

Gustav Mahler - Das Lied Von Der Erde (Ewa Podles) [2002]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Das Trinklied Vom Jammer Der Erde* 9:32 2. *Der Einsame I'm Herbst* 7:16 3. *Von Der Jugend* 3:12 4. *Von Der Schonheit* 7:06 5. *Der Trunkene I'm Fruhling* 4:45 6. *Der Abschied* 28:44
Ewa Podles - alto Anthony Dean Griffey - tenor Detroit Symphony Orchestra Neeme Jarvi - conductor 02. 05. 2002

Ewa Podles and Anthony Dean Griffey sang last night with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra under the able direction of Neeme Jarvi in Mahler's "Das Lied von der Erde." The orchestra demonstrated a virtousity that was a times breathtaking. Jarvi drew wonderful colors and heightened many intimate phrases that often sounded like chamber music. Most effective were the dark, brooding moments.

Mr. Griffey painted effective tone pictures when he was audible but lacked the vocal heft to be heard over the Detroit orchestra which was unmercifully at open throttle at times. The last time that I heard this piece here John Vickers sang the role. I know John Vickers, John Vickers is a friend of mine, Anthony Dean Griffy is no John Vickers.

Ewa Podles is that rarest of vocal types, a real contralto. Her voice is lush, cavernous, vibrant, and dark with a backward placement. It is unique and it is stunning. She nailed me to my seat with her opening phrase, "Herbstnebel wallen blaulich ubern See." Her dark timbre was used effectively in "Mein Herz is mude" as she sounded utterly exhausted. There was something odd about her piano attacks in this opening section. There was no clear point of attack. The notes began often with a slight delay, nebulously, as if it were not on the breath. They started at some point but it was not clear when.

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She altered tonal color and achieved a playful mood in "Von der Schonheit", especially in that quicksilver passage beginning with "Das Ross des einen wieher frohlich auf", even when using chest voice to spit out "Wie flattern im Taumel seine Mahnen, dampfen heiss die Nustern." Another odd aspect of her technique is that she raises her shoulders when breathing deeply and holds her head back when unleashing a torrent of sound or when spinning long lines.

I have never heard "Der Abschied" song more achingly, sorrowfully, effectively sung than was sung last night by Madame Podles. "Ich suche Ruhe fur mein einsam Herz" was a forlorn plea expressed in utter exhaustion and resignation. In the concluding lines of "Alluberall und ewig blauen licht de Fernen!" she was finally ready to become a part of the constant cycle of nature. With the repetitions of "ewig", each note became more distant until the final note was left floating, disembodied, forever. ---Ron Magnuson, listserv.bccls.org

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