

A close-up portrait of a man with dark hair, looking slightly to the left with a gentle smile. He is wearing a white shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

**OLEG
MARSHEV**

In recital

**LISZT
CHOPIN
SCRIABIN**

Jana
cord

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

- [1] *Funérailles*.
Harmonies poétiques et religieuses,
S173 No. 7 12:44
- [2] *Rhapsodie espagnole* S254 13:03
- [3] *Étude d'exécution transcendante*
S139 No. 10 f-minor 4:42

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

- 3 *Waltzes* op. 34
- [4] No 1 in A flat major 5:40
- [5] No 2 in A minor 5:55
- [6] No 3 in F major 2:07
- [7] *Ballade* No 4 in F minor Op 52 10:18

Alexandr Scriabin (1872-1915)

- [8] *Mazurka* Op 25, No 3 2:39
- 2 *Mazurkas* Op 40
- [9] No 1 in D flat major 1:39
- [10] No 2 in F sharp major 1:44
- 2 *Poems* Op 32
- [11] No 1 in F sharp major 2:37
- [12] No 2 in D major 1:34
- 5 *Préludes* Op 15
- [13] No 1 in A major 2:44
- [14] No 2 in F sharp minor 1:10
- [15] No 3 in E major 2:24
- [16] No 4 in E major 1:09
- [17] No 5 in C sharp minor 0:46
- [18] *Vers la flamme*
Poème pour piano Op 72 5:11

OLEG MARSHEV, piano

Oleg Marshev plays Liszt, Chopin, and Scriabin

The conjunction of three great Eastern European piano composers – the Pole Chopin, the Hungarian Liszt, the Russian Scriabin – is a natural and satisfying one. Chopin and Liszt were the primary and decisive influences on Scriabin's early development. Starting with the great violinist Paganini, whom both Liszt and Chopin revered, the figure of the virtuoso composer-performer became one of the central icons of 19th-century culture, and all three of these pianist-composers were supreme virtuosos who embodied in themselves three different aspects of that figure.

While the sheer virtuosity of the performer who can surmount the most difficult technical challenges in the service of a musical idea is a quality that is impressive in itself, virtuosity *per se* has often been an object of puritanical suspicion. In Jim Samson's phrase, 'the telling becomes more important than the tale'. Yet while this may be true of certain of Liszt's works, for Chopin virtuosity is essentially the handmaid of expression, the most fluent and effective way of putting across the sheer immediacy of his music's emotion. And in Scriabin, virtuosity is innate in the

musical ideas themselves: it is the medium of communication with the divine, the portal to Nirvana. Thus in Chopin we find the virtuoso as poet, the creator of exquisite and deeply expressive messages that touch the heart. With Liszt the virtuoso becomes heroic artist, astonishing the world with his pyrotechnical bravura as he annexes the worlds of literature and painting – even the music of his fellow composers – to his restless creative imagination. And in Scriabin the virtuoso metamorphoses into a prophet, his music speaking with a strange intensity as it seems to presage revelation of a new cosmic order.

Chopin's four *Ballades* are among his most substantial solo piano works, each combining elements of sonata style with a strong sense of narrative. (The once-frequent claim that they were inspired by the poems of his compatriot Mickiewicz is in fact difficult to substantiate.) *Ballade No.4*, composed in 1842, also manifests a highly developed variation technique and a mastery of counterpoint with which the composer is not always associated. (It was this aspect of the piece which prompted the British composer Ronald Stevenson to make the principal thematic complex the subject of his *Fugue on a Fragment of Chopin*.) In fact the introduction, main theme and secondary theme are all

subjected to intense development through variation which results in a cumulative impression of great breadth. Towards the end, a shockingly inconclusive cadence is interrupted by a few soft chorale-like bars before a headlong coda that is astonishing in its bravura and sense of danger.

The three Waltzes, op. 34 were published in 1838: Schumann wrote of them that 'such a wave of life flows through them they seem to have been improvised in the ballroom'. Yet they seem less like dance music pure and simple and more like meditations on the idea of the waltz, poetic evocations of a dance in progress. No. 1 in A flat (composed earlier than the other two, in 1835) combines the waltz-rhythm with a melodic and harmonic sumptuousness that has ensured it a place among Chopin's most celebrated and popular works. No. 3 in F is notable for the continuous passage-work and teasing cross-rhythms in its outer sections and the flamboyant acciaccaturas in the scentral section. But it was No. 2 in A minor that was Chopin's own favourite, a moody and meditative piece that opens with a melancholic, almost cellistic theme. (In fact Chopin subsequently arranged it for cello and piano.)

Liszt laboured for 18 years over his collection of ten piano pieces entitled

Harmonies poétiques et religieuses, partly inspired by the volume of poetry of the same title by his close friend, the poet Lamartine, published in 1830. Finally issued in 1853, only some of these pieces refer directly to specific poems, and *Funérailles*, composed in October 1849 – the month of Chopin's death – was in fact intended as a tribute to the Hungarian patriots executed for their part in the uprising of 1848. There may be an intended homage to Chopin as well: many commentators have noted that the third section, with its repeated left-hand triplet patterns, seems to recall the Polish master's A flat Polonaise. *Funérailles* finds its place in the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* due to its atmosphere, which it shares with the other pieces, of resignation and elegy, though in this case those impulses attain monumental expression. The clamorous bell-effects, the funeral-march tempi and the shattering climaxes place it among Liszt's supreme dramatic inspirations.

Inspired by a different kind of national feeling, the *Rhapsodie Espagnole* originated in 1845 as a *Grosses Konzertfantasie über Spanische Weisen* but was thoroughly recomposed about 1863 under the present title. In a subtitle, Liszt names the first two themes on which it is based as 'Folies d'Espagne' and 'Jota

Aragonesa', but there is in fact a third theme, equal in importance. 'Folies d'Espagne' is a slow dance melody sometimes ascribed to Corelli (in fact he did not invent it but used it as the basis of a set of violin variations); years after Liszt it would become the subject of Rachmaninov's *Variations on a Theme of Corelli*. The quicker 'Jota Aragonesa' had already been used by Glinka as the basis of an orchestral piece, and was subsequently treated by several composers apart from Liszt. The *Rhapsodie espagnole* thus consists of a set of slow variations on 'Folies d'Espagne', in C sharp minor, followed by quick variations on the 'Jota Aragonesa' in D major. There is then a cadenza, leading to the third theme, a kind of 6/8 waltz in F. This introduces a concluding section in which all three themes are alternated and combined with increasing brilliance, culminating in a brilliant stretto. This work of Liszt's has become better known in the version which Busoni made in 1894 for piano and orchestra, but its virtuoso qualities are even more apparent in the solo piano original.

Another commanding Lisztian cycle is the set of twelve *Etudes d'execution transcendantes* published in 1851, though in fact these are comprehensive re-workings, by way of an intermediate

edition (the *Grandes Etudes* of 1837) from one of his earliest works, the *Etude en douze exercices* most probably composed in 1826 when he was only 15. In their final 1851 recension these 'Transcendental Etudes' were all given titles – except for No. 10 in F minor. (Busoni, in his edition of Liszt's piano works, suggested it should be called the *Appassionata* etude.) It was however in the 1837 publication that this tenth Etude found its present form, a kind of taut sonata structure which includes as 'first subject' a theme very similar to that of Chopin's own Etude in F minor, op. 10 no. 9. The 'second subject' is a gloomy fanfare idea, and combined with the fleeting triplet figuration that opens the work the whole movement creates a remarkable interplay of light and dark.

Scriabin's early piano music – and the op. 15 *Préludes* are still early, composed in 1895-96 when he was 23 – combines Chopinesque pianism with Lisztian rhetoric. Later, in the op. 32 *Poems* and the op. 40 *Mazurkas*, he has developed these sources into something intensely personal. The *Poems*, like many of his later pieces, are aphoristic, suggestive, open-ended. The *Mazurkas* are particularly significant for the direction of his development. Scriabin was fascinated by the mystery and melancholy of Chopin's *Mazurkas*, so much so that he wrote no

less than 21 essays in this Polish dance form. Op. 25 no. 3 (1898) is the thirteenth of these, while Op. 40 contains the last two of all, composed in 1903. If something of the authentic Chopinesque melancholia is still detectable in op. 25 no. 3, in op. 40 Scriabin has left his model far behind. Chopin's delicate filigree writing has been refined and redirected, so that it is no longer a decorative element but on the contrary is itself the theme, embodying the whorls and eddies of free-floating, introverted melody freed from the gravitational pull of harmony. It is impossible to imagine these pieces as dance-music: they are Mazurkas of the mind, not the body.

With Scriabin's last works we approach ultimate mysteries. *Vers la Flamme* was originally conceived as an orchestral piece. It is an astonishing *tour-de-force*, a musical act of esoteric invocation which begins in incense-laden gloom and progresses gradually, through ever more virtuosic figuration and ever brighter harmonic content, to a concluding blaze in the light and confidence of a blinding E major. Here the creative fire burns very bright, as does the mystic's desire (to quote W.B. Yeats) 'that flesh and bone should disappear. . . And there be nothing but God left'.

¹Jim Samson, *Virtuosity and the Musical Work: The Transcendental Studies of Liszt* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 84.

Notes © copyright 2008 by Malcolm MacDonald

Born in Baku, ex-USSR, **Oleg Marshev** trained with Valentina Aristova at the Gnesin School for Highly Gifted Children and with Mikhail Voskresensky at the Moscow Conservatory where he completed his Performance Doctorate in 1988 gaining the Diploma with Honour. Marshev is thus a direct representative of the fifth generation of Russian pianists since Liszt, through Alexander Siloti, Konstantin Igumnov and Voskresensky's teacher, Lev Oborin.

Marshev's First Prize in the 1988 "Pilar Bayona" International Piano Competition (Spain) proved the first in a series of illustrious competition victories which have confirmed the artist's reputation as one of the most talented Russian pianists of his generation: in 1990 he took First Prize and the Gold Medal at the AMSA World Piano Competition of Cincinnati; in 1991 First Prize at the Concorso Pianistico Internazionale "Citta di Marsala" and the following year he was awarded the coveted *Primo Premio Assoluto* in the Italian capital's premier competition, the Concorso Pianistico Internazionale "Roma 1992".

In addition to numerous engagements in his native country, Marshev has performed in Hungary, Poland, Spain, Germany, Holland, France, Scandinavia, Japan, New Zealand and in the United

States and Canada. 1991 saw his New York debut with a highly acclaimed recital at the Lincoln Center "Alice Tully Hall" which led to an invitation to perform at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. Resident in Italy, the artist gives concerts regularly in that country's leading music centres, from Messina, Catania and Palermo in the south, via Rome and Tuscany to the major cities of the north such as Turin and Milan. He is also in increasing demand as a teacher, holding masterclasses in Spain, Italy and the USA, and as a competition jury member (including that of the World Piano Competition in Cincinnati).

Marshev's activities also extend to the recording studio: in addition to the present recordings numerous compact discs are available on Danacord. All these releases have been received to critical acclaim by leading international publications such as *The Penguin Guide, In Tune, Gramophone, High Fidelity, Fanfare, Fono Forum, Diapason, Pianist Magazine, Cd Classica* and *Repertoire des Disques*.

www.olegmarshev.com

OLEG MARSHEV releases on Danacord

Sergei Rachmaninov

4 Piano Concertos · Paganini Rhapsody
Aarhus Symphony Orchestra
James Loughran, conductor
DACOCD 582-583

Sergei Rachmaninov

Sonata no 2, Corelli variations · *DACOCD 525*

Anton Rubinstein

Piano Concertos Nos 3 & 4
Artur Rubinstein Philharmonic Orchestra
Ilya Stupel, conductor
DACOCD 411

Sergei Prokofiev

5 Piano Concertos
South Jutland Symphony Orchestra
Niklas Willén, conductor
DACOCD 584-585

Sergei Prokofiev

Original Solo Piano Music incl. 9 Sonatas
Vol. 1 to Vol 5 *DACOCD 391 - DACOCD 395*

Peter Tchaikovsky

All the works for piano and orchestra
Aalborg Symphony Orchestra
Owain Arwel Hughes, conductor
DACOCD 586-587

Dmitri Shostakovich

Piano Concertos 1 and 2. 24 Preludes
Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra
Hannu Lintu, conductor
DACOCD 601

Rimsky-Korsakov · Pabst · Scriabin

Piano Concertos.
South Jutland Symphony Orchestra
Vladimir Ziva, conductor
DACOCD 660

Pavel Pabst

Opera and Ballet Paraphrases · *DACOCD 450*

Mily Balakirev

Piano Concerto No 1 · Symphony No 1 · Tamara
Aarhus Symphony Orchestra
James Loughran, conductor
DACOCD 616

Franz Liszt

Piano Concertos 1 & 2. Totentanz · Hung. Rhap.
Aalborg Symphony Orchestra
Matthias Aeschbacher, conductor
DACOCD 651

Franz Liszt

Sonata · Tasso, arr Tausig · Gretchen, arr Liszt
DACOCD 653

Franz Liszt: HEXAMERON and music by
Chopin, Thalberg, Pixis, Herz and Czerny ·
DACOCD 530

Richard Strauss

The original solo piano music. *DACOCD 440*

Johannes Brahms

Sonata No 1 · Ballades Op 10 · Schumann Variat.
DACOCD 643

Franz Schubert

Sonata D960 · 3 Stücke D946 · *DACOCD 646*

Emil von Sauer: Complete Piano Music

Etudes de Concert I

DAC OCD 487

Etudes de Concert II & Valses

DAC OCD 488

Sonatas I & Propos de Bal

DAC OCD 533

Sonatas II & Serenatas

DAC OCD 534

Suite & Galop de Concert

DAC OCD 595

Piano Concerto No 2

Aarhus Symphony Orchestra

James Loughran, conductor

DAC OCD 596

Danish Piano Concertos Vol 1

Siegfried Langgaard · Rued Langgaard

South Jutland Symphony Orchestra

Matthias Aeschbacher, conductor

DAC OCD 535

Danish Piano Concertos Vol 2

August Winding · Emil Hartmann

South Jutland Symphony Orchestra

Matthias Aeschbacher, conductor

DAC OCD 581

Danish Piano Concertos Vol 3

Otto Malling · Ludv. Schytte · Siegfr. Salomon

Aalborg Symphony Orchestra

Matthias Aeschbacher, conductor

DAC OCD 597

Danish Piano Concertos Vol 4

Victor Bendix · Rudolph Simonsen

Aalborg Symphony Orchestra

Matthias Aeschbacher, conductor

DAC OCD 641

This recording was made in the Alсион Concert Hall in Sønderborg, Denmark. The hall is an integral part of the Alсион University complex, beautifully situated right by the quays in Sønderborg.

The Alсион Concert Hall was constructed with one aim in mind: To ensure optimum acoustics for classical music. To this end, the architects and acoustical engineers designed a shoebox hall with an astonishing 'surround sound' effect, which gives the listener the impression of being totally immersed in music. The hall projects the sound from acoustic instruments to all seats with excellent clarity, long reverberation, and ample loudness.

International experts have declared the hall to be among the very best concert halls for classical music in Europe today.

The internationally acclaimed Danish artist Olafur Eliasson has designed the art work in the foyer.

The Alсион Concert Hall is home to South Jutland Symphony Orchestra, with whom Oleg Marshev has made numerous recordings.

The Steinway model D concert grand piano used in this recording was kindly

provided by South Jutland Symphony Orchestra.

Future 2009 and 2010 recording projects with Oleg Marshev and the South Jutland Orchestra:

Ravel: Two Piano Concertos
Debussy: Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra
César Franck: Symphonic Variations

Stravinsky: Complete works for piano and orchestra.

www.sonderjyllands-symfoniorkester.dk







DACOCD 677

DIGITAL DDD

Total playing time
79:21Recorded in Alslon,
Sonderborg, Denmark
9 - 11 August, 2008

Steinway Model D

Recorded and
produced by
Morten MogensenExecutive producer:
Jesper BuhlDANACORD
Nørregade 22
DK-1165 Copenhagen
DENMARK
©DANACORD 2008
www.danacord.dk**Franz Liszt (1811-1886)**

- [1] *Funérailles* 12:44
- [2] *Rhapsodie espagnole* 13:03
- [3] *Étude transcendante No. 10* 4:42

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

- 3 *Waltzes op. 34*
- [4] *No 1 in A flat major* 5:40
- [5] *No 2 in A minor* 5:55
- [6] *No 3 in F major* 2:07
- [7] *Ballade No 4 Op 52* 10:18

Alexandr Scriabin (1872-1915)

- [8] *Mazurka Op 25, No 3* 2:39
- 2 *Mazurkas Op 40*
- [9] *No 1 in D flat major* 1:39
- [10] *No 2 in F sharp major* 1:44
- 2 *Poems Op 32*
- [11] *No 1 in F sharp major* 2:37
- [12] *No 2 in D major* 1:34
- 5 *Préludes Op 15*
- [13] *No 1 in A major* 2:44
- [14] *No 2 in F sharp minor* 1:10
- [15] *No 3 in E major* 2:24
- [16] *No 4 in E major* 1:09
- [17] *No 5 in C sharp minor* 0:46
- [18] *Vers la flamme Op 72* 5:11

