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SEATTLE SYMPHONY
COLLECTION

Arthur
HONEGGER
Symphony No. 2

Henri
LAZAROF
Concerto for Orchestra No. 2, Icarus'
Poema

Seattle Symphony
Gerard Schwarz

Arthur Honegger (1892-1955) Symphony No. 2

In January 1920, Henri Collet, a music critic based in Paris, proclaimed the talents of a group of a half-dozen young French composers whom he dubbed *Les six français* (The French Six). *Les six*, as they soon came to be known, shared an interest in using jazz and music-hall idioms in their work, a sympathy for the sounds of the machine age, and were influenced by the economy and dryness of an older French composer, Erik Satie. Among this coterie were Francis Poulenc, Darius Milhaud, and Arthur Honegger.

Honegger never sought allegiance with the other members of *Les six*, and it soon became apparent that he had only a superficial commonality with them. He had little use for the irony cultivated by his colleagues and no interest in playing the rôle of iconoclast, which Poulenc, especially, enjoyed. On the contrary, Honegger maintained a strong respect for musical tradition, proclaiming his loyalty to “chamber and symphonic music in all their most grave and austere aspects”.

Born in France in 1892 to Swiss parents, Honegger studied in Zurich and later at the Paris Conservatoire. Like other members of *Les six* (as well as Ravel and other French composers of the period), he used jazz inflections in some of the music he wrote during the 1920s, but Honegger also looked to Bach, Beethoven, and other classical masters for ideas pertaining to musical discourse, and to the leading modernists for innovations in harmony and rhythm. Something of the breadth of the composer’s imagination is revealed in his two most famous early works. In 1921 Honegger wrote his oratorio *Le roi David*, approaching the subject of the biblical King David in an earnest and traditional manner. Two years later he composed *Pacific 231*, an orchestral tour-de-force that gives a startlingly realistic sonic

portrait of a locomotive starting up, accelerating, and hurtling down the tracks.

In 1930 Honegger began composing symphonies and eventually emerged as France’s foremost symphonic composer of the twentieth century. The second of his five symphonies was occasioned by a request from the Swiss conductor Paul Sacher, a longtime champion of modern music, who commissioned works from many leading composers of the twentieth century (in addition to Honegger, these included Stravinsky, Bartók, Britten, Strauss, Martinů, Elliott Carter and others). Although Honegger spent over a year sketching ideas for it, the music would not take shape. “Finally during the sad days of the Occupation”, the composer recalled, “I once again immersed myself in the quartets of Beethoven, and the influence of these magnificent scores stimulated me and allowed me to begin work.” The second movement was composed first, in the winter of 1940-41; the entire composition was completed the following October. Honegger cast the work in three movements and scored it for string orchestra, with a single trumpet added in the final moments. Partly because it foregoes the colours that woodwind might have added, and largely as a result of the melodic and harmonic materials on which it is predicated, the *Second Symphony* conveys a rather dark, brooding mood, perhaps reflecting Honegger’s state of mind during the “sad days” in which he wrote the music. The composer described the character of the middle movement as “fairly sombre and even, at times, desperate”, but this could be said of the first movement also. Only at the end of the finale does the music strike a note of real optimism.

An introduction in slow tempo prefaces the first movement. This passage is dominated by a mournful repeating-note figure, given out by the violas, that

sets the tone for the symphony as a whole. Though faster in tempo, the main body of the movement seems hardly less distressed. Honegger recalls the music of the introduction late in the piece and combines its static, repetitive motive with themes of the *Allegro* during the coda that brings this initial part of the symphony to a close.

The central slow movement begins with a funereal theme composed of a series of two-note melodic "sighs". (These originate with the viola figure in the introduction of the previous movement.) Using this theme as a "ground", Honegger proceeds to add layers of counterpoint to it in the manner

of a passacaglia. The mood is intensely elegiac throughout.

Honegger enlivens the finale with stimulating cross-rhythms while considering a succession of varied themes. Most of these are developed during several recurrences over the course of the movement, but the last, a broad chorale-like melody to which the trumpet adds its voice, appears only near the close, bringing the symphony to a brighter conclusion than we might have expected.

Paul Schiavo

Henri Lazarof (b. 1932) Concerto for Orchestra No. 2, 'Icarus' • Poema

Henri Lazarof was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1932, and began his musical training in his native country. He continued his studies in Israel, under composer Paul Ben-Haim, and in Rome with Goffredo Petrassi. After emigrating to the United States, in 1950, Lazarof completed his studies at Brandeis University, where his teachers were Arthur Berger and Harold Shapero. In 1959 Lazarof moved to southern California and began a long association with the University of California, Los Angeles. Beginning there as a teacher of French language and literature, Lazarof joined the Music Department in 1962 and subsequently was named Professor Emeritus. He has enjoyed a long and fruitful association with Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony, who have performed and recorded a number of his works.

That association began in 1985, when Lazarof composed *Poema* as a wedding gift for Schwarz and his wife, Jody. Cast in a single movement, the piece begins with an introductory passage featuring ringing chords and evocative sonorities that grow out

of them. The main portion of the piece begins with a trumpet (the instrument Gerard Schwarz played so masterfully before turning full-time to conducting), which initiates a series of rhapsodic phrases that pass among several instruments. Soon more powerful massed sonorities begin to punctuate the melodic lines, and the music assumes an urgently dramatic character, several warmly romantic episodes notwithstanding. At length Lazarof recalls the material of the introduction, thereby returning the music to its point of origin.

Lazarof composed *Icarus*, a concerto for orchestra, in 1984, in response to a commission from the Houston Symphony Orchestra. Wishing to connect the work to the city where it would receive its first performance, the composer thought of the NASA space flight program, which is centered in Houston. The ambition, achievements and occasional tragic setbacks of NASA's efforts led to thoughts of the mythical Icarus, who took flight on wings fashioned by his father, but perished after flying too close to the sun. *Icarus* is not,

however, a piece of programmatic or descriptive music. Rather, its three movements convey something of both the ages-old desire to escape the confines of our earth and the danger inherent in that desire.

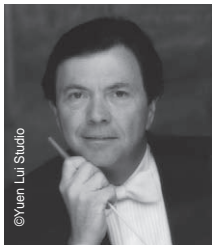
The first movement begins with a passage scored for two sets of timpani. From this emerge a succession of delicate sonorities, but the calm is broken, following a reprise of the timpani duet, by an acceleration and crescendo into the main body of the movement. Here the music presents dramatic outbursts alternating with spare, quiet textures. The movement's climax brings a frenzied outburst twice broken by mighty timpani strokes, after which the music subsides toward a state of hushed mystery.

The slow second movement begins with a soliloquy for bass clarinet. From this emerges a series of atmospheric ruminations, mostly featuring wind instruments. Finally, another increase in volume, speed and force propels the music into the finale. That movement juxtaposes passages of almost frenetic activity with occasional moments of tense fragility. A quiet passage of dense string-choir polyphony forms a startling central episode, and the work concludes with a recollection of the timpani duet from the first movement.

Paul Schiavo



Gerard Schwarz



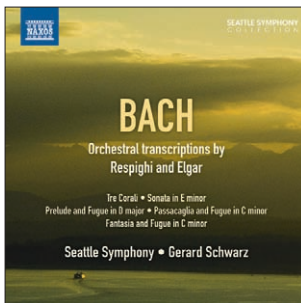
Gerard Schwarz has a vast repertoire that includes major commitments to Germanic, Russian and American music. He was Music Director of the Seattle Symphony from 1985 to 2011. He currently serves as Seattle Symphony Conductor Laureate and Music Director of the Eastern Music Festival. Previously, he was Music Director of New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and New York Chamber Symphony, as well as Artistic Advisor to Tokyu Bunkamura with the Tokyo Philharmonic. His considerable discography of over 330 releases showcases his collaborations with some of the world's greatest orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic, the London Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony, Orchestre National de France, Tokyo Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, New York Chamber Symphony and the Seattle Symphony, among others. Born to Viennese parents, Schwarz

has served on the National Council on the Arts. He has received two Emmy Awards, thirteen GRAMMY® nominations, six ASCAP Awards, and numerous *Stereo Review* and *Ovation* Awards. In addition, he holds the Ditson Conductor's Award from Columbia University, was the first American named Conductor of the Year by *Musical America*, and has received numerous honorary doctorates, including one from his alma mater, The Juilliard School. In 2002, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers honored Schwarz with its Concert Music Award, and, in 2003, the Pacific Northwest branch of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences gave Schwarz its first "IMPACT" lifetime achievement award.

Seattle Symphony

The Seattle Symphony, founded in 1903, has gained international prominence with more than 140 recordings, twelve GRAMMY® nominations, two Emmys and numerous other awards. Under the leadership of Music Director Ludovic Morlot since September 2011, the Seattle Symphony performs in one of the world's finest concert venues – the acoustically superb Benaroya Hall – in downtown Seattle. Gerard Schwarz led the orchestra from 1985 to 2011, and is now Conductor Laureate. The Seattle Symphony is internationally recognized for its innovative programming and extensive recording history. From September through July, the Symphony is heard live by more than 315,000 people. For more information on the Seattle Symphony, visit www.seattlesymphony.org.

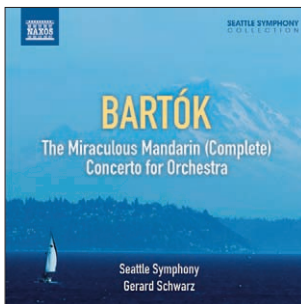
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Playing Time
61:32

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Completed during World War II, Honegger's *Symphony No. 2* gives voice to the composer's horror of mankind's barbarity and inhumanity perpetrated during the conflict. Its power derives from the seamlessness of its construction and the intensity of its expression. The work's dark, brooding mood comes to a profoundly moving climax in the finale's elegiac chorale tune, played on first violins accompanied by trumpet, thus ending the symphony on a more optimistic note than might be expected. Henri Lazarof's *Concerto for Orchestra No. 2, 'Icarus'* is a volatile, richly coloured score, and *Poema*, composed as a wedding gift for Gerard Schwarz and his wife, is both romantic and brilliant.



SEATTLE SYMPHONY

Arthur
HONEGGER
(1892-1955)

Symphony No. 2	25:28
1 Molto moderato – Allegro	11:00
2 Adagio mesto	9:12
3 Vivace, non troppo	5:16

Henri
LAZAROF
(b. 1932)

Concerto for Orchestra No. 2, 'Icarus'	22:33
4 Part I	9:27
5 Part II	6:36
6 Part III	6:30
7 Poema for Orchestra	13:31

Seattle Symphony • Gerard Schwarz

Recorded on 17 April 1992 and 8-9 February 1993 (*Symphony No. 2*); 28 May 1989 (*Icarus*);
8 January 1990 (*Poema*) at the Seattle Center Opera House, USA
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(*Honegger and Icarus*); Andrew Dawson (*Poema*) • Associate Engineer: Al Swanson (*Honegger*)
Assistant Engineers: Al Swanson (*Icarus and Poema*); Andrew Dawson (*Icarus*); Matthew Lutthans (*Honegger*)
Booklet notes by Paul Schiavo • Cover photo by Ben VanHouten • Previously released on Delos International
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