## Robert Simpson - Symphonies Nos. 6 & 7 (1987)

*1. Symphony No 6-1977 (1) 2. Symphony No 6-1977 (2) 3. Symphony No 6-1977 (4) 4. Symphony No 6-1977 (4) 5. Symphony No 6-1977 (5) 6. Symphony No 6-1977 (6) 7. Symphony No 6-1977 (7) 8. Symphony No 6-1977 (8) 9. Symphony No 6-1977 (9) 10. Symphony No 6-1977 (10) 11. Symphony No 6-1977 (11) 12. Symphony No 6-1977 (12) 13. Symphony No 7-1977 (13) 14. Symphony No 7-1977 (14) 15. Symphony No 7-1977 (15) 16. Symphony No 7-1977 (16) 17. Symphony No 7-1977 (17) 18. Symphony No 7-1977 (18) 19. Symphony No 7-1977 (19) 20. Symphony No 7-1977 (20) 21. Symphony No 7-1977 (21) 22. Symphony No 7-1977 (22) 23. Symphony No 7-1977 (23)* Royal Liverprool Philharmonic Orchestra Vernon Handley – conductor

These are two of the most extraordinary British symphonies to emerge since the Second World War. Simpson (b. 1921) tends to build his ideas as musical cells, but one will be motile, while the other is static. He will combine these and then let them evolve. It only seems atonal, but it isn't. Simpson lets the music emerge or submerge when it wants to. You can hear hints of Sibelius's moodiness, but beyond Sibelius, you won't be able to identify anybody other than Simpson. Hyperion is releasing all of Simpson's symphonies as well as his string quartets. Start here with these masterpieces. ---Paul Cook, amazon.com

Long-time readers will recall that I have recommended several Simpson disks before. Hyperion recordings of Nos. 2 &4 and Nos. 3 & 5 are both outstanding recordings, and the CD with No. 9 features not only fascinating music, but also a spoken exegesis by the composer himself, making that recording one of the most recommendable symphonic CDs I have ever had the pleasure to hear. Only the Hyperion recording of No. 10 proved a disappointment to me: not that the music is unenjoyable, but rather that I just cannot seem to come to grips with it. It did not move me at first hearing as the other Simpson symphonies had, and repeated listenings have not won me over. (A recording of two of his string quartets – 10 and 11, I believe – also left me distinctly underwhelmed).

This recording of Symphonies 6 and 7 has been around for some time now (it was recorded in 1987), but I had never seen a copy on the shelves until fairly recently. Naturally, I snapped it right up (as reader Mike Thomas says, I love to recommend things that show up singly – if at all – on record store shelves!) and zoomed home to give it a listen. Symphony No. 6 is interesting – something of a big symphony, quite expressive, and fun to listen to. But it was No. 7, a smaller work, more intimate, that really caught my ear. Interestingly, the liner notes say that it was written by Simpson with the idea of being played for a solitary listener – not for public performance. Ladies and gentleman, I invite each of you to take the opportunity to be that solitary listener. Let the music of Robert Simpson speak to you as it has to me. Feel yourself enriched by the vision of this remarkable man, and take the opportunity he will afford you to reflect on your own vision of your own life. ---Karl W. Nehring, robertsimpson.info

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