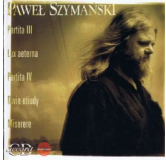


Paweł Szymański - Partita III, Lux Aeterna etc (1997)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 20 June 2010 12:06 - Last Updated Saturday, 24 May 2014 11:03

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* *Lux aeterna* (1984) - voices, instruments

Camerata Silesia Chamber Choir and Instrumental Ensemble,
Anna Szostek - conductor

* *Partita III* (1986) - harpsichord, orchestra

Elżbieta Chojnacka - harpsichord,

* *Partita IV* (1986) - orchestra

Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra,
Antoni Wit - conductor

* *Two Studies* (1986) - piano solo

Szabolcs Esztényi - piano

* *Miserere* (1993)

Bornus Consort,
Marcin Bornus-Szczyciński – director

We are told that Szymanski developed his own voice early.

Partita III starts as a tumultuous glocken fusillade of activity for the full orchestra and the

harpsichord. It sounds rather like a psychedelic Bach fugue - a supercharged Martinů or Poulenc concerto. This whirling activity stops and starts, punctuated by silences and modest gentle querulous sighs from the strings. The dreamy focusing and blurring melts into a slow motion vision rather along the lines of the 'trippy' dissolution sections of Valentin Silvestrov's Fifth Symphony. The harpsichord touches in ringing silvery patterning like clockwork running down.

Partita IV is the most avant-garde sounding of the works here. It was commissioned by BBC Northern Ireland and premiered in 1987 by the Ulster Orchestra conducted by Lionel Friend. Again it is constructed from repeated cells in evolution but here the incidents are furious and typical of the Polish 1960s avant-garde. Even the long-held quiet notes are ambiguously dissonant (5.50) though they do gain an almost sentimental warmth (11.23) made equivocal by moans from the brass. This piece represents an evolutionary progress from vehemence to silence.

The Two Studies for solo piano peck and impact in slow progression - again sounding both familiarly in the style of Bach yet dissected in an unhurried and surprisingly avant-garde exhibition. The second study moves to slough off the first at about 6.03. The second glitters in Mozartian gemwork.

Lux Aeterna is based on a theme from l'Homme Armée which is sung as if diced into sections presented haltingly cocooned in a tinkling commentary from the ensemble. Everything is presented with clarity and in a halo of warmth contributed by harp, piano, celesta and vibraphone. Time and again with Szymanski iterative bell sounds real or evoked are crucial. So it is with Lux Aeterna.

The Miserere is stunningly recorded as are all the other works here. Like the Lux Aeterna there is an archaic plainchant feeling to this work for chamber choir, a quartet of cellos plus harp and vibraphone. There are whispers, glintings, sighs and sinuous wails and stratospheric sirening from the cellos.

There is some extraordinary writing here. If you want to keep up to date then don't miss Partita III and Lux Aeterna. There will I am sure be much more to be heard from Szymanski. ---Rob Barnett, musicweb-international.com

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