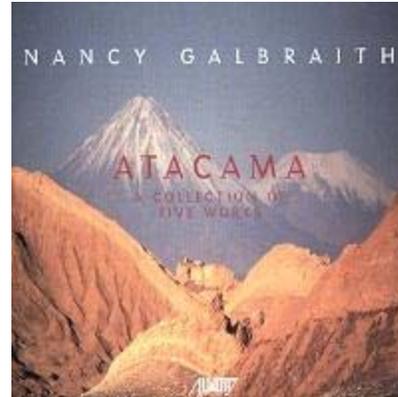


C D S P O T L I G H T

Wonderful exuberance

*A new release of music
by Nancy Galbraith -
recommended by
CARSON COOMAN*

'... music to be played and heard
again and again.'



This disc is the newest release of music by American composer Nancy Galbraith (born 1951). Galbraith is based in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA area and nearly all of the performers on this disc (and the impetus for the creation of these works) are based or connected to the Pittsburgh area. In recent years, Galbraith has become best known for a series of wind ensemble pieces which have been widely performed and recorded. This disc, although it includes one work for wind ensemble, gives a broader portrait of Galbraith's instrumental music.

Galbraith teaches on faculty at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, an institution which seems to have a lively dialogue and relationship with many ensembles, performers, and composers from Latin America and Spain. Three of the works on the recording reflect this dialogue.

Overall this is a disc of tremendous energy and wonderful exuberance. None of these works are pieces to listen to while falling asleep. This is *stay awake!* music that demands and compels active and repeated listening. Although Galbraith's musical language uses primarily diatonic elements (and heavy uses of modality -- both traditional and idiosyncratic), none of this music reveals all its secrets on a first hearing. This is music to be played and heard again and again.

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The disc opens with *Atacama Sonata* for flute and piano -- a work inspired by the Atacama desert of Chile. Both of the performers for whom this work were written (and who record it on the disc) are Chilean. The opening and closing movements -- *Capricho* and *Volante* -- burst with bounding rhythms, modal inflections, and a uncontainable zest. The most impressive part of the work however, is the middle movement, *Nocturno* which is subtitled 'in memory of the missing' -- written in memory of those political dissidents who were 'lost' forever in the Atacama desert. This movement -- using the full color palate of the flute (including 'whistle tones') is extremely moving and distinctly evocative. This reviewer cannot think of a more effective piece of 'desert' landscape chamber music [[listen -- track 2, 4:45-5:50](#)].

Inquiet Spirits is Galbraith's second string quartet. Her first quartet is structurally a more traditional three movement affair. This second quartet, however, is a compressed single movement dominated primarily by music of intense vigor and truly explosive energy. A beautiful and lyrical middle interlude provides a brief respite amid music of unabating virtuosity. One could not imagine a more committed and exciting performance of this work than the one given by Cuarteto Latinoamericano, for whom the piece was especially written [[listen -- track 4, 0:00-1:12](#)].

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