Darius Milhaud - La création du monde - Le boeuf sur le toit (2005)



1. La creation du monde, Op. 81 : La Creation du monde, Op. 81 Jean-Claude Casadesus 16:54 2. Le boeuf sur le toit, Op. 58: Le Boeuf sur le toit, Op. 58 Jean-Claude Casadesus 16:32 3. Suite provencale, Op. 152c: I. Anime Jean-Claude Casadesus 1:43 play *4. Suite provencale, Op. 152c: II. Tres modere Jean-Claude Casadesus 1:32 5. Suite provencale, Op. 152c: III. Modere Jean-Claude Casadesus 1:50 6. Suite provencale, Op. 152c: IV. Vif Jean-Claude Casadesus 1:08 7. Suite provencale, Op. 152c: V. Modere Jean-Claude Casadesus 1:56 8. Suite provencale, Op. 152c: VI. Vif Jean-Claude Casadesus 0:59 9. Suite provencale, Op. 152c: VII. Lent Jean-Claude Casadesus 2:06 10. Suite Provencale, Op. 152c: VIII. Vif Jean-Claude Casadesus 3:55 11. L'Homme et son desir, Op. 48: I. Scene I Tomoko Makuuchi 1:17 12. L'Homme et son desir, Op. 48: II. Apparition de la Lune Tomoko Makuuchi 1:00 13. L'Homme et son desir, Op. 48: III. L'Homme endormi et le fantome de la Femme morte Tomoko Makuuchi 3:19*
play
14. L'Homme et son desir, Op. 48: IV. L'Homme qui dort debout, oscillant comme dans un courant d'eau et comme sans aucun poids
Tomoko Makuuchi 0:43 15. L'Homme et son desir, Op. 48: V. Toutes les choses de la foret qui viennent voir l'Homme endormi Tomoko Makuuchi 5:20 16. L'Homme et son desir, Op. 48: VI. Danse de la passion Tomoko Makuuchi 3:15 17. L'Homme et son desir, Op. 48: VII. Reapparition del la Femme qui entraine l'Homme peu a peu en tournant lentement devant lui sur elle-meme
Tomoko Makuuchi 3:50 18. L'Homme Et Son Desir, Op. 48: VIII. La Lune I A Disparu La Premiere, La Lune II Disparait A Son Tour... Tomoko Makuuchi 1:09 Tomoko Makuuchi – soprano Jian Zhao – mezzo-soprano Mathias Vidal - tenor Bernard Deletré - bass Orchestre National de Lille-Region Nord - Pas-de Calais Jean-Claude Casadesus – conductor

Here we have three of Milhaud's greatest hits and one that should be, all in performances that are as fine as any I've heard. "La Creation" gets a really all-stops-pulled-out reading, with the Lille musicians tossing around more hot licks than I've heard except perhaps on Bernstein's old EMI recording. Just about any French conductor should be able to turn in a lively rendition of "Le Boeuf," yet this one sparkles in a very special way. And I like Casadesus' "Suite provencale"

even more than Charles Munch's (on RCA), which I thought was just about perfect.

One thing that the current recording has going for it is just about the best sound that's ever been accorded these popular works. Maybe it's the venue, the Auditorium du Noveau Siecle in Lille, or maybe it's Mike Clements, one of today's finest sound engineers. Maybe it's a special kind of synergy. Anyhow, this is a fabulous-sounding disc.

Finally, there is "L'homme et son desir." I don't know whether to call this a poor-man's "Les Noces" (Stravinsky) or a rich-man's "Ballet Mechanique" (Antheil), but whatever, it is one of Milhaud's most unusual and beguiling creations, replete with a weird vocalise for four soloists and huge percussion section featuring a whip and a police whistle! The piece is available in what might be a considered a definitive performance by the composer himself, except this one from Casadesus is every bit as good, if not a little livelier, and of course it is in up-to-the-minute sound. So as I say, even if you'll be getting your third (or fourth) version of "La Creation du monde," don't miss this very special CD. --- M. C. Passarella, amazon.com

Composer Darius Milhaud's music is not always easy to describe. He is influenced by the legacy of classical composers from his native France which forms the basic framework of his music. He was also influenced by trends in classical music by other composers who were his contemporaries as well as by the jazz movement. Some of his music also has a Latin/Brazilian feel to it which means that you're never quite sure oaf what you'll hear when it comes to Milhaud's music but one thing is certain, it may be a bit challenging but it will be enjoyable.

This disc from Naxos contains four pieces from the Milhaud catalogue. The first piece is "La Creation du Monde" which the liner notes states is Milhaud's best known work though I would believe that at least to American audiences, the familiar Brazilian strains of "Le Boeuf sur le Toit" would have that distinction. "La Creation" is a combination of French classical and jazz and was originally a ballet. "Le Boeuf" has a Brazilian and jazz feel to it and was originally written as a background piece for a silent film. "Suite Provencale" would be the most traditional work of the set and his "L'Homme et son Desir" would for orchestra and wordless voices would be his most experimental.

The Orchestre National de Lille seems at home with Milhaud's music. They accept the challenges posed by pieces such as "La Creation" and "L'Homme,' play "Suite Provencale" in a robust manner and have fun with "La Boeuf." Conductor Jean-Claude Casadesus seems to not gusty be familiar with the scores but as respect for the composer as well as his interpretations show. Naxos also has to be credited for providing a disc of not so familiar music so that listeners can get to know the music of an important 20th century composer. ---Timothy Kearney

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