

Bloch: Concerto Grosso No.1 & No.2 - Schelomo (1991)

Written by bluesever

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Concerto Grosso No. 1 For String Orchestra With Piano Obligato 1. 1. *Prelude: Allegro energico e pesante* 2. 2. *Dirge: Andante moderato* 3. 3. *Pastorale And Rustic Dances* 4. 4. *Fugue* Concerto Grosso

No. 2 For String Orchestra

5. 1. *Maestoso* 6. 2. *Andante* 7. 3. *Allegro* 8. 4. *Tranquillo* 9. *Schelomo: Hebraic Rhapsody For Violoncello And Orchestra*

Georges Miquelle - violoncello Eastman-Rochester Orchestra Howard Hanson – conductor

These extraordinary performances recorded at the Eastman Theatre, Rochester, in the late 50s, show no sign of fading. In aesthetic, presentation and sound, they are as fresh and vital as when they first came out...and I remember when they did, about 1960.

The greater part of the accolades, of course, go to Howard Hanson, whose tenacity and talent changed how the USA and the world looked at and listened to American music. Here he is in top form before the outstanding ensemble he built. In the concerti, the point and attack so necessary in Bloch is there, the virtuosity is there, the songfulness and emotion most definitely there. What's remarkable is that Hanson doesn't make a point of it...his Bloch aesthetic is by now so ingrained in our collective conscience that imagining a slack performance of any Bloch piece is brainwork, indeed.

The outstanding Miquelle works into the scheme very well, too. His Schelomo is the meditative king that eschews the rhetoric, bluster, bounce and noise we often get in the work. His Gallic tone is intimate, pure, on point, and even diminutive at times without in any way being retiring or pusillanimous. He and Hanson stick very close to the music and by doing less, they express more. Miquelle and Hanson's way won't appeal to those who seek "virtuosismo", but will reward those who seek Bloch's creative thought and compositional process. In that way, it's a unique

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and extraordinary performance.

If you don't know Bloch, this is a superlative way to start (my third grade music teacher played these performances on a Magnavox console for us kids and we immediately loved the music). Thanks to Wilma Cozart for refurbishing her own sessions so effectively, and Mercury for bringing back these historic performances for more generations to experience. ---amazon.com

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