

Cinco Puntos Cardinales. Music by Daniel Janke. Toronto, Ont.: Centrediscs CMCCD 16911, 2011. 1 compact disc (34:00). Contents: *Aparecer* (Mark Fewer, violin) (4:28) — *o curas hominum* (Coro in Limine) (3:56) — *Interlude* (Ignacio Ambrose, palm fronds) (1:39) — *Grand Waltz* (Red Pineapple Band) (5:47) — *Reacción* (Mark Fewer, violin) (4:05) — *Miawezo* (Daniel Janke, prepared pianos) (3:18) — *Hecho* (Mark Fewer, violin) (4:35) — *Para Leer En Forma Interrogative* (Coro in Limine) (4:23) — *Epilogue* (Mark Fewer, violin) (1:42). \$10.98

In order to understand the inspiration and background of this contemporary dance work, one should begin by reading the liner notes provided by Canadian composer Daniel Janke and choreographer Yvonne von Mollendorff. The title of the CD, *Cinco Puntos Cardinales*, translates as *Five Cardinal Points*. The work is in nine movements, featuring solo violin movements (beautifully performed by Canadian violinist Mark Fewer), Coro in Limine (a Lima-based male chorus), the Red Pineapple Band (a playful, eclectic group) and prepared pianos (featuring the composer, Daniel Janke). It is interesting to note that the movements were recorded in Toronto (Fewer's violin solos), Lima, Peru (Coro in Limine), and in Guyana, South America (an interlude with palm fronds). The production was staged in Lima, Peru, in September 2002.

It was entrancing to listen to the dance work solely as musical experience, divorcing the music from the whole theatrical experience. Attending a live performance of a dance work, one experiences the music as integrally linked to the choreography; the music and dance fuse into a single medium of expression. Listening to these vividly expressive, captivating dances, I could not help but create my own imagined choreography. The nine movements/tableaux are a mixed bag, stylistically speaking, ranging from Gregorian plainchant to improvisational chamber music. It is a meditation on classics, on raw-boned modernism, lit by flashes of flagrant sensuality and pathos. It is all the unexpected choices that give this disc depth and edge.

“Aparecer,” the opening dance, translated as “to appear,” is a dissonant, poetic exploration for solo violin. Unison chords develop into arching, jagged chromatic lines searching for tonal resolution. The serene, simple folksong quality, coupled with the sections of tortured harmonic writing, belies the overarching emotion of despair. The twisted melodic lines find repose in the return of the opening solo lines, but conclude with the violin still searching for harmonic resolution.

Coro in Limine, the unaccompanied male chorus, chants the meditative “o curas hominum” (Oh, the cares of man). The polyphonic plainchant features two choirs answering each other in Palestrina-style expression. The spare poetry is effectively communicated through this contemplative musical writing. The plainchant builds to a powerful climax. The futility of humanity's pursuits on earth is aptly expressed in the impassioned singing, dissipating into a single chorus chanting in unison.

The shortest movement is “Interlude,” only one-minute-and-thirty-nine seconds. The sounds of water flowing and the curious sounds of the palm fronds (a percussion instrument made from the large compound leaf of a palm) evoke the atmosphere of the Amazon rainforest and being in the heart of that exotic, wild space. A sense of mystery and danger is created by the repetition of what sounds like footsteps running through the forest that meet a menacing, percussive rhythmic pulse and rattle. The unexpected musical choices and abrupt ending of this vignette heighten the sense of apprehension.

“The Grand Waltz” (performed by the Red Pineapple Band) is a playful dance scored for piano, violin, bass, accordion, two saxophones, and drums. The intriguing collage of sound parodies a waltz delivered from an old-time country band, but with a twenty-first century twist. The waltz music is juxtaposed with the street sounds of Lima: squeaky, high-pitched brakes of a city bus, bells from a bicycle, and a distant, distorted voice. This is the longest dance of the nine movements, and it is an absolute charmer. The appeal of this piece is the seemingly random compositional approach, but one is conscious of the variable mixture of creativity and inspiration that went into it.

The haunting melody of “Reacción” (Reaction) is exactly that: a musical reply to the lightness of the previous movement. Again a movement for solo violin, it is a reprise of the second movement and the chant melody heard from the Coro in Limine chorus. The music develops to a section of more rhythmic energy but eventually dissipates into wisps of sound. The majestic yet aloof melody of the violin is an effective and poignant musical contrast to the previous dance movement.

The rhythmic, inexorable momentum of energy in “Miawezo” is spell-binding and engaging right from the opening bars. The composer himself, Daniel Janke, plays the prepared piano in this high-energy, hypnotic dance created by the repeated triplet figures. I am fascinated that a prepared piano creates these mesmerizing sounds. It is a minimalist tour de force.

The mournful, pleading voice of the solo violin returns in the movement “Hecho” (Done). It is a dissonant, soulful folksong melody. This introspective exposé is a haunting segue from the pulse and energy of the previous dance, “Miawezo.”

“Para Leer En Forma Interrogativa” (To Be Read in the Interrogative) is the penultimate dance; it features the poetry of Julio Cortázar. Cortázar (an Argentinean writer) was one of the founders of the Latin American literary renaissance, which influenced an entire generation of Spanish-speaking readers and writers. The Coro in Limine chorus makes another appearance, but this time accompanied by piano. A beautiful, captivating piano solo opens the movement, and then the chorus enters in unison. The spare, sensual poetry is captured by the male voices in the interrogative lines: “Have you seen, Have you truly seen the snow the stars the felt the steps of the breeze... Do you know, in every pore of our skin, that your eyes, your hands, your sex, your soft heart must be thrown away must be wept away, must be invented all over again?” Although the intonation of the chorus suffers a little here, I very much appreciate the raw, natural, earthy quality of Coro in Limine’s performance of this folksong.

The dance ends in the eerie, unresolved “Epilogue.” It is either a calming resolution or chilling warning to close the dance work with the indelible, haunting and pervasive atmospheric streets sounds of Lima.

The compositional structure of this nine-movement dance work is cleverly crafted. Janke bookends solo violin pieces and two Coro in Limine male chorus songs, sandwiching in four contrasting movements and ending with a final single movement. All the performances are beautifully rendered, and the sound quality of the recording captures the nuances of the individual movements.

Highly recommended if you are looking for compelling and daring musical choices.

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