

## Kilar – Piano Concerto and ... (Antoni Wit) [2002]

Written by bluesever

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1. *Bogurodzica (Mother of God)* Concerto for Piano 2. *Piano Concerto: I. Andante con moto*  
3. *Piano Concerto: II. Corale* 4. *Piano Concerto: III. Toccata* 5. *Siwa mgla (Grey Mist): Siwa mgla (Hoary Fog)* 6. *Koscielec 1909*

Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra, Warsaw National Philharmonic Choir Waldemar Malicki - Piano Antoni Wit – Conductor

Next album from THOMAS CIANNARELLA. Many thanks.

The music of this contemporary composer hits many of the right buttons for me. It is well crafted, it has a discernible shape, and it is expressed in a confident and original voice. Because of the sleek appeal of the music, it was not surprising to read that Wojciech Kilar is primarily known as a film composer, with over 100 scores to his credit, mostly in the Polish film industry, but also for such well-known Western movies as Francis Ford Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Roman Polanski's *Death and the Maiden*, and Jane Campion's *Portrait of a Lady*. His style in those scores, as well as the music on this CD, is essentially post-Romantic, with strong doses of minimalism and Eastern liturgical music (think Górecki and Pärt).

At the heart of this program is the 1997 Piano Concerto. The work is in three movements, but it is otherwise unconventionally constructed, beginning with a dreamy Andante that is large in scope but gentle in impact. With its metrical regularity and repeated melodic patterns, this is the most overtly minimalist music on the CD. The middle movement is slower still, and shares a Brahmsian melodic quality with the juggernaut-like final movement. Malicki has a firm control over the deceptively simple sounding solo part. The opening work, *Bogurodzica*, is the most harmonically advanced, with dissonant outbursts of choral writing for this setting of an ancient Polish hymn. It opens and closes with the beating of drums, alluding to a martial atmosphere. The work shares the composer's predilection for extreme dynamic contrasts with the other two

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works on the program, and opens so quietly that you might be tempted to crank up the volume, which will put you at the risk of ear damage a few moments later.

Siwa Mgla ("Grey Mist") and Koscielec are both tone poems, and are the pieces most like "movie music" on the program. Neither work is without merit and even beauty. Siwa Mgla is most compelling when the solo baritone enters, due in no small part to the richly expressive voice of Wieslaw Ochman. In Koscielec (named for a mountain in the Tatra range of Southern Poland), however, the bombast finally overwhelms any subtlety, in a score that would probably work well for a mass-market sci-fi flick.

I have long admired the work of Antoni Wit and the Warsaw Philharmonic. This is a great Eastern European orchestra, showing off an impressive combination of virtuosity and passion. Both orchestra and conductor contribute immensely to the appeal of Kilar's music, to which they sound intensely committed. --- FANFARE: Peter Burwasser, [arkivmusic.com](http://arkivmusic.com)

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