

## Valentin Silvestrov □ – Symphony No. 5 □ Exegi Monumentum (1994)

Written by bluesever

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1 *Symphony No.5* 45:49 2 *Exegi Monumentum* 22:16 Sergej Jakovenko - baritone The Ural Philharmonic Orchestra Andrej Borejko - conductor

I discovered the Silvestrov Fifth Symphony almost four years ago in the infancy of CMOTW. I had just been selected by Len Mullenger as Classical Editor for Music on the Web and was beginning to make contacts with record companies. Amongst those early contacts was BMG-Melodiya in Germany. Their catalogue was the home for the so-called 'Musica non Grata' Russian series which presented music which had been suppressed in the USSR.

The Symphony's single deep-breathed movement prompts comparisons with Pettersson's similar structures although Silvestrov has differing aims. The Silvestrov achieves a mesmerising ecstatic abandon - a sort of misty nirvana.

It is dedicated to Roman Kofman whose 1980s performance with the Kiev Conservatoire SO/Roman Kofman can be had on BMG-Melodiya (74321 49959 2). That performance clearly has great authority. It plays for 46.52 as against Borejko's 45.49. However neither gives the impression of hurry. In fact both create that pulse-slowing phantasmal sense of time suspension. This is crucial to the success of any performance and links the music to a lineage via Pärt's Cantus to Mahler's adagietto. The initial atonalities soon give place to a noble theme on the brass. This rears up in striking beauty over atonal rumblings and the tinkling of the orchestral piano. It is all voluptuously done; the theme swelling, rising and bursting in a languorous slow motion technicolour. The theme branches out in seemingly endless life - a simulacrum of bubbles rising with infinite and unhurried ease from emerald-lit ocean depths. The impression is given of an ascent into a great green country like the planetary realm of C.S. Lewis's 'Out of the Silent Planet'. This work sustains its interest with transfixing power over the complete three quarters of an hour.

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The two works on this disc share a common expressive style. The Exegi followed the Fifth Symphony by three or four years. The music has that same static quality. It is modernistic but glowingly attractive and does not hide lack of substantial ideas in a mazed denseness of sound. In the Exegi (with a sung text counselling truth to the artistic self and indifference to adverse, or any, criticism) at 13.09 a trombone oration reminds us of the similar dark and noble role taken by the trombone in Shostakovich's Symphony No. 15. Chirruping woodwind rises steadily like the hazeless bell sounds in Britten's morning movement in the Grimes interludes. ---Rob Barnett, musicweb-international.com

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