

## Krzysztof Penderecki – Concerto for Violin & Orchestra No. 2 'Metamorphosen' (1998)



*01. Metamorphosen, Konzert für Violine und Orchester Nr. 2 - 1. Allegro ma non troppo 02. Metamorphosen, Konzert für Violine und Orchester Nr. 2 - 2. Allegretto 03. Metamorphosen, Konzert für Violine und Orchester Nr. 2 - 3. Molto 04. Metamorphosen, Konzert für Violine und Orchester Nr. 2 - 4. Vivace 05. Metamorphosen, Konzert für Violine und Orchester Nr. 2 - 5. Scherzando 06. Metamorphosen, Konzert für Violine und Orchester Nr. 2 - 6. Andante con moto* Anne-Sophie Mutter - violin London Symphony Orchestra Krzysztof Penderecki – conductor

Penderecki, one of the leading Central European composers of the last half of the twentieth century, had two distinctive and very contrasting stylistic periods. The avant-garde first period began cascades of sound, thumps, shrieks, and other outbursts the explored the middle ground between pure noise and music. He then seemed to trace music history backwards, applying twelve-tone organizing principles. After that he became fascinated with the sounds of the late tonal era, highly chromatic, post Wagnerian music with definite tonality and usually a very dark mood. This second major period of his work lasted a good deal of the 1970s. Since the mid 1980s he explored ways to mixing both styles. The concerto, then uses a tonal, romantic idiom as its backbone, allowing for a flowing and logically related form (twelve-tone procedures also feature in the structure). But over it we hear the once-shocking string sounds of his avant-garde period: swooping glissandi, grinding dissonances, clicks and taps from the bow; all this plus brutal percussion outbursts.

It is in a lengthy single-movement form at nearly forty minutes. Its main divisions are noted in a list of "movements" accompanying this article and conform to the access points provided in the Deutsche Grammophon world premiere CD. That recording was made by the work's dedicatee and first performer, Anne-Sophie Mutter. The first performance also included the Central German Radio Orchestra conducted by Mariss Jansons. By comparison with the dark-toned Violin Concerto no 1, this is a lighter and more elegant work. An opening section (punctuated by long silences or by gong-strokes) announces the main motive, a rising chromatic line that turns

and falls by a minor third. There follows a vast structure whose complex interrelationships and dramatic progression could be painstakingly detailed. In summary, it unites an astonishing variety of textures of moods, from piston-driven motoric passages to soaring lyricism (which dominates the central part of the piece and returns like an echo at the end. Violence and tranquility; romance and bitter irony all somehow coexist. Purely tonal music alternates with passages of sheer tone-color. It is a work that repays (in fact, demands) repeated close listening. It is also a work that gives the average listener rather too much to digest at first hearing. ---Joseph Stevenson, Rovi

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