

**If you do not already own a recording of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto – or even if you do – this one by Yevgeny Sudbin and the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra is an imperative. - THE DAILY TELEGRAPH**

DISC OF THE MONTH & EDITOR'S CHOICE *Gramophone*

5 STARS *The Times*

CD OF THE WEEK *The Daily Telegraph*

5 DOUBLE STARS & MUSIC CHOICE *BBC Music Magazine*

#### GRAMOPHONE

MAY 2007 **DISC OF THE MONTH** / **EDITOR'S CHOICE**

To describe 26-year-old Yevgeny Sudbin as music's brightest young star pianist is in a sense to do him a disservice. For he is above all an artist, and here in his eagerly awaited concerto debut on disc he gives us a Tchaikovsky First of spine-tingling brilliance, poetry and vivacity. This is never the Tchaikovsky you have always known but an arrestingly novel rethink with the concentration on mercurial changes of mood and direction. Here, amazingly, is one of the most familiar of all concertos rekindled in all its first glory, brimming over with zest and shorn of all clichés that have adhered to it over the years.

In the first movement Sudbin's octaves ring out at 10'18" like a giant carillon, while the *Andantino's* central *prestissimo* becomes in such extraordinary hands a true firefly *scherzo*. Not even Cherkassky at his finest possessed a more elfin sense of difference or caprice. And to think that all this and more is accomplished without the lift, or hindrance, of a major competition success.

Medtner's massive First concerto, too, could hardly be played with a more burning clarity and commitment. Once wittily if misleadingly described as "a declaration of love in the language of the First Empire", Medtner's music remains formidably inaccessible, despite displaying the outward trappings of Romantic rhetoric. Yet Sudbin clearly believes every note and his playing convinces, as on live occasions, a rare sense of affection. Such poetry is confirmed in his encore, his own transcription of Medtner's *Liebliches Kind!* From his Op 6 songs. It only remains to add that BIS's balance and sound are of demonstration quality and that the São Paulo SO under John Neschling sound as if influenced by neighbouring Rio's carnival spirit, so infectiously do they respond to their radiant soloist. - *Bryce Morrison*

#### THE TIMES

APRIL 13, 2007 **5/5**

Yevgeny Sudbin advises us in his booklet note that there are at least 149 commercially available recordings of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto. But few seem as fresh and necessary as this release from this wonder pianist -- Russian, young (26), based in London -- whose subtlety, passion and fully fledged maturity have excited many listeners...

Once Sudbin leaps up those opening octaves, memories of the 149 performances, and any others, quickly fade. You seem to be hearing this barnacled concerto for the first time. Note the ringing flourish attached to that first piano figure's final chords; the improvisatory feel stamped on the next phrase; the genuine tension in the music's ebb and flow; the superbly calibrated moods; the limpid, crystal-clear phrasing... Sudbin gives us another concerto entirely: exciting, forward looking, with harmonies and structural shifts that constantly take us by surprise. — *Geoff Brown*

#### THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

APRIL 14, 2007 **CD OF THE WEEK**

Forget any stock blockbuster gestures or empty ostentation: Sudbin is a pianist who finds the delicacy, the melting, lyrical richness and subtlety of colour that combine with his flexed muscle to create a performance true to the Romantic tradition and with an insight second to none.

There is fantasy and fire, freshness and finesse in a formidable take on a concerto that has become a staple of the repertoire, but here is reinvigorated with zest and sensitivity that strikes at the music's very soul. This is a fascinating coupling, typical of Sudbin's searching intelligence.

There are those of us who have never quite "got" Medtner, and his First Concerto is perhaps not the easiest place to start. There is something of the Tchaikovsky concerto's rhetoric, a glimpse of Rachmaninov-like melody which never quite comes into bloom, and a hint now and again of Skryabin's fugitive visions, all underpinned by a learned way of organising things.

But Sudbin's passion for this music transcends any qualms; the orchestral playing is scintillating; and the solo encore of Medtner's song *Liebliches Kind!*, in Sudbin's own transcription, is a magical envoi. - *Geoffrey Norris*

#### BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

JUNE 2007 **MUSIC CHOICE**

In his highly informative booklet notes Sudbin affirms the strength and originality of Medtner's music, but it's his stunning virtuosity, marvellous variety of touch, and sensitive interaction with the conductor and orchestra that really does the talking.

Sudbin's performance is so fresh and imaginative that one can't help but hear each over-familiar phrase in a completely new light. - *Erik Levi*

#### CLASSIC FM MAGAZINE

JUNE 2007

No one is going to complain of yet another Tchaikovsky No.1 when it is as freshly conceived and commandingly played as this...

Few will be familiar with the least played of Medtner's three piano concertos.. a richly rewarding and intense roller-coaster here given its finest modern recording and performance. - *Jeremy Nicholas*

#### INTERNATIONAL RECORD REVIEW

MAY 2007

Sudbin's way with Tchaikovsky is infectiously lithe and playful, with a healthy dose of wit... The second movement finds Sudbin on particularly alluring form, tender, beautifully shaded and minutely responsive to phrasing. It's more delicate than Argerich's performance, and less impetuous...

Medtner's First Concerto.. Sudbin ..seems to have utterly understood both the finer nuances of this elusive piece and its overall pacing. - *Harriet Smith*

