

CD REVIEW 73

CHOPIN

Sonata no 3 in B minor Op 58

Four Scherzi:

B minor Op 20,

B flat minor Op 31,

C sharp minor Op 39,

E Op 54.

Ivo Kahaneck (piano)

Supraphon SU 4030-2 (62.59)



When this disc arrived for me to review, I was not very interested. Chopin is not one of my favourite composers by many a mile. In fact, some of his music annoys and irritates me to anger or distress.

However, this CD does not fall into that category.

While it does not convert me to Chopin, it is a fine disc of impeccable piano playing and, at last, Chopin is played without the ghastly and nauseous effeminacy so many pianists bring to it.

These performances are masculine, powerful and at speeds which cause the music to move along bringing real excitement... and the clarity of the playing and the excellent sound makes it a must for Chopin fans everywhere! The piano cascades sound like the ocean's might roar and not like splashing in a small puddle!

I was not impressed by the performers sleeve notes and the idea that Chopin was like Bach or Mozart.

Nonetheless, Kahaneck's playing is quite superb. He deals with the difficulties with ease. He is a brilliant young Czech pianist of virtuosity and superlative musicianship.

Because his playing is so very good, deleting the ghastly effeminacy and lingering rubatos often given to this music, this playing makes some wonder whether Chopin is constantly misrepresented with such awful performances and that his music is really better than the performers that are regularly given. Kahaneck's performances are hot!

Not everyone will respond to these very fine performances. There are many who like the slow, meandering, anaemic performances squeezing every emotion out of the music like the painful and long winded pulling of a tooth!

Music must communicate and not be hindered by dreary and excessive introspection.

This is why this CD is so good. It shows Chopin as a good composer and not as a wimp.

Kahaneck's choice of tempi is a revelation. Here we have music which is not a wallow or drowning in thick treacle! The music sparkles and is often tremendously exciting. In fact it is so good it could be mistaken for Liszt or Rachmaninov, the greatest composers for the piano since Beethoven! This is not the music of a demure genteel woman but a fiery, feisty young woman! Nor is it music of someone being sick, highly strung or emotional, but music of real meaning and polish! It is not like a very weak coffee but a satisfying tasty cup of coffee!

Although the music is not my first choice, it is highly recommended. It will transform peoples opinions and show us what Chopin is like when played like this! Perhaps my assessment of Chopin has been wrong but, if that is the case, it is because of the way he is presented and performed and this would include the playing by famous pianists!

I was very, very impressed!

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