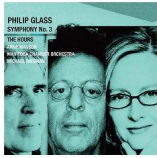


Philip Glass - Symphony No.3 & Suite From 'The Hours' For Piano And Orchestra (2013)

Written by bluesever
Sunday, 12 July 2015 16:06 -

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The Hours - Suite for Piano & Orchestra (Arr. Riesman) 1. *Movement I* 10'19" 2. *Movement II* 7'04" 3. *Movement III* 6'47"

Symphony No.3

4. *Movement I* 4'38" 5. *Movement II* 6'15" 6. *Movement III* 10'06" 7. *Movement IV* 3'29"
Michael Riesman, piano Manitoba Chamber Orchestra Anne Manson, conductor

In this new recording made at Canada's famous Glenn Gould Studio at the CBC in Toronto, conductor and Philip Glass champion Anne Manson leads pianist Michael Riesman and her own Manitoba Chamber Orchestra in a tour de force performance of Glass's Oscar nominated music from *The Hours* and a virtuosic performance of Glass's *Symphony No.3*. Riesman, conductor and pianist on the original soundtrack recording of *The Hours*, was commissioned in 2002 to create a concert piece based on the score. Glass's third symphony was written in 1995 for the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra and is one of the composer's most performed and accessible concert works. This recording shows off the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra's versatility, especially in the quick paced second and fourth movements, as well as the ensemble's silky interpretation of the many-layered voices of the third movement, all under the precise direction of Manson. ---forcedexposure.com

This fantastic new Philip Glass album features two of the composer's best instrumental scores. The soundtrack to *The Hours* has here been arranged by pianist Michael Riesman into a piano concerto, with brief orchestral introduction and outer movements which build to climaxes of real emotional power. As a concerto, it's terrific, something any fan of minimalism should appreciate. There is a sense of dramatic momentum which is remarkable given that the piece was originally incidental music to a film. One shouldn't be surprised by Riesman's authenticity as an arranger

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or effectiveness as a pianist: he has arranged for Glass many times in the past, joined the Philip Glass Ensemble in 1974, and produced the original soundtrack to The Hours.

The Symphony No. 3 has now received three major recordings, and it fully deserves the attention. The first movement makes an enigmatic introduction, but the real genius lies in the work's second half. Before a finale which absolutely screams James Bond thriller music we have a ten-minute slow movement of staggering beauty. It's a black pearl, which I've sometimes referred to as Pachelbel's Canon's evil twin or spiritual opposite. From a beginning of a few repeated chords for violas and cellos, Glass adds new ideas in careful layers: underpinning double bass and then one violin, two violins, all the violins blooming together in slow motion. This is one of my favorite moments from any living composers. If all the music Philip Glass ever wrote was in a burning building and I could only save one thing, I would instinctively reach for the slow movement of the Third Symphony.

As I said, the symphony's now appeared on three discs; Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra with Dennis Russell Davies, Bournemouth Symphony with Marin Alsop, and this one. In some ways the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra's performance is the one to get: it's more sharply etched than Bournemouth/Alsop, more closely miked and with a properly-sized chamber orchestra that brings every line into close focus. Anne Manson conducts like an expert. Russell Davies is the other chamber orchestra recording, and its first movement is more pointed and assertive, but it pretty clearly cedes to this newcomer in the two last parts, which are also my two favorites: the sharp detailing of the new recording really pays off, as does the strong drive Manson brings to the finale.

Only after I'd listened several times did I realize this was a live concert broadcast. Now my hat is off to the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, truly an unlikely ensemble to play this music so incredibly well, and I have to give this the highest possible praise. This is now an essential part of my Philip Glass collection. This is the kind of album that can win converts over to a great composer. ---Brian Reinhart, musicweb-international.com

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