Henri Dutilleux - Correspondances (2013)

1 I Gong (1) (Text By – Rainer Maria Rilke) 1:39 2 II Danse Cosmique (Text By – Prithwindra Mukherjee) 2:28 3 Interlude - 0:51 4 III À Slava Et Galina... (Text By – Alexander Solzhenitsyn) 5:24 5 IV Gong (2) (Text By – Rainer Maria Rilke) 2:18 6 V De Vincent À Théo (Text By – Vincent van Gogh) 5:48 7 I Énigme - 5:50 8 II Regard - 6:15 9 III Houles - 4:09 10 IV Miroirs - 5:33 11 V Hymne 4:22 12 I Les Heures - 2:52 13 II Ariel Maléfique - 2:26 14 III Mémoire Des Ombres - 5:07 15 Interlude - 2:29 16 IV Vagues De Lumière - 3:11 17 V Dominante Bleue ? 5:26 Art Direction – Merle Kersten Cello – Anssi Karttunen (tracks: 7 to 11) Chorus [Boy Soloists] – Maîtrise de Radio France (track: 14) Conductor – Esa-Pekka Salonen Orchestra – Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France Soprano Vocals – Barbara Hannigan (tracks: 1 to 6)

French composer Henri Dutilleux has had impressive creative longevity, continuing to issue new works well into his nineties. The lead item on this release, Correspondances, was composed in 2003, when he was a mere 87. It is an orchestral song cycle, a genre that Dutilleux had not yet taken up until that time. The work was written for soprano Dawn Upshaw, who sang the premiere but was unable to record it. Dutilleux heard a performance of the work by the present forces and suggested to conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen that he make a recording, even writing a new finale for soprano Barbara Hannigan. So you can be reasonably sure you're getting the composer's vision of the music here. Salonen has been a major champion of Dutilleux's free brand of serialism, which may prove a tough slog for general listeners even though his work is more linked to extramusical content than is the case for most other composers in the serial orbit. The Shadows of Time (1997) includes three boy soloists in a chilling third movement dedicated to the memory of Anne Frank. The title of Correspondances refers both to a Baudelaire poem about synaesthesia and to the fact that two of the songs are settings of letters, one from Vincent van Gogh to his long-suffering brother Theo, and the other from Alexander Solzhenitsyn to cellist Mstislav Rostropovich and his wife, singer Galina Vishnevskaya. These works, and the central and much earlier "Tout un monde lointain," a sort of cello concerto forged from Dutilleux's subtle style, contain unique effects of texture and line that emerge on repeated hearings, and in all, this is probably a good place to start in sampling Dutilleux's difficult late style. ---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

Henri Dutilleux (pronouced ‘Du-ti-e’) is a singular composer. Born in 1916, his most recent work was premiered in 2009 when he was 93 years of age and as far as I am aware, he is still composing. The three works featured on this new album recorded by Esa-Pekka Salonen with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France are terrific examples of this long-lived and loved composer. The Correspondances of 2003 for soprano and orchestra are expressive and large. The Concerto for Cello and Orchestra (1970) though is more contemplative and sparse in texture. The Shadows of Time (1997) are something else again, almost an amalgamation of the two previous works. This is an amazing contemporary music album that should not be missed. Even if you think you’re not a fan of contemporary music, at least give it a listen. It might surprise you. ---Kate Rockstrom, readings.com.au

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