NAXOS

PENDERECKI

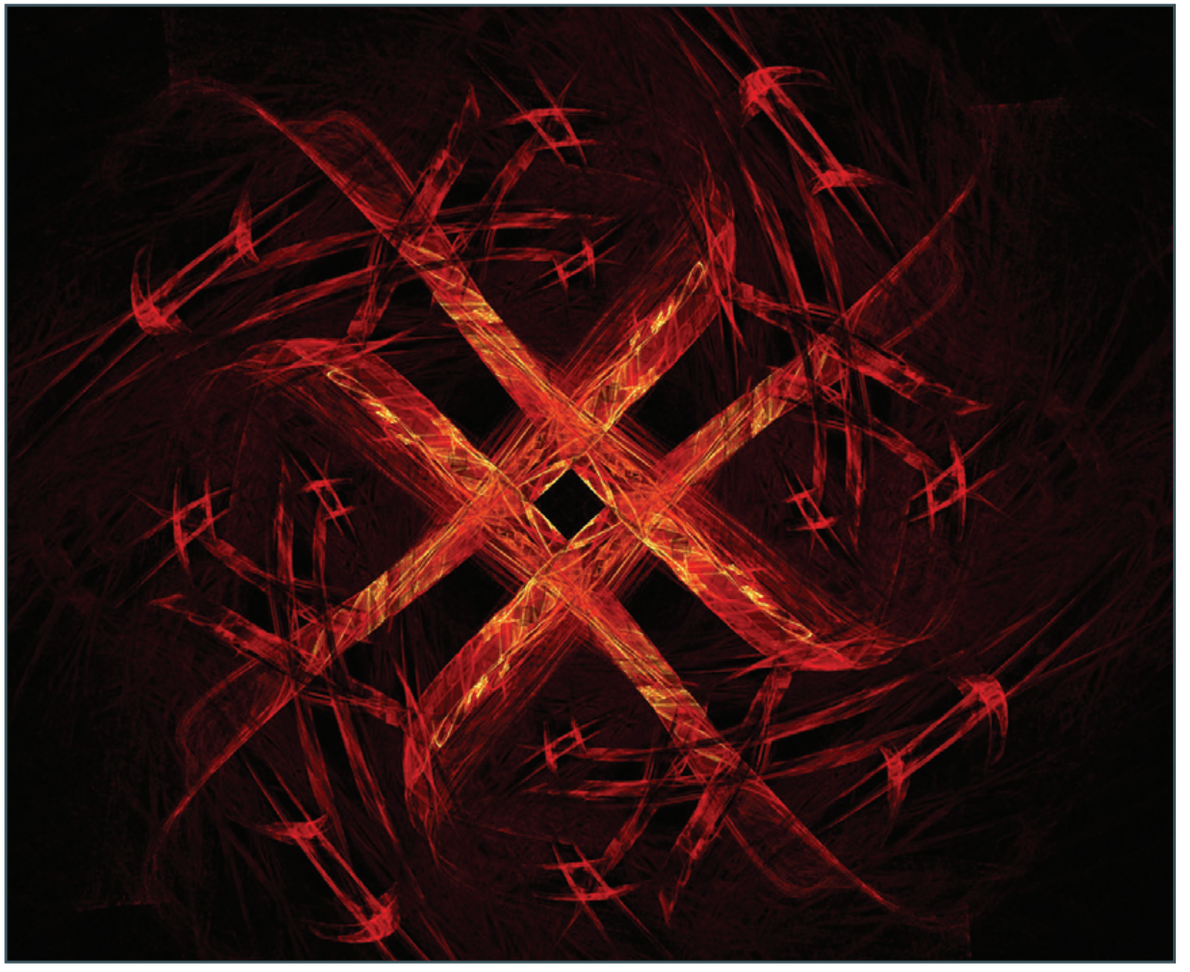
Symphony No. 8

Dies irae • Aus den Psalmen Davids

Kaune • Rehlis • Drabowicz • Lubańska • Minkiewicz • Bręk

Warsaw National Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra

Antoni Wit



Symphony No. 8, 'Lieder der Vergänglichkeit' 36:28

1 **Nachts (*Mezzo-soprano, Choir*)** 3:45
Text by Joseph von Eichendorff (1788-1857)

2 **Ende des Herbstes (1. Strophe) (*Choir*)** 0:55
Text by Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)

3 **Bei einer Linde (*Baritone*)** 2:47
Text by Joseph von Eichendorff

4 **Flieder (*Baritone*)** 2:41
Text by Karl Kraus (1874-1936)

5 **Frühlingsnacht (*Baritone*)** 3:46
Text by Hermann Hesse (1877-1962)

6 **Ende des Herbstes (2. Strophe) (*Choir*)** 0:50
Text by Rainer Maria Rilke

7 **Sag' ich's euch, geliebte Bäume? (*Soprano, Choir*)** 4:01
Text by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

8 **Im Nebel (*Soprano, Choir*)** 2:56
Text by Hermann Hesse

9 **Vergänglichkeit (*Soprano, Choir*)** 2:03
Text by Hermann Hesse

10 **Ende des Herbstes (3. Strophe) (*Choir*)** 1:55
Text by Rainer Maria Rilke

11 **Herbsttag (*Baritone*)** 2:41
Text by Rainer Maria Rilke

12 **O grüner Baum des Lebens (*Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, Baritone, Choir*)** 8:07
Text by Achim von Arnim (1781-1831)

Dies irae 25:22

13 **I. Lamentatio** 10:39
14 **II. Apocalypsis** 10:33
15 **III. Apotheosis** 4:10

Aus den Psalmen Davids 10:55

16 **I. Psalm 28 (27)** 3:03
17 **II. Psalm 30 (29)** 1:54
18 **III. Psalm 43 (42)** 2:11
19 **IV. Psalm 143 (142)** 3:48

Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933)

Symphony No. 8 • Dies irae • Aus den Psalmen Davids

Symphonies have long been central to the compositions of Krzysztof Penderecki. Completed in 1973, his *First Symphony* [Naxos 8.554567] marks the culmination of his 'avant-garde' phase as well as taking the colouristic idiom of the pieces from the preceding decade to its limits. By the time his *Second Symphony* [Naxos 8.554492] appeared in 1980, Penderecki was in the midst of a 'neo-Romantic' phase, with its allusions to late-nineteenth-century music. The next three symphonies each mine aspects of the stylistic pluralism he has since pursued. The *Third Symphony* [Naxos 8.554491] was not completed until 1995, six years after the 'Adagio' that is the *Fourth Symphony* [Naxos 8.554492], with the *Fifth Symphony* [Naxos 8.554567] following in 1996.

The *Sixth Symphony* is still in progress, but Penderecki meanwhile turned attention to the choral symphony. His *Seventh Symphony*, *'The Seven Gates of Jerusalem'* [Naxos 8.557766] had its première early in 1997 and sets texts from the Psalms of David and Book of Ezekiel. The *Eighth Symphony*, completed in 2005 and given its première that year in Luxembourg under Bramwell Tovey, is a setting of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German poems entitled *Lieder der Vergänglichkeit* (Songs of Transience) for soprano, mezzo and baritone soloists, mixed choir and an orchestra including a prominent part for bass trumpet. Mankind's journey through life, as reflected in the decay and rebirth of the natural world, underlies the twelve movements.

The first movement is a setting of Joseph von Eichendorff's *Nachts* (By Night), a poem that evokes an Eden-like innocence. Beginning hesitantly in lower strings and woodwind, it opens out into an elegiac setting for mezzo and chorus, replete with the toiling of bells. The second movement sets the first verse of Rainer Maria Rilke's *Ende des Herbstes* (End of Autumn), its warning of the inevitability of change given forceful treatment by chorus and orchestra, lower brass to the fore. The third movement returns to Eichendorff and his *Bei einer Linde* (By a Lime Tree), a reflection on the passing of spring in parallel to the onset of human experience. The text is taken by a baritone, his imploring manner mirrored by the orchestra, with sighing phrases on strings and plaintive oboe solo at the close.

The fourth movement again features a baritone in a setting of Karl Kraus's *Flieder* (Lilac) which, in telling of the renewal of natural as well as human life, is notable for its skirling woodwind and incisive strings in music that is more animated in expression. The baritone remains for the fifth movement, a setting of Hermann Hesse's *Frühlingsnacht* (Spring Night) and the nocturnal corollary to the preceding poem, which opens with an atmospheric prelude for cor anglais along with harmonics in the upper strings. Briefly disrupted by fugitive activity in brass and woodwind, the atmosphere is as suspenseful as is the text. There follows the second stanza of Rilke's *Ende des Herbstes* as the choral sixth movement, in which the imminence of decay (whether natural or human) is depicted in music that has been reduced to stark string phrases by the close.

A soprano now takes on the seventh movement, a setting of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Sag' ich's euch, geliebte Bäume?* (Do I tell you, beloved trees), which views human aspiration in a metaphysical manner, the fervent vocal writing accentuated by interjections from percussion. The mood changes rapidly when the chorus enters, building to the biggest climax so far, with trumpets and bells to the fore. The chorus opens the eighth movement, a setting of Hesse's *Im Nebel* (In the Mist) that draws parallels in the separation of trees from each other with the isolation of humans as they go through life. Its rapt tone is complemented by the hushed orchestral backdrop, but takes on a new immediacy as the soprano enters, the chorus returning in a mood of expectancy. The ninth movement stays with Hesse for a setting of *Vergänglichkeit* (Transitoriness), whose description of weariness through living is mirrored by the anxious soprano and chorus, with brass and percussion reinforcing a mood of imminent tragedy.

The tenth movement is the last verse of Rilke's *Ende des Herbstes*, its sombre intimations of mortality given to chorus and building to a climax with a doleful bass trumpet solo as postlude. The baritone enters for the eleventh movement, a setting of Rilke's *Herbsttag* (Autumn Day) whose description of imminent decay brought about by that season is emphasized by restricting orchestral activity to lower woodwind and strings. The twelfth movement is the most extended: a setting of Achim von Arnim's *O grüner Baum des Lebens* (O green tree of life) which appeals to the 'green tree' in every human heart as showing the way to eternal life in the face of imminent death. It also brings together all the performers for the first time in the work. The music builds to an intensive fugal passage in the strings, cut off by the glowering bass trumpet solo. Chorus and then soloists bring about the work's main climax, before continuing in starkly contrasted passages as the orchestra subsides into spectral percussion and the chorus vanishes upward into nothingness.

Scored for not dissimilar forces, the oratorio *Dies irae* is a very different proposition. Penderecki completed it at the beginning of 1967, on a commission to mark the unveiling of the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism at the former Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Oswieçim, where the première took place in April 1967 under Krzysztof Missona. The work is in three clearly defined parts that outline a cumulative overall trajectory.

The first part, *Lamentatio*, sets texts by the Polish poets Władysław Broniewski (*Bodies*) and Tadeusz Rozewitzc (*A Pigtail*), separated by an extract from Louis Aragon's poem *Auschwitz*. The grave opening on male voices and lower strings presages a mournful soprano solo and violent cluster-chords for the whole chorus. Fateful percussion underpins grinding discords in the lower strings, before mezzo and chorus sound out their plangent response, the former continuing over angular interjections from brass. The chorus remains to impart a sense of prayerful dread to this section's closing stage.

The second part, *Apocalypsis*, sets extracts from *Psalm 116* and the *Book of Revelation* (chapters 2, 6, 7, 11-13 and 19), as well as *The Eumenides* of Aeschylus. The contribution of the chorus is given graphic emphasis through its whispered and shouted phrases, intensified by brutal interjections from brass and percussion. The bass soloist then enters for a grave soliloquy, punctuated by brass and drums. Lower brass and strings now provoke the work's glowering climax, capped by frenzied choral gestures and the shrill sound of a siren.

The brief third part, *Apotheosis*, sets verses from *Revelation* and Paul's *Epistle to the Corinthians*, as well as the closing line from Paul Valéry's *Le Cimetière marin* (The Churchyard by the Sea). The initial protestations from tenor, then soprano, are followed by the chorus as the music wells up in indignation before dying away on lower strings - the chorus left to utter the fateful last words 'Let us try to live'.

Composed in 1958 and given its première at Kraków in September the next year, *Aus den Psalmen Davids* was one of the works that marked Penderecki's arrival on the new music scene. The title, *From the Psalms of David*, is significant as the composer uses only extracts from his texts and seeks not so much to capture their essence as to evoke something of their nature in constructing a succinct choral suite.

Percussion ushers in the first setting, from *Psalm 28*, its urgently reiterated phrases and whispered fragments contrasted with plaintive sung passages, percussion providing a skeletal underpinning at the close. The second setting, from *Psalm 30*, is sung unaccompanied in mournful polyphony, the gently dissonant harmony given direction by the smooth-unfolding vocal lines. The third setting, from *Psalm 43*, opens with aggressive rhythms on percussion and piano, powering a largely syllabic choral contribution that proceeds with irresistible drive. Tuned percussion opens the fourth setting, from *Psalm 143*, in the greatest contrast before leading to the restrained entry of the chorus. Gradually the harmony fills out and the expression duly intensifies, as the music builds in a steady crescendo of defiance that ends the work in a gesture parallel to that with which it began.

Richard Whitehouse

Michaela Kaune

The soprano Michaela Kaune was born in Hamburg and studied at the Music Academy there with Annie Schoonus and Judith Beckmann. She was a prize winner at the 1996 Belvedere Wettbewerb in Vienna and at the Bundeswettbewerb Gesang in the same year. Among others awards was the Otto-Kasten-Preis of the Deutsche Bühnenverein in 1999. Since 1997 Michaela Kaune has been a member of the German Opera Berlin, where she has appeared as Prinzessin Natalie in Henze's *Prinz von Homburg*, Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni*, the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro*, Anna in Marschner's *Hans Heiling*, Euridice in *Orfeo ed Euridice* and in the title rôle of *Arabella*. She has sung the Countess in *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Cologne Opera, at the Semperoper Dresden, the Brussels Théâtre de la Monnaie, the Opéra National de Paris, at the Salzburg Festival and at the Aalto Theater Essen. She sang Agathe in *Der Freischütz* at the Wiesbaden Opera, the Cologne Opera House, the Frankfurt Opera, the Hamburg State Opera, the Bavarian State Opera Munich (under Zubin Mehta) and the Ravinia Festival (under Christoph Eschenbach); Fiordiligi in *Così fan tutte* at the Semperoper Dresden and at the Aalto Theatre Essen; Tatyana in *Eugene Onegin* at the Basle Theatre and at the Graz Opera; Marie in *The Bartered Bride* and Eva in *Die Meistersinger* at the Bavarian State Opera Munich Pamina; Donna Elvira at the Opéra de Montpellier and at the Bavarian State Opera Munich; Cordelia in Aribert Reimann's *Lear* at the Aalto Theater Essen; the title-rôle of *Katya Kabanova* at the Vlaamse Opera, Antwerp, Freia at the Nederlandse Opera Amsterdam, Hanna Glawari and Fiordiligi at the Aalto Theatre Essen, Micaëla at the Semperoper Dresden and the title-rôle of *Rusalka* at the Schleswig-Holstein Festival. She has collaborated with distinguished orchestras and conductors in the concert hall, and her recordings include Strauss's *Orchestral Songs* with the NDR Hannover under Eiji Oue, Henze's *Nachtstücke und Arien* with the NDR Hamburg under Peter Ruzicka, and Mahler's *Second Symphony* with the NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo under Jun Märkl.

Agnieszka Rehlis

The mezzo-soprano Agnieszka Rehlis graduated with honours from the Vocal and Acting Department of the K. Lipiński Academy of Music, Wrocław, in 1996. She held a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture and Art in 1993-96. As a student, she won first prize in the Franciszka Platówna Vocal Competition in Wrocław, and in 1994 she won third prize in the oratorio category and a special prize for her rendition of *Principes persecuti sunt,* from Władysław Żeleński's *Communio*, in the Third Inter-University Vocal Competition in Duszniki-Zdrój. She made her début at the Wrocław Opera in the part of Jadwiga in Moniuszko's *The Haunted Manor*, a production celebrating the opera house's fiftieth anniversary. She has also sung many other major opera parts, including Fenena in *Nabucco*, Maddalena, Siebel, Cherubino, Mercedes in *Carmen*, Meg Page in *Falstaff* and Flora in *La traviata*. She has appeared with Wrocław Opera on tour in Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Italy as well as at the Taipei National Theatre in Taiwan. A large part of her concert activity involves oratorio concerts with a repertoire of more than 45 works, ranging from Bach to Penderecki, with performances throughout Europe. With the Sinfonia Varsovia orchestra conducted by Penderecki, she has given numerous performances of his *Te Deum* and *The Polish Requiem* and of Dvořák's *Requiem*. In January 2000 she sang in Krzysztof Penderecki's *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* at Midem Classique 2000 in Cannes, in a performance conducted by the composer himself and recorded on DVD.

Wojtek Drabowicz

Wojtek Drabowicz was born in Poznań and started his career as a member of the Jerzy Kurczewski Poznań Boys' Choir, from 1974 to 1984, and from 1983 to 1989 of the famous Poznań-based sextet Affabre Concinui. He subsequently graduated from the city's Music Academy where he studied with Antonina Kawecka (diploma with distinction). He was a prizewinner of several Polish and international vocal competitions, including the Adam Didur Competition in Bytom (1988, First Prize and twelve special awards), the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow (1990, Third Prize and a special award) and the Belvedere Competition in Vienna (1990, First Prize and eleven special awards). From 1989 to 1991 he was a soloist of the Grand Opera Theatre in Poznań, where he made his début as Eugene Onegin. He had to his credit numerous highly-acclaimed rôles, mainly in operas by Mozart, nineteenth-century repertoire, and in works by twentieth-century composers such as Karol Szymanowski (*King Roger*), Peter Eötvös, Victor Ullmann, and Kurt Weill. Wojtek Drabowicz made guest appearances in leading opera houses and concert halls throughout Europe, in Israel, Canada and the United States and performed at major festivals including those in Wexford, Brighton, Glyndebourne, London (Proms), Bregenz, Sarajevo, Wrocław, and Kraków (the Ludwig van Beethoven Festival). He worked with many distinguished conductors, and took part in opera productions under internationally renowned stage directors. Wojtek Drabowicz made numerous recordings for radio and television stations in Poland and abroad. His discography includes recordings of Mozart's *Requiem*, Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater*, Bach's *St John* and *St Matthew Passions*, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* (with the Berlin Philharmonic under Claudio Abbado), and Peter Eötvös's *The Three Sisters* (under Kent Nagano). His honours included the Andrzej Hiolski Memorial Award for the best operatic rôle of the 1999/2000 season and an award of the Marshal of the Wielkopolska Province for outstanding cultural achievements. Wojtek Drabowicz sang in the world première of Penderecki's *Symphony No. 8 "Lieder der Vergänglichkeit"* at a concert inaugurating a new hall of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Luxembourg. He died in a car accident on 27th March, 2007.

Anna Lubańska

The mezzo-soprano Anna Lubańska completed with distinction her vocal studies at the Warsaw Music Academy with Krystyna Szostek-Radkowa in 1994. She was placed first in the International Ada Sari Vocal Competition in Nowy Sàcz, and honoured as the best performer of French Songs and works by Mozart and Lutosławski in 1993. She also triumphed in other competitions in Paris and Brussels. Since 1993 she has been a soloist at the National Opera in Warsaw where her rôles have included those of Jadwiga in Moniuszko's *Straszny Dwór*, Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Eboli in *Don Carlos*, Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, and Mother Ubu in Penderecki's *Ubu Rex*. She has collaborated with Warsaw Chamber Opera performing the part of Marcellina in *Le nozze di Figaro*, and in Opera Âlàska in Bytom. She has given many performances in Poland and abroad. Her repertoire includes Mozart's *Requiem*, Verdi's *Requiem*, Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and settings by Rossini, Vivaldi, Szymanowski, and Dvořák, Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, Bach's *Mass in B minor* and *Passions*, and Mozart's *Mass in C minor* and *Coronation Mass*. Her recordings include special archive recordings for Polish Radio.

Ryszard Minkiewicz

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 Sàcz (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 also 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, Musica Aeterna, with conductors including Charles Dutoit, Simon Rattle, Yehudi Menuhin, Leoš Svarovski, Jacek Kasprzyk, and Kazimierz Kord. He has recorded for Naxos, EMI, Marco Polo, PolyGram, Accord, Dux, and others. Ryszard Minkiewicz has also made a number of recording for Polish Radio and Television as well as for BBC TV (Szymanowski) and Brno TV (Janáček's *Glagolithic Mass*).

Jarosłàw Bręk

Born in 1977 in Poznań, between 1984 and 1996 Jarosłàw Bręk sang in the Boys' and Men's Choir of the Poznań Philharmonic. He was a pupil of Jerzy Artysz at the Warsaw Academy of Music, and on graduation was awarded the *Magna Cum Laude* medal as the most outstanding graduate. He is a winner of many prizes at vocal contests in Duszniki-Zdrój (1998), Barcelona (1999), Vercelli (1999) and Lisbon (2000). In 1999 and 2000 he was nominated by the influential Polish magazine *Polithics* for the award for best musicians in Poland. Recent achievements include participation in Górecki's *Second Symphony*, celebrating the six hundredth anniversary of the Kraków Academy, in Handel's *Messiah* with the New College Choir, Oxford under Edward Higginbottom, participation in Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* in concerts given in Oviedo, Gijon, Düsseldorf, and at Notre Dame in Paris (at the opening ceremony of the Polish Season in France), repeated performances at the International Festival *Wratislavia Cantans*, participation in the Opera Gala in the Lviv Opera House, in the Polish première of the *Passion* by Jommelli during the Seventh Ludwig van Beethoven Easter Festival in Kraków, in Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderborn* performed for the first time at the National Philharmonic in Warsaw, in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at the Main Market Place in Kraków on the occasion of Poland's accession to the European Union, a performance with Teresa Żylis-Gara in a concert for the Red Cross in Monte Carlo, a performance of Bach's *St John Passion* in Amsterdam conducted by Tomasz Bugaj, and collaboration in a performance of Fauré's *Requiem*, performed on Kraków Common, conducted by Thomas Sanderling. Jarosłàw Bręk has performed in most of Poland's concert halls, and has appeared in opera houses and concert halls in Germany, Spain, Italy, Holland, Romania, the Canary Islands, Japan, Lebanon, Ukraine, Russia, France and Monaco. He is a soloist of the Warsaw Chamber Opera, works with the National Opera in Warsaw, and has also appeared in Poznań, Łódź and Kraków. He has also sung in such halls as the Palau de la Música de Valencia, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, Kyoto Concert Hall, and the Muzeul National George Enescu in Bucharest. He is often invited to take part in first performances of contemporary compositions.

Warsaw Philharmonic Choir

The Warsaw Philharmonic Choir was founded in 1952 by Zbigniew Soja and gave its first concert in May 1953 under the then artistic director of the Warsaw Philharmonic, Witold Rowicki. The present choirmaster Henryk Wojnarowski has held this position since 1978. The choir's broad repertoire includes more than 150 oratorios and choral works, ranging from the Middle Ages to contemporary music. Each year the choir collaborates in some ten symphony and oratorio concerts with the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra. These concerts constitute the most important part of its artistic activity. The choir also performs regularly at the Warsaw Autumn Festival and in Wrocław at the Wratislavia Cantans Festival. Polish music, in particular works of Krzysztof Penderecki, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki and Wojciech Kilar, is a very important part of the choir's repertoire. The choir has performed all Penderecki's oratorios and a cappella works, the *Polish Requiem, Te Deum, Utrenja, 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 Polish Philharmonic centres, 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 Żeleński. 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 Straszyński 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, serving 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 110 players.

Antoni Wit

Antoni Wit, one of the most highly regarded Polish conductors, studied conducting with Henryk Czyz 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 Jagellonian 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 Poznan Philharmonic, collaborated with the Warsaw Grand Theatre, and from 1974 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 1977 to 1983. From 1983 to 2000 he was the director of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, and from 1987 to 1992 he was the chief conductor and then first guest conductor of 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 *Turangalıla Symphony* by Olivier Messiaen (8.554478-79) was awarded the Cannes Classical Award in *Midem Classic 2002*. In 2004 he received the Classical Internet Award and was nominated for a Grammy for his Naxos recording of Penderecki's *St Luke Passion* (8.557149), with a further nomination in 2005 for Penderecki's *Polish Requiem* (8.557386-87). Antoni Wit is a professor at the F. Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw.

Krzysztof Penderecki (geb. 1933)

Symphonie Nr. 8 • Dies irae • Aus den Psalmen Davids

Die Symphonik bildet seit langem einen Schwerpunkt in Krzysztof Pendereckis Schaffen. Seine 1973 vollendete erste Symphonie [Naxos 8.554567] bezeichnete den Höhepunkt seiner „avantgardistischen" Phase und führte zugleich das koloristische Idiom der Werke, die in dem voraufgegangenen Jahrzehnt entstanden waren, an seine Grenzen. Als dann 1980 seine zweite Symphonie [Naxos 8.554492] erschien, befand sich der Komponist mitten in einer neoromantischen Phase, die immer wieder auf die Musik des späten 19. Jahrhunderts anspielte. Die anschließenden drei Symphonien brachten dann verschiedene Aspekte des stilistischen Pluralismus zutage, den Penderecki seither verfolgt. Die dritte Symphonie [Naxos 8.554491] wurde erst 1995 vollendet – sechs Jahre nach dem *Adagio,* aus dem seine vierte Symphonie [Naxos 8.554492] besteht. Die fünfte Symphonie [Naxos 8.554567] folgte schließlich 1996.

Während die sechste Symphonie sich noch immer „in progress" befindet, hatte Penderecki begonnen, sich mit der Chorsymphonie auseinanderzusetzen. Seine siebte Symphonie *Die sieben Tore von Jerusalem* [Naxos 8.557766] über verschiedene Psalmen Davids und Worte aus dem Buch Hesekiel wurde Anfang 1997 uraufgeführt. Die achte Symphonie *Lieder der Vergänglichkeit* erlebte noch im Jahr ihrer Entstehung (2005) in Luxemburg unter Bramwell Tovey ihre Premiere. Darin verwendet der Komponist Texte deutscher Dichter aus dem 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Die Partitur verlangt Sopran, Mezzosopran, Bariton und gemischten Chor sowie eine Orchesterbesetzung, in der es eine prominente Stimme für Basstrompete gibt. In den zwölf Sätzen geht es um die menschliche Lebensreise, die sich im Verfall und der Wiedergeburt der Natur spiegelt.

Der erste Satz bedient sich des Gedichtes *Nachts* von Joseph von Eichendorff, das eine geradezu paradiesische Unschuld beschwört. Nach zögerlichem Beginn in den tiefen Streichern und Holzbläsern erweitert sich die Musik zu einer Elegie für Mezzosopran und Chor, zu der sogar die Glocken läuten. Im zweiten Satz hat Penderecki die erste Strophe aus Rainer Maria Rilkes *Ende des Herbstes* vertont: Auf kraftvolle Weise tönt in Chor und Orchester die Warnung vor dem unvermeidlichen Wandel, wobei das tiefe Blech im Vordergrund steht. Der dritte Satz findet zu Eichendorff zurück: *Bei einer Linde* ist eine Reflexion über die Vergänglichkeit des Frühlings, in dem der Mensch seine ersten Erfahrungen sammelt. Der Text ist dem Bariton übertragen, dessen flehentlicher Ton sich im Orchester mit den seufzenden Streichern und dem klagenden Oboensolo am Schluss spiegelt.

Auch im vierten Satz kommt dem Bariton die vokale Hauptrolle zu. Hier singt er das Gedicht *Flieder* von Karl Kraus, in dem es um die Erneuerung in der Natur und im menschlichen Leben geht. Zu bemerken sind hier die wirbelnden Holzbläser und die scharfe, lebhaftere Musik der Streicher. Und ein weiterer Satz ist für Baritonsolo komponiert: Hermann Hesses *Frühlingsnacht* antwortet dem vorigen Gedicht als ausgesprochen nokturnaler Folgesatz, der mit einem atmosphärischen Präludium des Englischhorns zu den Flageoletts der hohen Streicher beginnt. Die kurz von flüchtigen Einwürfen der Blech- und Holzbläser unterbrochene Stimmung ist ebenso schwebend wie die Dichtung. Als sechsten Satz bringt der Chor die zweite Strophe aus Rilkes *Ende des Herbstes*, in dem der natürliche und menschliche Verfall von einer Musik illustriert wird, die sich am Ende auf kräftige Streicherphrasen beschränkt.

Im siebten Satz übernimmt die Sopranistin: Johann Wolfgang von Goethes *Sag' ich's euch, geliebte Bäume?* betrachtet die menschlichen Erwartungen aus einem metaphysischen Blickwinkel, indessen die glutvolle Führung der Gesangsstimme durch Einwürfe des Schlagzeugs akzentuiert wird. Rasch wandelt sich die Stimmung, wenn der Chor einsetzt und die bisher größte Klimax ansteuert, bei der die Trompeten und Glocken im Vordergrund stehen. Der Chor steht danach

auch am Anfang des achten Satzes über Hesses *Im Nebel,* womit eine Parallele zwischen den voneinander getrennt stehenden Bäumen und der Isolation der Menschen bei ihrer Wanderung durchs Leben gezogen wird. Den verzückten Ton ergänzt der geheimnisvoll huschende Hintergrund des Orchesters, das aber eine neue Unmittelbarkeit gewinnt, wenn der Sopran einsetzt und der Chor sich in erwartungsvoller Stimmung wieder zu Worte meldet. Der neunte Satz bringt einen weiteren Text von Hermann Hesse. *Vergänglichkeit* beschreibt die menschliche Schwäche mit den beunruhigten Stimmen von Sopran und Chor, die Blechbläser und Schlagzeug durch eine unterschwellige Tragik verstärken.

Der zehnte Satz enthält die letzte Strophe aus Rilkes *Ende des Herbstes* mit ihren düsteren Andeutungen der Sterblichkeit: Der Chor singt diesen Text und gelangt zu einem Höhepunkt, dem sich ein schmerzliches Solo der Basstrompete als Postludium anschließt. Der Bariton setzt wieder im vorletzten Satz ein, und zwar mit den Worten des Rilke-Gedichtes *Herbsttag;* dabei wird die Schilderung des kommenden Niedergangs, den diese Jahreszeit mit sich bringt, durch die Beschränkung des Orchesters auf tiefe Holzbläser und Streicher betont. Der abschließende zwölfte Satz ist zugleich der umfänglichste: In *O grüner Baum des Lebens* spricht Achim von Arnim von dem Lebensbaum, den jeder Mensch im Herzen trägt und der im Angesicht des Todes den Weg zum ewigen Leben zeigt. In diesem Finale werden alle Mitwirkenden erstmals gemeinsam eingesetzt. Die Musik steigert sich zu einer intensiven, fugierten Streicherpassage, die von dem finsteren Basstrompetensolo abgeschnitten wird. Dann steuern der Chor und nach diesem die Solisten auf die eigentliche Klimax des gesamten Werkes zu, bevor es in stark kontrastierenden Passagen weitergeht, bis das Orchester in geisterhaftem Schlagzeug verklingt und der Chor nach oben im Nichts verschwindet.

Das Oratorium *Dies irae* ist zwar für eine vergleichbare Besetzung komponiert, musikalisch aber eine ganz andere Angelegenheit. Das Anfang 1967 vollendete Werk entstand als Auftrag zur Enthüllung des Internationalen Denkmals für die Opfer des Faschismus von Oswieçim, dem ehemaligen Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau. Dort fand im April 1967 unter der Leitung von Krzysztof Missona auch die Uraufführung statt.

Dies irae besteht aus drei klar voneinander abgegrenzten Teilen, die eine durchgehende Steigerung beschreiben. Der erste Teil, *Lamentatio*, verwendet Texte der polnischen Dichter Wladyslaw Broniewski (*Leichen*) und Tadeusz Rozewitzc (*Ein Zopf*), die ein Ausschnitt aus Louis Aragons Gedicht *Auschwitz* voneinander trennt. Dem feierlichen Einsatz der Männerstimmen und tiefen Streicher folgt ein klagendes Sopransolo nebst heftigen Akkordballungen des vollen Chores. Das schicksalsschwere Schlagzeug unterstreicht die knirschenden Dissonanzen der tiefen Streicher, bevor Mezzosopran und Chor ihre volltönende Antwort singen. Die Solostimme wird danach von kantigen Einwürfen der Blechbläser begleitet. Am Ende obliegt es dem Chor, dem Abschnitt den Anstrich eines angstvollen Gebets zu geben.

Der zweite Teil, *Apokalypse,* verwendet Ausschnitte aus *Psalm 116* und der *Offenbarung* (Kapitel 2, 6, 7, 11-13 und 19) sowie aus den *Eumeniden* des Aischylos. Dem Chor kommt mit seinem Flüstern und Schreien eine emphatische Bildhaftigkeit zu, die von den brutalen Interjektionen der Blechbläser und des Schlagzeugs noch intensiviert werden. Der Solobass beginnt dann mit einem gewichtigen, von Blech und Pauken durchsetzten Monolog. Mit den tiefen Blechbläsern und Streichern geht es zu dem finster starrenden Höhepunkt des Werkes, der von irrwitzigen Gesten des Chores und dem schrillen Heulen einer Sirene gekrönt wird.

Der dritte Teil, *Apotheose*, verwendet Worte der *Offenbarung* und des Paulus-Briefes an die Korinther sowie die letzte Zeile aus Paul Valérys *Le Cimetière marin* („Der Friedhof am Meer“). Den nachdrücklichen Äußerungen des Tenors und der Sopranistin schließt sich der Chor an, indessen die Musik wütend emporwogt und dann in den tiefen Streichern erstirbt. Der Chor allein rezitiert die letzten, schicksalhaften Worte: „Wir wollen versuchen, zu leben.“

Aus den Psalmen Davids entstand 1958, wurde im September des folgenden Jahres in Krakau uraufgeführt und ist eines der Werke, die zeigen, dass Penderecki auf dem Terrain der Neuen Musik angekommen war. Der Titel ist insofern bezeichnend, als der Komponist nur Textauszüge verwendet und dabei nicht versucht, das Wesen dieser Worte einzufangen, sondern vielmehr etwas von ihrer Natur zu beschwören und eine knappe Chorsuite zu konstruieren.

Das Schlagzeug leitet den ersten Teil ein, in dem Ausschnitte aus *Psalm 28* verwendet werden. Dringlich wiederholte Phrasen und geflüsterte Fragmente kontrastieren mit klagendem Gesang, zu dem das Schlagzeug am Ende eine skelettierte Stütze liefert. Der zweite Satz (aus *Psalm 30*) erklingt in trauerhafter, unbegleiteter Polyphonie, deren leicht dissonante Harmonik durch die sanft sich entfaltenden Gesangslinien ihre Richtung erhält. Der dritte Satz (aus *Psalm 43*) beginnt mit aggressiven Rhythmen des Schlagzeugs und des Klaviers, die einen weitgehend syllabischen, unwiderstehlich vorandrängenden Chorpart antreiben. Gestimmtes Schlagzeug bildet am Anfang des vierten Satzes (aus *Psalm 143)* den denkbar größten Kontrast, bevor der Chor verhalten einsetzt. Allmählich verdichtet sich die Harmonik, wodurch sich auch der Ausdruck intensiviert, derweil sich die Musik in einem stetigen, trotzigen Crescendo steigert. So endet das Werk mit einer Geste, die derjenigen des Anfangs entspricht.

Richard Whitehouse

Deutsche Fassung: Cris Posslac

NAXOS

PENDERECKI: Symphony No. 8

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Penderecki's *Eighth Symphony*, which here receives its world première recording, is a setting of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German poems entitled *Lieder der Verganglichkeit* (Songs of Transience). Mankind's journey through life, as reflected in the decay and rebirth of the natural world, underlies its twelve movements. Scored for not dissimilar forces, the oratorio *Dies irae* is a very different proposition, commissioned to mark the unveiling of the International Monument to the Victims of Fascism at the former Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. Composed in 1958 and given its première at Kraków in September the following year, *Aus den Psalmen Davids* was one of the works that marked Penderecki's arrival on the new music scene.

Krzysztof
PENDERECKI
(b. 1933)

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Symphony No. 8

1-12	Symphony No. 8, 'Lieder der Vergänglichkeit' (2005) *	36:28
13-15	Dies irae (1967) †	25:22
16-19	Aus den Psalmen Davids (1958)	10:55

Michaela Kaune, Soprano* • Agnieszka Rehlis, Mezzo-soprano*
Wojtek Drabowicz, Baritone* • Anna Lubańska, Mezzo-soprano†
Ryszard Minkiewicz, Tenor† • Jarosław Bręk, Bass-baritone†

Warsaw National Philharmonic Choir
(Henryk Wojnarowski, choirmaster)

Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra • Antoni Wit

In memory of Wojtek Drabowicz, who died in a car accident on 27th March, 2007

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

Available texts may be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/570450.htm

Recorded on 8th, 9th and 11th March, 2006 (tracks 1-12); on 30th and 31st August, 2006 (tracks 13-15); and on 27th and 29th November, 2006 (tracks 16-19) at Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, Poland
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