

The NAXOS logo is located in the top left corner. It consists of the word "NAXOS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, centered within a dark blue rectangular box. Above the text, there are three small, stylized white icons that resemble classical architectural columns or flutes.

NAXOS

The background of the entire cover is an abstract painting. It features a complex interplay of colors, including deep blues, vibrant reds, and earthy greens, all blended together with visible, expressive brushstrokes. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and artistic depth.

JANÁČEK

Taras Bulba

Lachian Dances

Moravian Dances

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra

Antoni Wit

Leoš Janáček (1854-1928): Taras Bulba • Lachian Dances • Moravian Dances

Janáček was born in 1854 in the northern part of Moravia, near the Polish frontier, a region that enjoys both linguistic and musical individuality. He was educated at the Augustinian school in Brno, the capital of Moravia, eventually succeeding to the position of organist that had been occupied by his teacher. Between 1874 and 1875 he studied at the Prague Organ School, where Dvořák had been a pupil sixteen years earlier, returning to Brno as conductor of the local Philharmonic Society. His lack of confidence in his own ability as a composer took him to Leipzig in 1878 for a further year of study, followed by similar activity in Vienna.

In 1881 Janáček opened a music school in Brno, and in the following years continued to write music, in 1886 dedicating a set of choral works to Dvořák, but in general enjoying only a very local reputation. His first opera, *Sárka*, met with difficulties, since permission for the use of the poem on which it was based had not been granted by the author. Subsequent operas had a better fate, at least in Brno, but it was not until 1916 that the attention of the Prague National Theatre was drawn to his work, leading, largely by a series of lucky chances, to the performance there of the opera known as *Jenůfa*, that had first been staged in Brno in 1904. The last twelve years of Janáček's life brought him fame in Czechoslovakia and elicited from him a series of five further operas, each as original in choice of libretto as in musical content.

The music of Janáček is dominated by his preoccupation with Moravian folk-song, the spirit of which informs his work. He had a particular interest in the musical inflections of speech and the melodic shape of natural sounds, while his theories of harmony were original, particularly in his sudden shifts of key. As a composer he only started work in middle age and always appeared as a musician of startling originality, in part through geographical isolation, at a distance from Vienna and even from Prague.

The *Rhapsody Taras Bulba* is based on Gogol. It was written in 1918. Typically the composer chose a romantic historical novel by a Russian writer as the frame-work for his creation. His interests were Pan-Slav, embracing the unity of the Slav peoples, and under similar impetus he had turned to

Ostrovsky's play *The Storm* for his opera *Kátya Kabanová* and to Dostoyevsky for his last opera, *From the House of the Dead*. His attempt to make an opera of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*, with a Russian libretto of his own devising, remained unfinished.

For *Taras Bulba* Janáček takes three episodes in the violent life of the Cossack leader Taras Bulba in his struggle against the Poles in 1682. In the first the son of Taras Bulba, Andrij, is put to death by his father for the disloyalty that his love has brought about. The Cossacks had laid siege to the town of Dubno, where Andrij's beloved is among those besieged. The young man enters the town by a secret passage and joins with the Poles in the subsequent battle with his own people. The second episode shows the death of his second son Ostap, tortured and put to death by the victorious Poles, an event witnessed by the disguised Taras Bulba, mingling with the crowd. The third movement, with its organ part, depicts the prophecy and death of Taras Bulba himself, nailed to a tree and condemned to be burned to death. As he dies, he foretells the future liberation of the Cossacks.

Janáček's *Lachian Dances* were originally to have been Valachian, but were transposed geographically by the composer's own alteration of the title. Written in 1889 and 1890, the six dances are scored for a large orchestra. The first, *Starodávny*, opens with a melody derived from the tragic song "Matthew has been killed", with which the following melodies provide contrast. The nature of the dances that follow is apparent from their titles. For the composer, towards the end of his life, they recalled a past that had vanished and a countryside and way of life with which he had been familiar.

Janáček had a fundamental interest in the folk-music of his native Moravia, on which he was considered a major authority. His interest manifested itself in editions of Moravian folk-music and in a number of arrangements of songs and dances. The five dances, opening with a *Kožich*, a fur-coat dance, are characteristic in melodic contour and rhythm of the music of East Moravia.

Keith Anderson

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra – The National Orchestra 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, with the world-renowned pianist, composer and future statesman Ignacy Jan Paderewski as soloist in a programme that included Paderewski's *Piano Concerto in A minor* and works of other Polish composers, Chopin, Moniuszko, Noskowski, Stojowski and Żeleński. The orchestra achieved considerable success until the outbreak of war in 1939, with 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 hall for chamber music, recognised as the National Philharmonic of Poland. Subsequent conductors included Bohdan Wodiczko, Arnold Reizler 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 (Europe, both Americas, Japan), 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. Recordings include works by Polish composers, Paderewski, Wieniawski, Karłowicz, Szymanowski, Penderecki, Lutosławski, Górecki and Kilar, and by foreign composers, with acclaimed interpretations of works by Mahler and Richard Strauss. Their releases have won many prestigious awards, including six GRAMMY® nominations.

Antoni Wit

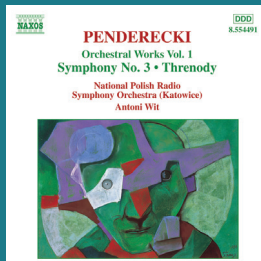


Photo: Krzysztof Niesporek

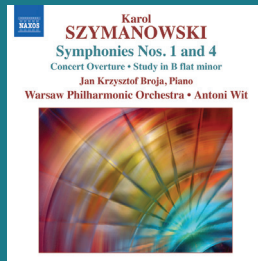
Antoni Wit, one of the most highly regarded Polish conductors, studied conducting with Henryk Czyż at the Academy of Music in Kraków. He then continued his musical studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris. He also graduated in law at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. Immediately after completing his studies he was engaged as an assistant at the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra by Witold Rowicki. After winning second prize in the International Herbert von Karajan Conducting Competition in Berlin (1971), he became an assistant conductor to the patron of that competition. Later he was appointed conductor of the Poznań 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 managing and artistic 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 the Orquesta Filarmónica de Gran Canaria. In 2002 he became managing and artistic director of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir. Since the season 2010/11, he has been first guest conductor with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra in Pamplona. His international career has brought engagements with major orchestras throughout Europe, the Americas and the Near and Far East. He has made over 200 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 *Turangaïla Symphony* by Olivier Messiaen (8.554478-79) was awarded the Cannes Classical Award at MIDEM Classic 2002. In 2004 he received the Classical Internet Award. He has completed for Naxos a CD series of Szymanowski's symphonic and large-scale vocal-instrumental works, each rated among 'discs of the month' by CD magazines (*Gramophone*, *BBC Music Magazine*). He also received the Record Academy Award 2005 of Japanese music magazine *Record Geijutsu* for Penderecki's *Polish Requiem* (Naxos), and four Fryderyk Awards of the Polish Phonographic Academy. He has received six GRAMMY® nominations for Penderecki's *St Luke Passion* in 2004 (8.557149), *A Polish Requiem* in 2005 (8.557386-87), *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* in 2007 (8.557766), *Utręcja* in 2009 (8.572031) and Karol Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* in 2008 (8.570724) and *Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4* in 2009 (8.570722). In 2010 Antoni Wit won the annual award of the Karol Szymanowski Foundation for his promotion of the music of Szymanowski in his Naxos recordings. Antoni Wit is professor at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw.

Also available



8.554491



8.570722



8.572487



8.572639

Leoš Janáček was an authority on his native folk-music, and the *Lachian* and *Moravian Dances* preserve and celebrate culture and traditions which were vanishing even in his own lifetime. Based on Gogol's historical novel, Janáček's inspired orchestral rhapsody on *Taras Bulba* depicts three moving and dramatic episodes in the violent life of the Cossack leader, climaxing in his stirring and triumphant prophecy of liberation. This release follows Antoni Wit's acclaimed Warsaw recording of Janáček's *Glagolitic Mass* and *Sinfonietta* (8.572639).



Leoš
JANÁČEK
(1854-1928)

**Taras Bulba –
Rhapsody (1918) 24:57**

- 1 I. Smrt Andrijova
(Death of Andrij) –
Moderato, quasi recitativo 9:20
- 2 II. Smrt Ostapova
(Death of Ostap) – Moderato 5:23
- 3 III. Prorockví a smrt Tarase Bulby
(Prophecy and Death of Taras
Bulba) – Con moto 10:15

**Lachian Dances
(1889-90) 20:32**

- 4 Starodávný (Old-time Dance) 6:12
- 5 Požehnaný (Blessed) 2:17

6 Dymák
(A Blacksmith's Dance) 2:20

7 Starodávný (Old-time Dance) 4:38

8 Čeladenský (From Čeladna) 1:51

9 Pilky (Saw Dance) 3:14

**Moravian Dances
(1891) 9:09**

10 Kožich (Fur Coat) 3:13

11 Kalamajka 0:52

12 Trojky (Threes) 1:22

13 Silnice (Road) 2:08

14 Rožek (Little Corner) 1:34

Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra • Antoni Wit

Recorded at Warsaw Philharmonic Hall, Warsaw, Poland, on 2nd and 3rd September, 2010 (tracks 1-3), and on 26th April, 2011 (tracks 10-14), and at the Witold Lutosławski Studio of Polish Radio, Warsaw, on 12th and 13th October, 2010 (tracks 4-9)

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8.572695

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Playing Time
54:38



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