

MARCO
POLO

Boris
LYATOSHYSKY

DDD

8.223542

Symphony No. 1, Op. 2
“Grazhyna”, Op. 58 (Symphonic Ballade)

Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra
Theodore Kuchar



Boris Lyatoshynsky (1895-1968)

Symphony No.1, Op. 2

“Grazhyna”, Op. 58 (Symphonic Ballade)

Lyatoshynsky's *Symphony No.1*, which although completed by the year 1919, did not receive its première as a complete work until 1923, at which time it was conducted by Reinhold Glière, professor of composition and then director of the Kiev Conservatory. Fragments of the symphony became known to the public in earlier forms. The second movement of the symphony received its first performance as early as 1917, conducted by the composer, when it was introduced as an independent work under the title “Lyric Poem.” The first movement was composed in 1918, while Lyatoshynsky was completing his studies at the Kiev Conservatory, and was in that same year submitted as his graduation work. The second movement, reworked from its original form, and the finale were later completed in 1919. Although the work gives a rather immediate impression of being polystylistic, it is the harmonic language of Scriabin which obviously left a strong impression on the young composer, while the grandiose orchestration is most influenced by the romantic traditions of Borodin, Tchaikovsky and Wagner.

It would be incorrect to compare the *First Symphony*, not only with other European symphonies of the same period, but even with Lyatoshynsky's subsequent, more structurally accomplished symphonies. It would be equally incorrect to completely disregard this work as a mere student exercise. Already in the first movement exist melodic and rhythmic fragments, which although here appear “raw” or angular, become quite recognizable staples of his later works. The two principal themes of the first movement appear on the surface to be very much Scriabin-like, yet this association can only be a cosmetic one, as the personal convictions and depictions of the two composers, through their melodic portrayal, were of complete contrast. Through his outlook on the lives of the Ukrainian people and, in fact, the rest of the world, Lyatoshynsky was distressed by this period in history. This symphony can be described as an

artistic description of the composer, mostly inspired by the life-confirming tragedy of the times. The symphony is structured along the traditions of the three-part sonata cycle. The unusually saturated textures, largely brass dominated, create this dramatic and tragic image, yet as this appears within a refined polyphonic structure we already see the individuality and foundation towards the future of Lyatoshynsky. Although on first hearing the unfamiliar listener may be, at times, reminded of Scriabin, it is this unique use of themes and melodies which gives this composer such an individual style. In the words of the Ukrainian musicologist Mykola Hordiychuk, "the device of 'Surrounding' broad, melodic themes by shorter, expressive folk tunes throughout his creative output appears to be one of the most distinctive features of the composer's individuality."

The second movement of the symphony can be best described as a deep, psychological narration based on the human existence. It begins by outlining the doubts and desperate feelings experienced by mankind, possibly reflecting directly on the souls of so many Ukrainians at this particular point in time, yet throughout the movement developing as an emotionally exalted and inspired statement in the name of life and artistic creativity. The finale contrasts and juxtaposes the various thematic material already heard throughout the symphony. The tragic nature of the movement, which is all too evident based on the various thematic characters, is developed into a heroic statement through the use of fanfare-type material and culminates in the greatest of extended climaxes, so reminiscent of what one may normally associate with Rachmaninov, Scriabin and Tchaikovsky.

The symphonic ballade *Grazhyna, Op. 58* is recognized by many as one of Lyatoshynsky's true masterworks. Composed in 1955, the work was written to commemorate the centenary of the death of the great Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz and may best be described as a programmatic work, based on the poem of the same name. The first page of the composer's score contains a detailed programme of the various episodes to be found throughout the symphonic poem, which remain faithful to the original poem. Lyatoshynsky

ingeniously recreates the poet's intentions through the use of strict sonata form. It is the work's programmatic structure, though, which gives reason for the unique development of the coda. The coda, in this instance, is not a direct repeat of existing material, but an interaction between that which has already been stated and several new, emotionally-charged colours. Thematic development of a very sorrowful nature depicting the death of various characters maintains the dramatically strained atmosphere, yet this was not intended to diminish the heroic pathos of the composition. The closing theme, depicting Grazhyna's death, represents the composer's intention as a call to fight for the glory of the people and the motherland. In short, the first and many subsequent performances of this emotionally-charged tone poem was greeted by critics and followers of Lyatoshynsky's output with extreme interest and enthusiasm.

© 1994 Volodymyr I. Rozhok

Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra

Established in 1937 under Nathan Rachlin, the Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra has continued to serve as one of the most celebrated and accomplished instrumental ensembles in the territories of the former Soviet Union. During its long history the orchestra has appeared with soloists and conductors of the greatest distinction. Praised by Shostakovich and by David Oistrakh, the orchestra has made many recordings and its tours have taken it to cities throughout the former Soviet Union and Europe. Under its principal guest conductor Theodore Kuchar, appointed in 1992, it has continued to offer an extensive repertoire of music to audiences in the Ukraine and elsewhere.

Theodore Kuchar

The Ukrainian conductor Theodore Kuchar is currently principal guest conductor of the Ukrainian State Symphony Orchestra, music director of the Ukrainian Chamber Orchestra and artistic director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music. His professional career began as a principal violist in leading orchestras of Cleveland and Helsinki, followed by appearances as a soloist and chamber musician in Europe, Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America and the former Soviet Union. In 1980, at the age of twenty, Theodore Kuchar was awarded the Boston Symphony Orchestra Paul Fromm Fellowship, allowing study at Tanglewood with Leonard Bernstein, Colin Davis, Seiji Ozawa and André Previn. After international appearances as a guest conductor, he was appointed, soon after his Australian debut in 1987, music director of the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra in Brisbane, while also serving until 1993 as music director of the West Australian Ballet in Perth. In 1989 he was awarded a bronze medal by the Finnish government for services to Finnish music, while in 1994 he played in the world première of Penderecki's String Trio in New York. His recordings as a conductor include a number of important works for Naxos and Marco Polo.



Theodore Kuchar



Lyatoshynsky was the leading Ukrainian composer of his generation, writing symphonies in the tradition of Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov, works that have been described as philosophical dramas, reflecting the stresses of the period of their composition. His highly personal musical language reflects Russian tradition and the music of his native Ukraine.

8.223542

STEREO

Boris
LYATOSHYSKY

(1895 - 1968)

Playing
Time:
56'38"

Symphony No. 1 in A Major, Op. 2

- | | | |
|----------|---|----------------|
| 1 | Allegro non troppo un poco agitato | (14:56) |
| 2 | Molto lento | (11:33) |
| 3 | Allegro energico | (10:55) |

“Grazhyna”, Op. 58 (Symphonic Ballade)

- | | | |
|----------|---|----------------|
| 4 | Andante sostenuto - Allegro risoluto | (18:57) |
|----------|---|----------------|

Recorded at the Studio of the State Broadcasting Company of Ukraine in Kiev, on 8th, 13th to 15th May, 1994.

Producers / Engineers: Leonid Bylchynsky, Katherina Bazhenova
and Andrei Gerasimenko

Music Notes: Volodymyr Rozhok

Cover Painting by Luba Lebid' - Korovay

MADE IN GERMANY



DDD

© 9158

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORIZED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE,
BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THIS COMPACT DISC PROHIBITED.
© 1994 HNH International Ltd.
© 1994 HNH International Ltd.
DISTRIBUTED BY: MVD MUSIC AND VIDEO DISTRIBUTION GmbH,
OBERWEG 21C-HALLE V, D-82008 UNTERHACHING, MUNICH, GERMANY.