

American Record Guide

march/april 2010

Off The Map

FRANK: *Ritmos Achinos*; **LAM:** *Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain*; **ZIPORYN:** *Sulvasutra*; **GOLIJOV:** *Air to Air*

Silk Road Ensemble

World Village 468095—63 minutes

The Silk Road Ensemble's program also uses traditional Chinese instruments, like the pipa; but Evan Ziporyn's *Sulvasutra* also includes a tabla and takes a Sanskrit treatise as its inspiration. The three movements, using the treatise as structure, follow a mathematical principle, the Pythagorean Theorem, as it begins in India and spreads to Greece. The first movement begins with light strings, pipa, and digital rumblings. The tabla enters with great strength before beginning its repeated patterns. Angel Lam's *Empty Mountain, Spirit Rain* begins with repeated and ominous pedals. Slow build-ups reveal touching and yearning melodies, though Lam's is the sparsest work on the release. Osvaldo Golijov's *Air to Air* is a multicultural piece that uses the Galician bagpipe (as well as the pipa, jang-go, and kamancheh). The music is rich in tonality, taking keys, modes, and structures traditionally used to depict specific idioms and juxtaposing them. Soulful, melancholy lines, spirituals, dances, and protest songs are beautifully crafted into a cohesive whole, made even more impressive with the use of unusual instruments.

LAMPER