

## Leos Janacek - The Eternal Gospel (Vecné Evangelium) [1997]

Wpisany przez bluesever

Piątek, 19 Luty 2010 21:43 - Zmieniony Wtorek, 14 Styczeń 2014 10:47

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## Leos Janacek - The Eternal Gospel (Vecné Evangelium) [1997]



1. *The Eternal Gospel. Legend for Soloists, Mixed Choir and Orchestra* 00:21:21
  1. *Con moto* 00:04:03
  2. *Adagio* 00:06:07
  3. *Con moto* 00:07:57
  4. *Andante* 00:03:13
2. *Our Father. Chamber Cantata for Tenor Solo, Mixed Choir, Harp and Organ* 00:15:35
3. *Lord Have Mercy for Soloists, Mixed Choir, Organ, Harp and Brass Instruments* 00:03:59
4. *Elegy on the Death of my Daughter Olga. Cantata for Tenor Solo, Mixed Choir and piano*
5. *Cartak on the Solan. Cantata for Male Choir and Orchestra*

Jadwiga Wysoczanska - soprano Beno Blachut - tenor Miroslav Svejda - tenor Ludmila Solarowa - organ Marie Mrazova - contralto Ivo Zidek - tenor Jan Panenka - piano

Prague Symphony Orchestra  
Prague Philharmonic Choir  
Jiri Pinkas - conductor

By the time Janáček sat down to compose the Eternal Gospel in 1914, the composer had completed several very significant works, but had not quite achieved the notoriety he was just about to receive. The Brno premiere of Janáček's *Jenufa* produced few tangible results. But a May 1916 National Theatre production put new life into the opera and gave the composer international recognition. Works composed before the composer's first major success were taken out of obscurity and given multiple performances. The *Eternal Gospel* was one such work allowed to see the light of day, partly due to the *Jenufa* success.

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Janáček's Eternal Gospel comes close to an oratorio, though the composer never referred to it as such. Based on a poem by one of Janáček's favorite poets, Jaroslav Vrchlický, the text's theme is universal love. Some of Janáček's closest associates believed that the war in the Balkans may have given impetus to the idealistic work, because of the pacifist attitude of the composer.

The central character in Janáček's miniture drama is the prophet Joachim da Fiore, sung by a tenor. Fiore the prophet appears before the people (represented by a mixed chorus) to proclaim the dawning of a Golden Age told to him by an angel.

The work is in four movements, and depict stages in human understanding. In the first movement, (*con moto*) the prophet simply intones the brightest day for all mankind is dawning, a phrase taking up only four bars. The orchestral part here introduces a few key motifs and establishes a basic mood. In the second movement, (*adagio*), the prophet Fiore continues the revelation after a brief orchestral introduction. Who can see the Angel flying through the clouds? Spirit from above, he's hidden by stars. The chorus enters forcefully in response singing, the Angel flies over the bottomless depths, holding the Eternal Gospel in his hand. He will proclaim it over seas and mountains, in every language known to mankind. The prophet reenters to speak of the revelation in terms of a book. At midnight, my gaze rises to Heaven. I see the Book's clasp, flashing in the clouds. With the arrival of expanding consciousness comes a familiar restoration theme. Leaves that had withered are revived with new sap--a line that is repeated several times by the tenor and chorus.

In the third movement, the prophet chronicles three Empires, each describing a stage in humanity. One Empire was the fear of the law, a reference to the Old Testament and Mosaic law. The second Empire is the Christian Empire, characterized as an epoch of faith, virtue and grace. The text says that, at this point, both Empires have passed, and now the third comes. It's glory in the East is already shining. This is the Empire of the Spirit, and is led by Francis, the rock of the Third Empire, who, according to the text was dedicated to the birds and to the beasts. The prophet exchanges lines such as these with the chorus. With each successive reference to the Empire of the Spirit, a series of alleluias bring the movement to a triumphant close, wherein the man with nothing will be rich in spirit.

The fourth movement of Janáček's Eternal Gospel has the prophet Joachim Fiore officially announcing the inauguration of Love's Empire, the eternal or final empire of the human spirit. The work ends impressively after a series of shimmering chords, harking back to the first movement. The Eternal Gospel ranks as one of Janáček's finest accomplishments. In it can be seen traces of his Glagolitic Mass, which occupied a social place in Janáček's world view.

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---Franklin Stover, Rovi

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