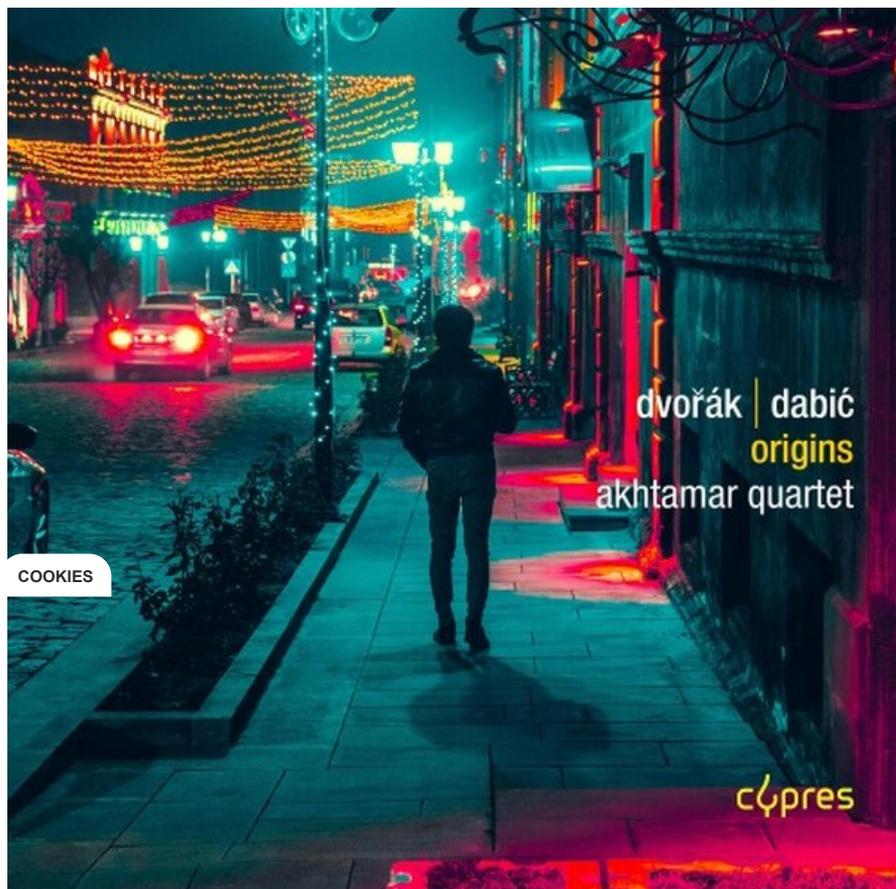


DVOŘÁK; DABIĆ 'Origins'

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Author: SangKwon Lee



DVOŘÁK; DABIĆ 'Origins'

String Quartet No. 13

Anzhamanak

[Selected Comparisons](#)

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Under the title 'Origins', the Akhtamar Quartet couple Dvořák's G major Quartet, Op 106, with Jelena Dabić's *Anzhamanak*. Written in 1895, shortly after his return from America, Op 106 is Dvořák's first 'home' work, re-anchoring his language in Czech soil while refining a Classical quartet idiom. Dabić's 2024 score, commissioned by the ensemble, draws on Armenian legend and Balkan rhythm to explore an abstract idea of home: memory suspended outside chronological time.

Akhtamar place Dvořák at the lyrical, gently modern end of that spectrum. Their sound is compact and luminous, the resonance kept close to the string: articulation is finely drawn, vibrato controlled and varied, with edges subtly rounded beside the wider dynamic range of the Pavel Haas Quartet. In the *Allegro moderato* a relaxed basic tempo lets the three ideas settle into long, clearly profiled paragraphs so development can unfold without haste. The *Adagio ma non troppo* flows as a broad instrumental aria, constant turns

between major and minor traced in a single sustained breath and the central climax built more by gradual thickening of texture than by sheer weight. In the *Molto vivace* Furiant the off-beat accents are sprung with light exactness, rhythm taut yet never heavy, while the finale sets an introspective *Andante* frame against an *Allegro con fuoco* driven by steady, glowing momentum, its closing pages tightly controlled yet still texturally smooth.

In *Anzhamanak* Dabić gives Akhtamar a canvas made for their imagination. 'Root' unfolds in free tempo as speech-like monody: microtonal inflections and changing bow contact turn a single line over a soft drone into a study in colour and remembered song. 'Signal' snaps that memory into irregular *col legno* beats – Balkan aksak rhythms knocked out on wood and string, pierced by glissando cries that feel half ritual, half alarm. 'Thread' loosens time again into whispering harmonic glissandos before 'Glint' gathers pulse and melody into a final weave. Akhtamar keep the sound warm and humane, so the experiments read as lived narrative rather than laboratory.

The clear, resonant acoustic of the Arsonic in Mons suits them well, and as a programme this feels like a single, well-argued story about roots.

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