

György Ligeti - Le Grand Macabre (2011)

Written by bluesever
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Disc 1 1. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Vorspiel* 01:09 2. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Dies irae, dies illa* 06:36 3. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Zurück, du Fettwanst* 04:47 4. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Heute noch, um Mitternacht* 05:02 5. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Beim allerhöchsten Willen* 04:37 6. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Zwischenspiel* 00:57 7. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Eins, zwei, drei, fünf. Au!* 03:35 8. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Oh weh! Oh weh! Wer soll spülen? Wer soll waschen?* 04:44 9. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Anziehend und formvollendet* 05:54 10. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Wer da? Ein Mann!* 06:13 11. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt I - Feuer und Feuersnot* 03:46 12. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Vorspiel* 01:06 13. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Arschklecker, Arschkriecher!* 05:52 Disc 2 1. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Psssst!* 04:04 2. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Gestatten, bin der Dienstälteste* 03:06 3. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Geheimmeldung!* 03:33 4. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Und endlich allein! Kukuriku!* 04:40 5. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Grandioser Einzug* 04:51 6. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Wehe! Denn es ist gekommen der hgrosse Tag des Zorns!* 04:46 7. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Der Nekro ist kein Zarr!* 01:11 8. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Bluut schmeckt guut! Ich hab zuviel getötet.* 08:28 9. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Wo ist meine Sense?* 13:05 10. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Hach! Ihr seid am Leben, Fürst?* 01:02 11. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Aschtarot! Wir haben Durst, ergo wir leben...* 02:18 12. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Nekrotzars allmähliches Verschwinden im Nichts* 04:06 13. *Le Grand Macabre: Akt II - Finale: Ach es war gut im dunklen Grab* 06:33

Penelope Walmsley-Clark (Soprano) Olive Fredericks (Mezzo Soprano) Peter Haage (Tenor) Christa Puhmann-Richter (Mezzo Soprano) Kevin Smith (Countertenor) Ude Krekow (Bass) Eirian Davies (Soprano) Herbert Prikopa (Spoken Vocals) Ernst Leopold Strachwitz (Spoken Vocals) Dieter Weller (Baritone) Johann Leutgeb (Baritone) Ernst Salzer (Baritone) Laszlo Modos (Baritone) Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra Austrian Radio Chorus Gumpoldskirch Boys Choir Elgar Howarth – conductor Written: 1974-1977; Berlin, Germany

György Ligeti's only opera, *Le Grand Macabre*, was initially suggested by film and theater director Göran Gentele who was in 1965 director of the Stockholm Opera. Ligeti and librettist Michael Meschke adapted Belgian author Michel van Ghelderode's 1934 play *La balade du*

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grande macabre into the needed libretto and finished the opera in a mere six years. The Wergo CD of the work (there are two; the other is led by Esa-Pekka Salonen on Sony) is not of the first production of Le Grand Macabre but the second, held in the Grossen Konzerthausaal in Vienna in 1987 under the direction of Elgar Howarth.

Le Grand Macabre is a mega-bizarre opera that is part post-modern avant-garde and part Marx Brothers; a mad escapade that calls for sirens, auto horns, and singers who are able to behave like loons, and yet sing up into the stratosphere if necessary. This performance is live and once in awhile you can hear a titter of laughter from the audience. Le Grand Macabre IS funny -- thankfully there is a thick German-English libretto included with the set, so one need not fuss that any of the humor (or horror -- there's a considerable amount of that also) will be missed. A thinner booklet found inside the clamshell case contains the liner notes and track listings. This Grossen Konzerthausaal performance is as good as can be hoped for in such a difficult work, but that does not mean the music itself is "difficult." Le Grand Macabre isn't tuneful -- it's written in a highly complex, late twentieth century idiom, but with action of the play to hang the music onto it is fairly easy to follow, and is nonetheless very entertaining.

Le Grand Macabre isn't staged with much frequency, as it appears to be a rather expensive production. A video or DVD would be the best way, outside the concert hall, to experience it, but in the lack of such a product this rather pricey two-disc set will have to do. If the listener is interested in contemporary European opera after 1950 this should be the first place to go. Wergo's live recording is of excellent quality, but could stand to be a little louder than it is. ---Uncle Dave Lewis, AllMusic Review

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