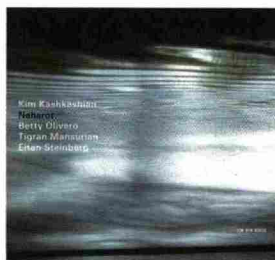


REVIEWS



***Neharót.* Kim Kashkashian, viola** (ECM 476 3281)

HAUNTING PREMIERES OF ARMENIAN AND ISRAELI WORKS

Violist Kim Kashkashian returns to the spirit-driven music of Armenian composer and arranger Tigran Mansurian on five of the seven tracks on this strikingly beautiful CD. In recent years, Kashkashian—also of Armenian heritage—has brought this haunting Arabic-inflected music to the forefront of the classical world as she has sought to spotlight these sorely neglected ancient and modern Eastern European works.

The Mansurian pieces include “Tagh of the Funeral of the Lord,” Three Arias (Sung Out the Window Facing Mount Ararat), and “Orer,” a short piano piece composed by Komitas (1869–1935), the Armenian composer, priest, philosopher, poet, ethno-

musicologist, collector of folk songs, and writer of sacred and secular music. These are teamed with two works by contemporary Jewish composers. The evocative 16-minute opening track, “Neharót Neharót,” is a song of mourning composed for viola, two string ensembles, accordion, percussion, and tape by the contemporary Israeli composer Betty Olivero. It was inspired by the 2006 rocket attacks on Israel by Hezbollah militia. Its title translates as “Rivers, Rivers” in Hebrew (a reference to a flood of tears). The piece was written for Kashkashian, who performed it with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta orchestra at its world premiere in Amsterdam in 2007. The closing 16-minute track, “Reva Deravin,” is a dynamic tour de force by Israeli composer Eitan Steinberg.

The mood throughout this seamlessly programmed disc is alternately serene and intellectually stimulating—these are powerful, emotional works of spiritual significance performed by a violist with a towering intellect, a devotion to her Armenian roots, and an ability to touch the divine.

She is joined on this recording by Mansurian on piano; the Münchener Kammerorchester, with Alexander Libreich conducting; the Kuss Quartet; and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project under Gil Rose.

—G.C.

