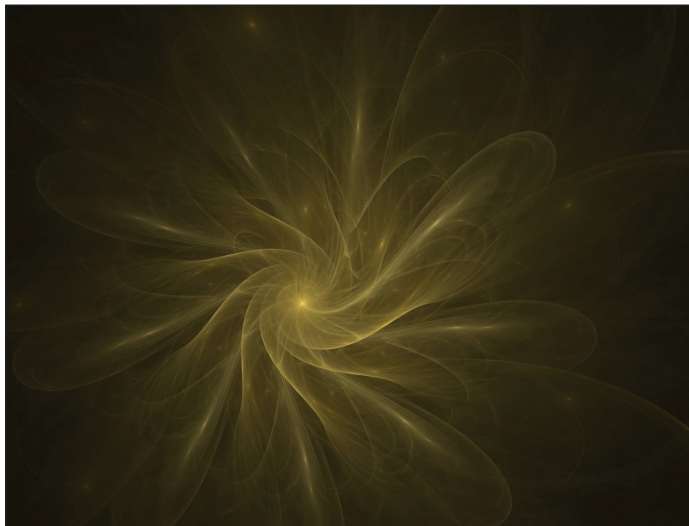


PENDERECKI

Viola Concerto • Cello Concerto No. 2

Grigori Zhislin, Viola • Tatjana Vassiljeva, Cello
Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra • Antoni Wit



Krzysztof
PENDERECKI
(b. 1933)

Viola Concerto (1983)

20:21

1	Lento –	6:18
2	Vivace –	3:04
3	Meno mosso –	1:28
4	Vivo –	0:40
5	Tempo I (Lento) –	3:17
6	Vivo –	2:48
7	Lento (Tempo I)	2:45

Cello Concerto No. 2 (1982)

37:12

8	Andante con moto –	5:48
9	Vivo –	6:11
10	Tempo I –	3:56
11	Allegretto –	3:20
12	Lento –	8:05
13	Allegretto –	1:43
14	Poco meno mosso –	4:50
15	Tempo I	3:19

Krzysztof Penderecki (b. 1933)

Viola Concerto • Cello Concerto No. 2

Although he remains best known for his large scale choral and symphonic works, Krzysztof Penderecki has amassed a sizeable concerto output. His early works for soloist and orchestra had tended to be short and self-contained pieces that themselves evinced a fair measure of virtuosity, while fighting shy of the rhetorical expression with which the concerto genre had so frequently been associated, hence the *Sonata for Cello and Orchestra*, written for Siegfried Palm [Naxos 8.570509]. With his *First Violin Concerto* [Naxos 8.555265] of 1976, however, Penderecki came up not only with a full length concerto, but one whose unabashed Romanticism itself marked a decisive break with his *avant-garde* past. Written for Isaac Stern (who memorably declared it to be among the most important such concertos from the twentieth century), it has remained among the composer's most frequently performed works, and it was followed by the hardly less emotionally wrought *Second Cello Concerto* written for Mstislav Rostropovich, the smaller-scale *Viola Concerto* and *Flute Concerto*, then the *Second Violin Concerto* written for Anne-Sophie Mutter [Naxos 8.555265], the *Piano Concerto* and the *Horn Concerto*. Several of these concertos have also been arranged for other instruments, while there are several concertante works for soloist(s) and orchestra that are not designated as concertos, but which demonstrably continue the line of musical thinking that is present in the other works.

The *Viola Concerto* (1983) is a significant example of Penderecki's contribution to the genre in that, while not among his most imposing such works, it incorporates the broad range of musical techniques from the composer's maturity into a taut and compact time-span. The *Concerto* was first performed by José Vazquez, with the Maracaibo Symphony Orchestra and Eduardo Rahn, in Caracas on 21st July 1983, and its success can be gauged from the number of transcriptions that it has subsequently received. A version with chamber orchestra was first performed by Grigoriy Zhislin with his

Chamber Orchestra in Moscow on 20th October 1985; that for cello was given its première by Boris Pergamenschikov, with the Wuppertal Symphony Orchestra and Peter Gülke, in Wuppertal on 15th December 1989; while that for clarinet was first given by Orit Orbach, with the Colorado Music Festival Orchestra and Giora Bernstein, in Boulder on 9th July 1995.

The work opens with a pensive soliloquy for the soloist which is soon joined by lower strings as the expressive tension mounts. A further solo passage is more demonstrative, and is offset by searching exchanges between the various string sections on the way to another brief climax, before heading into a heated confrontation between the soloist and brass. This launches a faster section, marked *Vivace*, which is continued by incisive interplay between the strings which latterly transfers to brass and percussion, before the soloist shares in an evocative *Meno mosso* passage with tuned percussion and lower strings. This takes on something of a scherzando character when woodwind and percussion emerge in the following *Vivo*, but the initial gravitas is soon restored in the *Tempo I* of the lower strings and the soloist unfolds a pensive monologue against static string harmonies. This continues unaccompanied for a while longer, before leading straight into a martial passage, marked *Vivo*, which moves forward with a determined intent on brass and strings. The soloist engages volubly in the confrontation, before the percussion capped climax leads, via atmospheric writing for upper woodwind and percussion, to a resumption of the passive music heard at the outset. The soloist in turn resumes its initial pensiveness and the work moves steadily towards a conclusion in which aspects of the earlier orchestral writing are recalled as if from a distance, before alighting on an austere chord that fades out into nothingness.

As mentioned above, the *Second Cello Concerto* (1982) was written for Mstislav Rostropovich and was

first performed by him, with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by the composer, in Berlin on 11th January 1983. At the time it attracted much attention for its ostensible expansion of the neo-Romantic language that Penderecki had adopted during the preceding decade, and which reached its apogee in the opera *Paradise Lost* (1978), the *Second Symphony* (1980) [Naxos 8.554492] and the *Te Deum* (1979) [Naxos 8.557980]. What followed was couched in a more pluralistic style, drawing on aspects of his more radical manner of the 1960s and early 1970s in an attempt at overall musical synthesis, whose largest works are *A Polish Requiem* (1984) [Naxos 8.557386/7] and the opera *Die schwarze Maske* (1986). This idiom has, with certain modifications, held good for Penderecki's music over the past 25 years.

The work opens with icily descending gestures on upper strings, lower strings sounding out held chords as those gestures increase both in volume and harmonic density to result in chordal clusters that spread across the whole string texture. These presently fall away to leave only pulsating chords on basses, before more stable writing starts to emerge on the lower strings. It is only now that the soloist appears, in a gradually ascending passage that leads (*Vivo*) into sustained exchanges with the orchestra. The mood for the most part is fateful and resigned, though it frequently flairs up into heated exchanges between the soloist and brass, these provoking a more active string response as well as some brusque assaults from the percussion. These latter presently join the soloist prior to a resumption of the initial string gestures (*Tempo I*), thus paving the way for

a passage in which the soloist and upper woodwind musingly exchange gestures on the way to a highly wrought climax and its regretful aftermath. From here the music springs into renewed activity (*Allegretto*), the soloist engaging in lively repartee with strings and percussion that culminates in angry cluster chords and repeated attacks from woodwind. As these gradually subside, the initial strings gestures briefly return to usher in (*Lento*) the work's most sustained passage, essentially a monologue for the soloist against first an arresting texture of woodwind and percussion, then proceeding to an intensive interplay with the strings that sees the entry of brass as a forceful climax is reached. The mood is now at its most earnest, as lower brass and percussion intone a fateful response to the soloist's eloquent threnody. Yet the percussion once more provoke greater activity (*Allegretto*), with the soloist leading the orchestra in a spirited processional that heads into a more capricious section (*Poco meno mosso*) with brass and percussion to the fore. These offset what is an elaborate accompanied cadenza, with the soloist displaying a range of responses to the orchestra's confrontational manner, before winding down to sustained chords. At this point (*Tempo I*) the initial string gestures re-emerge for the final time, while the soloist embarks upon a closing threnody that returns the music to its initial uncertainty. Upper strings, woodwind and bells continue alone as the work concludes with the wider issues raised during its course left hanging in the balance.

Richard Whitehouse

Grigori Zhislin



Grigori Zhislin was born in St Petersburg, and graduated from Moscow Conservatory as a pupil of Yuri Yankelevitch. At the age of 22 he won first prize in the Paganini Competition, and the Silver Medal in the Queen Elizabeth Competition, with a flourishing international career. His repertoire includes over one hundred concertos for violin and viola, and numerous recital and chamber music programmes ranging from Baroque to contemporary music. He has appeared as a soloist with leading Russian and international orchestras, collaborating with the most distinguished conductors. He has cooperated closely with such composers as Schnittke, Denisov, Sofia Gubaidulina and Krzysztof Penderecki, and gave the first performance in Russia of Penderecki's *Violin Concerto*. The two formed a close relationship and together they have recorded all of Penderecki's violin and viola works. It was in 1983, at Penderecki's

request, that Zhislin began to play the viola, in order to give the first European performance of Penderecki's *Viola Concerto*, and Penderecki also dedicated his *Cadenza per Viola Solo* to him. Grigori Zhislin is Professor of Violin and Viola at the Royal College of Music in London. He is also visiting professor in Finland, Norway and Poland, and gives master-classes in Germany, the former Yugoslavia and the United States.

Tatjana Vassiljeva



Tatjana Vassiljeva was born into a musical family in Novosibirsk and began the cello with Eugenij Nilov, before studying with Maria Zhuravleva, Walter Northas and David Geringas. She began her performing career very early, but it was victory in the 2001 Rostropovitch Cello Competition that brought her international recognition. She is known for her impeccable technique, irresistible range of sonorities, strength of musical personality and innate musical curiosity. Her extensive repertoire ranges from baroque to contemporary music and includes several works of which she has given the world premiere. Tatjana Vassiljeva performs with orchestras including the Munich Philharmonic, St Petersburg Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, London Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich and the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra under such distinguished conductors as Temirkanov, Gergiev, Zinman, Abbado, Gatti, Kitaenko, Eschenbach, de Billy, Sinaisky and Penderecki. She is regularly invited to festivals such as Lockenhaus, Verbier, Edinburgh, Kronberg, Colmar, Elba, the Rencontres de musique de chambre at Chambéry and La Grange de Meslay, and the Folles journées in Nantes and Japan.

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 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 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 (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.

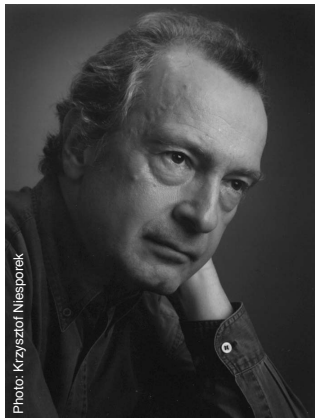
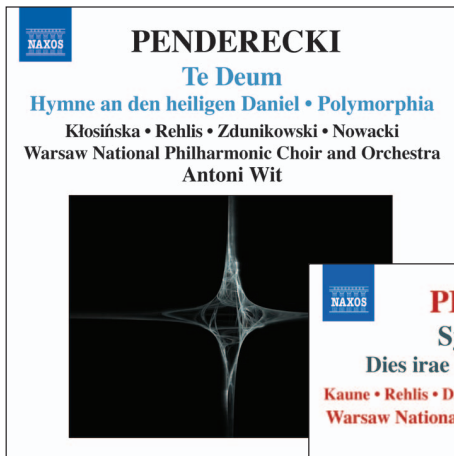


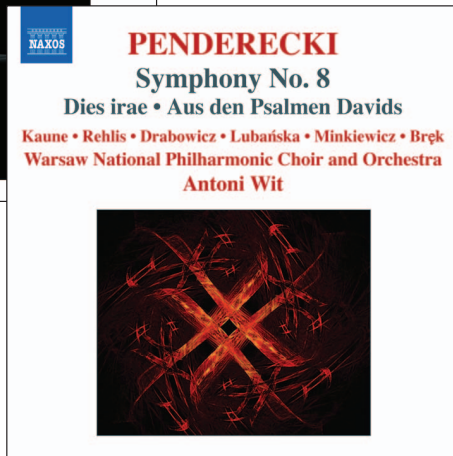
Photo: Krzysztof Niesporek

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 from 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, 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 Orquesta Filarmónica de Gran Canaria. In 2002 he became managing and artistic director of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra and 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 recordings for EMI, Sony and Naxos. He has sold close to five million records on Naxos including an acclaimed release of Prokofiev's *Piano Concertos*, 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 (8.554478-79) was awarded the Cannes Classical Award in 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 music magazines (*Gramophone*, *BBC Music Magazine*). He also received the Record Academy Award 2005 of Japanese music magazine *Record Geijutsu* for Penderecki's *A Polish Requiem* (8.557386-87), and four Fryderyk Awards of the Polish Phonographic Academy. He received six GRAMMY® nominations for Penderecki's *St Luke Passion* in 2004 (8.557149), *A Polish Requiem* in 2005, *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* in 2007 (8.557766), *Utrenja* 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.

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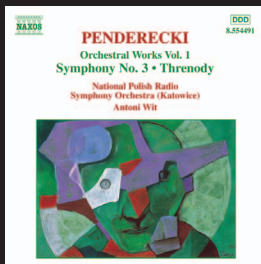


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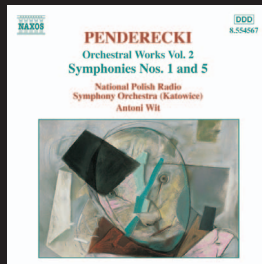


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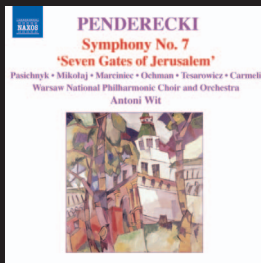
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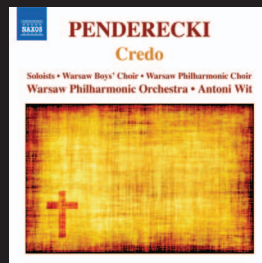
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Penderecki's concertos are amongst the most communicative, emotionally charged, and important works of the second half of the twentieth century. The *Second Cello Concerto* was written for Rostropovich and its exploration of Romantic intensity reflected a change in Penderecki's musical language. Its rich harmonies and dramatic power ensure unflagging interest. Opening with an expressive soliloquy for the soloist, the brooding and complex *Viola Concerto* incorporates a broad range of techniques from the composer's maturity into a taut and compact time-span. Grigori Zhislin has long been associated with this work, whilst Antoni Wit is one of the composer's greatest champions, whose 'authoritative insight' (*American Record Guide*) has been acknowledged in the *Symphony No. 3* and *Threnody* on Naxos 8.554491.



Krzysztof
PENDERECKI
 (b. 1933)

1-7 Viola Concerto (1983) 20:21

8-15 Cello Concerto No. 2 (1982) 37:12

Grigori Zhislin, Viola • Tatjana Vassiljeva, Cello
Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra
Antoni Wit

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

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