Wolfgang Rihm – La Musique Creuse Le Ciel (2009)



1. La musique creuse le ciel - Musik für zwei Klaviere und großes Orchester (197779) [34:12] 2. Über-Schrift für zwei Klaviere (19922003) [26:33] Klavierduo Andreas Grau & Götz Schumacher Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin Peter Rundel – conductor

Wolfgang Rihm is probably the most prominent German modernist composer to emerge in the late twentieth century. Remarkably prolific, he has written extensively in virtually every genre, but he tends to favor large-scale works, and the two pieces recorded here certainly qualify. La musique creuse le ciel (Music Hollows Out the Sky) for two pianos and large orchestra is a single-movement work that lasts 35 minutes. Written when the composer was in his twenties, it's an essay in anguished expressionism constructed of fragmentary gestures whose relationships are not immediately obvious. Rihm gives the audience little to hold onto in making sense of the piece, but it does have many striking moments, including an old-fashioned giddy melodrama that sounds like the scoring for an early Dracula film, which opens the score and pops up in various guises throughout. Uber-Schrift, for two pianos, is even more abstract, disjunct, and opaque in divulging its intent or direction. Rihm has demonstrated intriguing versatility as a composer, but for anyone except for the most ardent and experienced modernist, these are probably not the best works for beginning to explore his oeuvre. The GrauSchumacher Piano Duo delivers virtuoso accounts of these formidably difficult scores and plays with passion and commitment. Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, led by Peter Rundel, likewise throws itself into the music with fervor and focus. The sound is clean, but cold and a little brittle. --- Stephen Eddins, Rovi

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