

Feldman - Palais de Mari; Crumb - A Little Suite for Christmas (2016)

Written by bluesever

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1 –Morton Feldman *Intermission 5* 4:24 2 –George Crumb *Processional* 9:49 3 –Morton Feldman *Piano Piece 1952* 3:39 4 –Morton Feldman *Extensions 3* 5:30 George Crumb *A Little Suite For Christmas, A.D. 1979*

5 – *The Visitation* 2:39 6 – *Berceuse For The Infant Jesu* 1:35 7 – *The Shepherds' Noël* 1:15 8 – *Adoration Of The Magi* 1:23 9 – *Nativity Dance* 0:59 10 – *Canticle Of The Holy Night* 3:07 11 – *Carol Of The Bells* 2:09 12 –Morton Feldman *Palais De Mari* 26:16
Steven Osborne - piano

Although they were leading figures of the avant-garde in the 1970s and 1980s, Morton Feldman and George Crumb are an unexpected pairing on this 2016 Hyperion release by pianist Steven Osborne, because they employed dissimilar techniques and achieved rather different results. Feldman is perhaps best known for his extremely long and harmonically dense works of the 1980s, while Crumb's use of extended instrumental techniques and mystical references made him one of the most imitated composers in the last half of the 20th century. Yet they both explored the quiet end of the dynamic range, and the otherworldly feeling of their music often reveals a mutual affinity for introspection and intuition. The short Feldman pieces, *Intermission 5*, *Piano Piece 1952*, and *Extensions 3*, were all composed in 1952 and are rather scattered and sparse, unlike the sustained mood and consistently delicate sonorities of *Palais de Mari*, Feldman's final work, which reflects his interest in slowly evolving processes. Crumb's *Processional* is a mix of tonal and modal elements clashing over a pulsing rhythm, and it is surprisingly loud and aggressive when compared to many of his earlier works. Yet *A Little Suite for Christmas, A.D. 1979* is more in keeping with Crumb's evocative style of the 1970s, and its short movements are reminiscent of *Makrokosmos I and II*. After hearing this album in its entirety, one can understand Osborne's choices and appreciate a stylistic continuity between them, though the program reveals these composers' differences more starkly than their similarities. --- Blair Sanderson, AllMusic Review

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