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FRANZ HUMMEL - Hatikva, Symphony for Clarinet and Orchestra - Fukushima, Violin Symphony - Giora Feidman (Clarinet) - Elena Denisova (Violin) - Alexei Kornienko (Conductor) - Moscow Symphony Orchestra - 4250702800026 - Released: July 2012 - TYXart TXA12002

For a new record label just out of the gate in June 2012, this bold recording may be an omen of great things to come from the people at **TYXart**. According to producer **Andreas Ziegler**, the label's mandate is as follows: "TYXart's first priority is to satisfy the emotional, spiritual and intellectual requirements of music lovers with products of high artistic quality. All that is uplifting and gratifying to the musicality of the listener, seriousness, humour, tranquility, energy, thoughtfulness, as well as joie de vivre, exultation or grief, will be presented in our releases." The two works on this CD, by German composer **Franz Hummel** (b 1939), certainly have grief and seriousness covered.

Cast in the role of a long, sustained, lamenting outcry, the humble clarinet, under the breathtaking manipulation of **Giora Feidman**, contorts, grimaces and soars over a dark and foreboding orchestral landscape whose only indications of forward development come in the form of harmonic expansion, with shades of Mahler progressions, constantly repeating a gripping incantation in the style of a passacaglia. Feidman shapes and contours every note with so much emotive power, that the clarinet becomes an extension of the man. It stands out in bold relief against the rich dark colors of the orchestra. **Hatikva - Symphony for Clarinet and Orchestra** is a powerfully evocative new work that deserves steady presentation on the world's concert stages. Its ending may be soft and quiet, but it weighs heavily on the mind. This is a 'live' recording, with a very long stunned pause before the final applause.

"Hatikva" means hope and is the title of the Israeli national anthem. The Israelis call it, self-ironically, the "Moldau", because the first four bars are reminiscent of Smetana's famous D minor theme. I have melted down the substance of the anthem to form a melodic, harmonic concentrate that renders the atmosphere of the song in four bars and forms the passacaglia bass of the whole work. The solo clarinet is engrossed in its own excessive expression of joy and sorrow, outcry and tragedy while the yearning melodies of "Hatikva" are buried, time and again, beneath the orchestral sounds, recalling the great sufferings of the Israeli people. {Franz Hummel}

Fukushima - Violin Symphony stems from a reaction to man's arrogance at Hiroshima. It's a very different symphonic work from the hands of Franz Hummel. In many instances, especially in the way the violin part is written and played out, it reminds me of the William Schuman Violin Concerto. Long soaring lyrical lines pitted against a stormy orchestral background. Like *Hatikva*, it's laid-out over one sustained single movement, although over much more tortuous terrain. Violinist **Elena Denisova** holds her head well above the stormy waters, and delivers a riveting account of this quasi concerto. Virtuosity and lyricism fused into one. The solo violin acts as both the lonely tortured soul witnessing destruction on a massive scale, and the accomplice playing its part within the orchestral fabric. A tough new challenge for musicians to surmount. Both these works are presented here in their world première recording. May there be more!

Jean-Yves Duperron - September 2012