

Aram Khachaturian - Violin Concerto (Oistrakh) [2006]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Allegro con fermezza* 2. *Andante sostenuto* 3. *Allegro vivace* David Oistrakh, violin
Philharmonia Orchestra Aram Chaczaturian – conductor

The great Raymond Chandler once had his careworn knight errant Philip Marlowe describe Khachaturian as "imitating a tractor factory. He called it a violin concerto. I call it a broken fan belt." Anyone care to remind me which of the novels that came from. Given that I regard Chandler very highly I wish I could agree with Marlowe. As it is I think it is one of Marlowe's less pungent and miscalculated witticisms – clever-ish but off the mark. At the time – mid-1940s wartime USA the concerto was playing with every major and minor state orchestra. The USA (stars and stripes) and USSR (stars and hammers and sickles) were for a few years locked in alliance and everything seemed possible.

The Khachaturian is an extremely attractive piece which taps into the Armenian's usual exotically sinuous folk-roots in the *Andante sostenuto*. The outer movements are driven along on a blast of rhythmic energy and in the finale a hiccupping Russian dance – nothing ethnic about this dance.

This version which majors on the voluptuous was one of three works recorded at the Kingsway Hall in 1954 by the composer with the Philharmonia. This is a satisfying performance and far from being unvirtuosic but there are more hothouse performances including a fierily excellent one from Leonid Kogan on Russian Revelation if you can find it. --- Rob Barnett, MusicWeb International

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