

Schubert - Symphonies CD3 (Minkowski) (2012)

Written by bluesever

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Symphonie Nr.7 "Unfinished" 3-1 *Allegro Moderato* 15:07 3-2 *Andante Con Moto* 11:13
Symphonie Nr.6

3-3 *Adagio - Allegro* 9:10 3-4 *Andante* 5:29 3-5 *Scherzo: Presto* 6:25 3-6 *Allegro Moderato* 9:57

Les Musiciens Du Louvre Marc Minkowski - conductor

What a journey is traversed in Schubert's nine symphonies, from the adolescent pomposity of the opening flourish of the First, through the genuine drama of the Fifth and onto the pure, unadulterated inspiration of the final two. And along the way are the under-appreciated gems, the Third in particular that, please forgive me, beats hands- down anything that Mozart or Mendelssohn had written in the symphonic form by the same age of barely 20. No wonder so many of the great conductors have had a crack at the complete set, and let's just list von Karajan, Böhm, Barenboim, Muti, Abbado and Harnoncourt for starters, not to mention the Peter Maag LP-era and the Jos van Immerseel sets. So Marc Minkowski and Les Musiciens du Louvre Grenoble are mixing it with the big boys in this new boxed set recorded live in March 2012 in Vienna's Konzerthaus. Good thing they know what they're doing.

Using the same technique they applied to Haydn's London Symphonies, the 30-year-old French group performed the entire series in a week and recorded the lot, the upshot of the spontaneity being some really exciting performances, and the downside being the occasional ouch-moment when the period instruments remind us that they can be ornery critters that necessitated modern improvements (but listen out for the lovely period oboe sound).

Minkowski has the first and second violins on either side of him with the basses facing him across the back, a layout well- captured within the balance of the four discs. There is terrific momentum throughout, but never any sense of haste, although the finales are tricky to hold

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together ensemble-wise at speed, and occasionally sound it. Still, this is spirited live playing, with the Tragic Symphony No 4 being quite a revelation and the best-known works in the series – Nos 5, 6, 8 and 9 (the latter two confusingly labelled 7 and 8 in this package based on musicological evidence) – also worthy of taking their place up there with the best live recordings in the field. ---Martin Buzacott, limelightmagazine.com.au

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