

Classical CDs Weekly: Debussy, Goldmark, Ravel, Martynas Levickis

Country nuptials from Singapore, piano transcriptions of French orchestral music and the accordionist winner of Lithuania's Got Talent

by Graham Rickson | Saturday, 07 September 2013

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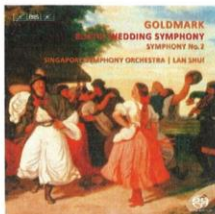
Lan Shui conducts the Singapore Symphony Orchestra

Lan Shui

Goldmark: Rustic Wedding Symphony, Symphony No 2 Singapore Symphony Orchestra/Lan Shui (BIS)

Root around in enough second-hand LP shops and you'll probably find at least one scratchy vinyl copy of Karl Goldmark's 1875 *Rustic Wedding Symphony*. The piece was once a repertoire staple - Bernstein and Beecham recorded it. It's now an exotic rarity. Why? It's sublimely orchestrated and the tunes are fabulous. It's perfectly proportioned. Goldmark's contemporary Brahms described it as "clear-cut and faultless... it sprang into being a finished thing". Presumably it went out of fashion through virtue of being so, er, nice. Don't expect another Mahler 6, in other words. But approach this baggy five-movement work with an open heart and you'll be seduced. There's a moment just one minute in, where horns and clarinets play a variant of Goldmark's lolling march theme. It should have you purring with delight. The ensuing *Bridal Song* and *Serenade* are delectably scored fluff. Goldmark's fourth movement, *In the Garden*, suggests an ecstatic love duet, and the closing *Dance* is as unbuttoned as you'd hope. Big, warm-hearted music, in other words, and this is an impeccably idiomatic performance from Singapore - Lan Shui's lower strings have velvety warmth and the wind playing is matchless.

We also get Goldmark's more conventionally organised Symphony No 2. An over-polite opening *Allegro* is a slight disappointment, but the subsequent movements are more distinctive. As with the main work, the playing never disappoints and BIS's sound has plenty of fruity depth. A gorgeous disc.



“ approach this baggy five-movement work with an open heart and you'll be seduced ”

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