

Josef Bayer: Fairy Doll - Sun and Earth (2004)

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 12 February 2017 15:37 - Last Updated Sunday, 12 February 2017 15:41

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Die Puppenfee (The Fairy Doll) 1. Vorspiel: Allegro 00:02:23 2. No. 1 Allegro 00:00:53
3. No. 2 00:00:55 4. No. 3 Lento 00:01:09 5. No. 4 Moderato 00:00:50 6. No. 5
Moderato 00:01:55 7. No. 6 Lento: Oberösterreicherin 00:01:21 8. No. 7 Baby: Allegretto
00:02:14 9. No. 8 Chinesin: Allegretto 00:01:20 10. No. 9 Spanierin: Allegro 00:00:59 11.
No. 10 Japanerin: Lento 00:01:40 12. No. 11 Harlekin: Allegro 00:02:09 13. No. 12
Moderato 00:01:45 14. No. 13 Allegro 00:01:09 15. No. 14 Andante 00:00:57 16. No.
15 Waltz 00:01:11 17. No. 16 Ballabile 00:09:58 18. No. 17 00:00:10 19. No. 18
Marsch 00:02:22 20. No. 19 Galop 00:00:53 21. No. 20 00:02:01

Sonne und Erde (Sun and Earth)

22. Prelude 00:01:40 23. Scene IV 'Winter': Polka 00:02:13 24. Scene IV 'Winter':
Walzer 00:00:38 25. Scene I 'Spring': Sternenmusik: Andante 00:01:06 26. Scene I
'Spring': Allegorie: Moderato 00:00:42 27. Scene I 'Spring': Allegretto 00:00:41 28. Scene
I 'Spring': Allegretto 00:00:53 29. Scene I 'Spring': Andante - Allegretto - Polka 00:01:57 30.
Scene I 'Spring': Allegro - Walzer - Galop 00:01:14 31. Scene I 'Spring': Moderato 00:00:54
32. Scene I 'Spring': Polka 00:01:02 33. Scene I 'Spring': Walzer - Polka 00:00:48 34.
Scene I 'Spring': Cadenza 00:00:27 35. Scene I 'Spring': Andante 00:00:51

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra Andrew Mogrelia – conductor

Naxos are issuing so many different ballet scores at present, that I am surprised that they do not have a Ballet Series.

The current issue is an almost unknown score, which was very popular in its day. Franz Schmidt, playing the cello in the Vienna Court Opera Orchestra was very scathing about ballet composers in general, and Josef Bayer in particular. He said of Bayer: "I liken him, in order not to insult this rank, to an Austrian regimental music sergeant only in so far as he possessed the arrogance and coarseness of one in richest measure. His ability as a conductor and musician however, would not have satisfied the needs of the post of regimental music sergeant by a long way. He was beneath all criticism and was further devalued by the pitifulness and vulgarity of

his compositions."

Musicians' judgements of one another are often suspect as personal animosities come into the equation. In actual life, Bayer was a very popular figure in Viennese musical life. He was the musical head of ballet in Vienna for over thirty years. During that time, he composed some twenty one act ballets, many other shorter pieces, numerous divertissements, operettas and light music for various venues. With such a range of works, one might assume that the jam is spread fairly thinly, and so it is, if these two ballets are anything to go by.

Naxos has recorded here the complete Fairy Doll, and a good portion of Sun and Earth. For the orchestra they have chosen the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra, and have engaged the worthy Andrew Mogrelia, to head up the proceedings. He has given us other ballet recordings - some very good and others not so good. This is one of his better offerings and he secures lively accurate playing from his orchestra in a highly believable acoustic in one of Naxos's good non hi-fi recordings. The digital sound is first rate and the orchestra is set in a concert hall setting, which I find very pleasant to listen to.

Are there any negative points? Yes, emphatically so. I find Schmidt's assessment of the composer highly accurate, and most of the ballet is very pleasant but highly forgettable and thank god it is only a fiver. This is, as has been said before, one of the benefits of Naxos's pricing policy. By charging a ridiculously low price for their discs, the music lover can pick and choose from a huge range of repertoire with minimal financial exposure.

I would have been quite miffed if this disc was full priced, because, if this were the case, it would not have got a recommendation at all. As it is, this low priced disc offers the music lover the opportunity to hear something he or she would not otherwise get the opportunity to hear. Let us make no mistake, both ballets are tuneful in so far as they go, are expertly crafted and played far more than adequately by orchestra and conductor.

The disc comes with very good notes and advertise another of Naxos's offerings – Naxos Radio. This offers forty channels of Classical Music, Jazz, Folk/World Music and Nostalgia in near CD quality over the Internet. It is accessible anywhere (that is through a suitably equipped computer), anytime.

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Perhaps in a few years time, reviews such as this will become redundant, as you will be able to listen to and download those discs you like for a nominal sum, and make up your own minds as to whether you would enjoy them or not. I can recommend this disc to anyone who likes tuneful light music in a well recorded acoustic. ---John Phillips, musicweb-international.com

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