

Bruce Leto Jr.

GOMITOLO!

An Interpreter's Tribute to a COVID-Stricken Europe



Taking his cue from classical and impressionistic composers such as Maurice Ravel and Francis Poulenc and modern composer Curt Cacioppo, Bruce Leto Jr. has assembled ten tracks of music that recognize the chaos and turmoil of the Covid Pandemic and its systematic influences on the daily lives of Europeans, from sun up to sun down and beyond. Fortunately for us, music knows no boundaries. There are no dulcet, flowing reveries here. Reflecting that which is today's truth, there is oftentimes dissonance in this music. But there is also hopeful tranquility. Above all, Leto has injected a sense of honesty into his interpretations.

The opening track is **Française d'après Claude Gervaise** by Francis Poulenc. The namesake, Gervais, is a Renaissance composer and Poulenc's homage to him is a poignant conveyance that represents the tortured soul of the present day. Leto plays it as if it were a march into hell.

There is an insightful gentleness to the second cue **Novelletes, FP 47: No. 1 in C Major**. One of three of Poulenc's pieces for piano, Leto performs this tribute to a friend of Poulenc's with a light hand in the neo-classical style. The lighthearted manner is a welcome respite from the pain and suffering of the world.

Gomitolo in this case, meaning "incomprehensibility of human life," is thoughtfully examined and offered in a palatable manner by way of the third movement **Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn, M. 58** by Maurice Ravel. This short piece is a play on Haydn's name. Leto injects a lyrical motif in this piece, a kind of soft, gentle yearning.

One of my favorites on the recording is **À la manière de Borodine**, another of Ravel's workings in favor of the performer's waltz-like phrasing. This pleasant pastiche is passionate and focused by Mr. Leto as he plays with a kind of improvisational abandon.

With a dreamy, energetic introduction, Leto includes a live performance on the album of Cacioppo's piece **Ecco Venere**. This is a multifaceted work with a pensive mixture of arpeggios and soft riffs, a dichotomy that is well appreciated for its complexity. For me, the music suggests that the pain of suffering and the loss we feel today may perhaps be alleviated in the future. The sun will shine tomorrow.

Mr. Leto is a national and international multi-award winning composer who studied under Curtis Cacioppo. Leto's own modernistic style is sometimes delicate, but always refined. If anything Bruce Leto Jr.'s contemporary work GOMITOLO! An Interpreter's Tribute to a COVID-Stricken

Europe which has a life in the past, offers more than a modicum of hope for the future. By experiencing these ten tracks of sensitive, optimistic piano morceaus, the heart will be a bit lighter and the spirit lifted to a new level of hope. Recommended.

- R J Lannan, Artisan Music Reviews