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What a stunning debut album for Duo 47/4 (47 for the 47 strings on the harp, and 4 for the four on the violin), Anna Viechtl (b 1984) and Viktoria Kaunzner (b 1982). And what a way to make their mark, with an album of 20th- and 21st-Century works that intersperse truly contemporary pieces with ones that, while written in the 20th Century, are nonetheless 19th-Century traditional. It's as if they're answering the question people asked about Schoenberg: "Yes, but can he write (here, perform) real music?"

At first I found Kaunzner's violin piercing and shrill but then quickly realized it was the effect she was giving at the start of the album's opening work, written in 1991 by Violeta Dinescu. It's an 11-minute piece in a rhetorical Roumanian style called "suspiratio" that ranges from tone waves and lace-like work in the harp to the violin's very expansive palette and riffs. Both the work itself and its performance are an integrated experience.

Then in Bernard Andres's three-minute Ravelian-Hispanic 'Zerbina' (1991) the duo shows in spades their total rhythmic and stylistic ensemble. Their breadth of tone colors and flow are alive and vital.

In R Murray Schafer's Wild Bird (1998, nine minutes) both players are again extremely versatile, turning this tale of "a vulture that tears its prey to pieces, eats it, and then rises in the air again" into a dramatic, engaging, quasigypsy work that is accessible, exhilarating, and wonderfully integrated. It is followed by the Meditation from Thais in one of the most exquisite performances I've ever heard; here the players do a switch—it is the accompanying harp that conveys the marvelously flowing rubato and the melodic violin that maintains a rather steady lyricism (usually it's the other way around).

Kaunzner has homes in both Cologne and South Korea—thus the two Korean-inspired work on the album. Her Korean Drip Catcher (2011) she describes as "film-music poetry". From its open pppp in the harp's lowest register to the violin's melismatic flourishes, it is both impressionist and soaringly lyrical.

Ibert's Entr'acte (1935, three minutes) a la Espagnole is followed by the 'Song of Sackcloth' (six minutes) by Ja Young Choi (b 1974). Inspired by Psalm 30:11, it evolves from a sense of forced mourning to a quasi-mood of joy. I found it the least impressive piece on the album. The program concludes with Saint-Saens's Fantasy for violin and harp in a truly sweeping, virtuosic, passionate, flowing, and eminently musical performance.

The engineering here is superb and the performances peerless. Editor Vroon always chides reviewers never to say "this is an album of the year" because there are still more to come, except that this issue is the last we can choose from for the Critics' Choice 2015 column that will appear in the next issue. Be assured that this will be on my list. © 2015 American Record Guide