



Valerie Barber PR

Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra

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Oslo Philharmonic/Petrenko: Scriabin

By Neil Fisher

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It's a pity that in the 100 years after the death of Alexander Scriabin, no one has got around to fulfilling the composer's vision, his magnum opus, *Mysterium*. Admittedly first it needs to be written. And then a special temple in the Himalayas has to be built to perform it where everyone must experience the work through dance, lights, words and even smells, as well as music. Long before hipster theatre directors were schlepping east Londoners one by one through abandoned shopping centres, Scriabin really did intend for his work to be "immersive".

Although he hasn't built that temple in the Himalayas, Valery Gergiev is one conductor who has championed Scriabin's orchestral works. Another is his compatriot Vasily Petrenko, who has started a symphony cycle with the Oslo Philharmonic. The first album brings together the *Symphony No 3*, or *The Divine Poem*, and Scriabin's most renowned orchestral piece, *The Poem of Ecstasy*, sometimes chalked up as his *Fourth Symphony*.

The performances, although recorded in a rather muddy acoustic, have the lean vigour we've come to expect of Petrenko from his work with the Russian repertoire at the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic. Not all of the *The Divine Poem* is divine — scored for enormous forces, it's prone to flabby repetition — but Petrenko and his Norwegian orchestra don't make the mistake of driving it too hard.

They find lovely echoes of Tchaikovsky in the sprawling first movement, trickles of Wagner in the voluptuous middle section, and only really go for broke in the last hurrah. Petrenko ably controls the surging eddies of the more concise *Poem of Ecstasy* — which makes *The Divine Poem* look like a unedited dress rehearsal — and the orchestra's principal trumpeter produces some beautifully silvery solos. (Lawo Classics)