

Aram Khachaturian – Piano & Violin Concerto (2008)

Written by bluesever

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Piano Concerto 1. *Allegro Maestoso (Piano Concerto)* 2. *Andante Con Anima (Piano Concerto)* 3. *Allegro Brillante (Piano Concerto)* Annette Servadei, piano
USSR Large Symphony Orchestra Constantin Ivanov Violin Concerto
4. *Allegro Con Fermezza (Violin Concerto)* 5. *Andante Sostenuto (Violin Concerto)* 6. *Allegro Vivace (Violin Concerto)*
Boris Gutnikov, violino London Philharmonic Orchestra Joseph Giunta

Here are Khachaturian's two most famous concertos conveniently and generously coupled. They remind us that this composer stands as a sort of spiritual ethnic descendant of Borodin – troubadour, celebrant, poet, accelerant and exhilarant. The analogue Gutnikov has not – so far as I can tell - previously seen the light of day on CD. The Servadei began life as a Hyperion project in which form it was issued as CDA66293. The Piano Concerto is here rather statuesque and measured. In the Prokofiev-bright finale things occasionally lumber although the quicker pages are rendered with engaging brilliance. Servadei makes much of the Andante with its 'Nights in the Gardens of Yerevan' fragrance - some lovely poetic touches. Also you can distinctly hear the famous flexatone part - not something that can be said of every recording.

Vitebsk-born Boris Gutnikov (1931-1986) is little heard of. What else did he record beyond the Britten, Brahms Double with Rostropovich and the Bach and Mozart violin concertos? He is no mean player. His conductor, the underrated Konstantin Ivanov died in the same year as Gutnikov. Here the two are almost equal partners with Khachaturian's many strands of lyric filigree - especially for the wind instruments - adding a delectable descant to the solo's limelight. It's a neon-bright recording but glorious if occasionally dazzlingly bright. A few moments into the finale and it's time for the aural 'shades'.

The notes are thorough and thoroughly good. Peter Avis and Regis are to be congratulated.

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We have heard very little about Joseph Giunta. This American conductor currently holds the chief position with the Des Moines symphony. With that orchestra he has recorded the Beethoven nine symphonies (2003-4) as well as the Earl Wild Doo-Dah Variations and the Gershwin Piano Concerto. He also partnered Servadei in 1982 in a recording of the Britten piano concerto with the LPO.

As for Konstantin Ivanov (1907-1986) this must presumably have been among his last recordings. He should be best known for his elite recording of Miaskovsky's Symphony No. 5 - unmatched even by Svetlanov – indeed especially by Svetlanov. And yes I am curious to hear Ivanov's Glazunov. I think he recorded the Fifth Symphony. Let's also have the chance to catch his promisingly titled tone poem Fiery Years.

Gutnikov's reading of the Violin Concerto is worthy to stand alongside the Oistrakhs and Kogans. Servadei delivers a most poetic and reflective performance heard in exalted eloquence in the Andante.

Regis and its satellite labels have established not so much a Russian music niche as a whole deep set of shelves. We must hope that they will continue. ---Rob Barnett,
musicweb-international.com

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