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LPO/Alsop

Royal Festival Hall, London

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Marin Alsop's latest concert with the London Philharmonic prefaced Górecki's Third Symphony with UK premieres of works by Mark-Anthony Turnage and Philip Glass. Turnage's *Texan Tenebrae* draws its material from *Anna Nicole*, his forthcoming opera about the life and drug-related death of Anna Nicole Smith. The piece is notable for its hallucinatory quality and unvarying shrillness. A distorted phrase from Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* weaves through a tangle of clanging bells, fragmented schmaltz and acid percussion rasps. Alsop and the LPO did much with its tatty glamour, but it sounded like a chunk from a longer work that needs the rest to supply its meaning.

Glass's *Violin Concerto No 2* is subtitled *The American Four Seasons*. Written for Robert McDuffie as a Vivaldi companion piece, it links Glass's own minimalism to the classicism and neo-classicism of the 18th and 20th centuries respectively. Baroque in scale, and slyly using a synthesiser as continuo, it interweaves unaccompanied solos with formal movements of great melodic beauty. Moments of suspect intonation showed that McDuffie was pushed to his limits, though the standing ovation at the close was richly deserved.

Górecki's Third, meanwhile, was unforgettable and, in its context, unique. It was dedicated to the 96 victims of the Polish plane crash, and a minute's silence was requested at the end. Unable to fly to London due to current airline restrictions, soprano soloist Joanna Wóś had driven across Europe to get here. Despite – or perhaps because of – its former popularity, the symphony's outings are rare; this was a reminder of just how gut-wrenching it can be. Wóś, dark-toned and fearfully intense, was matchless in it.

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