

L. VAN DER PALS Piano Sonata, op. 143¹. Duo-Sonata for Violin and Cello, op. 55². Piano Trio, op. 56³. 3 Fugues, op. 132⁴ • ^{2,3}Elisabeth Zeuthen Schneider (vn); ^{2,3}Tobias van der Pals (vc); ^{1,3,4}Kristoffer Hyldig (pn) • POLYHYMNIA PF14002 (62:44)

Leopold van der Pal's overall style and approach to composition have mostly been described in the above interview. From what has been said and from the impressions I've gained listening to the present CD, I can attest to the fact that this is not music that is easily categorized. Yes, van der Pals is an eclectic, drawing upon a diversity of sources; and yes, it's also true that given his dates (1884–1966) his musical idiom leans more towards the late Romantic than it does towards 20th-century modernism, the time during which he lived most of his life.

French Impressionism as well as Austro-German Expressionism play a part in van de Pals's music, but it's not Debussy's whole-tone and pentatonic scales or his non-dominant ninth and eleventh chords that contribute to the Impressionistic effect in van der Pals's scores; nor is it Schoenberg's pan-tonal chromaticism, unregulated dissonance, and arrhythmic procedures that contribute to van der Pals's Expressionist tendencies. Harmonic progression is largely non-functional, producing unusual and unexpected effects, but the music remains essentially non-dissonant and tonal. Moreover, van der Pals's writing is heavily reliant on a rigorous counterpoint that often suggests Bach as a close companion.

All of this comes together in music that is difficult to explain in words but easy to understand in listening to it. Van der Pals conjures a unique sound world I've never quite heard before, yet it in its seeming strangeness, it somehow seems familiar; and it's that combination, I think, of the alien and the native that intrigues us and draws us into its mysterious spell.

We've met all three of these fine musicians before: Tobias van der Pals in a program of Leopold van der Pals's works for cello and piano, reviewed in 35:6; Elisabeth Zeuthen Schneider in recordings of works for violin and piano by Schumann (25:6) and J. P. E. Hartmann (20:2); and pianist Kristoffer Hyldig on a Naxos disc, performing works for voice and piano by Messiaen (33:5).

For the current program of works by Leopold van der Pals, Hyldig has the stage to himself in the expressive, atmospheric Piano Sonata, and then again in the hauntingly beautiful Three Fugues. He sits out the Duo-Sonata for violin and cello, for which Schneider and Tobias van der Pals join for a terrific performance that runs quite a gamut of musical styles, and makes serious technical demands on the players. Together all three musicians give a performance of incandescent beauty of the strongly French-inflected Piano Trio, which, I swear, has its roots in the D-Minor and G-Minor Trios of Fauré and Chausson, respectively. All four of the works on this disc eagerly await your exploration, but the Piano Trio, in particular, in my opinion, is a true masterpiece.

This is strongly recommended to all who wish to acquaint themselves with some very beautiful music that has until now been totally neglected. To appreciate it in such fine performances and recording is an extra bonus. **Jerry Dubins**