

Krzysztof Penderecki – Polish Requiem (Antoni Wit) [2004]

Written by bluesever

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01. *Requiem Aeternam - 'Requiem aeternam dona eis'* 02. *Kyrie - 'Kyrie Eleison'* 03. *Dies Irae - 'Dies irae'* 04. *Dies Irae - 'Tuba minum spargens sonum'* 05. *Dies Irae - 'Mors stupebit et natura'* 06. *Dies Irae - 'Quid sum miser tunc dicturus'* 07. *Dies Irae - 'Rex tremendae majestatis'* 08. *Dies Irae - 'Recordare Jesu pie'* 09. *Dies Irae - 'Ingemisco tamquam reus'* 10. *Dies Irae - 'Lacrimosa dies illa'* 11. *Agnus Dei - 'Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi'* 12. *Lux Aeterna - 'Lux aeterna, luceat eis'* 13. *Libera Me - 'Libera me, Domine, de morte eterna'* 14. *(Finale) - 'Recordare, Jesu pie'* Izabella Klosinska - soprano Ryszard Minkiewicz - tenor Piotr Nowacki - bass Warsaw National Philharmonic Choir Warsaw Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra Antoni Wit - conductor

Naxos continues its exploration into the major repertoire of Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki with his Polish Requiem, which has an interesting background in that its various sections were assembled over time, much in the manner of Johann Sebastian Bach's Mass in B minor. Although the "Sanctus" wasn't added until 1993, most of the individual parts of the Polish Requiem were premiered separately between 1980 and 1984, and the work as a whole not given until 1985. In this form, Penderecki made a recording for Deutsche Grammophon in 1989 which, so far, has generally been adjudged the best. This Naxos recording, featuring conductor Antoni Wit and the Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra and chorus plus soloists Izabella Klosinska, Jadwiga Rappé, Ryszard Minkiewicz and Piotr Nowacki has arrived to give the composer's recording a run for its money.

This is the second time around for conductor Antoni Wit in the Polish Requiem, who recorded it back in 1985 for Polskie Nagrania, albeit minus the "Sanctus." Likewise this is the second appearance in the Polish Requiem for soloists Rappé and Piotr Nowacki, both of whom appeared on a recording of the work made by Penderecki for Chandos in 1996, this time including the "Sanctus." One frequently encountered criticism of Penderecki as an interpreter of his own music is that his sense of sound production from the orchestra tends to be thick and blocky. In the Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima, that's not a bad thing -- after all, it's

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nothing but blocks and intersections. Nonetheless, the Polish Requiem consists of a wide variety of orchestral textures, and Wit does an ideal job of highlighting each of the 16 sections of the work to their best advantage. The light in "Lux aeterna" breaks through as from heaven, the chaos of "Ingemisco tanquam reus" churns up as from hell, the ostinati and exciting percussion flourishes of "Libera me, domine" are spelled out with a sense of drama and urgency, and the giant major chords of the "Sanctus" shake you out of your seat. Of the soloists, Rappé is outstanding, particularly in the "Libera me, domine." Penderecki's Polish Requiem is a big deal, one of only a few late twentieth century works deserving the designation of "masterpiece." This Naxos release is likely the very best way that one might approach and enjoy it. ---Uncle Dave Lewie, Rovi

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