Tippett - Symphonies Nos 1 & 2 (2018)

Symphony No. 1 (39:04) *1 I Allegro Vigoroso, Quasi Alla Breve 11:08 2 II Adagio 13:39 3 III Presto 6:52 4 IV Allegro Moderato Ma Con Brio E Più Tarde Condelicatezza 7:23*
Symphony No. 2 (35:40)
5 I Allegro Vigoroso 9:17 6 II Adagio 10:59 7 III Presto Veloce 5:50 8 IV Allegro Moderato 9:32
BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra Martyn Brabbins - conductor

Curiously, Michael Tippett is better known for his dense dramatic works than for his relatively accessible symphonies, but the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and conductor Martyn Brabbins are out to change that with their new symphony cycle. Tippett actually wrote five, withdrawing the first and leaving the present Symphony No. 1 of 1944 as his acknowledged debut. It's a bit of a mixed bag, with the trappings of Tippett's pastoral predecessors filled out with thornier material, including an extremely dark wartime finale. The Symphony No. 2 of a decade later is likewise something of a transitional work, with the later Tippett springing suddenly into bloom in the free-floating, lyrical episodes of the slow movement. Sample this for a taste of the composer finding a wholly original voice and for Brabbins and company catching the moment admirably. Traditional symphonic form is definitely present in these works and exists in a kind of uncomfortable tension with Tippett's developing imagination, but this is interesting in itself and brings insight into the composer. A welcome rehearing of these works.
---James Manheim, AllMusic Review

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