THE REHEARSAL STUDIO

A PLACE TO EXERCISE IDEAS BEFORE WRITING ABOUT THEM WITH GREATER DISCIPLINE.

TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 2021

A Viola's Perspective on Tango

Violist Ellen Ruth Rose playing "Le vrai tango Argentin" (screen shot from the YouTube video being discussed)

As announced yesterday, last night provided my first encounter with the First Mondays series of streamed videos presented by Earplay. The video was a solo performance of Pablo Ortiz' "Le vrai tango Argentin," which lasted a little more than five minutes in duration. Like the other First Mondays videos, this was presented through YouTube; and last night's stream has now been uploaded to a YouTube Web page. The violist was Ellen Ruth Rose.

I wanted to collect my own thoughts before listing to the conversation that Rose had with Ortiz, which is on another YouTube Web page. Ortiz was born in 1956 in Buenos Aires, which probably qualifies his personal thoughts about "true Argentinian tango." What is particularly interesting, however, it that he seems to avoid just about any theme or motif that can be associated with familiar tango music (at least familiar to what we can encounter through recordings here in the United States).

Nevertheless, the score has an intense rhythmic drive, even if neither the rhythms themselves nor the motifs they shape do not reflect the usual impressions of the tango. The sharp edges of those rhythms are then enhanced by the viola bowing, frequently aggressive and often highlighting upper harmonics. As we have known since the days of Pontius Pilate, truth is a slippery concept. Tango is such a personal practice, be it the dance or the music for the dance, that it is unlikely that it has a "universal truth." Nevertheless, Ortiz has his own "truth about the tango;" and he was terse enough to express it in about five minutes of attention. Personally, I thought he was being playful in making his case; and, through that playfulness, I was readily inclined to accept his "truth."

STEPHEN SMOLIAR

The author's construction of his reality of self!

ABOUT ME

STEPHEN SMOLIAR

Still trying to "liberate the mind from fear, superstition and pettiness."

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A Viola's Perspective on Tango

Earplay to Stream Music of Pablo Ortiz

POSTED BY STEPHEN SMOLIAR AT 6:57 AM

LABELS: CHAMBER MUSIC, MUSIC

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