

Andrzej Jagodzinski Trio – Chopin (1994)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Prelude in E minor*
2. *Etude in A minor*
3. *Polonaise in C sharp minor*
4. *Mazurka in F minor*
5. *Prelude in C minor*
6. *Waltz in D flat major*
7. *Prelude in E minor*

Personnel:

- * Andrzej Jagodzinski: piano
- * Adam Cegielski: bass
- * Czeslaw "Maly" Bartkowski: drums

If Chopin really was a composer for the right hand only, as Wagner grouchily complained, then perhaps Andrzej Jagodzinski has provided a missing accompaniment. These are not jazzed-up interpretations of Chopin compositions but a set of jazz originals inspired by the great Pole's most evocative pieces. While Jagodzinski takes the melodic and harmonic heart of the Waltz in D flat major, more often he takes nothing more than a mood, or a vague musical shape, and erects his own structure on top of it. As an act of homage, it is profoundly impressive and beautifully executed.

Interestingly and significantly, the Waltz is the only major-key piece in the set. The remainder have a more sombre and questioning tonality that often does - cliché though it is - suggest the blues. The Etude in A-minor has a dark and brooding quality that suggest Tchaikovsky at his most introspective, as is the Polonaise in C minor the key of the 'Moonlight' Sonata's opening movement and of Rachmaninov's darkest Prelude. The C minor Preludedefalls almost ideally

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under fingers for piano player and it is here, about midwaythrough the set and just after the hokey Mazurka, that Jagodzinski really pulls out the stops (wrong keyboard metaphor, I know) and creates a performance of genuine intellectual and emotional penetration. What follows, the Waltz and reprise of the opening E minor Prelude, is inevitably an anti-climax.

In a famous review of the 1930s, the great Neville Cardus suggested that modern piano players had streamlined and polished what was essentially raw and emotional music, turning it into something befitting a conservatory recital hall rather than a concert in the true sense.

Jagodzinski and his colleague bassist Adam Cegielski and drummer Czeslaw Bartkowski have made a fascinating piece of music in its own right, but they have also suggested new - or rather old - ways of listening to Chopin. His work is, after all, the acme of piano music and there is a straight line from it to Tatum and Bud Powell, even perhaps Cecil Taylor, Keith Jarrett, and beyond. That lineage makes this an important recording. --- Brian Morton, jagodzinski.art.pl

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