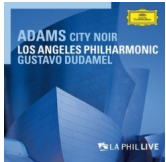


John Adams - City Noir (Dudamel) (2013)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 22 May 2019 14:55 -

John Adams - City Noir (Dudamel) (2013)



1. The City And Its Double 13:26 2. The Song Is For You 8:42 3. Boulevard Night 12:24
Los Angeles Philharmonic Gustavo Dudamel - conductor

John Adams' *City Noir* was commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and premiered by Gustavo Dudamel in his debut concert as the orchestra's music director (the same concert that yielded the previously released Mahler Symphony No. 1—type Q12491 in Search Reviews).

City Noir is a three-movement work of symphonic style and dimensions that pays homage (in a non-overt manner) to Hollywood film music of the 1950s. The first movement, *The City and its Double*, opens with a motoric busyness that grows increasingly frenzied before relaxing into the kind of dreamy, rhapsodic, soaring music familiar from Adams' *Harmonielehre*. From this state the first movement dissolves into the second, *This Song is for You*. Here Adams seems to channel his inner Charles Ives as discordant brass clusters mash-up with extended, Duke Ellington-style trombone solos, evoking the kind of boozy delirium found in *The Lost Weekend*.

This gets blown away quite effectively by the *Boulevard Nights* finale, with its even more frantic activity (recalling the cartoon-inspired mania of Adams' *Chamber Symphony*). About two-thirds of the way through, Adams introduces a syncopated "Martinu rhythm" that sounds more threatening each time it appears. The composer is an expert at building climaxes of tremendous rhythmic energy and raw sonic power, and he does so here, bringing the piece to a roof-raising conclusion.

Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic go all out for this music, offering a gripping and highly persuasive performance that sounds fine in Deutsche Grammophon's live recording.

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Adams' City Noir is a powerful, highly original piece that likely needs a couple of hearings to get a real sense of how it all holds together. But the effort is well worth it. Recommended. ---Victor Carr Jr, classicstoday.com

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