

his now-established compositional language, Perle engages in three movements of an almost courtly-sounding dance seemingly from an earlier historical age, a characteristic quickly evolving Scherzo, and a Bartókian *Mysterioso* with expressive passages amidst rhythmic interjections. All three movements invoke the feeling of variations, completely coherent and consistent, and a continually evolving variety of registers, textures, and instrumental combinations.

The Quartet No. 8, “Windows of Order,” is a mature work, in which technique and expression are one. The title comes from a dichotomy in Perle’s writings: “windows of disorder” versus “windows of order,” meaning that disruptive elements in one mode of expression can become the structural basis of another. Many of the musical elements in Perle’s language descend from passages disruptive to the world of late nineteenth-century tonal music, but act as the foundation in Perle’s adaptations. All the Perlean features are found in his Eighth Quartet: the slow, expressive evolution of contrapuntal lines, the skittery Scherzo passages, the contrasting rhythmic outbursts, the searching variations, and the continual invention, all within a meaningful, although light, musical flow that engages and envelops the listener. As with all of Perle’s later works, the richness of detail only becomes apparent upon repeated listenings.

The liner notes include a general introduction to Perle and his music by the composer’s long-time friend and collaborator Paul Lansky, and an essay by Malcolm MacDonald on the pieces recorded. Although the essay features helpful quotes from Perle himself, the introduction is largely impressionistic in its description of—rather than direct response to—the music (with multiple, somewhat-strange assertions, such as the “pugnacious” yet “humorous” passages in several of the works). The playing on the CD is assured throughout, and clearly the Daedalus Quartet has put in the time and effort to express the music fully. My only complaint is a somewhat too uniform approach to tone; a stronger contrast in weight and attack is needed to reflect the music’s varying moods and changing character, particularly in the earlier works. Nonetheless, the recording is most welcome, and all listeners should be excited by the promise of a second volume in this series.

Dave Headlam



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Gaudete Brass, *Chicago Moves*. Cedille Records CDR 90000 136, 2012.

Known for presenting serious new works for brass quintet, the Gaudete Brass Quintet does not disappoint with *Chicago Moves*, its dynamic 2012 release on Cedille Records. The CD features six world premieres, written specifically for Gaudete Brass by James Woodward, John Cheetham, Brian Baxter, Stacy Garrop, Rob Deemer, and David Sampson. The final track, Joan Tower’s *Copperware*, was written for the American Brass Quintet. Gaudete trombonist Paul Von Hoff writes in the liner notes

that “this album is designed to showcase the wonderful quality of today’s literature for brass quintet and demonstrate that, as an ensemble, the modern brass quintet has truly arrived.”<sup>1</sup> Gaudete Brass’s presentation of challenging contemporary music demonstrates their technical mastery and ensemble blend and establishes them as a group of chamber musicians to keep an eye (and ear) on.

*Chicago Moves* begins with James Woodward’s *Gaudete*, which means “rejoice” in Latin and was the quintet’s first commissioned work in 2007. Woodward’s short opener is an energetic work with some expansive melodic lines that give it moments of Coplandesque appeal. Composer John Cheetham is no stranger to writing for the brass quintet. His *Sonata for Brass Quintet* shows off the ensemble’s flexible style in each of the movements and is an enjoyable piece for the audience.

Loosely based on the nineteenth-century folk song “El-a-noy,” Brian Baxter’s *A Great Commercial City* is a one-movement work in three parts that features some beautiful harmonies. The blend of the ensemble creates a unified sound and a seamless exchange of lyrical motives between the voices. Stacy Garrop’s two-part *Helios* displays Gaudete Brass’s impressive control of technique and musical expression. The opening immediately takes off with syncopated rhythms and propulsive sixteenth note runs. The second half slows down to show off Garrop’s gorgeous harmonies, which the quintet plays with great sensitivity. *Brass*, a highly creative work by Rob Deemer, explores the various timbres and colors that can be produced by the ensemble, with aptly named movements titled “Bell,” “Mute,” and “Slide.” The third movement features exposed solo lines that include virtuosic playing from every member of the ensemble. David Sampson’s *Chicago Moves*, the CD’s title piece, gives us a brief look at life in Chicago through a musical representation of various landmarks—Grant Park, Spaghetti Bowl, the Loop, and Lake Shore Drive.

The Juilliard School originally commissioned Joan Tower’s *Copperwave* for the American Brass Quintet; Gaudete Brass’s recording, however, represents a premiere in traditional brass quintet instrumentation (with tuba rather than bass trombone). Tower’s work is a tour de force. The piece moves organically between different ideas and requires a considerable amount of technical and musical control, which Gaudete Brass demonstrates impressively.

*Chicago Moves* reinforces Gaudete Brass’s place in the chamber music world as innovators of new music and confirms their mission of “presenting serious brass chamber music” to the public. What sets Gaudete Brass apart from many other brass chamber groups is its serious commitment to commissioning new works by prominent composers. The works on this CD have all been composed since 2006 and feature prominent American composers; collectively, they add significantly to the relatively small brass quintet repertoire.

The accompanying liner notes by Gaudete trombonist Paul Von Hoff provide background information on the featured composers and a few words on the inspiration for each work. The notes shed light on the collaborative relationships that Gaudete Brass has forged with contemporary American composers and reveal their

<sup>1</sup> Paul Von Hoff, liner notes to *Chicago Moves*, Gaudete Brass, Cedille Records 90000 136, 2012.

love for their hometown of Chicago, their interest in exploring brass timbres, and their embrace of programmatic works.

The music on this CD falls squarely within the realm of American tonal music. Melodies are interwoven throughout the works and are often allowed to sail atop busy textures; syncopated rhythms and driving ostinatos establish an energy that keeps listeners on the edge of their seats. Gaudete Brass does a phenomenal job of showcasing a very difficult repertoire that should, nevertheless, be accessible and appealing to the average concerto-goer.

Kevin Sanders