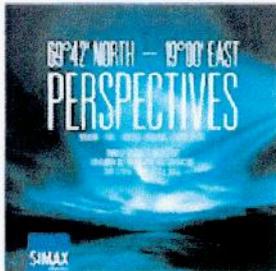


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Date: **3 August 2012****Perspectives - Anton Webern, Arvo Part, Gyorgy Kurtag, Fredrik Hogberg, Witold Lutoslawski****Tromso Chamber Orchestra/Kolbjorn Holthe**

(Simax)

★★★★☆

This rather disparate collection of works for string orchestra spans 99 years and includes three 20th-century classics – Webern's own expansion of his Op 5 Movements for String Quartet, Arvo Pärt's Cantus in Memoriam Benjamin Britten and Lutoslawski's Musique Funèbre – alongside one of the several existing versions of György Kurtág's tiny Aus die Ferne III, and a concerto for double bass and strings, Hitting the First Base, by the Swedish composer Fredrik Högberg. I suspect the whole disc is more a showcase for the impressive talents of the Tromso Chamber Orchestra, which is based high up in the Norwegian Arctic, than anything else, but on that level it works well enough. Högberg's concerto is a jokey, hyperactive affair that demands an unexpected agility from its double-bass soloist, Dan Styffe, while the performances of the other works generally favour assertiveness and vigour over refinement. Pärt's memorial suffers most from the lack of subtlety, while the Mahlerian influences on Webern's miniatures emerge much more strongly than usual.

**Andrew Clements**