

Lutoslawski - Cello Concerto; Double Concerto; Dance Preludes (1987)

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1 *Cello Concerto* 23:05 Dance Preludes For Clarinete Solo, Harp, Piano, Percussion And String Orchestra 9:31 2 *Allegro Molto* 1:02 3 *Andantino* 2:45 4 *Allegro Giocoso* 1:24 5 *Andante* 3:14 6 *Allegro Molto - Presto* 1:43
Concerto For Oboe, Harp And Chamber Orchestra 18:23
7 *Rapsodico* 4:53 8 *Dolente* 6:51 9 *Marciale E Grottesco* 6:42
Heinrich Schiff - cello Ursula Holliger - harp Eduard Brunner - clarinet Heinz Holliger - oboe
Symphonie-Orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks Witold Lutosławski – conductor

The Cello Concerto was composed in the years 1969-1970 on commission by the Royal Philharmonic Society and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. Dedicated to Mstislav Rostropovich, it received its world premiere on October 14, 1970, at London's Royal Festival Hall, in a performance by the dedicatee and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under Edward Downes. ---lutoslawski.org.pl

LUTOSLAWSKI CONDUCTS LUTOSLAWSKI has three recordings, the CELLO CONCERTO, DANCE PRELUDES, and CONCERTO FOR OBOE, HARP, AND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA. The orchestra is Symphonie-Orchester Des Bayerischen Rundfunks, and the recording is from January 1986. Don't worry, even though the Cello Concerto was recorded live, there is not any of that dad-blasted, inappropriate applause that you find at the end of other classical music that is recorded live.

CELLO CONCERTO (22 min, 55 sec). This begins with a monotonous bowing of a low note of

the cello, interrupted by skittish hiccups and noodlings. At 2 min, the cello plays an interesting series of glassando-tinged notes, followed by more of the dreadfully monotonous and stupid sounding monotonous bowings of one note. At 3 min, 50 seconds, the trumpet makes its entrance, and it spews out some robust screeching notes that sound stupid, as if desperately trying to sound *avant garde*. At 4 min, 50 sec, the cello, wind section, and string section, all join together, and this time the effect is a beautiful wonder to behold. The cello is in the foreground, and the backgrounds that is provided by the other instruments is like a subdued galloping flurry. At the 8 minute mark, the brass section provides a cacophonous motif, sounding like a barn full of stuttering cows. Then, the music is beautiful again. At 9 min, 40 sec, the trumpets provide a cacophonous motif, sounding like flock of ducks on electric shock therapy.

At 12 minute, the cello provides a meandering tune, while the orchestra provides a subtle backdrop, where this backdrop is like what is found in *WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY* by Charles Ives (see, 5 minutes 45 seconds into *Washington's Birthday*). The quiet backdrop is beautiful too. At 16 minutes, the string section gets more aggressive, and then for a while, the entire orchestra provides a noisy cacophony. At 17 minutes, 20 seconds, the xylophone provides a brief jumbled motif, making this piece sound oh so thrillingly *avant garde*. Then, the orchestra resumes its aggressive cacophony. At 19 and a half minutes, come some fun sounding percussive effects, and then the trombones provide a couple of inebriated glissandos. The final minutes of this piece are more beautiful, and we find a number of aggressive sonic thrashings.

DANCE PRELUDES (9 min, 31 sec). Cut 2 is a happy and bouncy piece, with prominent clarinet throughout, and lasting only 57 seconds. Cut 3 is slow, sounding a bit like *Appalachian Spring* by Copland. At the halfway point, the pace picks up, and here the piece sounds like a blustery symphony by Carl Nielsen. This piece ends on a quiet note (2 min, 40 sec). Cut 4 starts with a motif that is clowning and spunky, with prominent clarinet and pizzicato strings. Cut 4, in my opinion, is channeling the musical spirit of Prokofiev. Unfortunately, cut 4 is only one minute and 20 seconds long. Cut 5 begins with a spooky sounding bass line. Then, the clarinet enters, playing morose notes, and the spooky bass line resumes. Cut 5 is the only movement of this piece that is not interesting (3 min). Cut 6 begins on an optimistic note, with a chugging motif from the strings, which urges the clarinet to engage in tuneful pyrotechniques (1 min, 34 sec).

CONCERTO FOR OBOE, HARP, AND CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (18 min, 23 sec). Cut 7 begins with a swarming wasp nest of skittering strings, sounding like part of Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*. The clarinet makes its entrance, playing an attractive *avant garde* melody similar to the reed music of Anthony Braxton. At 1 minute and 50 seconds, the wasp nest returns briefly. At 2 min, 20 sec, the wasp nest returns again. At 3 min, 50 sec, is a brief serialistic music motif coming from the percussion section (4 min, 49 sec). Cut 8 begins with a pizzicato flourish from the strings, sounding like raindrops pounding on a magnolia tree. The clarinet's contributions are sometimes like the bleating call of a shepherd's horn, and

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sometimes it sounds like the noodlings of Anthony Braxton. At 3 minutes, the raindrops return. The come more noodlings. From time to time, the harp provides a flourish sounding like background music from a film noir spy music. At 5 min, 50 sec, the percussion section briefly plays more serial music (6 min, 52 sec). Cut 9 is actually fun to listen to, from beginning to end. Cut 9 is 6 min, 42 seconds long. The piece clowns around, much like Lutoslawski's VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF PAGANINI (1941), which is based, in part, on Paganini's Caprice No. 24 in Am. The strings provide a couple of flirtatious glissandos, and then more glissandos. At 2 min, 15 sec, and again at 2 min, 40 sec, the clarinet decides that it has a sore throat, and it plays distorted bleatings. In the last four minutes of Cut 9, one finds a particular motif where one note is played rapidly in a mono-tone, resembling a rapid stutter. Cut 9 is my favorite part of this album. ---Tom Brody, amazon.com

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