



But there, some kid is having his imagination captured by Soepa, Benjamin Verdery's CD of American guitar music.

The music is new. This is not a bad thing. This is not reason to relegate it to the library at the local university.

Why? Because this is a CD not of Babbit's *Ars Subtilior* but of Vee's, Asia's and Marshall's *Contentance Angloise*. Times have changed and the new American Music has more currency with the teenager than the midlifer.

Verdery's CD contains works by many prominent American (read: New York) composers as well as his musings on pop songs by Prince. Vee's *Strummage* and Marshall's *Soepa*, make use of amplified, delayed guitar. These pieces sound more like works played by Van Halen than those played by Van Cliburn. But that's not to say that they are simple works rendered in miniature or that the works don't have long term development, they do, but more in the realm of that seen in Reich. But what they have that is essential is currency. Your average teenage kid will love this CD and this music. They'll want to play it, probably while brooding alone in their room with the lights out.

For those less inclined to minimalism, there are the works by Lennon and Asia which are the central core of the disc. Their developmental ideas tend to be less based on repetition and mutation and more on direct interplay. They are fascinating pieces, especially the second movement of Asia's *Your Cry will be a Whisper* which relentlessly drives (with no small effort by Verdery) from idea to idea.

The most attractive piece on the disc, though, is Verdery's own *4 the tears in your eyes* (a fantasy on a piece by Prince). More on this piece than any other work on the disc, Verdery turns his considerable skill to the task of sensitive revelation. He takes the simple idea of the pop song and fills in its gaps, elevating the piece and thus allowing it to seamlessly run into the other works on the CD (which come from a distinctly different background).

This CD is a reflection of a new era in American Music, what a selfish joy to find its expression through the medium of the guitar.