



MUSIC & VISION

11 AUGUST 2018

AN ADVENTUROUS UNDERTAKING

Piano music by Lowell Liebermann - heard by GERALD FENECH

'... superbly performed and sumptuously annotated and recorded.'

Born in 1961, Lowell Liebermann is one of America's finest and most frequently performed and recorded living composers. His prodigious output includes works in every genre, from opera and symphonic music, to instrumental, art song and chamber music. Much of his music has become standard repertoire, and his piano pieces in particular are much admired. Indeed, his vast output for the instrument frequently appears in concerts and competition programmes, something that testifies strongly to his command of the instrument and his profound understanding of its sonic possibilities.

With this third volume, David Korevaar continues on his journey of recording all of Liebermann's works for the piano between 2001 and 2017 and the programme is, maybe, one of the most imaginative and representative of the composer's immense gifts to write music that is modern and yet so beautiful and attractive.

The four Nocturnes, the last he composed in the genre, push the boundaries to almost the very limits, and while Nos 8 and 11 contrast an opening simplicity with brilliant virtuosic climaxes, Nos. 9 and 10 are more subtle and tranquil in their means.

The Schubert Variations (after Goethe's 'Heidenröslein') combine virtuosity and historical references in a wonderfully imaginative and at times bizarre way, incorporating not just the Schubert melody but also echoes of the sombre 'Dies Irae' chant and the motive 'BACH'.

The two Impromptus are very recent creations, written for the 2016 New York International Piano Competition, sponsored by the Stecher and Horowitz Foundation, and while the first alternates simplicity with agitation, the second grows from a docile and lyrical idea to a somewhat more complex mood that taxes the soloist's mental and physical dexterity to the full.

The Sonata No 3 is maybe the pick of the programme. Written for James Giles in 2002, it is extrovert and darkly dramatic, and has a large-scale fast-slow-fast structure which gives it a dynamic diversity that keeps the listener consistently enthralled.

This is an adventurous undertaking, superbly performed and sumptuously annotated and recorded.

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