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Pervez Mody – The Fifth

Indian Pianist Pervez Mody Continues his Highly Acclaimed Recording-Series of Piano Music by Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915)

Most composers were also good pianists, and some of them were veritable piano virtuosos, just think of Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin or Sergei Rachmaninoff. Some of these composer-pianists composed almost exclusively for the piano, the most notorious case being Frederic Chopin who never wrote an opera or a symphony, actually not even a chamber music piece without a piano.

The purest case of a piano composer after Chopin must have been the Russian Alexander Scriabin. No composer after Chopin, not even Debussy, wrote so much good and pianistically refined piano music as did Scriabin. He admittedly composed three symphonies and an exuberant poem for orchestra, but these pieces are completely overshadowed by a plethora of etudes, preludes, impromptus, sonatas, nocturnes, mazurkas and scherzos which Scriabin wrote for his own instrument, the piano. Scriabin was a composer to whom writing for the piano came natural and who thought almost exclusively in terms of piano music.

As a composer, Scriabin started out as an imitator of Chopin. His early pieces up to the year 1903 are written in a fairly conventional romantic manner resembling that of Chopin and Franz Liszt. The older and more mature Scriabin gets, however, the more does he venture into hitherto unknown territory. He gradually abandons the traditional functional tonality, adds more and more unresolved dissonances and the focus slowly shifts towards a system in which chord coloring is most important than traditional four part harmony.

The piano sonata No. 5 Op. 53 which opens Mr. Mody's recording is Scriabin's most widely recorded sonata and also one of his most famous. It is in one movement and marks the transition from the composer's late romantic and tonal sonatas to the atonal musical language he preferred during his later years. Consisting of five intertwined themes the sonata is feared for its technical difficulty. The Russian pianist Sviatoslav Richter famously called it "the most difficult piece in the entire piano repertory."

More conventional, tonal throughout and reminiscent of Rachmaninov, Scriabin's fellow pupil at the Moscow conservatory, are the etudes op. 12, particularly the martial eight, which was often played as a brilliant encore by Vladimir Horowitz.

All of the preludes on this CD and the impromptus op. 12 belong to Scriabin's early romantic period, whereas the dances op. 73 already venture far beyond the limits of established tonality.

Scriabin's fantasy in b-minor op. 28 was composed in the year 1900 when the composer served as professor of composition at the Moscow conservatory. This is a technically demanding virtuoso piece in sonata form that was probably planned to be the first movement of a piano sonata.

Pervez Mody, a native of Mumbai in India, today lives and works out of Germany. Mr. Mody studied the piano in Moscow and Karlsruhe and is a winner of prestigious prizes and competitions. Specializing on the romantic piano repertoire, Mr. Mody has been touring many countries as a concert pianist. He is also very much sought after as a teacher who has been giving master classes on four continents. He is in the midst of a project during which he will be recording all of Alexander Scriabin's piano works.

This is the fifth recording in the series making up Scriabin's entire piano works, entitled "Pervez Mody plays Scriabin".

The previous CDs were released under the following order nos.:

CTH2570/2 (Vol. 1) Sonata no 4 – Preludes op 11 – etc incl. bonus CD Sound Fantasies

CTH2579 (Vol. 2) Sonatas nos. 1 and 9 – 10 Mazurkas op. 3

CTH2590 (Vol. 3) Preludes – Nocturnes – Etudes – Sonatas nos 2 and 7 etc.

CTH2612 (Vol. 4) Sonata nos.3 and 10 – Preludes op.22 – Impromptus op.14 – Etudes op.65

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