



Lines - Music for Cello & Piano

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This disc is more about the protagonist and emerging cello virtuoso Caroline Stinson than the music itself, although this wholly 20th-century programme is riveting in every sense of the word. No stranger to recordings over the last decade, Stinson has, up to now, always worked with some wonderful ensembles such as Continuum and Lark Quartet, but with this project she has decided to take the plunge and step out on her own. As Stinson herself admits, she has always been fascinated about composers' relationships, both between themselves and their pupils, so it is no surprise that this first individual issue highlights three such groups, with all the significance, musically, personally and professionally, that go with them.



Indeed, the title is most apt, and the imaginative idea of linking together pupils and teachers in three principal strands: Bloch-Sessions-Harbison; Lutosławski-Stucky-Waggoner and Weesner; and Boulanger-Carter fits the concept to perfection. Carter was deeply influenced by Sessions and was close with him, although he was never his student. Both Waggoner and Weesner carved out close relationships with Harbison, and in different works they both reveal Harbison's influence as much as Stucky's. On the other hand, Harbison's early works often exhibited Sessions' influence, while his baroque sensibilities have more in common with Bloch's neoclassical style, his grand-teacher.

This crisscrossing of the lines exposes the wealth and variety of the music under review.

One other consideration: our star soloist has been fortunate enough to have worked with John Harbison (b.1938), Andrew Waggoner (b.1960), Anna Weesner (b.1965), Elliot Carter (b.1908) and Steven Stucky (b.1949), all the living composers featured on this disc. This enriching experience not only afforded Stinson with a profound insight on the work and aspirations of these five, but also helped her to delve deeper into the music of their contemporaries: Ernest Bloch (1880-1959), Roger Sessions (1896-1985), Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994) and Nadia Boulanger (1887-1979).

This is not music for the squeamish, but Stinson's impassioned and compelling renditions, coupled with an inner warmth and calm that are truly remarkable, give this compilation more than a touch of heroic "gravitas". And what about the tone that Stinson produces from the instrument? Absolutely impeccable and sublime, this is an impressive debut disc in top-notch sound and presentation.