



DISC OF THE MONTH

Scorching Scriabin from Sudbin

JULIAN HAYLOCK *welcomes an exemplary recital of Scriabin's mesmerising music, in which Yevgeny Sudbin proves a match for the mighty Horowitz*

SCRIABIN

Piano Sonatas: No. 2 (Sonate-Fantaisie); No. 5, Op. 53; No. 9 (Messe Noire); Valse, Op. 38 etc
Yevgeny Sudbin (piano)

BIS SACD-1568 (hybrid CD/SACD)
57:23 mins

BBC Music Direct £12.99

'I am the apotheosis of creation,' Scriabin once said. 'I am the aim of all aims; I am the end of all ends.' Be that as it may, his unique brand of musical megalomania led him to compose for the piano with a claustrophobic intensity and compression that brooks no half measures. Building upon the neurotic changeability of Chopin's Op. 28 Preludes, Scriabin gradually enriched and distorted Chopin's musical language, often telescoping harmonic

offset by an exquisite pearly legato worthy of Scriabin's great rival, Rachmaninov. In the Second Sonata, Sudbin impressionistically conjures up images of the sea with a chimerical, sleight-of-hand textural interplay, and then gives himself entirely to the erotically-charged, hallucinogenic eruptions that litter the Fifth with an intoxicating allure to hold the listener spellbound.

Rarely have the Ninth Sonata's inner demons been unleashed with such pulverising intensity, insidiously corrupting everything in their path, although Sudbin proves no less magically enticing in four of the Op. 3 Mazurkas, leaving one positively aching to hear him in the remainder of the set. In

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processes and setting emotional opposites on a collision course. This is music that demands pianism of superlative quality, and here Yevgeny Sudbin miraculously combines the volcanic intensity of Vladimir Horowitz with the cat-and-mouse tonal reflexes of Mikhail Pletnev.

The two etudes Sudbin has selected were both Horowitz specialities, and it is fascinating to compare the microcosmic hysteria whipped up by the Master with Sudbin's angst-fuelled sonic explosions, thrillingly

such perfumed musical incense as the *Poème*, Op. 59 No. 1, it is easy to become seduced by the music's ability to inebriate the senses, yet Sudbin also makes one unusually aware of the direct parallel between its microcosmic obsessions and Schoenberg's Op. 11 Piano Pieces.

For seductive phrasing and a heady sense of this music's implosive compression, Gordon Fergus-Thompson's Scriabin recordings (ASV and Kingdom) are required listening. Both Roberto Szidon