

Eric Whitacre - Marimba Quartets (2020)

Written by bluesever (Bogdan Marszałkowski)

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1 *Lux Aurumque* 3:56 2 *October* 7:39 3 *A Boy And A Girl* 3:56 4 *Sleep* 5:56 Joby Burgess (marimba & vibraphone) Sam Wilson (marimba & vibraphone) Calum Huggan (marimba) Rob Farrer (marimba)

Anyone who knows Eric Whitacre's choral works will doubtless have been struck by their supremely lush harmonies and overall gorgeous sounds. With these clever arrangements of some of them for various combinations of marimbas and vibraphones, with either two or four instruments being employed, Joby Burgess has managed to breathe new life into what will I'm sure become timeless works. Who knows perhaps this opens the way to treating these pieces to the same kind of arrangements that has been the case for Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* which shows that the same music can sound quite different when passed through the prism of varied and different instruments, each one equally valid in its own right.

Marimbas have that ethereal almost unworldly sound that so perfectly matches the similar qualities found in Whitacre's music. In *Lux Aurumque* (Light, warm and heavy as pure gold) one can almost feel the warmth while similar aural textures come to the fore in *October* which describes the colours of autumn again with palpable luminosity. One of the features of marimbas and vibraphones is the resonance that comes from the sustained note that lingers after being hit adding to its other worldly sound.

A Boy and a Girl is played in short passages which serve up another way of hearing these evocative instruments and *Sleep* rounds off an experience that is quite unique and almost defies description; this is music that must be heard since words cannot do it the justice it deserves. The composer is quoted as saying that Joby Burgess is a "musical genius" in achieving "these really clever, beautiful arrangements" and I couldn't agree more. At less than 22 minutes this is a very short programme but the asking price is commensurate with its length

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so if you are a marimba fan I can confidently predict you will love this sumptuous sounding disc.
---Steve Arloff, musicweb-international.com

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