

PERCUSSIVE NOTES July 2012

New Percussion Literature and Recordings

Souvenirs

Matthew Coley

If you are in search of a disc with great recording quality, a high level of performance, and an eclectic collection of tracks, this title should be added to your iTunes wish list. Matthew Coley's *Souvenirs* delivers 80 minutes of diverse works for solo marimba, marimba and piano duo, and percussion ensemble.

I appreciate Coley's willingness to break-up the monotony of the typical solo marimba recording. His implementation of chamber works and the order of tracks really contribute to the listener's enjoyment.

One is immediately struck by the first track's adaptation of a Piazzola tango; this version for marimba and piano serves as a fun welcome before immersing the listener in contemporary percussion literature. Two solo marimba tracks follow, and then the listener is taken on a programmatic journey to a casino in "Glitz!" This chamber work includes Coley performing on dulcimer. The early harmonies of Stravinsky follow on solo marimba. After the evocation of the "big-three ballets," you will again find yourself engaged in chamber music with "Running Towards Empty." This piece was written for Coley and the Iowa State Percussion Ensemble. The penultimate track confronts the listener with 14 minutes of Klezmer-style solo marimba. The final track is the only one composed by the performer. "Journey" bookends the recording with the same instrumentation in which it began.

I applaud all of the players on their level of performance; it is excellent. With the ease of creating high-quality recordings these days, the programming can make a disc stand out from the masses. Bravo to Coley and his fellow performers for doing just that!

—*T. Adam Blackstock*