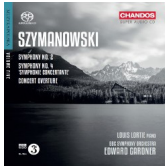


Szymanowski - Concert Overture and Symphonies 2 & 4 (2013)

Written by bluesever
Sunday, 20 May 2018 14:36 -

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1 *Concert Overture, Op. 12 For Orchestra* 12:07 *Symphony No. 4, Op. 60 'Symphonie Concertante' For Piano And Orchestra* (25:15)
2 *I Moderato (Tempo Commodo) - Subito Piu Mosso Animato - Poco Piu Tranquillo - Poco Piu Mosso*
□ - *Andantino Tranquillo E Dolce - Subito Piu Vivo - Quasi Tempo I (Molto Moderato) - Subito Piu Mosso*
□ - *[Cadenza] - Allegramente Animato - A Tempo (Molto Animato)* 9:48 3 *II Andante Molto Sostenuto - Doppio Movimento (Tempo Moderato) - [Cadenza]* 8:50 4 *III Allegro Non Troppo Ma Agitato Ed Ansioso - Meno Mosso. Moderato. Molto Tranquillo*
□ - *A Tempo Animato - Avvivando* 6:31 *Symphony No. 2, Op 19* 5 *I Allegro Moderato. Grazioso - Meno Mosso (Quasi Andante) - Piu Mosso (Quasi Tempo I)*
□ - *Meno Mosso (Quasi Andante) - Piu Mosso (Subito) - Ancora Poco Piu Animato - Ancora Piu Animato*
□ - *Sostenuto - Vivace - Poco Meno (Quasi Tempo I). Poco Scherzando - Tempo I. Molto Energico*
□ - *Poco Meno Mosso (Tranquillo)* 12:07 6 *II Theme. Lento* - 1:30 7 *Variation I. L'istesso Tempo* - 1:29 8 *Variation II. L'istesso Tempo* - 1:56 9 *Variation III. Scherzando. Molto Vivace - [] - Tempo I* - 2:29 10 *Variation IV. Tempo Di Gavotte - Allegro - Largo* - 2:41 11 *Variation V. Tempo Di Minuetto* - 2:48 12 *Finale. Introduzione, Variation VI. Vivace E Capriccioso - Meno Mosso - Lento* - 1:17 13 *Fuga Finale [Theme I.] Allegro Moderato. Molto Energico - [Theme II.] Poco Piu Larghetto*
□ - *[Theme III.] [] - [Theme IV.] [] - Lento - [Theme V.] [] - Subito Tempo I. Molto Energico*
□ - *Largo - Subito Tempo I. Allegro Energico* Louis Lortie - piano BBC Symphony Orchestra Edward Gardner - conductor

Edward Gardner and the BBC Symphony Orchestra open with a sparkling account of Karol Szymanowski's outsize Concert Overture (1905/13), owing to Richard Strauss and Max Reger while sowing the seeds of the Polish composer's mature compositional style. This is an exciting performance, with soaring strings, whooping horns and full-bodied climaxes that give repeated bursts of affirmation and reaching the ecstatic state required. Gardner's speeds are

challengingly fast, heightening the thrill of the opening pages, and from there the brio of the piece is never lost. The Fourth Symphony (1932), featuring a piano soloist (and dedicated to Arthur Rubinstein), is very different, both symphonic and concertante, Szymanowski's use of tonality becoming ever more ambiguous. There are still distinctive themes, but they are more elusive – and when the piano is used there is additional rhythmic impetus. Louis Lortie is receptive to these elements, playing superbly and achieving a glassy tone quality that complements the opulence of the orchestra. Gardner presents the slower music as mysterious and colourful, while the finale brings an impressively powerful surge, led by the piano. There are many revelations here. The Second Symphony went through an extended period of creation and revision (covering 1909 to 1936), counterpoint high on Szymanowski's agenda. There is an abundance of intertwining melodies, lucidly sounded here, the violin of Stephen Bryant particularly impressive in the opening pages. Gardner succeeds in uniting the potentially lopsided two-movement structure, the second embracing a Theme and Variations and then a Fugue (each section is helpfully given a separate track). The BBC Symphony Orchestra plays with great virtuosity and sensitivity, and the recorded sound is excellent its marriage of spaciousness and tangibility. It is encouraging to note the current exposure of Szymanowski's music, with a cycle of the symphonies due from the London Symphony Orchestra and Valery Gergiev on LSO Live. These Chandos versions are currently at the front of the field. Edward Gardner displays a close affinity with this strange and often beautiful music, leading performances of passion, weight and clarity. ---Ben Hogwood, classicalsource.com

This recording of orchestral works by Karol Szymanowski form part of the Polish Music series on Chandos, and is performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra and Edward Gardner. These performers have impressed in their Lutoslawski survey, which is part of the same series; in a review of volume 1, Gramophone described them as a veritable 'dream team'. Symphony No. 2 by Szymanowski is a work of great power and ingenuity, with many passionate and varied contrasts in its use of solo instruments. Composed in 1909 – 10, it is widely considered the greatest orchestral work of the composer's early period, not to mention one of the most important Polish symphonic compositions to date. Szymanowski himself thought very highly of it, and in August 1911 wrote in a letter to his fellow Polish composer Zdzislaw Jachimecki: 'How happy I am that this Symphony impressed you as I had wanted. I will frankly admit that I feel somewhat proud about its value. In some miraculous way I have managed during my work on it to resist all those garish phantoms which seduce "young and inexperienced" artists and to produce pure and uncompromising beauty in the way I personally understand it.'

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The internationally acclaimed pianist Louis Lortie joins the orchestra and conductor in Symphony No. 4 of 1932, which the composer subtitled 'Symphonie concertante' in recognition of the near-soloistic role played by the pianist. Whereas Szymanowski's early and middle works clearly reflect Wagner, Strauss, and Scriabin, this work is strongly influenced by Prokofiev, particularly in the finale, an agitated and daring movement reminiscent of the Russian composer's Piano Concerto No. 3, composed about a decade earlier.

Written in 1904 – 05 in a style recalling Wagner and Strauss, the Concert Overture is characterised by enormous expressiveness and gusto in the way it handles the expanding themes. Szymanowski inscribed the original score with part of the poem Witez Wlast by his friend Tadeusz Micinski: 'I will not play you sad songs, O Shades! but will give you a triumph proud and fierce...'. This vivid imagery is perfectly in keeping with the music's exuberant and vivacious character. ---chandos.net

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