



Russian Brass Music

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[American Record Guide](#) (Barry Kilpatrick - 2003.09.01)

First of all, this brass quintet sounds excellent, showing rounded tone qualities, fine intonation and blend, and good dynamic variety. Listening to them is a pleasure. Second, this is an unusual program, since most collections of Russian brass music tend to major in the works of Victor Ewald (1860-1935). Several of the pieces are original brass quintets, while the rest are arrangements of piano literature.

The most substantial of the original brass works is a suite by Aleksandr Poteenko (b 1960) that shows numerous stylistic influences. I is a virtuoso study, especially for trumpeters Falk Zimmermann and Klaus Wingsiefen, while II is a waltz that gives a lyrical melody to trombonist Thomas Steger. Tuba player Guido Gorny dances nimbly in a whimsical III, and horn player Frank Lefers ruminates in IV. The trumpets grab the spotlight again in V.

Viktor Grisichen's little Rondo (1986) sounds like a study from Bartok's Mikrokosmos and seems to be a "musical caricature of village life in provincial Russia". A Brass Quintet by Anton Simon (1850-1916) has three movements based on folk-like melodies, while the one by Alexander Alabiev (1787-1851) sounds like a model for the not-very-sophisticated but tuneful and virtuoso brass music of Wilhelm Rams(0248)e and Victor Ewald.

The best music of the program is the piano arrangements, including the always impressive Rachmaninoff Prelude in G minor and three evocative selections from Sergei Bortkiewicz's Russian Tunes and Dances. From Tchaikovsky's Seasons we have the sprightly 'February', lyrical 'April', and gliding 'December'. A set of harmonious pieces by Alexander Scriabin brings the collection to a close.