

Antonin Dvorak – Symphonic Poems (Mackerras) [2010]

Written by bluesever

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1. *The Water Goblin. Symphonic Poem, Op. 107* 20:28 2. *The Noon Witch. Symphonic Poem, Op. 108* 13:59 3. *The Golden Spinning-Wheel. Symphonic Poem, Op. 109* 25:47 4. *The Wild Dove. Symphonic Poem, Op. 110*

Czech Philharmonic Orchestra

Charles Mackerras – conductor

You won't find better conducting in this music anywhere. Charles Mackerras finds so many wonderful details in these pieces that it's impossible to list them all, and he does it at all tempos and dynamic levels. Listen to his subtle underlining of rhythm in *The Wood Dove's* opening funeral march, and compare it to the unrivaled glitter of its central party music. Bask in the woodwind timbres at the opening of *The Noonday Witch*, and marvel at just how much music Mackerras finds even in the stormy climax of *The Water Goblin*. It's an unalloyed delight from the first note to the last.

Of course, the Czech Philharmonic plays these pieces magnificently. The sonics, however, are not as brilliant as the performances, and that's not unusual from this venue, with its somewhat cavernous acoustic. Slightly recessed brass and percussion lessen the impact of the climaxes somewhat, but it's awfully hard to quibble when the interpretations are this strong. One programming note: *The Golden Spinning Wheel* was released previously, as the coupling to Mackerras' equally sterling Dvorák Sixth Symphony, but the other three performances are new, and listeners may well prefer this selection (getting all four works on one disc also represents excellent value). Self-recommending. ----- David Hurwitz, ClassicsToday.com

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