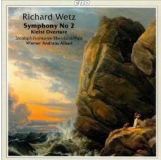


Wetz - Symphony No. 2 (1999)

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 02 October 2019 15:44 -

Wetz - Symphony No. 2 (1999)



Symphony No. 2, op. 47 (43:06) 1 (I) *Massig bewegt* 17:50 2 (II) *Langsam, mit klagendem Ausdruck* 9:50 3 (III) *Finale. Bewegt (Ruhige Halbe)* 15:26 4 *Kleist Overture op. 16* 16:08
Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz Werner Andreas Albert - conductor

I was unaware of Richard Wetz's existence before hearing this disc but was quite bowled over by the constant melodic and heroic undercurrents that run through his boldly personal music. The Second Symphony is a very beautiful work that deserves resurrection. It is far removed from the advanced harmonies of Strauss but one never loses interest although the three movement structure means that two of the movements can tend to be slightly overlong. I detected traces of Raff and Liszt in the opening *Massig bewegt* that is also reminiscent of Bruckner at times although the central development is wonderfully advanced in its intensity. The Finale is also highly inventive with many rambling melodies and a sprightly and heroic coda concluding proceedings in a most satisfying manner.

The accompanying 'Kleist' Overture is also a decidedly involving work with romantic associations very much in evidence.

We are now used to Werner Andreas Albert unearthing rare German music and his interpretations of these works are second to none with the orchestra playing peerlessly. Involving notes make up the colourful booklet, which also sports a fine reproduction of a Dahl painting. CPO's recording is richly resonant and very clear with an expansive sound picture of the whole orchestra very much in evidence. Another major discovery from this highly enterprising German label. ---Gerald Fenech, musicweb-international.com

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Richard Wetz (1875 — 1935) was a provincial composer in the truest sense of the word, comfortably writing music in the accepted German forms, using recognizably German/Austrian melodic material, and scoring with typically German conservatism. His Second Symphony was completed in 1919, but could have been written anytime between 1880 and the early 1930s. It sounds a lot like Bruckner, Mendelssohn, Brahms and Wagner, and the most interesting thing about it is the fact that it does not include a Scherzo, but rather has two large quick(-ish) movements surrounding a brief adagio. This makes the symphony much more active than one might ordinarily expect, and its closest cousin seems to be a piece like Furtwängler's Second Symphony, a work which also conceals some individuality of expression behind its conventional outward demeanor. Nowadays the words "conventional" and "provincial" have pejorative connotations, particularly when applied to the arts. The real issue, however, is whether or not the artist is sincere, and whether he understands how to work with the materials he chooses, however conventional they may be. Wetz knows what he is doing. His themes are attractive and well chosen, his developments imaginative, and his scoring apt. If you enjoy Bruckner, you'll like Wetz, as least as presented here on this well played, well recorded disc. ---David Hurwitz, classicstoday.com

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