

tone and takes great care to relish the large and expressive leaps. I especially enjoy the energetic character of the "Courante" and the incredibly long and lyrical phrases in the "Sarabande."

Mr. Parisi is at his best in Paganini's virtuosic *Capriccio*, where he amazes and entertains us with a flashy rendition of the familiar theme and its 11 variations. He demonstrates a variety of techniques, including flutter tongue, rapid tremolos, harmonics and slap tongue, which emulate various articulations on the violin. In program notes, Mr. Parisi explains, however, that the bass clarinet "is not intended to 'imitate' the violin, but to assimilate the idea of Paganini's virtuosity, according to which the instrument is treated not as tradition has it, but purely as a means to render the 'musical thought' and to impress." He certainly succeeds in that regard. It is incredible what he can do on the instrument! The polyphony he achieves by singing while playing in the third variation is extraordinary, as is the unique timbre of the extremely high harmonics in the tenth variation.

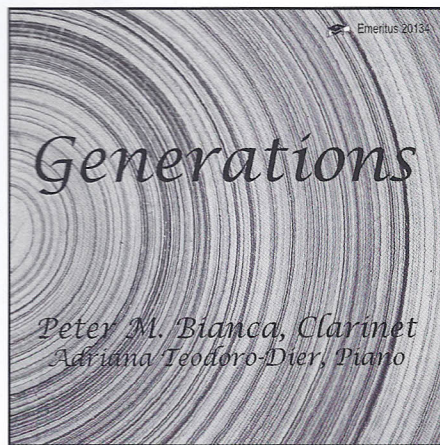
The album concludes with the performers' own transcription of Rossini's "La Tempesta" sonata. Rossini wrote a collection of six sonatas for two violins, cello and double bass, including this one, when he was only 12 years old. It is interesting to note that documentation has been discovered in which Rossini himself was later highly critical of these six sonatas he wrote in his youth. As we would expect from Rossini, the writing has a lovely vocal quality. The fast outer movements are bright and energetic, even cute at times, with several lengthy ascending and descending scalar sequences. Skilled collaborators, the Parisi/Rota duo creates a beautiful dialogue throughout as they effortlessly pass off the phrases.

The performers take listeners on an enjoyable journey through familiar works as they have been re-imagined on the bass clarinet. For me, the solo pieces are the most effective tracks on the album. While the performances aren't technically flawless, they are filled with character and excitement. To be sure, Rocco Parisi pushes the envelope of what is technically possible on the instrument, and I look forward to hearing which works he decides to tackle next.

by Jeff O'Flynn

Generations. Peter M. Bianca, clarinet; Adriana Teodoro-Dier, piano. Paul

Jeanjean: *Arabesques*; Sy Brandon: *Three Greek Dances* and *Hep Cats*; Antoni Szałowski: *Sonatina*; Robert Schumann: *Romances*, Op. 94; Max Reger: *Two Pieces*; Joseph Küffner (often attributed to Weber): *Introduction, Theme and Variations*. EMERITUS RECORDINGS 20134. Total time 54:10. www.amazon.com, www.cooppress.com and iTunes



Generations offers a tasteful mix of familiar works and newer compositions presented beautifully by clarinetist Peter M. Bianca and pianist Adriana Teodoro-Dier. Bianca holds degrees from the University of New Hampshire, Boston University, and the University of Miami and has an impressive resume as a freelance musician and teacher. He proves to be a capable performer able to communicate the spirit of each of these diverse works. His collaborator, Dr. Teodoro-Dier, demonstrates superb flexibility and sensitivity while eliciting a wide range of colors from her instrument.

Jeanjean's popular *Arabesques* opens this recording with flair. Peter Bianca balances the technical demands with unfailing attention to the musical line, as he does throughout this disc. The pair has excellent pacing that builds excitement to the end and grabs the listener's attention.

Next comes Sy Brandon's *Three Greek Dances* which was composed in 2003 for clarinet and marimba. This recording features an effective 2013 arrangement by the composer for clarinet and piano. The first dance, "Kalamationos," is in 7/8 and is based on a popular dance of Peloponnesian origin. It bounces with energy and offers the clarinet and piano interesting contrapuntal challenges. "Zeibekiko," the second dance, comes from the Eastern Aegean Islands. It sounds improvisatory, and the performers handle it with spontaneous ease. The fi-

nale, "Hassapikos," is a butcher's dance that dashes to the end as the performers challenge each other by trading ever faster melodies.

Polish composer Antoni Szałowski's *Sonatina* (1936) remains as one of his best-known works. The first movement has an angular opening theme and a placid second theme that complement each other well. The second movement provides a welcome contrast to the outer movements. It features soft playing and haunting melodies that draw in the listener. The last movement sparkles with energy and is one of the highlights of this recording.

Hep Cats by Sy Brandon is the only unaccompanied work on this CD. The three movements take their names from cats, and each embodies a different style. The opening of "Siamese" is captivating with its jazzy riffs and playful turns of phrase. "Angora" begins silkily and softly before a staccato section interrupts the blues-inflected lines. Finally, "Tom" is a rock-driven and syncopated showpiece to close the work. Bianca answers this piece's challenges with outstanding control and nuance.

Schumann's *Romances* give the audience another favorite and familiar work. Fine breath control and smooth voicing make the work feel seamless while pianist Teodoro-Dier provides shading and attention to detail that complete the performance. The second movement stands out for its flawless ensemble.

"Albumleaf" and "Tarantella" comprise the *Two Pieces* by Max Reger. These short selections were intended to be encore pieces and each is under two minutes in length. They are charming, melodic and a perfect match for Peter Bianca's rich clarion and full chalumeau playing.

Küffner's *Introduction, Theme and Variations* follows the pattern you expect from the title, with a brief ornamented introduction and a simple theme that practically demands embellishment. The variations are essentially arpeggiated versions of the melody with varied tempi to create interest. Each one gets faster, as though the performers are dared to continually accelerate.

Overall, the attention to detail and finely tuned ensemble make this disc stand out. Peter Bianca is a talented clarinetist with a beautiful even tone, crisp articulation and wonderful musical sensibility. I particularly enjoy hearing the relatively unknown pieces on this disc and recommend it for anyone in need of recital repertoire.