



Etudes4violin&electronix

Daniel Bernard Roumain | Thirsty Ear Recordings (2007)

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The most profound thought that any human being can have is about being alive. How we express life hopefully motivates us "to do," not just "to be." It is a gift to be able to have a means to do. And the gift often comes forth in a product. The product, in this case, is music. And a person who has mastered his voice in the music is Daniel Bernard Roumain. Violinist Roumain collaborates with several composers as well as playing his own compositions on *Etudes4violin&electronix*.

Roumain's violin supplies an element that is not unlike the storyteller that a singer can be. The strokes of the bow pull a vocabulary across the strings that evokes much joy, even when a strain of the blues comes through. The bowing dynamics range from legato to saltando, tremolo, pizzicato and more. Roumain exercises a lightness of touch that fosters a fluidity, continuity and consistency within the recording that demonstrates unquestionable virtuosity and commitment to the violin's expressivity.

Within a basso, heavy, grinding DJ Spooky & Peter Gordon sampling mix, the violin begins disguised amidst the siren-like sound of female voices. The instrument works in parallel with the voice line. It rises as the star of "Black Man Singing." The elegant simplicity of Ryuichi Sakamoto's piano work on two tracks, "The Need To Be" and "The Need To Follow," allows Roumain to flourish openly, but in a way that diversifies rather than overpowering the piano line; the two interacting with equal force.

DJ Spooky's "Resonance" flips a switch to a seductive rhythm played out on synthesizers and piano; the violin floats high above the groove. On Roumain's "Divergence," he plays both violin and piano; the melody is somber and pensive but then explodes out of the sobriety only to return to a careful close. Philip Glass's contribution, "Metamorphosis," speaks a theme out of Glass' *Glassworks* (CBS, 1982). Glass remains true to a tremolodic process, while Roumain simplifies the piano line with smooth stroking. Midstream, the roles reverse and Roumain changes the dynamic to imitate Glass' tremolos of the first section, the piece concluding with the same postures as the beginning.

The remainder of the recording is in keeping with Roumain's interest in expanding his conversational society. It is by playing with other composers that he experiences the wealth of interaction that complements his lust for life. His own compositions reflect the vivacity with which he commands his vocation. There are many musicians/composers whose music can be completely uplifting and sweep you off your feet. DBR is one of them.