

NAXOS

Karol
SZYMANOWSKI

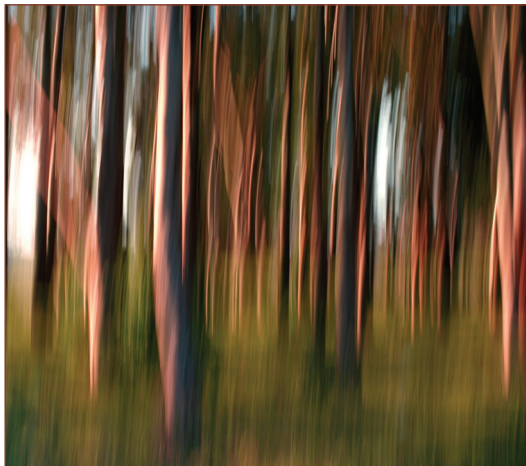
Symphony No. 2

Symphony No. 3 'Song of the Night'

Ryszard Minkiewicz, Tenor

Warsaw Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra

Antoni Wit



Karol
SZYMANOWSKI
(1882-1937)

Symphonies Nos. 2 and 3

Symphony No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 19*	34:38
① I. Allegro moderato – Grazioso	12:59
② II. Theme: Lento –	1:30
③ Variation 1: L'istesso tempo –	1:20
④ Variation 2: L'istesso tempo –	1:55
⑤ Variation 3: Scherzando. Molto vivace –	2:40
⑥ Variation 4: Tempo di gavotte –	2:46
⑦ Variation 5: Tempo di minuetto –	2:46
⑧ Variation 6: Vivace e capriccioso –	1:22
⑨ Fuga	7:21
Symphony No. 3, Op. 27, 'Pieśń o nocy' (Song of the Night)	26:10
⑩ I. Moderato assai†	8:48
⑪ II. Allegretto tranquillo	7:34
⑫ III. Largo†	9:47

Ewa Marczyk, Violin Solo* • Ryszard Minkiewicz, Tenor†

Warsaw Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra

(Chorus-master: Henryk Wojnarowski)

Antoni Wit

Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937)

Symphony No. 2 in B flat major, Op.19 • Symphony No. 3 'Pieśń o nocy' (Song of the Night), Op. 27

Karol Szymanowski was born at Tymoszkówka in the Kiev District of the Ukraine in 1882, the son of a Polish land-owner and of a mother of Swedish extraction, born Baroness Anna Taube. The family and their immediate circle had a deep interest in the arts, a fact reflected in the subsequent careers of the five children of the marriage as musicians, poets or painters. His sister Stanisława later became a singer and his brother Feliks a pianist. Szymanowski's early education was at home, since a leg injury at the age of four prevented him from attending school in the neighbouring town of Elisavetgrad (later known as Kirowograd), where, nevertheless, he had music lessons from a relative, Gustav Neuhaus, who had a school there. In 1901 he went to Warsaw to continue his musical studies, taking lessons from the composer Zygmunt Noskowski in counterpoint and composition and from Marek Zawirski in harmony.

The feelings of Polish nationalism that had inspired Chopin and his contemporaries continued through the nineteenth century, exacerbated by the repressive measures taken by Russia, in particular, in the face of open revolt. Warsaw in 1901, however, remained as provincial as it had been in the time of Chopin, who had sought his musical fortune abroad in Paris in 1830. The century had seen Polish performers of the greatest distinction, particularly the violinists Lipiński and Wieniawski. The opera composer Stanisław Moniuszko, however, a rival to Chopin in his own country, enjoyed only a local reputation, while his successors, in Szymanowski's esteem, occupied a still lower place. Polish music was to a great extent isolated and provincial, a reflection of the society in which it existed. The new century, however, brought together a group of young musicians of much wider outlook, a circle that included the pianist Artur Rubinstein, the violinist Paweł Kochański and the conductor Grzegorz Fitelberg. The last named, the composer Ludomir Różycki and the pianist and composer Apolinary Szeluto, together with

Szymanowski, established under the patronage of Prince Władysław Lubomirski the Young Poland in Music group, for the publication and promotion of new Polish music. Fitelberg, by training a violinist and composer, made his later career as a conductor, and directed the first concert of the group in Warsaw in 1906, when Szymanowski's *Concert Overture* was performed. He won later distinction as a conductor at the Vienna Staatsoper and in work for the Russian impresario Dyagilev, before returning to direct the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra and, from 1947, the Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice. Kochański's support was to prove invaluable, particularly in the composition of the first of Szymanowski's two violin concertos and in a number of works written for violin and piano. Rubinstein, who, like Kochański, made his later career in the United States of America, proved an additional champion of Szymanowski, while Paderewski, a musician of more conservative tendency, assisted in the wider dissemination of Szymanowski's piano music, favouring especially the famous *B flat minor Study*, a work that owes much of its popularity to his advocacy.

The first Young Poland concert in Warsaw had included performances of Szymanowski's *Variations on a Polish Folk Theme* and his *Study in B flat minor*, played by the pianist Harry Neuhaus, and had been well enough received. Berlin, however, proved much less interested, when Fitelberg conducted the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in a similar programme in the same year. Szymanowski spent the following two years principally in Berlin and Leipzig, absorbing still further the influence of Wagner, of Reger and of Richard Strauss, composers of whom he later took a cooler view. This period saw the composition of his *Symphony No. 1 in F minor*, completed in 1907 and given its first performance in Warsaw two years later. The composer subsequently withdrew the symphony and went so far as to destroy the 1907 piano trio, sensing what seemed to

him the excessive influence of the post-Wagnerian, a reflection of a predominant aspect of music of the time in Germany. The following years brought periods at home in the Ukraine and abroad. He wrote his *Penthesilea*, *Opus 18*, an orchestral work with soprano solo derived from the Achilleis of the contemporary Polish painter and dramatist Stanisław Wyspiański, in Italy in 1908, and in 1910 completed a very different *Symphony No. 2 in B flat*, *Opus 19*, a work in which the influence of Skryabin is noticeable, as it is in the piano music of this period. The new symphony, played under Fitelberg in Warsaw in 1911, proved unacceptable to both audience and critics, but won acclaim in Berlin, Leipzig and Vienna, establishing the international importance of the composer. After this experience Szymanowski determined to live, at least for a time, in Vienna, where Fitelberg was now employed at the Staatsoper, and where he reached an agreement with Universal to publish his work.

Vienna proved less stimulating than Szymanowski had hoped, but the period changed to some extent his musical outlook, particularly through his experience of the music of Debussy and, still more, of Ravel, and of the Dyagilev company in Stravinsky's *Firebird* and *Petrushka*. In March 1914 he left Vienna and travelled south to Italy, Sicily and North Africa, returning through Rome, Paris and London, where he met Stravinsky. He spent the war years in musical isolation at home at Tymoszówka, turning his attention to a study of Greek civilisation and literature, to the early history of Christianity and to the culture of Islam, the last an extension of an interest aroused by translations of the poems of Hafiz by Hans Bethge, poet of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, some of which he had set to music in 1911, and exemplified in the remarkable *Symphony No. 3*.

The Russian revolution put an end to Szymanowski's period of war-time seclusion. The family was compelled to move, for reasons of safety, to Elisavetgrad, and the property at Tymoszówka was destroyed by the revolutionaries. In 1919 they moved to Poland, after the proclamation of the new republic. Kochański and Rubinstein prudently chose to settle in

the United States, but Szymanowski determined to stay in his own country and to seek there a further source of inspiration, particularly in the more primitive aspects of indigenous music. His reputation grew at home and abroad, and in 1927 he rejected the offer of a position as director of the conservatory in Cairo in favour of the financially less rewarding position of director of the Warsaw Conservatory, which in 1930 became the Warsaw Academy of Music, an institution of which he remained rector until his resignation in 1932.

The five years that Szymanowski spent at the Conservatory and the Academy brought many frustrations, particularly in dealing with musicians of a conservative turn of mind, and these difficulties finally led to his resignation. The remaining years of his life were not easy, without any regular source of income, and he therefore made more public appearances as a performer, writing the piano part of his *Symphony No. 4* in 1932 to suit his own relatively modest piano technique, no longer adequate for the more taxing compositions of his earlier career. In the same year he was greatly encouraged by the performance in Prague of his opera *King Roger*, a work that deals imaginatively with a struggle in medieval Sicily between Christianity and an Eastern Dionysian religion, a further example of his absorption of the essence of other cultures than his own, and of his reading of Euripides.

Szymanowski's final years were clouded by illness and he sought an alleviation of the effects of tuberculosis abroad in Davos, Grasse and Cannes, and finally in Lausanne, where he died on 29th March 1937. His last orchestral work was the *Second Violin Concerto*, completed in 1933, followed by two *Mazurkas* for piano, written in the following year. The ballet *Harnasie*, inspired by the primitive folk-music of the people living in the Tatra mountains, was staged in Prague in 1935 and the following year, with much success, in Paris, with choreography by Serge Lifar. It became a popular part of Polish ballet repertoire after its first performance in Poznań in 1938, a year after the composer's death.

Szymanowski summarised succinctly enough the

plan of his *Symphony No. 2 in B flat major*, writing of “the first movement in a grand manner, the second movement - a theme and nine variations, the adagio and finale with a fugue”. He expressed satisfaction with his achievement, feeling that he had overcome the inconsistencies of his earlier work, opening new doors, at least in his own style of composition. At the same time he suggested an element of what he described as “Zopfmusik”, presumably a reference to the traditional forms of which he makes use. In 1934, with the help of Fitelberg, he revised the orchestration, in an attempt to clarify the structure.

The new symphony was given its first performance in Warsaw on 7th April 1911 under Fitelberg but was coolly received, even by those who had been enthusiastic about the *Concert Overture* five years earlier. Abroad it fared very much better, arousing interest in Berlin, Leipzig and Vienna, where its originality was appreciated by critics. The opening movement, grandiose enough in general conception, makes sensuous and passionate contrasts in its use of solo instruments in a varied orchestral texture that may remind us of Mahler. The second movement, where a solo violin again makes an emotionally effective appearance, embraces a wide variety of styles and techniques in its continuous variations, all subsumed into the composer’s own comprehensive idiom. The symphony ends with a fugue, its chromatic subject dramatically introduced and developed with continuing contrasts of orchestral texture. The contrapuntal character of the movement and its forward impetus are

interrupted by a gently lyrical section, leading to the massive conclusion of the work.

Szymanowski’s *Third Symphony*, completed in 1916 after two years’ work, was first performed in London in 1921. The work, in which orchestra and singers are subtly blended in a continuous web of sound, shows something of the influence of Debussy, but above all the composer’s reinterpretation of the thought and words of the great medieval Persian mystic known as Mevlânâ, our Master, Jalâl ad-Dîn, founder of the order of so-called whirling dervishes, his words translated by Tadeusz Miciński. Hafiz, a poet of the fourteenth century, had exercised a considerable fascination over European writers from Goethe onwards. Szymanowski first read Hafiz in translations by Hans Bethge, and in some respects one may see Szymanowski’s interest as a continuation of this aspect of European thought rather than as a personal eccentricity. The symphony, rhapsodic, mystical and ecstatic, captures in a foreign idiom much of its source, enabling Kaikhosru Sorabji, a perceptive critic, to describe him as no mere European in fancy dress. Nevertheless it is always possible in listening to the symphony to detect affinities with other European composers of the period and to understand the reaction of Warsaw audiences, for whom Szymanowski now appeared, in his own words, as a stranger, inapprehensible and probably even useless in the general structure of Polish music.

Keith Anderson

Ryszard Minkiewicz



Photo: Artist's archives

The tenor Ryszard Minkiewicz studied composition and theory of music at the Academy of Music in Gdansk, and then solo singing with Piotr Kusiewicz at the same Academy. He was awarded the Special Prize at the Third International Ada Sari Competition in Nowy Sącz (Poland) for the performance of contemporary lyric songs. In 1992 he won Third Prize as well as the Prize of the Syndicate of the French Theatre Directors at the International Singing Competition in Toulouse. Since 1989 he has been a soloist of leading Polish Opera Houses in Warsaw, Poznań, Kraków, Bydgoszcz and Gdansk, where he has appeared in operas by Rossini, Mozart, Donizetti, Johann Strauss and Leonard Bernstein. Ryszard Minkiewicz has a wide and versatile cantata, oratorio and concert repertoire. He works regularly with all major Polish Philharmonic organizations and festivals, and frequently participates in International Music Festivals, among others at Prazske Jaro, the BBC Proms in London, the Salzburg Festival, Musicora in Paris, Wratislavia Cantans and the Warsaw Autumn. He has appeared with such renowned orchestras as the Orchestre National de France, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Philharmonic, Bratislava and Brno Philharmonic Orchestras, Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia, Capella Savaria, and Musica Aeterna, with conductors including Charles Dutoit, Simon Rattle, Yehudi Menuhin, Leos Svarovski, Jacek Kasprzyk, and Kazimierz Kord. Recordings of the artist are found on Naxos, EMI, Marco Polo, PolyGram, Accord, Dux, and other labels. Ryszard Minkiewicz has also made a number of recordings for Polish Radio and Television as well as for BBC TV London (Szymanowski) and Brno TV (Janáček's *Glagolithic Mass*).

Ewa Marczyk

Concertmaster of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra, Ewa Marczyk graduated from the Warsaw Music Academy in 1975 as a pupil of Tadeusz Wronski. She then went on to study in Paris with Jean Fourmier. In 1977 she joined the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra where she has served as leader since 1980. She has performed the solo parts of numerous symphonic works, including Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* and Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. From 1977 to 1983 she was also leader of the Warsaw Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra with which she toured all over the world. Since 1986 she has worked with the Polish Piano Quartet, with which she performs and records on a regular basis.



Photo: Artist's archives

Warsaw Philharmonic Choir



Photo: Warsaw Philharmonic

the choir's repertoire. The choir has performed all Penderecki's oratorios and *a cappella* works, the *Polish Requiem*, *Te Deum*, *Utrjenja*, *Aus den Psalmen Davids*, *Dies irae*, *Veni Creator*, *Song of Cherubim*, *St Luke Passion*, *Seven Gates of Jerusalem*, and *Credo*, as well as his opera *Paradise Lost*. The choir performs not only in Warsaw but also in other Polish cities, and is also very active internationally, with appearances throughout Europe, as well as in Israel and in Turkey. In addition to performances with leading orchestras, the choir has also participated in opera at La Scala, Milan, La Fenice in Venice, and elsewhere. In 1988 and 1990 the choir was invited to the Vatican to take part in the celebrations of the successive anniversaries of Pope John Paul II's pontificate, with concerts televised throughout Europe. In December 2001 the Choir together with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra performed for John Paul II once again in a special concert commemorating the centenary of the Warsaw Philharmonic, this time presenting the *Missa pro pace* by Wojciech Kilar.

Henryk Wojnarowski

The choirmaster of the Warsaw Philharmonic Choir since 1978, Henryk Wojnarowski was previously conductor and choirmaster of the Warsaw Opera Choir where he prepared over eighty opera premières and several world premières. He had studied symphony and opera conducting under Stanisław Wisłocki at the Warsaw Conservatory. He has appeared with the Warsaw Philharmonic Choir in numerous venues, presenting both *a cappella* works and oratorios, the latter with local symphony orchestras. His choir has participated in many renowned music festivals, including Wratislavia Cantans in Wrocław, the Warsaw Autumn, Palermo and Ravenna Festivals, among others. Henryk Wojnarowski has prepared the Warsaw Philharmonic Choir for many recordings for Polish radio and television, and Polish and foreign record companies. He has made numerous international tours with the choir, and also serves as professor of choral conducting at the Warsaw Academy of Music.

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra: The National Philharmonic of Poland

The first performance of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra took place on 5th November 1901 in the newly opened Philharmonic Hall under the artistic director and principal conductor, Emil Młynarski. The soloist was the world-renowned pianist, composer and future statesman Ignacy Jan Paderewski, and the programme included Paderewski's *Piano Concerto in A minor* and works of other Polish composers, Chopin, Moniuszko, Noskowski, Stojowski and Zelenka. In the succeeding years the orchestra won a high reputation, collaborating with leading conductors and soloists, until the outbreak of war in 1939, the destruction of the Philharmonic Hall and the loss of 39 of its 71 players. Resuming activity after the war, the orchestra was conducted by Straszynski and Panufnik, and in January 1950 Witold Rowicki was appointed director and principal conductor, organizing a new ensemble under difficult conditions. In 1955 the rebuilt Philharmonic Hall was re-opened, with a large hall of over a thousand seats and a 433-seat hall for chamber music, recognised as the National Philharmonic of Poland. Subsequent conductors included Bohdan Wodiczko, Arnold Rezler and Stanisław Skrowaczewski, and in 1958 Witold Rowicki was again appointed artistic director and principal conductor, a post he held until 1977, when he was succeeded by Kazimierz Kord, who served until the end of the centenary celebrations in 2001. In 2002 Antoni Wit became general and artistic director of the Warsaw Philharmonic – The National Orchestra and Choir of Poland. The orchestra has toured widely abroad, in addition to its busy schedule at home in symphony concerts, chamber concerts, educational work and other activities. It now has a complement of 112 players.

Antoni Wit

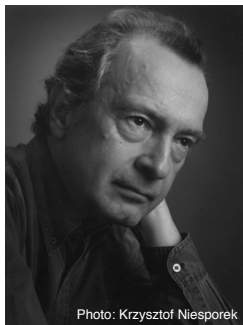


Photo: Krzysztof Niesporek

Antoni Wit, one of the most highly regarded Polish conductors, studied conducting with Henryk Czyż and composition with Krzysztof Penderecki at the Academy of Music in Kraków, subsequently continuing his studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He also graduated in law at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Immediately after completing his studies he was engaged as an assistant at the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra by Witold Rowicki and was later appointed conductor of the Poznań Philharmonic. He collaborated with the Warsaw Grand Theatre, and from 1964 to 1977 was artistic director of the Pomeranian Philharmonic, before his appointment as director of the Polish Radio and Television Orchestra and Chorus in Kraków. From 1983 to 2000 he was the director of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, and from 1987 to 1994 he was the chief conductor and then first guest conductor of the Orquesta Filarmónica de Gran Canaria. In 2002 he became General and Artistic Director of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra. His international career has brought engagements with major orchestras throughout Europe, the Americas and the Near and Far East. He has made nearly a hundred records, including an acclaimed release for Naxos of the piano concertos of Prokofiev, awarded the *Diapason d'Or* and *Grand Prix du Disque de la Nouvelle Académie du Disque*. In January 2002 his recording of the *Turangalila Symphony* by Olivier Messiaen (Naxos 8.554478-79) was awarded the Cannes Classical Award at *Midem Classic 2002*. Antoni Wit is a professor at the F. Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw.

III Symfonia, 'Pieśń o nocy'

10 O, nie śpij, druhu, nocy tej!
Tyś jest Duch, a myśmy chorzy nocy tej!
Odpędź z oczu Twoich sen!
Tajemnica się rozwidni nocy tej!
Tyś jest Jowisz na niebiosach,
wśród gwiazd krążysz firmamentu, nocy tej!

Nad otchłanie orła pędź!
Bohaterem jest Twój Duch nocy tej!

12 Jak cicho, inni śpią...
Ja i Bóg jesteśmy sami nocy tej!
Jaki szum! Wschodzi szczęście,
prawda skrzydłem opromienia nocy tej!
Nie śpij, druhu!
Gdybym przespał aż do ranka,
jużbym nigdy nie odzyskał nocy tej!
Targowiska już ucichły,
patrz na rynek gwiazdnych dróg nocy tej!
Lew i Orion,
Andromeda i Merkury krwawo lśni nocy tej.

Wpływ złowieszczy miota Saturn,
Wenus płynie w złotym dżdżu nocy tej!
Zamilknięciem wiąże język,
lecz ja mówię bez języka nocy tej!

Mevlânâ Jalâl ad-Dîn (1207-1273)

Polish translation by Tadeusz Miciński (1873-1918)

Symphony No. 3, 'Song of the Night'

Do not sleep, O friend, through this night!
You, a soul, while we suffer through this night!
Ban slumber from your eyes!
Revealed is the great secret in this night!
You are God in the high heaven,
Round the starry vault of heaven you go round
in this night!
Like an eagle soar above!
Now is your soul tonight a hero!

So quiet, others sleep...
I and God together, alone in this night!
What sound! Joy rises,
Truth with shining wing shines in this night!
Sleep not, friend!
If I slept on until dawn,
I should never, never again see this night!
Roads on earth are silent,
There see the starry paths of this night!
Leo, Orion,
Andromeda and Mercury gleam
blood-red through this night.
Saturn binds with fated powers,
Venus swims in golden rain through this night!
Silence chains my tongue,
But I speak, though without a tongue, in this night!

English translation by Keith Anderson

Also available:



SZYMANOWSKI

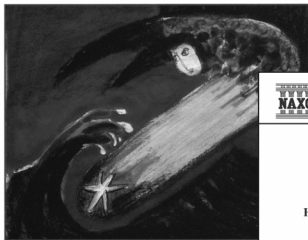
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Songs with Orchestra

Love Songs of Hafiz • Songs of the Infatuated Muezzin
Songs of a Fairy-Tale Princess

Jadwiga Gadulanka • Barbara Zagórzanka
Anna Malewicz-Madej • Ryszard Minkiewicz
Polish State Philharmonic Orchestra (Katowice)
Karol Stryja



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NAXOS

**Karol
SZYMANOWSKI**

**Violin Concertos Nos. 1 and 2
Nocturne and Tarantella**

Ilya Kaler, Violin

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra • Antoni Wit



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Also available:



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Violin Sonata

Mythes • Notturmo and Tarantella

Miriam Kramer, Violin • Nicholas Durcan, Piano



8.557748

Composed in 1910, at a time when Szymanowski was influenced by Richard Strauss, Reger and Scriabin, the unusually structured *Symphony No. 2* is a work of great power and invention, with many passionate and varied contrasts in its use of solo instruments, in particular the violin. Szymanowski's *Symphony No. 3 'Song of the Night'*, in which orchestra, tenor and choir are subtly blended in a continuous web of intoxicating sound, is a ravishing setting of a Polish translation of a poem by the great medieval Persian mystic known as Mevlânâ, our Master, Jalâl ad-Dîn, which evokes the mysteries and beauty of a starlit Persian night.



Karol
SZYMANOWSKI
(1882-1937)

Symphonies Nos. 2 and 3

- | | | |
|--------------|--|--------------|
| 1-9 | Symphony No. 2 in B flat major, Op. 19* | 34:38 |
| 10-12 | Symphony No. 3, Op. 27, 'Pieśń o nocy'
(Song of the Night)† | 26:10 |

Ewa Marczyk, Violin Solo* • Ryszard Minkiewicz, Tenor†

**Warsaw Philharmonic Choir
and Orchestra**

(Chorus-master: Henryk Wojnarowski)

Antoni Wit



Sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, Warsaw, Poland
Polish sung texts and English translations included

The sung texts and translations can also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/570721.htm

A full track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet

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60:49



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