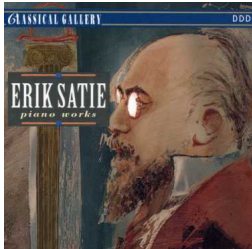


Erik Satie - Piano Music (Yitkin Seow) [2004]

Written by bluesever

Sunday, 25 October 2009 20:51 - Last Updated Wednesday, 23 April 2014 09:58

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- 01 - *Gymnopédie 1*
- 02 - *Gymnopédie 2*
- 03 - *Gymnopédie 3*
- 04 - *Gnossienne 1*
- 05 - *Gnossienne 2*
- 06 - *Gnossienne 3*
- 07 - *Gnossienne 4*
- 08 - *Gnossienne 5*
- 09 - *Gnossienne 6*
- 10 - *Embryons desséchés- 1. d'Holothurie*
- 11 - *Embryons desséchés- 2. d'Edriophthalma*
- 12 - *Embryons desséchés- 3. de Podophthalma*
- 13 - *Croquis et agaceries- 1. Tyrolienne turque*
- 14 - *Croquis et agaceries- 2. Danse maigre*
- 15 - *Croquis et agaceries- 3. Española*
- 16 - *Sports et Divertissements- 01.Choral inappétissant*
- 17 - *Sports et Divertissements- 02.La Balançoire*
- 18 - *Sports et Divertissements- 03.La Casse*
- 19 - *Sports et Divertissements- 04.La Comédie Italienne*
- 20 - *Sports et Divertissements- 05.La Réveil de la Mariée*
- 21 - *Sports et Divertissements- 06.Colin-Maillard*
- 22 - *Sports et Divertissements- 07.La Pêche*
- 23 - *Sports et Divertissements- 08.Le Yachting*
- 24 - *Sports et Divertissements- 09.Le Bain de mer*
- 25 - *Sports et Divertissements- 10.Le Carnaval*
- 26 - *Sports et Divertissements- 11.Le Golf*
- 27 - *Sports et Divertissements- 12.La Pieuvre*
- 28 - *Sports et Divertissements- 13.Les Courses*
- 29 - *Sports et Divertissements- 14.Les Quatre-Coins*
- 30 - *Sports et Divertissements- 15.Le Pique-nique*
- 31 - *Sports et Divertissements- 16.Le Water-chute*

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- 32 - *Sports et Divertissements*- 17.*Le Tango*
 - 33 - *Sports et Divertissements*- 18.*Le Traineu*
 - 34 - *Sports et Divertissements*- 19.*Le Flirt*
 - 35 - *Sports et Divertissements*- *Le Feu d'Artifice*
 - 36 - *Sports et Divertissements*- *Le Tennis*
 - 37 - *Heures Séculaires et Instantanées*- 1.*Obstacles venimeux*
 - 38 - *Heures Séculaires et Instantanées*- 2.*Crépuscule matinal*
 - 39 - *Heures Séculaires et Instantanées*- 3.*Affolements granitiques*
 - 40 - *Le trois valse distinguées*- 1.*Sa taille*
 - 41 - *Le trois valse distinguées*- 2.*Son binocle*
 - 42 - *Le trois valse distinguées*- 3.*Ses jambes*
 - 43 - *Sonatine bureaucratique*
 - 44 - *Nocturne 1*
 - 45 - *Nocturne 2*
 - 46 - *Nocturne 3*
 - 47 - *Nocturne 4*
 - 48 - *Nocturne 5*
- Yitkin Seow – piano

Yitkin Seow's 1989 recording of Erik Satie's popular miniatures for Hyperion is a fine choice among a handful of excellent recordings. Whether or not one has a preference for the critically acclaimed albums by Pascal Rogé or Aldo Ciccolini, Seow's polished performances are in the same league and differ only slightly in terms of rubato, dynamics, and phrasing. Satie's music is somewhat rarefied, eccentric, and vaguely surrealistic, but also limited in emotional range and style. Pianists must contend with his thin textures, abrupt changes of mood, and unusual harmonic voicings in much the same way: with refined delicacy, as in the three *Gymnopédies*, the six *Gnossiennes*, and the five *Nocturnes*, or with irreverent, punchy vigor, as needed in *Sports et divertissements*, *Heures séculaires et instantanées*, and the *Sonatine bureaucratique*. Seow's playing is on the subdued side -- the very antithesis of Romantic pianism, which Satie would have applauded -- and his interpretations have a veiled quality that makes these short pieces enigmatic and perhaps mistier than might be expected. Hyperion's recording, while pleasant, is also a little muted, so a higher volume setting is advised to hear all the details, especially in the extremely soft *Gymnopédies*. ---Blair Sanderson, Rovi

We have had to wait far too long for this first solo recording from Yitkin Seow, for he is an excellent pianist with a keen sense of style. I would like to have from him and Hyperion such

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mainstream works as the Brahms Paganini Variations or the Chopin B minor Sonata, music that he plays very well; but failing that his artistry is fully evident in the present Satie collection. The recital begins with the composer's most popular pieces, the three Gymnopédies, sensitively done but, given their simplicity and Greek inspiration, arguably just a tiny bit too beautified (or cosmeticized) by rubato compared with the more straightforward Peter Lawson on his Classics for Pleasure disc. The same goes for the Gnossiennes, but I hasten to add that Seow's freedom did not worry me seriously and he does characterize each piece well, thus avoiding monotony. In drier pieces such as the Embryons desséchés he gives us wit and point, playing the 'fake endings'—and the references to Chopin's Funeral March and other music—with just enough humour to emphasize their jokes yet not overdoing them. It is similar with the 'Clementine' stylization of the Sonatine bureaucratique. Altogether this is an attractive and well-chosen Satie collection, well recorded in St Barnabas's Church in North London with an acceptable degree of reverberation. --- Gramophone [12/1989]

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