

THE YOUNG

RICHTER LIVE

LISZT CHOPIN SCHUMANN



**RARE EARLY
PERFORMANCES
from the
1950s**

**Over 2½ hours
of music!**

PARNASSUS

The Young Richter Live Liszt, Chopin, Schumann

Frédéric Chopin

1 *Prelude in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 45* (4:40)

Robert Schumann

2 *Variations on A-B-E-G-G, Op. 1* (8:03)

Franz Liszt

3 *Consolations, S. 172 - No. 6 in E Major.*
Allegretto sempre cantabile (3:48)

Schumann

Fantasiestücke, Op. 12

4 No. 2. Aufschwung (2:53) 5 No. 3. Warum? (2:57)

6 No. 7. Nicht Schnell (2:22)

Liszt

Scherzo and March, S. 177

7 I. Scherzo (5:42) 8 II. March (5:52)

Schumann

9 *Humoreske in B-Flat Major, Op. 20* (27:18)

Liszt

Années de pèlerinage

10 1ère année, Suisse - No. 6. Vallée d'Obermann
(Obermann's Valley) (13:48)

11 1ère année, Suisse - No. 4. Au bord d'une source (Beside a Spring) (3:07)

12 2ème année, Italie - No. 1. La spozalizio (The Wedding) (8:53)

13 3ème année - No. 2. Aux cyprès de la Villa d'Este

(To the Cypresses of the Villa d'Este) (6:18)

14 2ème année, Italie - Mo. 6. Sonetto 123 del Petrarca
(Petrarch's Sonnet 123) (7:00)

15 Venezia e Napoli - No. 1. Gondoliera (5:00)

16 Venezia e Napoli - No. 2. Canzona (2:39)

17 Venezia e Napoli - No. 3. Tarantella (8:40)

18 *Nuages gris, S. 199* (3:07)

Schumann

Four Fugues, Op. 72

19 No. 1 in D Minor. Nicht schnell (3:32)

20 No. 2 in D Minor. Sehr lebhaft (1:57)

21 No. 3 in F Minor. Nicht schnell und sehr ausdrucksvoll (4:08)

22 No. 4 in F Major. Im mäßigen Tempo (2:05)

Liszt

23 *Polonaise in E Major, S. 223 No. 2* (8:05)

Schubert (trans. **Liszt**)

24 *Erlkönig, Op. 1* (4:11)

Liszt

25 *Valse Oubliée No. 1, S. 215 No. 1* (2:37)

Chopin

Etudes, Op. 10

26 No. 3 in E Major (4:06) 27 No. 1 in C Major (1:58)

Sviatoslav Richter, *piano*

Sviatoslav Richter died on August 1, 1997. Those of us who were fortunate enough to hear Richter in person know how much we miss his concerts. Recordings can only prompt our memories. They cannot capture Richter's commanding, quiet presence, the thrilling intensity with which he could fill the largest hall, and that unique tone, so beautiful and so varied.

Still, the recordings to bring us something of the Richter experience, especially recordings of his live performances. And they offer us something that Richter could never give any audience in person: the chance to hear him in a wider repertoire, and at more stages of his career, than any concert-goer could experience.

During the 1990s and the decade following, Parnassus Records undertook a significant expansion of the Richter experience on recordings with its seven volume, 13-disc series ***Richter in the 1950s***. After Richter came to international fame in 1960 following a sensational tour of the United States, he chose to make recordings mostly in live performance. But in the decade before he had begun to tour the world outside the Soviet bloc, relatively few of his concerts were officially recorded for commercial release. A few individual items have been issued by

Melodiya, most notably a stunning collection of Scriabin. The Czech-based Praga's superb CD series, ***Richter in Prague***, brought us a number of items from Richter concerts of the 1950s. And Philips still keeps alive its collection of material from 1958 Sofia concerts, including the magnificent version of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Otherwise, most of what we had heard from this decade were studio recordings.

The tapes from which the ***Richter in the 1950s*** releases were taken had been discovered in Russia by a dedicated group of Richter enthusiasts—the most extensive series of Richter's live performances from the 1950s, in recorded sound that, while not the ultimate in fidelity, is superior to what we had come to expect from early Russian tapes. Our remastering engineers have aided significantly in bring us this experience in the best possible sound quality.

In every period of Richter's career he had much to offer his listeners. His extraordinary technique, his powerful musical penetration, his depth of understanding in a huge and varied repertoire, all marked him as a unique artist. But there are differences between the Richter of the 1950s and the Richter of later decades, and those of us who cherish his playing will be

glad of the opportunity to experience the younger artist in concert performances.

The younger Richter was perhaps even more of a virtuoso than the more mature artist. Hearing these early recordings, we may feel that in this decade he was more willing to dazzle audiences with his facility. He takes more chances, employs startling phrasing and accents, and invariably sheds interpretive light on the timeless masterpieces he plays. Most importantly, the performances are so gripping that the shortcomings of the recording technology disappear, and Richter's brilliance lives again.

Richter's performances of music by **Robert Schumann** have long been noted as some of his finest and most individualistic. Unfortunately we have to put up with some distortion in the opening numbers. But fortunately, the sound clears up considerably for the Humoreske, the only Richter live performance of this work so far published. Richter identifies completely with the unique atmosphere of this stream-of-consciousness music, in which ideas sometimes appear by simply pushing other music aside. As fine as his studio recording of this piece is, the live performance is even more

exciting.

As for Richter's playing of piano music by **Franz Liszt**, much as we may regret the lack of the best possible sound quality, much of Richter's coloration does come through in these recordings. Although Richter played a great deal of Liszt's music, many of the pieces he selected were performed only a few times, relatively early in his career.

Only one of the Liszt pieces—*Aux cypres de la Villa d' este*—exists in any other Richter recording (Russia Revelation RV 10011, a phenomenal all-Liszt recital also dating from 1958). Richter has long been known as one of the great Liszt players. His Philips recording of the two Concertos is one of his outstanding accomplishments in the recording studio, and his live performances of the Sonata—including one this writer heard, at Carnegie Hall in 1965—were among the greatest versions of that monumental work produced by any pianist.

These pieces from *Années de pèlerinage* are the only ones Richter played. Apparently he played them for a relatively brief time, which seems strange when one hears his intense identification with the music. Fortunately these performances are conveyed in some of the best sound of our series, enabling us to hear

clearly the way Richter floats the beautiful *Au bord d'un source* with magical tone, as well as his powerful climaxes.

It's only in recent years that we have had the chance to hear on recordings how well Richter plays **Frédéric Chopin**, and how much of the composer's music he plays. Richter often played his own selection of Chopin *Preludes*, but the single *Prelude in C Sharp Minor, Op. 45* is apparently the only recording he made of the work, during a Moscpw recital in 1952. The two *Preludes* from Op. 10 that conclude this program capture his ability to bring a concentration of dramatic rhetoric and intensity to these brief virtuoso studies.

— Leslie Gerber

Producer: **Leslie Gerber**

Mastering: **Wayne Hileman** and **Meredith Capraro**, Squires Productions Inc.; and **Eldad Benary**, The Sound Company

Editing and mastering for digital release: **Gene Gaudette**

Production assistancs: **John Wiser** and **Mark Zip**

These recordings have been processed with the Sound Forge noise reduction system.

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