

## Avner Dorman

Piano Sonatas 1 -3; Moments Musicaux; Azerbaijani dance; Prelude no 1.

**Eliran Avni (piano)**

**Naxos 8.579001**

Review by Ying Chang

Avner Dorman (b.1975) has a distinctively post-modern answer to the problem of how to write meaningful contemporary classical music, in the sense that he combines a variety of styles and types of music in what theorists called *bricolage*; it forms a very *twentieth-century* philosophical background to this release in Naxos' 21 st century classics series.

Dorman's influences go beyond what the liner notes tell us – not merely Art Tatum jazz, the folk music of the Middle East and the Caucasus, Bach and late Beethoven, but also Kabalevsky (Sonata 1, 1 st movement), Chabrier's *Dance Villageoise* from *Pieces Pittoresque* (3 rd movement), Martinu (the prestos of the 2 nd Moment Musical and 2 nd sonata), Satie (the adagio Moment Musical), French piano music in general (the prelude to the dance suite, which is Sonata No 3), and even Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies (the techno).

As an undergraduate, I was taught when writing essays that originality of style was the concealed route to originality of content. In the same way, Dorman's eclectic blend of influences not only makes his music easy to digest, but also forms an admirable refraction of the energetic, sometimes abrasive, *mestizo*, multi-cultural nature of both his native Israel and the diverse artistic American society that he moves easily within. This is his route to a creative voice, to arrive at individuality through assimilation and integration.

The Azerbaijani dance, written specially for this CD, in fact resembles a Spanish *jota* (Falla's will be the most familiar example); its tremendous vitality is the most impressive thing on the disc, both in composition and performance. In terms of 'finding a voice,' Dorman must be encouraged by how confident this dance (2005) sounds compared to the earliest work on the disc, the prelude of 1992, a minimalist-style reworking of Bach's prelude No 1 from the '48.'

Good, modern recording, and precise, well- characterised playing by the young Israeli pianist Eliran Avni. Avni is the same age as Dorman; his interpretations have the edge and deliberate brittleness the music implies – art is fragile, humanity vulnerable, congruence and harmonious existence a struggle.

The insert is a single folded sheet, shorter than most Naxos offerings, though the notes are helpful and clear (the format does not allow a photograph of the artist).

<http://www.musicalpointers.co.uk/reviews/cddvd/Dorman.htm>