Guo Wenjing - Riding on the Wind; Symphony in B Minor, Op. 39 'Hero' (2009)



1. Riding on the Wind: Overture for Orchestra and Military Band Symphony in B Minor, Op. 39 "Hero" *2. I. The Spreading Flames 3. II. The Motherland*

While Guo Wenjing's modernist scores have established him as one of China's most imaginative and individualistic contemporary composers, he can, when the occasion or a commission requires, produce works with a broad popular appeal. The current program features two works in this populist/nationalist idiom. The overture for orchestra and military band, "Riding on the Wind" makes a splendid noise, as well as slyly swiping some gestures from John Williams' score for "The Cowboys." More serious in tone is the B Minor "Heroic" Symphony, op. 39. Guo definitely knows his Shostakovich and Prokofiev - as can be heard in this grandiose Socialist-Realist "Heroic" Symphony. Throughout the score Guo quotes from L'Internationale, Dong Fang Hong (The East is Red), The March of the Volunteers (China's National Anthem) as well as a signature quote from composer Lu Qiming's "Ode to the Red Flag" (a work well-known to all Chinese concert goers).

Guo's music is utterly infectous - brilliantly orchestrated, witty, never over-staying its welcome. Even though neither of these works claim any pretense to the vangaurd, they are - with tongue firmly in cheek - "Revolutionary" ^_^ ---jayfan.com

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