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SAXOPHONE ALONE

Section: Collections

TOM BERGERON: Saxalone 1-6; BRITTEN: Metamorphoses After Ovid; PERSICHETTI: Parable XI; BONNEAU: Caprice, WHITE: Recitative & Presto; TELEMANN: Fantasias 5 +12 Torn Bergeron 59 minutes

Tom Bergeron is a versatile saxophonist, equally at home in the jazz and classical realms. His tone quality is strong enough to have a bit of reed in it yet full and velvety to the ear. Only occasionally is his vibrato so full-blown as to distract. Here he gives us an hour of unaccompanied saxophone music--quite a dose by any measure. While it may be a bit much for one sitting, it offers a range of styles and emotions. It also comes with exhaustive notes.

Reading about each movement of Britten's Six Metamorphoses After Ovid (originally for oboe) may take longer than listening to them. On oboe, the tessitura is so high that tension and strain are part of the piece; but in Bergeron's transcription, the piece sounds comfortable--a significant change in the work's basic character. The transcriptions of two flute fantasias by Telemann are played quite beautifully, with subtle nuance and seemingly spontaneous expression.

Vincent Persichetti's whimsical and abstract Parable XI (1972) has the character of an extended improvisation, while Paul Bonneau's Caprice en Forme de Valse (1950) is a virtuoso study in the sort of solo-instrument counterpoint found in Bach's cello suites--in a much lighter vein. Bergeron breezily tosses off its dazzling twists and turns.

John D White has remarkable credentials in both philosophy and music: a PhD in music composition from the University of Iowa, chair of the Philosophy Department at Talladega College, Alabama. His brief Recitative is followed by an angular, insistent, and repetitive Presto.

Interspersed among the composed works are six of what Bergeron calls Saxalones--solo improvisations that have such descriptive titles as 'Morning Swing', 'Cloud Forest', 'Evening Glide', and so forth. If these were composed as they were recorded, as Bergeron writes in the notes, then he is very good at it.

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By KILPATRICK