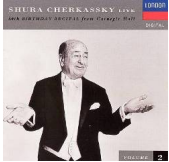


Shura Cherkassky - Piano Recital from Carnegie Hall (1992)

Written by bluesever

Tuesday, 27 September 2011 18:37 - Last Updated Friday, 09 May 2014 21:36

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01. Ferruccio Busoni - Chaconne (BWV1004) [0:16:33.13] 02. Robert Schumann - Symphonische Etuden op13 - Thema [0:01:37.12] 03. Symphonische Etuden op13 i. Un poco piu vivo [0:01:20.63] 04. Symphonische Etuden op13 ii. Andante [0:02:48.37] 05. Symphonische Etuden op13 iii. Vivace [0:01:20.00] 06. Symphonische Etuden op13 iv. Allegro marcato [0:01:02.50] 07. Symphonische Etuden op13 v. Scherzando [0:01:15.25] 08. Symphonische Etuden op13 vi. Agitato [0:00:53.08] 09. Symphonische Etuden op13 vii. Allegro molto [0:01:12.62] 10. Symphonische Etuden op13 viii. Sempre marcatissimo [0:01:51.65] 11. Symphonische Etuden op13 ix. Presto possibile [0:00:37.15] 12. Symphonische Etuden op13 x. Allegro con energia [0:01:24.00] 13. Symphonische Etuden op13 xi. Andante espressivo [0:03:06.73] 14. Symphonische Etuden op13 xii. Finale: Allegro brillante [0:06:57.52] 15. Frédéric Chopin - Nocturne in F minor, op55. no.1 [0:05:31.13] 16. Charles Ives - Three-page sonata [0:06:33.12] 17. Josef Hofmann - Kaleidoscope, op40. no 4 [0:04:46.25] 18. Paul Pabst - Paraphrase on theme from 'Eugene Onegin' [0:13:01.13] 19. Frédéric Chopin - Tarantelle, op.43 [0:03:12.25] 20. Morton Gould - Boogie Woogie Etude [0:02:54.62] Shura Cherkassky – piano

Two things I particularly like about Cherkassky. One is his very attractive touch, the other is that he does his own thing in terms of what he chooses to play, whatever the trends in critical fashion. This disc preserves for us the little man's 80th birthday recital at the Carnegie Hall in 1991, and is now available as one of Decca's Gramophone Awards Collection, having won the instrumental award in 1993.

With the passing of Horowitz and Cziffra a particular kind of virtuoso tradition had almost died out. Cherkassky represented an even older element in that tradition than Horowitz did. He was a pupil of Josef Hofmann and his playing recalls Hofmann's in some ways, although he has no lack of individuality of his own. The first piece in this recital that brings out his virtuosity to the full is actually by Hofmann, and being unaware of anything else of Hofmann's creative work I can't be sure how to understand its title 'Kaleidoscope' nor how to place it in any kind of context.

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Cherkassky treats us to some delightful scintillating fingerwork in it, showing the characteristic cool clarity of touch that is his special hallmark. In fact that is apparent in every single work on this long programme, from which a few pieces have had to be dropped as exceeding the disc-capacity, although they are to be issued on a separate record. There is a certain amount of standard fare here - a nocturne by Chopin and his tarantella, Schumann's etudes symphoniques, and I suppose we can include the Bach/Busoni chaconne under the 'standard' heading. I have that in another performance by Michelangeli, not widely known for outlandish choices in his recitals, and the contrast is delightful. There is a devil-may-care bit about Cherkassky, and it is pleasant to find it surviving through the new era of perfectionist super-virtuosi that Michelangeli, Lipatti and (on some days) Richter represented. There is also a short sonata by Ives, and in a more populist vein there is a paraphrase by Paul Pabst of themes from Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin. Just in case anyone was finding the programme too uniform in style, Cherkassky ends with a boogie-woogie etude by Morton Gould.

There is a great sense of enjoyment about it all, although a fifth star in the rating would have needed a bit more evenness in the playing generally from my point of view. By that I don't mean more accuracy - wrong notes are very rare indeed, and I understand from the liner note that the allocation of time for retakes was not used and the recital as we have it here is exactly as Cherkassky gave it. The liner note itself is talkative and charming, and the recorded quality is perfectly good without being outstanding. There was room for a player like this in a generation that had decided to take a different direction. ---David Bryson, amazon.com

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