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*'Creating
music in the
moment is
who I am'*

NEMANJA
RADULOVIĆ

THE STAR SERBIAN VIOLINIST ON
HIS NEW PROKOFIEV ALBUM AND
CREATING MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS



slow movement and folkier, brightly dancing fire to the finale – all to close, punchy orchestral partnering.

The shorter piano-accompanied pieces make for an attractive second half. In these performances, strong-toned and expressive, they come across as more than the sum of their parts; all in all, a very enjoyable album.

CHARLOTTE GARDNER

ORIGINS

DABIĆ Anzhamanak

DVOŘÁK String Quartet no.13

Akhtamar Quartet

CYPRES CYP1691

A great Bohemian reframed to exhilarating effect

'Fresh and unique experience of sound fragrances' is promised in the booklet for this unorthodox and revealing coupling from the Akhtamar Quartet, a group bringing together French and Belgian musicians but taking its name from a sequence of Armenian pieces by Komitas, the father of that nation's music. Jelena Dabić (born 1982) is a Serbian–German composer, setting a seal – alongside Bohemian Dvořák in his post-New World period – on a truly international album.

Anzhamanak is described as 'a contemporary suite inspired by roots, memory and transformation'. Its fusion of Armenian and Balkan folk styles with the vocabulary of the contemporary string quartet is an effective one. It opens with a solo cello threnody tinted with microtones and pitch-bends, and passes via keening, chant-like passages, sequences of irresistibly rhythmic dances and glowing songs to its upbeat conclusion. Dvořák's fusion is between the Brahmsian quartet archetype and the outdoorsy sounds and folk styles of his native



land, peppered with what he learnt in America – those characteristic pentatonic melodies are never far away.

The Akhmatar responds vividly to the G major's Quartet's heady mix of rusticity and sophistication, relaxing into tempos but maintaining just a piquant edge of occasional roughness to its sound. The group should win many friends for Dabić's new work, and it's always a pleasure to hear the Dvořák played so sympathetically.

DAVID THREASHER

GIARDINI Six Sonatas for violin and continuo op.1

I Solisti Ambrosiani

TACTUS TC710704

Music of galant charm undermined by technical issues

Felice Giardini's op.1 Sonatas each comprise three movements and combine mostly Baroque structures with a predominantly galant idiom. Violinist Davide Belosio boldly tackles their challenging bowings, wide leaps, double- and multiple-stopping, harmonics and passages of high tessitura, skilfully negotiating the slurred staccatos in no.1's Minuetto and no.2's opening

Allegro and producing clear, bell-like single and double harmonics in the last two movements of no.6. He makes modest attempts to add extempore ornamentation in most repeated sections and aptly recreates Giardini's reported elegant lyricism in the central Adagios of nos.3 and 4.

Belosio's performances are not unqualified successes, however. They are marred by insecure and sour intonation, particularly in sections of double-stopping, an apparent awkwardness in shifting, abrupt phrasal delivery and a lack of spontaneity and direction in interpreting the composer's written-out ornamental passages, notably in the final bars of the slow movements of nos.2 and 5. Tempos for the outer movements are generally cautious and more might have been made of the dynamic contrasts clearly notated in Giardini's 1751 publication.

Although their continuo support is studiously diligent, harpsichordist Nicola Bisotti's contribution lacks real flair and imagination and cellist Claudio Frigerio seems too prominent in a close recording that also admits undesirable extra-musical noise.

ROBIN STOWELL



A truly international outlook from the Akhtamar Quartet

NICOLAS DRANS