

Philip Glass - Violin Concerto, Low Symphony (2008)

Written by bluesever

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Concerto for Violin and Orchestra [25:06] 01. *Quarter* = 104-120 [6:39] 02. *Quarter* = ca. 108 [8:46] 03. *150-Coda: Poco meno, Quarter* = 104 [9:41]

Low Symphony [42:37]

04. *Subterraneans* [15:12] 05. *Some are* [11:22] 06. *Warszawa* [16:05]

Gidon Kremer - Violin Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra Christoph von Dohnanyi – conductor
(1-3) Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra Dennis Russel Davies – conductor (4-6)

Glass composed his Violin Concerto, his first orchestral work since his student days, between November 1986 and February 1987 on commission from the American Composers Orchestra, which gave the work's premiere at New York's Carnegie Hall under the baton of Dennis Russell Davies on April 5, 1987, with the composer's long-time friend and collaborator Paul Zukofsky as soloist. Though the work is scored for standard orchestra without the electronics that give a characteristic sonority to so many of Glass' compositions, he said that "the piece explores what an orchestra can do for me. In it, I'm more interested in my own sound than in the capability of particular orchestral instruments. It is tailored to my musical needs." The Concerto's form evolved as Glass worked with its musical ideas ("the material finds its own voice," he explained), and finally settled into a conventional three-movement fast-slow-fast arrangement with a reflective coda added at the end. Glass sees the genre of the concerto as "more theatrical and more personal" than the purely orchestral forms, and the soloist in this work finds an individuality that sets it apart from the larger ensemble, sometimes strewing lightning-flash cascades of arpeggios upon the pulsing background chords, sometimes soaring over them with spacious, arching, cantabile lines.— Richard E. Rodda, philipglass.com

The "Low" Symphony, composed in the Spring of 1992, is based on the record "Low" by David

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Bowie and Brian Eno first released in 1977. The record consisted of a number of songs and instrumentals and used techniques which were similar to procedures used by composers working in new and experimental music. As such, this record was widely appreciated by musicians working both in the field of "pop" music and in experimental music and was a landmark work of that period.

I've taken themes from three of the instrumentals on the record and, combining them with material of my own, have used them as the basis of three movements of the Symphony. Movement one comes from "Subterraneans," movement two from "Some Are" and movement three from "Warszawa."

My approach was to treat the themes very much as if they were my own and allow their transformations to follow my own compositional bent when possible. In practice, however, Bowie and Eno's music certainly influenced how I worked, leading me to sometimes surprising musical conclusions. In the end I think I arrived at something of a real collaboration between my music and theirs. — Philip Glass, philipglass.com

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