



EÖTVÖS

Paradise Reloaded (Lilith)

Annette Schonmuller, Holger Falk, Eric Stoklossa, Rebecca Nelsen, Gernot Henirich, Andreas Jankowitsch, Michael Wagner, Avelyne Francis, Christina Sidak, Anna Clare Hauf; Hungarian Radio Symphonic Orchestra/Gregory Vajda
Budapest Music Center BMC 226
94:08 mins (2 discs)

It was never Peter Eötvös's plan to write operas. After working briefly as a composer for theatre and film as a student in the 1950s, Eötvös emerged as a staunch modernist, focusing solely on electronic music and working closely with Stockhausen and Boulez. Yet a chance misunderstanding in 1986 (an invitation to stage Eötvös's purely orchestral work *Chinese Opera*) saw the composer embark on *Three Sisters* which, when it finally premiered in 1997, proved a runaway success.

Completed in 2013, *Paradise Reloaded (Lilith)* is a dramatic, ambitious and astonishing work which explores the intriguing character in medieval Jewish tradition of Lilith, Adam's first wife. After being banished from paradise, Lilith makes a pact with Lucifer to win back Adam and destroy Eve. The four iconic figures are joined by a three-voice male chorus and corresponding female chorus in a taut drama of loss, desire and power-play.

Eötvös's magnificent score is by turns explosive and luminescent, ranging from fierce dissonance to otherworldly enchantment – the haunting passages scored for the female chorus are particularly arresting. This recording with the Hungarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, conducted by the excellent Gregory Vajda, is committed and precise. Soloist performances are strong all round, with Rebecca Nelsen's highly-charged, pin-bright rendering of Eve particularly noteworthy. The double-CD edition is slickly presented, although an English translation of the German libretto would have been welcome. *Kate Wakeling*

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★