

The integral sonatas of Scriabin by Anna Malikova

It is noteworthy that until today there are only very few integral recordings of Alexander Scriabin's piano sonatas available. In addition to countless individual recordings of single sonatas, we know only about the following complete recordings with Vladimir Ashkenazy, Michael Ponti, Dimitri Alexev and Bernd Glemser, the almost incomparable Marc André Hamelin and Pervez Mody, the latter recording all the solo works of Scriabin for the piano. Now the Russian pianist Anna Malikova has released an integral recording of the sonatas by the composer-pianist.

The ten piano sonatas by Alexander Scriabin in their entirety provide a wonderful overview of Scriabin's development as composer. The construction of the first sonata is still of classic form. And certainly the composer, who in any case was about to revolutionize composing not only for the piano, even not willing to write in any conformistic way, was still influenced by Chopin, who he admired a lot. After all, the funeral march of the then 20-year-old composer, which he used as final movement, shows a clear relation to Chopin's "Marche funèbre" from his second sonata. But already in the second sonata, which was completed only over a period of several years, Scriabin broke up with the formal requirements of classical music and wrote a work of two movements, which he later - again referring to Chopin - called "Phantasy Sonata". What momentarily becomes clear with Malikova's play is her extraordinarily transparent sound, which seems to be more important to her than a rushing and fast-paced playing style, like Hamelin prefers. Nevertheless, her play nowhere lacks energy and determination. Additionally, Malikova always knows how to accentuate her dynamics in a way, which blend brilliantly into their overall context. Moreover, she is in every respect able to draw long dramatic lines, which are by others and often displayed only with difficulty, so that the listener is able follow without any problems. The

fourth sonata thus becomes something like a fugitive entirety, even though the first movement is difficult to hold together. The text which Scriabin wrote on this sonata already shows his beginning tendency in trying to achieve a transcendental state, by which he strived to develop his music and let it become part of a world-embracing complete piece of art. Only in few moments one might wish for some more thrust.

Beginning with the fifth sonata, Scriabin wrote only one movement sonatas. He used more and more densely compressed motives, which Malikova perfectly recreates. Above all, she always accurately balances the piano sound to suit the characteristics of the music, with her nuanced sound colours fully adding to a wide dynamic range. Even in these one movement sonatas, which are so technically so hard to master, difficult to decipher and to memorize, like for instance the eighth sonata, she has no difficulties in transforming the musical intentions of Scriabin and in realizing an absolutely convincing kaleidoscope of sounds.

Anna Malikova has recorded these two CDs over a period of three years, and the time spent working intensively on Scriabin's sonatas bore rich fruit and has a convincing and brilliant result: rarely was there an integral recording of the Scriabin sonatas, which is so completely convincing.

Carsten Dürer

Alexander Scriabin
The integral Sonatas

Anna Malikova, piano (Shigeru Kawai)

Acousence Classics 12214 (2 CDs) (distributors: Gebhardt)

