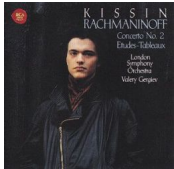


Rachmaninoff - Piano Concerto No.2 & Etudes-Tableaux [1993]

Written by bluesever

Thursday, 15 September 2011 18:46 - Last Updated Friday, 08 November 2013 13:52

Rachmaninoff - Piano Concerto No.2 & Etudes-Tableaux [1993]



1. *Concerto No. 2, Op. 18 in C Minor: Moderato; Allegro* Evgeny Kissin;Valery Gergiev 11:27
 2. *Concerto No. 2, Op. 18 in C Minor: Adagio sostenuto* Evgeny Kissin;Valery Gergiev 11:50
 3. *Concerto No. 2, Op. 18 in C Minor: Allegro scherzando* Evgeny Kissin;Valery Gergiev 22:14
 4. *Études-tableaux, Op. 39: No. 1 in C Minor* Evgeny Kissin 3:35
 5. *Études-tableaux, Op. 39: No. 2 in A Minor* Evgeny Kissin 6:19
 6. *Études-tableaux, Op. 39: No. 4 in B Minor* Evgeny Kissin 3:29 [play](#)
 7. *Études-tableaux, Op. 39: No. 5 in E-Flat Minor* Evgeny Kissin 5:02
 8. *Études-tableaux, Op. 39: No. 6 in A Minor* Evgeny Kissin 3:00 [play](#)
 9. *Études-tableaux, Op. 39: No. 9 in D* Evgeny Kissin 3:46
- Evgeny Kissin – piano London Symphony Orchestra Valery Gergiev

Because Rachmaninoff's music mirrors the Russian culture, I have often noted that no one plays Rachmaninoff like a Russian. Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 2 and Etudes-Tableaux, played by the Russian Evgeny Kissin, is unparalleled in mastery, beauty, and power. The album begins with one of the most sensitive interpretations of Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto that I have heard (on par with Vladimir Ashkenazy's, a fellow Russian). Kissin understands the flow of the piece from beginning to end. As a result, he builds the tension by accentuating the rich chord progressions that fill the piece. He then resolves that tension with the precision of a story-teller and the sensitivity of a master artist. Though the music stretches the ability of even the greatest pianists, Kissin plays through the difficulty in order to paint a landscape of musical progression. He hears and invites his audience to hear the intricate sub-plots that recur all throughout the work. Perhaps Rachmaninoff's most famous composition is married with a true master artist.

The album ends with six powerful Etudes-Tableaux. Once again, Kissin hears and emphasizes both the predominant theme as well as the innumerable sub-themes, often overlooked by lesser musicians. My favorite is Etude-Tableau No. 5 in E-flat minor. This extremely difficult piece builds tension through increased dissonance until a lofty climax. That dissonance almost becomes unpleasant to the ears, creating an atmosphere of extreme melancholy. I imagine that

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tension mirroring the inner turmoil that an individual experiences through a difficult time of life. But when that tension and internal cacophony can get no greater and the person is at the point of breaking, grace comes! The beauty of the resolution is far more beautiful against such a dark backdrop. And any person who has been through difficulties can fully enter into the emotion of the music. And anybody who is currently experiencing pain and suffering can take hope, even from this music, that resolution will come. ---Joseph W. Hyink, amazon.com

This was the first recording that I'd heard of Kissin's playing. Once I was over the amazement to the fact that he was a mere 16 years old when he recorded this, only then could I critique the performance and interpretation of these wonderful and extremely difficult works. That said - the true gems on this recording are the Etudes-Tableaux. Technically and interpretively excellent, he does wonderfully at expressing Rachmaninoff's picturesque miniatures. I've not yet heard a better recording of the #1 Etude in C-minor. To top off, the piano that he is playing on is exceptional; same quality of the pianos played by Rachmaninoff and Horowitz from the 1940's (back when Steinway "made them like they used to"). The concerto leaves much to be desired. Kissin's playing is good but I don't care for some of the tempos that they use and the sound quality (mixing) is definitely lacking - particularly where the piano is concerned; too much echo. Buy this CD for the Etudes; these are among Rachmaninoff's finest works for solo piano and young Mr. Kissin does an enjoyable rendition of them; one that I think even Rachmaninoff himself could be pleased with. ---atv, amazon.com

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