

American Record Guide

independent critics reviewing classical recordings and music in concert

SCRIABIN: *Piano Pieces 4*

Sonatas 3+10; Preludes, opp 13+22; Poemes, opp 63+69; Impromptus, op 14; Morceau, op 49; Etudes, op 65

Pervez Mody—Thorofon 2612—69 minutes

This is Mody's 4th volume of Scriabin's piano works in a continuing series. Vol. 1 (Thorofon 2570, 2CDs) was not reviewed in ARG. I enjoyed Vol. 2 (Thorofon 2579, Nov/Dec 2011) and Mr Auerbach went so far as to say Mody was the best Scriabin interpreter he had ever heard (Vol. 3, Thorofon 2590, Mar/Apr 2013). This disc continues the tradition and is an absolute must for Scriabin fans. From the energy in the opening two bass octaves of Sonata 3 to the final Etudes, we are immersed in the world of Scriabin.

What I especially enjoy about Mody's set is the variety of works on each volume. We get early works (Opp. 13 & 14) clearly under the influence of Chopin—with a Russian twist, of course. The middle works (Opp. 22, 23, 49) come from a time when Scriabin had found his style and show the complexities of harmony and rhythm that a virtuoso pianist composer was capable of. In the later years of his short life (43 years) mysticism, dissonance, and even atonality were present, but still with a strong element of Russian melodic genius. The late works here (Opp. 63, 65, 69, 70) have all of these elements in abundance.

My standards are high for Scriabin's music; I learned most of it from the recordings of Horowitz, Sofronitsky, Richter, Ashkenazy, and Hamelin. I predict that time will prove Mody a member of this elite group. No one yet has beat Horowitz's Sonata 10—the nervous, eccentric energy that propels his trills and tremolos—Mody does offer a fine account. His Sonata 3 is in the same vein as Sofronitsky's, which I consider best. The Preludes, Impromptus, Poemes, Morceaux, and Etudes are all on a very high level.

With superb piano sound from Thorofon and extensive booklet notes, this fourth installment of Scriabin bodes well for a complete series of piano music that will probably be a reference by which others are measured for many years to come.

HARRINGTON