Philip Glass - A Madrigal Opera (2009)

1 Part I - Opening 8:05 2 Part I 13:11 3 Part II 12:10 4 Part III 10:16 5 Part IV 12:07 6 Part IV - Closing 4:38 Helsinki Ooppera Skaala: Petri Bäckström - Tenor Vikke Häkkinen - Baritone Linda Hedlund - Violin Laura Heinonen - Soprano Jari Hiekkapelto - Music Direction Satu Jaatinen - Mezzo-Soprano Janne Lehmusvuo - Direction Essi Luttinen - Mezzo-Soprano Minna Luukka - Children's Voices Riku Pelo - Bass Max Savikangas – Viola

The work, written for the Dutch theater artist Rob Malasch, is conceived as and abstract music theater work which would the be “completed” by the various future directors. It is for this reason that though the work has a clear emotional shape, it has no specific theatrical content.
---philipglass.com

A Madrigal Opera (1979) was the first opera Philip Glass wrote after the revolutionary Einstein on the Beach of 1976, and in some ways it strays even further from the conventions of traditional opera than Einstein had. Glass conceived of it as a piece for dramatic presentation, but he provides only the music, leaving all dramatic elements to be determined by the director who produced it. Its use of non-meaningful syllables gives even less of a hint of a dramatic or narrative trajectory than Einstein. On the other hand, Glass' musical language is more restricted than that of Einstein, with far less variety, making it closer to his more purely minimal works that had preceded Einstein. The limited musical parameters -- six solo voices singing almost entirely homophonically, using bland triadic harmony, accompanied only by violin or viola -- make it a considerably less engaging work, especially when experienced purely aurally. The relentlessness of the clumpy vocal writing induces a sense of the kind of sameness that gave minimalism a bad name. The CD lists poet Lauri Otonkoski as a collaborator, but her

contribution, which was part of the production at Skaala Opera Helsinki, from which this recording is taken, is not evident on the album. Several of the tracks are for solo string instrument, played beautifully by violinist Linda Hedlund or violist Max Savikangas, and they are far more satisfying than the tracks that include voices. The vocal parts are so ungratefully written that the singers don't make much of an impact. Only the final chorus offers any hints of the elegant and expressive choruses of Satya Graha that Glass composed the following year. The voices sound somewhat distant, but the strings are clear. This is an album that's likely to be of interest primarily to hardcore Glass fans who want to hear everything he has composed. ---Stephen Eddins, AllMusic Review

Philip Glass - A Madrigal Opera, opera w permanentnym toku. Wszystko, co prócz muzyki możemy wyczytać z partytury A Madrigal Opera Philipa Glassa to data kompozycji (rok 1979) i obsada (sześć głosów: sopran, dwa mezzosoprany, tenor, baryton, bas oraz skromne instrumentarium – skrzypce i altówka). To czteroczęściowa kameralna opera pozbawiona określonego libretta, dzięki czemu może być konstruowana przez reżysera podług jego wyobraźni, może być dowolnie kształtowana dramaturgicznie, jedynym drogowskazem jest kompozycja Glassa. A drogowskaz to sylabiczny, repetytywny i pełen napięć, szczególnie dobrze wyczuwalnych w ascetycznej strukturze utworu. ---operarara.pl

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