

# Gapplegate Classical-Modern Music Review

Modern classical and avant garde concert music of the 20th and 21st centuries forms the primary focus of this blog. It is hoped that through the discussions a picture will emerge of modern music, its heritage, and what it means for us.

Friday, May 18, 2018

## Bruno Bettinelli, Chamber Music, Trio, Improvvisazione, Due movimenti



Every month as a reviewer brings me a spate of composers I have yet to discover. Some from right this moment, others recently gone, others of course from some earlier period. Today we have yet another, one Bruno Bettinelli (1913-2004).

Bettinelli was a successor to the Italian 20th century lineage of composers that include Respighi and Casella, somewhat less so the Serialist-and-beyond camp of Dallapiccola, Maderna, Berio and Nono. Yet there is a structural concern to be heard in his works and an abstractive flair that makes him a full Modernist at heart. At least that is what I hear and appreciate on a new recording simply entitled *Chamber Music*, with mention in the subtitle of three of the important works to be heard in the program, *Trio, Improvvisazione,*

### About the Blog

Grego Applegate Edwards's Classical-Modern Music Review blogsite covers recent releases or re-issues of recordings that feature classical and concert music, primarily of the 20th and 21st Centuries, but earlier music as well when warranted. All styles of relevance will be addressed from Late-Romantic and Neo-Romantic through High-Modern, Avant Garde and Post-Modern styles. Chamber music, orchestral, choral, operatic, and electronic forms will be considered as well as music that combines a classical element with one or more other stylistic elements. Earlier periods will get coverage when a release has something to say to us. Both established and unfamiliar composers will get attention. All content copyright 2007-18 by Grego Applegate Edwards.

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*Due movimenti* (Naxos 8.573836).

Performances are first-rate. The music? Compositions cover a pretty vast period of time from 1968 to 1991. None of the works are trifles, all are uncompromising small chamber configurations ranging from two solo guitars ("Divertimento" 1982), flute and guitar ("Musica a due" 1983), voice and guitar ("Due liriche" 1977), violin and piano ("Improvvisazione" 1968, "Due movimenti" 1977), to violin, cello and piano ("Trio" 1991).

What is perhaps most remarkable about these pieces is their refusal to settle down into an easily characterizable niche, and in a related way, their refusal to supply a crowd-pleasing literary or thematic "hook." The Modernism lingers on the edges of what was in demand at the time. There are no obviously Serial strands of bloop and bleep in this music, but then there is enough of an abstract expressive autonomy to perhaps put off those committed to a past-leaning neo-Classicism or neo-Romanticism. This is chamber music that is ultra-serious about a commitment to hermetic purism. Like late Beethoven Quartets it does not try to speak plainly as much as it drives deeply into a sort of advanced expression that primarily is intended for the "real" cognoscenti.

So every work is a kind of highly worked gem that does not easily yield its riches but demands special attention. Slowly, as you listen repeatedly, the music emerges, even reluctantly. Yet if you spend the time with this music, you begin to reap the benefits. This is not stylistically astounding Modernism nor is it rear-garde hearkening back. It is everywhere. It is nowhere. It nearly demands the sort of intimacy that someone who learns to perform this music would have. Not quite all, but a reflective practical immersion. You need that. In today's world, does any of us have that much to give a composer who is already past and not yet certified as a member of the Holy Pantheon? That is your call. I decided to keep listening and by now I understand that this has substance and uncompromising originality.

So once again, here is something that does not play itself. YOU must be an active participant to the music in order for it to do its work. If you do that you will enter a world that you might not have available to you with any other composer. That is saying something, isn't it?

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Posted by [Grego Applegate Edwards](#) at 7:09 AM



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### About Me



 **Grego Applegate Edwards**

Cape May, New Jersey, United States

I am a life-long writer, musician, composer and editor. I wrote for Cadence for many years, a periodical covering jazz and improv music. My combined Blogspot blogs (as listed in the links) now cover well over 3,000 recordings in review. It's been a labor of love. The music is chosen because I like it, for the most part, so you won't find a great deal of nastiness here. I have no affiliations and gain nothing from liking what I do, so that makes me somewhat impartial. I do

happen to like a set of certain musics done well, so it's not everything released that gets coverage on these blogs. I have thirteen volumes of compositions available on amazon.com. Just type in "Grego Applegate Edwards" to find them. (But one is under "Gregory Applegate Edwards.") I went to music and higher education schools and got degrees. It changed my life and gave me the ability to think and write better. I've studied with master musicians, too. The benefits I gained from them are invaluable. I appreciate my readers. You are why I write these reviews. I hope the joy of music enriches your life like it does mine. Thank you. And thank you to all the artists that make it possible.

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