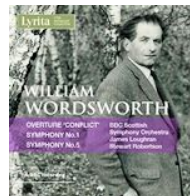


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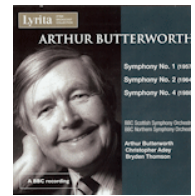
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Some items to consider

REVIEW

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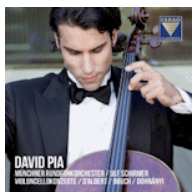


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David Pia



Beethoven Rattle

Faradzh KARAEV (b. 1943) Orchestral Works

Konzert für Orchester und Sologeige (2004) [32:58]
 "Vingt ans après - nostalgie ..." (2009) [26:50]
 Patricia Kopatchinskaja (violin)
 Azerbaijan State Symphony/Rauf Abullayev
 Russian State Symphony Capella/Valery Polyansky (Vingt)
 rec. 8 April 2011, Magomaev Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Hall, Baku; 30 November 2009, Great Hall, Tchaikovsky Conservatory, Moscow (Vingt)
PALADINO MUSIC PMR0070 [60:23]

Born in Baku, Azerbaijan in 1943, Faradzh Karaev is said to be "one of the leading composers of the post-Soviet era". This release features two orchestral pieces, both recorded in concert. Their value lies in the fact that hardly any of this composer's music has been recorded, though I see that Melodiya issued an album of his music entitled 'Nostalgia' several years ago.

Karaev's *Konzert für Orchester und Sologeige* is a powerful work, whose three movements are performed without a break. The solo violin takes centre-stage throughout, and the work requires prodigious stamina on the part of the soloist. This very performance, emanating from the Fourth Qara Qarayev Festival of Contemporary Music, can be viewed on Youtube. The energy, brilliance and staggering virtuosity of Patricia Kopatchinskaja is spectacular on all counts. She draws on her impressive violinistic arsenal to produce the wide range of effects called for in the score. These include harmonics, pizzicato, glissandi and bowing near the bridge to obtain metallic timbres. Karaev makes discreet references to various works, including Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto, Brahms' Violin Concerto, a Brahms Symphony and at one point I thought I heard the opening measures of the Berg Violin Concerto. The work is imaginatively scored throughout, with Karaev highlighting the colours of the various instrumental sections. The orchestra provides an ethereal backdrop to the solo violin narrative. The third movement is titled 'Vier Variationen und Thema' and begins with a dialogue between solo violin and solo cello. As the movement progresses the music becomes more frenzied then, at the end, peace and tranquillity reign and everything dies away. The applause on the Youtube film has been edited out on the CD. Throughout, I hear echoes of Schnittke, especially in the pointillistic complexion of some of the writing. The Azerbaijan State Symphony deliver a visceral reading, under the inspirational conducting of Rauf Abullayev.

"Vingt ans après - nostalgie ...", a polystylistic utterance, is dedicated to Alfred Schnittke and Edison Denisov and consists of four interlinked movements. At the opening, the orchestral textures are sparse and bare, and a dark, ominous cloud seems to envelope the music. By contrast, the second movement is dramatic and angst-ridden. High drama again pervades the next movement, in which the woodwinds play a prominent role. The final movement is more tranquil and conjures up images of an alien and otherworldly landscape. The music calls to mind that of Schnittke and Gubaidulina. Valery Polyansky and his players generate plenty of excitement when called for. My only reservation is that the performance is at times hampered by the intrusive bronchial afflictions of the Moscow audience.

Nevertheless this is challenging music which is worth exploring. Of the two works, the Concerto is preferable, more so for the high-octane playing of Patricia Kopatchinskaja.

Stephen Greenbank

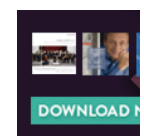
Editorial note: the music of Faradzh Karaev is not to be confused with that of his father Kara Karaev (1918-1982)



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