

# Journal of the American Viola Society

## New Music Reviews

By Ken Martinson

### **Three Fantasies for Viola and Piano (2008)**

- I. Andante Furioso
- II. Delicato, Rubato
- III. Allegro Animato

Difficulty: Level 5

Duration: 26 minutes

Commission by: Ross Debardeleben

### **By Steve Danyew (b. 1983)**

I really enjoyed listening and playing through this work, and I especially enjoyed the harmonic language Danyew uses. I thought I heard an Eastman influence in his harmonic language, and I confirmed this hunch after reading his bio, and discovering that he is currently pursuing a master's degree at the Eastman School. Parts of his music reminded me of a couple modern, "trendy" composers like Michael Torke, Joseph Schwanter, and Steven Hartke. I also appreciated the boldness of the "thinner" piano writing; it was kept fairly simple and not chordal by any means, but more brittle, like the accompaniment of the Shostakovich *Viola Sonata*. I also really love modern music that sounds fresh in its harmonic language, yet has a universal appeal, and is attainable from the first listening, as this work is.

Each of these three movements has an independent "Fantasy" character, but they are glued together in a very subtle way with an underlying motive that takes many forms as it is developed. The first movement "Andante Furioso" is in 2/4 or 6/8 time, and is characterized with driving rhythms and very aggressive playing utilizing a droned open D-string. The rhythmic motives are sparingly used, which helps to define the character of the movement. The second movement "Delicato, Rubato" is in the key of F-Sharp major. The third movement "Allegro Animato" is also very driving, and "Coplandesque" with its frequent meter changes between 3/4, 5/8, 8/8, 3/8, etc. This was truly a very exciting work with a powerful ending, and I very much look forward to more viola music from this up and coming young composer!

This work is available directly from the composer at:

[www.stevedanyew.com](http://www.stevedanyew.com)

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