

Rodion Shchedrin: Old Russian Circus Music - Symphony No.2 (1997)

Written by bluesever

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1. Concerto for Orchestra No. 3, "The Old Music of Russian Provincial Circuses" 24:16
2. Symphony No. 2, "25 prelyudiy": I. Preludes 1-6 11:27 3. Symphony No. 2, "25 prelyudiy": II. Preludes 7-9 5:55 4. Symphony No. 2, "25 prelyudiy": III. Preludes 10-14 11:43
5. Symphony No. 2, "25 prelyudiy": IV. Preludes 15-18 9:28 6. Symphony No. 2, "25 prelyudiy": V. Preludes 19-25 16:53 BBC Philharmonic Orchestra Vassily Sinaisky – conductor

Contemporary composers [prefer] to write slow, gloomy, doleful music as if it were the confession of a suicide before he takes his life...’ Not Rodion Shchedrin, best known for his witty reworking of Bizet’s Carmen as a ballet score. And there’s more in that vein in the more recent of the two works on this disc. Old Russian Circus Music, written in 1989 for the Chicago Symphony, is a kind of modern retake of Stravinsky’s Circus Polka with the musical humour laid on with a trowel. The Second Symphony, though, is seriously earnest, composed in the mid-Sixties and censured by the Soviet Union of Composers after its Moscow premiere for its uncompromisingly confrontational stance – it certainly sounds daringly modernist for its time and place. The BBC Philharmonic fares better in the Circus Music than in the Symphony, which witnesses the occasional passage of knife-edge string playing. But the players are old hands at making something memorable of unfamiliar music and there is, throughout, the sense of welcome discovery, with Sinaisky an enthusiastic and dutiful guide.---Matthew Rye, classical-music.com

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