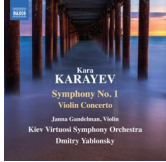


Kara Karayev - Symphony No. 1 & Violin Concerto (2018)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 23 January 2019 13:38 - Last Updated Wednesday, 23 January 2019 13:53

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Symphony No. 1 In B Minor (33:40) 1 *I. Molto Sostenuto. Allegro* 15:08 2 *II. Lento Moderato* 18:27 Violin Concerto (20:59) 3 *I. Allegro Moderato* 9:21 4 *II. Andante* 4:25 5 *III. Allegro* 7:06
Janna Gandelman - violin Kiev Virtuosi Symphony Orchestra Dmitry Yablonsky - conductor

Kara Karayev was one of the most prominent figures in the music of 20th-century Azerbaijan, and an inspiration to subsequent generations of Azerbaijani composers. His eloquently expressive and tautly dramatic First Symphony is a significant work in Karayev's output, reflecting both the harmonies and melodic characteristics of the South Caucasus region and, in its orchestral brilliance, the influence of his mentor Shostakovich. The Violin Concerto shows a notable shift in style, exploring the serial techniques that add astringency and inventive depth to Karayev's already richly coloured and vividly diverse palette. ---prestomusic.com

The former Soviet republics continue to yield strong unknown repertory as Russian and other Eastern expats bring them to the West. In the case of music by the Azeri composer Kara Karayev (also known as Gara Garayev), whose work is starting to be rediscovered, conductor Dmitry Yablonsky has returned to the East from the U.S., establishing an ensemble called the Kiev Virtuosi that on occasion, as here, expands to a full symphony orchestra. Karayev was a follower of Shostakovich, and he handles the orchestra -- a full symphony and then some -- expertly. He's also a fine melodist (sample the first movement of the Symphony No. 1, starting about five minutes in), and his grim finale to the symphony, very much in the vein of Shostakovich, does emotional justice to what was happening in the Soviet Union in 1943. The much later Violin Concerto (1967) is also notable. Karayev adopts a full-scale tone row in the opening movement, something Shostakovich flirted with but never did. He manages to merge

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the tone row with a pleasantly folkish idiom, not a terribly common accomplishment although the work as a whole is not on the level of the Symphony No. 1. Probably a major orchestra could really bring alive what Yablonsky has re-exposed here, and Naxos' series devoted to composers from Azerbaijan remains entirely worthwhile. ---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

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