

Liszt - Piano Sonata in B minor - Funerailles - La Noite (Zimmerman)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Piano Sonata in B minor, S.178* 30:36 2. *Nuages gris, S.199* 3:12 3. *La Noite, S.602* 9:44 4. *La Lugubre Gondola, S.200 no.2* 9:52 5. *Funérailles* 12:18

Krystian Zimerman – piano

This recording is just unbelievable! It is perhaps one of the most perfect recordings of the piece, combining the fire of Argerich, the musical insight of Richter, and the absolute command of sound and color comparable only to Horowitz. Under Zimerman's fingers, the piece becomes an organic whole from beginning to end. If you are a serious musician and collector of fine music, I highly recommend getting this recording. --- Jerico Vasquez (Houston, Texas), amazon.com

Krystian Zimerman comes from a family with rich music-making traditions. Musicians would meet almost daily in his home to play various works, mostly chamber music. These performances afforded Mr. Zimerman a most intimate, natural, everyday contact with live music and provided an early impetus to his musical career. He made his first steps in music under his father's supervision, and at the age of 7 started working with Andrzej Jasinski, a senior lecturer at the music conservatory in Katowice, Poland. This tutorship was crowned by Mr. Zimerman's graduation, 14 years later, from the conservatory there. Mr. Zimerman had no zest for contests, but he followed the common way of musical development for concert pianists, which brought him the highest prizes at several prestigious competitions devoted to Russian and Polish music and to the works of particular composers (Prokofiev and Beethoven). There followed the Grand Prix at the Chopin Competition of 1975, which paved the way for performances in concert halls worldwide.

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The 25 years of Mr. Zimmerman's artistic activity have been marked by regular meetings with his own dedicated audiences, which ardently look forward to every concert. Wherever his concert tours take him, in the music centers of Europe, Asia and America, he always recognizes familiar faces. During the last 10 seasons, since he has resolved to travel with his own concert piano, he has managed to accustom his audience and concert organizers to this unusual and only seemingly inconvenient gear. Mr. Zimmerman has applied several technical inventions of his own which have made it possible for him, as for other musicians, to take his instrument along on tours. The confidence afforded by his own thoroughly familiar instrument, combined with his piano-building expertise--first acquired in Katowice and developed through permanent cooperation with the Steinway Company in Hamburg--allows him to eliminate, or reduce to the absolute minimum, everything that might distract him from purely musical issues.

Mr. Zimmerman's comparatively early acquaintance with the main developments of European music--erman, Russian, French and others--precluded him from becoming a "Chopin specialist." Instead, it stirred in him the ambition, which he has achieved in the last 10 years, of performing music in the place and culture of its origin: French works in Paris; Beethoven, Mozart and Schubert in Vienna; Brahms in Hamburg; American music played in New York and, in one notable instance, conducted by the composer himself--Leonard Bernstein. "If I were an actor," he argues, "I would also set myself the aim of performing Shakespeare in London and Chekhov in Russia."

Witold Lutoslawski's honorable dedication of his Piano Concerto to Krystian Zimmerman inspired the pianist to a similar treatment of that work: it was self-evident that it should be performed in Warsaw during the Warsaw Autumn Festival of Contemporary Music, with the composer as conductor. During each of his New York recitals, he has taken care to perform a Polish composition as part of the program or as an encore. For several consecutive seasons he performed Karol Szymanowski's works in principal music centers on three continents. His encounters with pre-eminent musicians--performers of chamber music and conductors--have been, he claims, his greatest luck. He has repeatedly performed with Kaja Danczowska, Kyung-Wha Chung, Gidon Kremer and about 40 other celebrities of the musical world..

The piano is not Mr. Zimmerman's only musical passion: he has always remained an exceedingly keen organist. Playing the organ also allowed him to grasp and fashion the musical form in its horizontal dimension. He has also enriched his knowledge of conducting due to collaboration with the most illustrious conductors of his time: Leonard Bernstein, Herbert von Karajan, Seiji Ozawa, Riccardo Muti, Lorin Maazel, Andre Previn, Pierre Boulez, Zubin Mehta, Bernard Haitink, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Sir Simon Rattle and numerous others. In some instances (with Bernstein, Boulez, Karajan, Kondrashin and Ozawa), the cooperation was particularly close and sustained by friendship. Mr. Zimmerman and Leonard Bernstein worked together for 13 years: Mr. Zimmerman was the last--for some time also the only--pianist who performed under

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Bernstein, both during recording sessions and at concerts in many European countries and the United States. Working frequently and closely with an outstanding musical personality, a master of orchestral sound, was a formative experience for him. The same could be said about his close and long-time contacts with Herbert von Karajan. Mr. Zimerman also embraced the opportunity to meet and make a closer acquaintance of the older-generation masters: Claudio Arrau, Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli, Arthur Rubinstein and Sviatoslav Richter--all of whom exerted a powerful influence on his musical development.

During his 24-year collaboration with Deutsche Grammophon, Mr. Zimerman has made 22 records, for which he has frequently received the most prestigious record awards.

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