



The Golden Ear

Newsletter of the *Chicago Audio Society*

October 2002

Meeting Notice

Sunday, October 20th, 2:00 pm

ServoDrive - Sound Physics Labs

Tom Danley and Mark Seaton



Several years ago some of us heard the ContraBass subwoofers which Tom Danley at Quantum Sound had designed, as well as some unusual full range speakers which had drivers that looked like a pair of swinging doors. The latter never went very far but was shown at one of the last CES's in Chicago.

Since then, the ContraBass subs have been very well received, and Tom also has designed the Unity horns. Perhaps the term horn doesn't apply, but you'll see and hear what they're all about this Sunday. The setup at this past summer's horn bash in Merrillville went over very well, and Tom gave an interesting presentation there. We'll hear all about the products and design and have a chance to listen to plenty of music. Bring some CDs and tell a friend.

Website, under construction, at www.servodrive.com

Last Month

Dr. Bruce Edgar, with the considerable assistance of local enthusiast and happy Edgarhorn owner **Ray Mazeika**, helped us start off at the new venue in Arlington Heights with a bang. Bruce gave a very

enjoyable presentation and demonstrated some things, and we auditioned the **Edgarhorn** Titan system including subwoofer by playing music people brought. The meeting was very well attended and enthusiastically received. The new venue gave the speaker system plenty of room to breathe, and even at the back of the room you could feel the bass.

Future Meetings

November 17th - to be announced.

We have several topics, both music and audio, which we're trying to line up, which should carry us through till next spring. If there is something you're eager to hear or someone you'd like to visit us, please let one of us know.

The Classical Corner

Len Cronin

Anybody who reads this column on a regular basis will recognize that I have an affinity for 20th Century Scandinavian composers. This is my first encounter with the Danish composer Rued Langgaard, who lived between 1893 and 1952, and who by all accounts was a unique individual. While his contemporaries were turning to the various forms of modernism Langgaard became a staunch advocate of romanticism. This recording features his Symphony No.4 and both Version 1 & 2 of Symphony No.5 (Dacapo 8.224215). The Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra is under the direction of Thomas Dausgaard. If you like the orchestral music of Richard Strauss or

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We meet on the third Sunday of each month at 2pm at the Arlington Heights Historical Society, 110 W. Fremont St., Arlington Heights IL. Nonmembers are welcome (first meeting is free, otherwise \$5 fee or \$40 annual dues). CAS is a volunteer organization of audio and music enthusiasts dedicated to having fun. Our constitution and bylaws are available on our website or in printed form upon request.

Kurt Attenberg, then I think you need to make the acquaintance of this neglected Danish composer. The recording is first rate and Decapo continues to provide informative liner notes. Highly recommended.

Naxos continues exploring neglected American music in its ongoing series of the same name. Naxos 8.559116, Frederick Converse (1871-1940), various tone poems, The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, JoAnn Falletta, Conductor. Until this recording I had never heard of this composer. His music is tonal and presents no challenges to any listener who has moved beyond the 1812 Overture. This music may not be profound but it is enjoyable. The recording is good and well worth discovering. Roy Harris, on the other hand, is much better known than Frederick Converse, but with the exception of his 3rd Symphony, is also under represented in the catalogue. Naxos 8.559050 gives one the opportunity to discover his 7th & 9th Symphonies. These may not be masterpieces, but they do represent American symphonic thought from the perspective of the mid 20th Century. Theodore Kuchar leads the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine in fine performances of these works. Although I recommend this recording, if you are unfamiliar with the music of Roy Harris, you may want to start with his 3rd Symphony.

Until next month, enjoy.

Hi-Rez

Len Cronin

If you haven't jumped into the hi-rez waters, then let me give you four reasons to get your feet wet.

#1. Telarc SACD-60588 Vaughan Williams, A Sea Symphony, with Robert Spano conducting the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra & Chorus. Vaughan Williams is one of my two favorite 20th century composers. However his 1st Symphony, subtitled A Sea Symphony, has in the past been my least liked of the nine that he wrote. This recording has changed that view. This is the type of performance that makes this music come alive. Consider yourself forewarned, this is a true choral symphony that lasts a shade over one hour, so if you don't like 'classical' singing, this probably isn't your cup of tea. On the other hand you just might discover that true audiophile rarity. Great music, great performance, and great sound all on the same recording.

#2. San Francisco Symphony 821936-0002-2, Mahler Symphony No.1, Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the S.F.S. This recording is on their own label (Delos is the distributor) and is available at Tower Records or from Music Direct. This is the second installment of what will be a complete Mahler cycle. This is a live recording that captures the magic of a live event. The above mentioned Telarc may be better recorded, but I don't want to give up this recording. This is one of the best performances of this music currently available. Don't pass this one up. Highly recommended.

#3. Now for something different, The German label CCnC on SACD 01912 has given us a program of contemporary music. John Adams and Lepo Sumera are featured. I'll assume that everybody knows who John Adams is. This disc is a good introduction to his music. 'Fearful Symmetries' and 'The Chairman Dances' are given good performances by Kristjan Jarvi and the Symphony Orchestra of Norrlands Opera. The real treat was the discovery of the Second Symphony of Lepo Sumera. Lepo Sumera was an Estonian composer who died in 2000 at the age of 50. There appears to be elements of minimalism in his music, perhaps the reason he was coupled with Adams, along with more traditional methods of musical development, well recorded unusual repertoire that usually isn't featured on an audiophile recording. I really like this recording, especially the Sumera.

#4. More unusual repertoire, as a matter of fact both pieces are world premiere recordings. Albany Recordings, TROY 515, features Roy Harris' Symphony No.2 and Morton Gould's Symphony No.3 with the Albany Symphony Orchestra conducted by David Allen Miller. Rather than trying to describe this music let me say that it is American music slightly off the beaten path. If you are willing to take a chance on something different, I think you'll be justly rewarded. By the way, this is the only disc that was not recorded in multichannel SACD. Excellent sound, unusual repertoire, I like it.

To be continued next month.

Massive Music Mart

In case you haven't heard, this huge record show is still going on at Old Orchard Shopping Center in Skokie, through this coming Sunday. The three days listed below are called 'Bargain Weekend', and admission on these days is \$5. With records in the main

section going for \$1 and the choice section starting at \$4, it's hard to not go home with at least a nice handful of records, and the charitable cause is the treatment of ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). Visit www.lesturnerals.org and click on the Events link for more information.

Friday, Oct. 18 - 11am-9pm

Saturday, Oct. 19 - 10am-8pm

Sunday, Oct. 20 - 10am- 6pm

Note that this will be the *last* Massive Music Mart to be held! There will be no more! But just make sure you pry yourself away to come to our meeting this Sunday.

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Audio Publications

Mark Haugen has kindly volunteered to be the keeper of the magazines, which Jared Johnson has gone through to list what publications and what issues are available (see last month's *Golden Ear*). Mark holds the distinction of buying the most records at the Massive Music Mart of anyone I know, over \$1200 worth. Mark, if you're reading this, we can help you with your "problem".

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