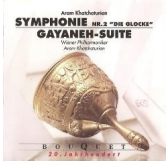


Khachaturian - Symphony No.2, Gayaneh-Suite (1990)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 15 June 2013 15:48 -

Khachaturian - Symphony No.2, Gayaneh-Suite (1990)



01] *Symphony No.2 - Andante maestoso* 02] *Symphony No.2 - Allegro risoluto* 03] *Symphony No.2 - Andante sostenuto* 04] *Symphony No.2 - Andante mosso-Allegro sostenuto, maestoso* 05] *Gayaneh-Suite - Sabre Dance* 06] *Gayaneh-Suite - Aysheh's awakening and dance* 07] *Gayaneh-Suite - Lezghinka* 08] *Gayaneh-Suite - Gayaneh's Adagio* 09] *Gayaneh-Suite - Gopak* Vienna Philharmonic Aram Khachaturian – conductor

Armenian composer Aram Khachaturian (1903-78) composed his Symphony No. 2, subtitled "The Bell," during the second world war as a paean to the struggle of Soviet troops against the Germans. In four movements, the symphony has been compared to other great Soviet wartime symphonies including the Prokofiev Symphony No. 5 and the Shostakovich war symphonies Nos. 5-7. It has never caught on with audiences or symphonic programmers as have the others, even to this day. My little old Lansing (Mich.) Symphony Orchestra, under a vivid and outgoing new young conductor, put the Profokiev Fifth on the schedule last year and subscription concertgoers were excited. Imagine what would happen if the Khachaturian Second were given the same treatment, here or in New York, Chicago or Los Angeles, although it would have to survive the spears of snooty big city critics calling it juvenile and second-rate (more on that later.)

This is the composer's first stereo recording of the symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic from 1962. It is out of print in this pressing and still available mated to Stanley Black's Spartacus suite and some middling performances of the piano and violin concertos in a famous London-Decca twofer Piano Concerto / Violin Concerto / Symphony 2. The composer also recorded this again in 1977 in Russia, a year before the end of his life Khachaturian: Symphony No 2 / Excerpts from Gayaneh (recorded in 1977) from a concert that included some excerpts from his ballet Gayne. That recording is most useful in understanding the composer conducted his ballet faster than anyone else and that vulgarity is part of the formula for successfully interpreting his music. Either recording gives you an idea of the composer's ideas but this one is better recorded and the Vienna Philharmonic is the better band.

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There's a lot of nonsense written by critics lambasting Khachaturian for supposed inferior compositions and empty rhetoric. A famous Chicago critic once said, "He who steals Khachaturian steals trash." While his exciting Symphony No. 3 is pretty much an empty gesture intellectually Symphony 3 / Triumphal Poem, the music is a lot of fun and it benefits from continued listening. Along with "The Bell," it was a favorite of Leopold Stokowski, whose recording has come back to circulation in several packages that are variably in and out of print Khachaturian: Symphony No. 3 / Rimsky-Korsakov: Russian Easter.

Good recordings going out of print is a problem for Khachaturian lovers. Many of the greatest recordings of Khachaturian have gone out of print including Fistoulari's fabulous Gayne ballet suite on Everest Gayne Ballet Suite. If you're willing to put out the money and the time, there is an excellent complete recording of the ballet Gayne: Complete Ballet by Armenian conductor Loris Tjeknavorian, who specializes in the music of his countryman and has made many fine recordings.

For any fan wanting to get to know this composer, try this recording in this package of with the concertos as well as the composer's Third Symphony and Khachaturian's own recording of his ballet suites from Spartacus and Gayne Khachaturian: Spartacus / Khachaturian, Vienna Philharmonic. Another one worth getting (it's cheap, too) is the greatest recording Russian conductor Kirill Kondrashin ever made that includes the suite to Khachaturian's Masquerade suite and Kabalevsky's The Comedians, another ballet reminiscent of the composer Khachaturian: Masquerade Suite; Kabalevsky: The Comedians; Tchaikovsky: Capriccio Italien; Rimsky-Korsakov: Capriccio Espagnol / Kondrashin. ---Larry VanDeSande, amazon.com

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