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10/09-(5)

Title:

Arnold Schönberg (1874-1951)
5 Orchesterstücke op. 16
Notturmo for Harp, Violin and
Strings; 6 Lieder op. 8;
Prelude and Fugue BWV 552
(Bach/Schönberg)

Artists:

Manuela Uhl, soprano
Beethoven Orchester Bonn
Stefan Blunier, cond.

1 SACD

Bestellnummer:
MDG 937 1584-6

UPC-Code:



Fascinating Format

What a program! On his first recording as the conductor of the Beethoven Orchestra of Bonn, Stefan Blunier offers us a look at four important phases in the life of the composer Arnold Schönberg. The selection ranges from the late-romantic Notturmo through the Orchestral Songs op. 8 to the atonal Orchestral Pieces op. 16 and the highly romantic transcription of the Prelude and Fugue BWV 552 by Johann Sebastian Bach.

Premiere Performance

Schönberg's Notturmo for harp, solo violin, and string orchestra was long regarded as lost. Its existence was documented only by a newspaper notice: in its edition of 15 March 1896 the Neue musikalische Presse of Vienna reported that the "very highly appealing" composition had been premiered by the Polyhymnia amateur string orchestra of Vienna under the Schönberg pupil Alexander Zemlinsky. The work was later identified and edited on the basis of original fingerings in the violoncello part. The Beethoven Orchestra of Bonn has now recorded this work for the first time.

Selective Suspension

Schönberg had already left behind late-romantic harmony when he composed his Six Orchestral Songs op. 8 during 1903-05, but his first vocal compositions for a large body of instruments were not yet free of all tonality. Schönberg himself later spoke of a "state of suspense." In his selection of poems Schönberg, like Mahler, employed texts from the anthology Des Knaben Wunderhorn. In addition, he

set poems by Petrarch and Heinrich Hart – material aplenty for the young soprano Manuela Uhl, who has already earned her place in the Berlin Opera ensemble.

Transcriptional Tradition

Schönberg's composition of the Five Orchestral Pieces op. 16 in 1909 documented his arrival to atonality. Schönberg explained his new manner of composition as follows in a letter to Richard Strauss: "No architecture, no structure. Merely an uninterrupted alternation of colors, rhythms, and moods." No matter how progressive Schönberg's pursuit of twelve-tone technique might have been, he continued to occupy himself with the transcription of earlier music, above all that of Bach. His arrangement of the grand Prelude and Fugue in E flat major from 1929 makes for a surprise while also showing how very much this great innovator was rooted in the tradition of the nineteenth century. A fascinating program, fascinatingly presented!

Franz Liszt: Christus (Oratorio)

Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno,
Beethoven Orchester Bonn, Roman Kofman
MDG 937 1366-6 (3 SACDs)



Ernst Krenek

Karl V. (Opera)
Czech Philharmonic Choir Brno,
Beethoven Orchester Bonn, Marc Soustrot
MDG 337 1082-2 (2 CDs)

