

Alfred Schnittke - Symphony No. 3 (Klas) [1994]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Symphony No. 3: 1. Moderato*
2. *Symphony No. 3: 2. Allegro*
3. *Symphony No. 3: 3. Allegro pesante* [play](#)
4. *Symphony No. 3: 4. Adagio*

Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra
Eri Klas – conductor

Alfred Schnittke's Third Symphony (1981) is an extraordinary work, even by the standards of Schnittke's iconoclastic output. Schnittke's Fourth Symphony may be more perfect, and his First more outrageousness, but Schnittke's Third remains strangely outside their canon, its visionary glance turned toward the entire Germano-Austrian symphonic tradition, perhaps the German temperament as well. This glance is wise and deeply sympathetic, but also doomed, at times fiercely tragic.

What results in Schnittke's vast but "traditional" four-movement scheme is thus a kind of German encyclopedic history, inscribed with symphonic terms and gravity. It is Schnittke's "Philosophical" Symphony, with all the sweeping scope that word implies: within its motives and forms flow the evolving spirits of Mozart, Beethoven, Wagner, Bruckner, Mahler, Schoenberg, Berg, Webern, Weill, Stockhausen, and Zimmermann. Yet the Symphony is also a river of conceptual histories: its vortex swallows Kant's Enlightenment, Hegel's "Geist," Schopenhauer's Pessimism, and Nietzsche's Superman. And it also swallows Wagner's epic operatic myth of corruption, heroism, apocalypse, *Das Ring des Nibelungen*--and by association its terrifyingly real successor, the Germany of World War II. --BIS-records

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Schnittke's Third Symphony is possibly his most daring and ambitious musical project. The impressive orchestral mass' employment, the exploratory character of every one of its four movements and the overwhelming perspective that hovers it, make of this work hard to label it.

The sidereal inspiration, the different inflections that remind us to Shostakovich, Mahler, Messian and Hovanes, the memorable Mozart's tribute as well its contemplative zero atmosphere mesmerizes even the most exigent listener. I just wouldn't hesitate for a second, to include it among the most relevant, conspicuous and transcendental artistic feats of the final decades of the past Century. –Hiram Gomez Pardo

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