

A close-up portrait of a man with dark, wavy hair and brown eyes, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His hands are clasped together in front of him. The background is dark and out of focus.

Christian Leotta
pianist

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Christian Leotta has been defined by the legendary Rosalyn Tureck as *"an extraordinary talent with a beautiful innate musicality"*, and the great Karl Ulrich Schnabel wrote about him: *"his respect of the indications of the Classical and Romantic composers is perfect and their understanding considerable"*.

Mr. Leotta is a native of Catania, Italy, and now lives in Como. He studied with Mario Patuzzi at Milan's "Giuseppe Verdi" Conservatory and at the "Tureck Bach Research Foundation" of Oxford, England.

Considered as one of the finest interpreters of Beethoven, Christian Leotta burst onto the international scene in 2002, by presenting in Montreal, at the age of only 22, the complete cycle of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas. To date, twenty-one cycles have been successfully performed, most notably in international music capitals such as Como, Venice, Madrid, Montreal, Vancouver, Quebec City, Kyoto, Mexico City, Lima and Rio de Janeiro. In 2004, the President of the Italian Republic, Hon. Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, awarded Mr. Leotta with the prestigious President's Medal for his cycles of the 32 Piano Sonatas played around the world.



Following the extraordinary success of his live performances of Beethoven, in 2007 French Canadian label Atma Classique signed Christian Leotta to record the entire corpus of the 32 Piano Sonatas in a collection of five two-CD sets, released between 2008 and 2014. The international press hailed Mr. Leotta as *"one of the major Beethoven soloists of our time"* (Pizzicato, Luxembourg), defining his complete recording of the 32 Piano Sonatas as *"a major addition to other sets currently available"* (Fanfare, USA); German music magazine Rondo added: *"this cycle reveals an interpreter of Beethoven who can hardly be compared to any other pianist of his generation"*, and Mr. Bryce Morrison, crowning the international success of Mr. Leotta's recordings on Atma Classique, wrote on Gramophone: *"Volume V of five two-CD sets completes Christian Leotta's cycle of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas. He will shortly have played the Sonatas 15 times in public; and even in a fiercely competitive marketplace his task shines with an exceptional musicianship"*.

Christian Leotta's affinity to Beethoven's music has been unanimously recognized thanks to *"his prodigious technique used to better express the poetry of Beethoven's music"* (The Whole Note, Toronto), to *"his capability of really seizing your attention at unexpected moments"* (All Music Guide, USA), gaining a reputation as *"a pianist of the highest order: technician, musician and interpreter all at once"* (La Presse, Montreal).

Mr. Leotta's performance of the cycle of Beethoven's Five Piano Concertos and the Choral Fantasy, played in Guadalajara's stunning Degollado Theatre with the Jalisco Philharmonic Orchestra, showed once more his ability to communicate and enthrall both public and critic. El Informador wrote: *"Christian Leotta was sublime: he brought forward energy, agility, and a cascade of lyricism. In the Andante con moto of the Concerto No. 4, the performer hypnotized, literally, the audience, almost obliging the public to stop breathing, thus rendering each note eternal"*.

In 2015 Christian Leotta was included by Mr. Claude Gingras on La Presse, among *"the great interpreters of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas heard in Montreal since 1961"*, with *"Wilhelm Kempff, Rudolf Serkin, Anton Kuerti e Louis Lortie"*.

In April 2016 Atma Classique released his recording of the "Diabelli Variations", unanimously prized by the international press. Mr. Remy Frank wrote on Luxembourg's magazine Pizzicato: *"Christian Leotta's account of Beethoven's Diabelli Variations has to be counted among the best performances available on disc"* and, on American Record Guide, Mr. Becker added: *"Since everything*

has conspired to place this recording among of my favorites, I will list my other favorites: Anderzewsky, Brendel, Demidenko, Kovacevich, Pollini, Schnabel and Serkin. Since no respectable collector can have just one, it is time to make room for this newcomer”

An extraordinary public and critic success was also recorded by Christian Leotta’s recent performance of the 32 Piano Sonatas cycle at Kyoto’s Alti Hall, Japan, rewarded by eight standing ovations in a row, a fact which has never occurred in Japan’s history. The prestigious music magazine Ongaku No Tomo wrote: *“Mr. Leotta’s Beethoven reminded the playing of great German pianists such as Schnabel, Backhaus and Kempff”*, and the Asahi Shimbun added on the occasion of the last recital: *“following the third powerful variation of the second movement of Op. 111, the audience was increasingly caught into quiet and introspective sounds and the entire hall seemed wrapped in such an atmosphere as if we were in a church: Christian Leotta has led the audience to a state of ecstasy”*

Always committed to champion Beethoven’s music around the world, Mr. Leotta has been the first pianist to perform the complete cycle of the 32 Piano Sonatas in several countries, recently presenting it in Alger, for the first time in Algeria’s and Africa’s history. Christian Leotta was also the first pianist ever to present in all Southeast Asia a series of ten concerts including the 32 Piano Sonatas and the Five Piano Concertos, performed with the Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra. The Bangkok Post, Thailand’s premier newspaper, titled on that occasion about Mr. Leotta’s performances of Beethoven: *“Making history on the piano”*

Having already played in more than fifty countries in five continents, Mr. Leotta has worked with major orchestras such as the Münchner Philharmoniker, the Wiener Kammerorchester, the Italian RAI National Television Orchestra, the Milan’s Symphony Orchestra “Giuseppe Verdi”, regularly performing in important theatres and concert halls such as the Philharmonie at the Gasteig in Munich, the Konzerthaus of Vienna, the Tonhalle of Zurich, the Sala Verdi and the Auditorium of Milan, the Salle Claude-Champagne of Montreal, the Great Hall at the Bunka Kaikan Theatre and the Musashino Civic Cultural Hall of Tokyo, the Xinghai Concert Hall of Guangzhou.

Christian Leotta has been invited to give masterclasses in over thirty Universities and Conservatories in five continents, including the “Università Politecnico” of Milan in Italy, the “College of Music” of Osaka in Japan, the “New York University” at Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, the “Université du Québec a Montréal” and the “Conservatoire de Musique a Québec” in Canada, the “Queensland University” of Brisbane in Australia, the “Universidade UNESP” of Sao Paulo in Brazil.

First Italian pianist to have in his repertoire and to perform internationally the Piano Sonatas cycle by Beethoven and by Schubert, Christian Leotta played in 2018, at the Alti Hall of Kyoto, a cycle of seven recitals entirely dedicated to Franz Schubert, presenting on that occasion the greatest series of schubertian programs ever performed by one pianist. His interpretations of the Piano Sonatas, the Wanderer Fantasy, the Moments Musicaux, the Impromptus D 899 and D 935, the Drei Klavierstücke, the Allegretto in C Minor and the Hüttenbrenner Variations, recorded an extraordinary public and critic success. Crowning this new exceptional musical undertaking, Mr. Takayoshi Nakamura wrote on Japanese premier music magazine Ongaku No Tomo: *“as I expected, knowing his playing very well, Christian Leotta produced a beautiful sound, and that gave already so much to Schubert’s music. He created also a lyrical and dramatic world and, thanks to his marvelous sonorities, he made the audience feel like as his playing was falling from heaven. . . . Especially the Piano Sonata D 960, performed on the last recital, was beyond any description”*

Highlights of the 2020/2021 season include the performance at the Teatro Sociale of Como, Italy, of the Piano Sonatas cycle by Franz Schubert, two tournée in Latin America and in several Asian countries, plus a new tournée in Japan, where he will be back for the eleventh time.

Christian Leotta è stato definito dalla leggendaria Rosalyn Tureck come *“uno straordinario talento con una meravigliosa musicalità innata”* e il grande Karl Ulrich Schnabel ha di lui scritto: *“il suo rispetto delle indicazioni dei compositori Classici e Romantici è perfetto e notevole è la loro comprensione”*.

Nato a Catania e comasco d'adozione, Christian Leotta ha cominciato lo studio del pianoforte all'età di sette anni. Ha studiato con Mario Patuzzi al Conservatorio “Giuseppe Verdi” di Milano e alla “Tureck Bach Research Foundation” di Oxford in Inghilterra. Considerato fra i migliori interpreti di Beethoven, Christian Leotta si è imposto sulla scena concertistica internazionale nel 2002, quando, all'età di soli 22 anni, ha eseguito a Montreal l'integrale delle 32 sonate per pianoforte di Beethoven. Christian Leotta è stato da allora protagonista di ben ventuno esecuzioni delle 32 sonate di Beethoven, interpretandole in Italia, Europa, America, Asia e Africa in importanti capitali musicali internazionali quali Madrid, Montreal, Como, Venezia, Vancouver, Ville de Québec, Kyoto, Città del Messico, Lima e Rio de Janeiro; nell'aprile del 2004 il Presidente della Repubblica italiana, On. Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, lo ha insignito con una Medaglia per le sue interpretazioni delle 32 sonate nel mondo.

Grazie allo straordinario successo di pubblico e di critica delle sue esecuzioni di Beethoven, Christian Leotta firma nel 2007 un contratto in esclusiva con la casa discografica canadese Atma Classique per la registrazione dell'integrale delle 32 sonate per pianoforte, pubblicata in una serie di cinque doppi album dal 2008 al 2014. La stampa specializzata internazionale ha descritto Christian Leotta come *“uno dei più importanti interpreti di Beethoven del nostro tempo”* (Pizzicato, Lussemburgo), definendo la sua registrazione dell'integrale delle 32 sonate come *“un importantissimo contributo agli altri cicli finora disponibili”* (Fanfare, Stati Uniti d'America); la nota rivista tedesca Rondo ha aggiunto: *“questa integrale rivela un interprete di Beethoven che molto difficilmente potrà essere eguagliato da qualsiasi altro pianista della sua generazione”* e, a coronamento dello straordinario successo del ciclo delle 32 sonate inciso per Atma Classique, Bryce Morrison ha scritto su Gramophone: *“Il Volume V della serie di cinque doppi album completa il ciclo delle 32 sonate di Beethoven registrato da Christian Leotta. A breve avrà terminato la quindicesima performance delle sonate in pubblico; e nonostante una discografia ferocemente competitiva, la sua devozione per questa grande impresa risplende grazie alla sua eccezionale musicalità”*.

Le interpretazioni di Christian Leotta sono state inoltre apprezzate per *“la sua tecnica prodigiosa, usata per esprimere al meglio la poesia della musica di Beethoven”* (The Whole Note, Toronto), per *“la sua capacità di sorprendere davvero l'ascoltatore in momenti inaspettati”* (All Music Guide, Stati Uniti d'America), descrivendolo come *“un pianista di altissimo livello: tecnico, musicale ed interpretativo tutti insieme”* (La Presse, Montreal).

La sua esecuzione del ciclo dei 5 Concerti per pianoforte e orchestra e della Fantasia per pianoforte, coro e orchestra di Beethoven, interpretati in Messico al Teatro Degollado di Guadalajara con la Filarmónica de Jalisco, ha una volta in più confermato le grandi doti comunicative di Christian Leotta, capaci di conquistare sia il pubblico, sia la critica. El Informador ha scritto: *“Christian Leotta è stato sublime: ha trasmesso un'energia palpabile, unita ad una tecnica e ad un lirismo travolgenti. Nell'Andante con moto del Concerto n. 4, l'interprete ha ipnotizzato, letteralmente, il pubblico, quasi obbligandolo a smettere di respirare per rendere eterna ogni nota”*.

Nel 2015 Christian Leotta è stato incluso, dal noto critico canadese de La Presse Claude Gingras, fra *“i grandi interpreti delle sonate di Beethoven ascoltati a Montreal dal 1961”*, assieme a *“Wilhelm Kempff, Rudolf Serkin, Anton Kuerti e Louis Lortie”*.

Nel 2016 Atma Classique ha pubblicato la sua registrazione delle “Variazioni Diabelli”, riscuotendo subito grandi elogi sulla stampa internazionale. La rivista lussemburghese Pizzicato ha scritto: *“l'interpretazione di Christian Leotta delle Variazioni Diabelli di Beethoven deve essere annoverata fra le migliori esecuzioni disponibili su disco”* e, su American Record Guide, Alain Becker ha aggiunto: *“visto che tutto ha contribuito a far diventare questa registrazione di Christian Leotta una delle mie preferite, citerò i miei altri interpreti di riferimento: Anderzewsky, Brendel, Demidenko, Kovacevich, Pollini, Schnabel e Serkin”*.

Eccezionale è stato il successo di pubblico e di critica riscosso da Christian Leotta anche in occasione della sua recente esecuzione del ciclo delle 32 sonate in Giappone all'Alti Hall di Kyoto, testimoniato da ben otto standing ovation consecutive, fatto mai accaduto nella storia del Giappone. La prestigiosa rivista musicale Ongaku No Tomo ha scritto: *"il suo Beethoven ha ricordato il pianismo di grandi interpreti quali Schnabel, Backhaus e Kempff"*, e l'Asahi Shimbun ha aggiunto in occasione dell'ultimo concerto: *"dopo la strepitosa terza variazione del secondo movimento dell'op. 111, il pubblico è stato sempre più trasportato da suoni profondi e introspettivi e tutta la sala è sembrata essere avvolta da una tale atmosfera come se fossimo stati in una chiesa: Christian Leotta ci ha portato in uno stato di estasi"*.

Da sempre impegnato nel diffondere la musica di Beethoven nel mondo, Christian Leotta è stato il primo pianista ad interpretare l'integrale delle 32 sonate in diversi Paesi, presentandola recentemente ad Algeri, per la prima volta nella storia dell'Algeria e dell'Africa. Christian Leotta è stato anche il primo pianista a eseguire in tutto il sudest asiatico un ciclo di dieci concerti comprendente sia le 32 sonate, sia i 5 Concerti per pianoforte e orchestra di Beethoven, interpretati con la Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra. In tale occasione il Bangkok Post, il principale quotidiano della Thailandia, ha titolato: *"Fare storia con il pianoforte"*.

Esibitosi in più di cinquanta Paesi nei cinque continenti, Christian Leotta ha collaborato con le maggiori orchestre, quali i "Münchner Philharmoniker", i "Wiener Kammerorchester", l'"Orchestra Nazionale Sinfonica della RAI", l'"Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi", suonando in prestigiose sale concertistiche, come la Philharmonie del Gasteig di Monaco di Baviera, la Konzerthaus di Vienna, la Tonhalle di Zurigo, la Sala Verdi e l'Auditorium di Milano, la Salle Claude-Champagne di Montreal, la Sala Grande del Teatro Bunka Kaikan e la Musashino Civic Cultural Hall di Tokyo, la Xinghai Concert Hall di Canton.

Christian Leotta è stato invitato a tenere masterclass in una trentina di università e conservatori di musica nei cinque continenti, fra i quali il Politecnico di Milano, il College of Music di Osaka in Giappone, la New York University ad Abu Dhabi negli Emirati Arabi Uniti, l'Université du Québec a Montréal e il Conservatoire de Musique a Québec in Canada, la Queensland University di Brisbane in Australia, l'Università UNESP di San Paolo in Brasile.

Primo pianista italiano ad avere in repertorio l'integrale delle sonate per pianoforte sia di Beethoven, sia di Schubert, Christian Leotta ha eseguito nel 2018 in Giappone, all'Alti Hall di Kyoto, un ciclo di sette recital interamente dedicati a Franz Schubert, presentando in tale occasione la più grande serie di programmi schubertiani mai eseguita da un pianista nella storia. La sua interpretazione delle Sonate, della Fantasia Wanderer, dei Moments Musicaux, degli Impromptus D 899 e D 935, delle Variazioni D 576, dell'Allegretto D 915 e dei Drei Klavierstücke, ha riscosso uno straordinario successo di pubblico e di critica e, a coronamento di questa nuova eccezionale impresa musicale, il noto critico Takayoshi Nakamura ha scritto su Ongaku No Tomo, la principale rivista di musica classica giapponese: *"conoscendo molto bene il pianismo di Christian Leotta, ero certo che avrebbe prodotto un suono bellissimo, e questo ha donato così tanto già di per sé alla musica di Franz Schubert. Christian Leotta è stato inoltre in grado di creare un mondo lirico e drammatico che, grazie alle sue meravigliose sonorità, ha fatto credere al pubblico che la musica da lui prodotta provenisse dal paradiso. . . Specialmente la Sonata D 960, eseguita nell'ultimo concerto, è stata al di là di qualsiasi descrizione"*.

Impegni di rilievo della stagione 2020/2021 includono l'esecuzione al Teatro Sociale di Como del ciclo delle sonate per pianoforte di Franz Schubert, due tournée in Sud America e in diversi Paesi asiatici, e una nuova tournée in Giappone, l'undicesima della sua carriera concertistica.



CHRISTIAN LEOTTA

PLAYS THE BEETHOVEN PIANO SONATAS CYCLE ON

ATMA Classique



"... a quite memorable performance of Beethoven's last Piano Sonata Op. 111..."
 — *THE SUNDAY TIMES, LONDON*

"... one of the most extraordinary Beethovenian interpreters of our time..."
 — *MUZIKA21, POLAND*

"... a pianist of the highest order — technician, musician and interpreter all at once..." — *LA PRESSE, MONTREAL*

"Christian Leotta is a masterful pianist whose Beethoven playing is quite special. I believe his cycle of the sonatas (beautifully recorded on an exceptionally beautiful Steinway) will be a major addition to other sets currently available"
 — *THE BEETHOVEN JOURNAL, SAN JOSÉ*

"One thing is sure and certain: in spite of the presence on the market of numerous good integrals, this one will be not superfluous. Leotta's imagination seems big enough to give to his interpretations a personal character interesting and enriching". — *PIZZICATO, LUXEMBOURG*

"There's no question that Leotta bears watching, for he's capable of really seizing your attention at unexpected moments... Few pianists have been able to bring out the strong foreshadowings of Beethoven's middle period as well as Leotta does... the set as a whole makes you want to hear the future volumes..." — *ALL MUSIC GUIDE*

"Christian Leotta is an intelligent and vivid pianist who brings a deft keyboard technique and a musical mind to the challenge of playing Beethoven. The remaining sonatas of the cycle are eagerly anticipated". — *FANFARE*



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 Piano Sonatas Nos. 3, 9, 10,
 13, 17 "The Tempest",
 19, 20, 25, 31



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Volume II
 Piano Sonatas Nos. 11,
 21 "Waldstein",
 29 "Hammerklavier", 30



ACDZ 2486

Volume I
 Piano Sonatas Nos. 7,
 8 "Pathétique", 12,
 23 "Appassionata", 24, 32

www.atmaclassique.com

www.christianleotta.com



Diabelli Variations, ACD 2 2485, April 2016



Volume V, ACD 2 2490, January 2014



Volume IV, ACD 2 2489, June 2012



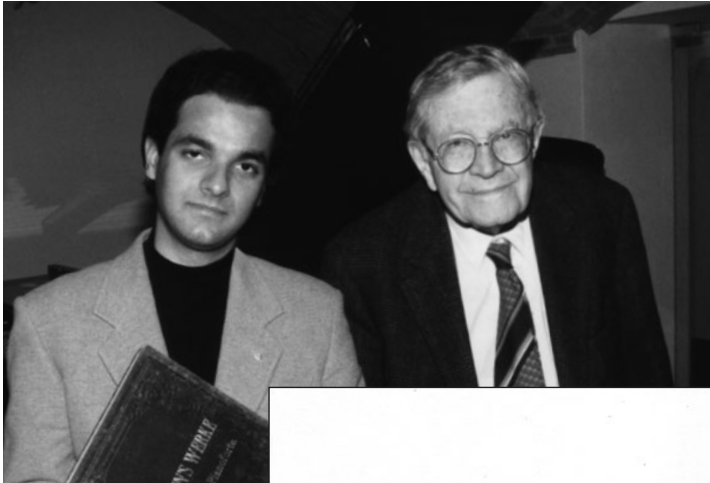
Volume III, ACD 2 2488, June 2010



Volume II, ACD 2 2487, April 2009



Volume I, ACD 2 2486, April 2008



Christian Leotta with Karl Ulrich Schnabel, Griante (Italy), "International Piano Foundation", May 1999

Mr. Christian Leotta has taken piano lessons from me for a few years. His respect for the indications of the classical and romantic composers is perfect and their understanding considerable. The dynamic range of his playing from ~~pp~~ nearly inaudible pp to a powerful ff is impressive. I feel that I can recommend his performances warmly. Karl Ulrich Schnabel

R U S, Menaggio (Como), Italy

October 1999.

"Christian Leotta has taken piano lessons from me for a few years. His respect for the indications of the classic and romantic composers is perfect and their understanding considerable.

The dynamic range of his playing from nearly inaudible *pp* to a powerful *ff* is impressive. I feel that I can recommend his performances warmly".

Karl Ulrich Schnabel,

Menaggio (Como), Italy, October 1999



Christian Leotta signs his first CD recording to Rosalyn Tureck, Oxford (England), "Tureck Bach Research Foundation", December 1998.

"Christian possesses an extraordinary talent. His range of technique and his beautiful innate musicality are far beyond the normal talent. In addition, he is extremely intelligent with a swift, alert mind and memory. His capacity for work is unlimited. He is in excellent health, easily able to cope with all the stresses of an international career. He is courteous, very attractive, and has an excellent stage manner.

Christian has worked with me intensively in several Master Classes at the International Piano Foundation at Lake Como in 1997 and in Oxford, England, in January 1998. There is no doubt in my mind that his gifts and work capacity will inevitably lead to a major career in performance".

Rosalyn Tureck

Oxford (England), January 2000

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3/10(土) ソナタ第18番「幻想ソナタ」、ソナタ第8番、
「さすらい人幻想曲」D760

3/14(水) ソナタ第14番、4つの即興曲 D899、
ソナタ第16番

3/18(日) ソナタ第4番、ソナタ第13番、ソナタ第21番

2nd stage 2018

11/27(火) ソナタ第7番、3つのピアノ曲 D946、ソナタ第17番

12/1(土) 「楽興の時」D780、アレグレット ハ短調 D915、
ソナタ第20番

12/5(水) 4つの即興曲 D935、
ヒュッテンブレンナーの主題による13の変奏曲 D576、
ソナタ第19番

12/9(日) ソナタ第15番「レリーク」、ソナタ第9番、ソナタ第21番

平日19時開演、土日15時開演 / 開場は各回開演30分前
※ピアノソナタ第21番のみ両stageで演奏 ※各ステージ最終日に出演者を迎え交流会を実施予定
※都合により曲目等内容を変更する可能性があります。

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主催：京都府、イタリア文化会館一大阪、創く(公財)京都文化財団・(株)コングレ共同事業体【京都府舞台芸術振興・次世代体験推進事業】
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Fondazione Comasca

Christian Leotta

interpreta

**Le 32 sonate
per pianoforte di
Ludwig van Beethoven**

Villa Carlotta

Via Regina 2 - 22019 Tremezzina - Como

1 - 4 - 11 - 15 - 22 - 25 settembre

2 - 6 ottobre 2017 - Ore 18.30

Ingresso: Euro 18

Prenotazione posti - prevendita - informazioni
biglietteria Villa Carlotta tel. 0344.40405

P r o g r a m m a

Martedì 1 settembre, ore 18:30

Sonata n° 6 in fa maggiore, op. 10 n° 2
Sonata n° 15 in re maggiore, op. 28, "Pastorale"
Sonata n° 22 in fa maggiore, op. 54
Sonata n° 31 in la bemolle maggiore, op. 110

Venerdì 4 settembre, ore 18:30

Sonata n° 11 in si bemolle maggiore, op. 22
Sonata n° 5 in do minore, op. 10 n° 1
Sonata n° 27 in mi minore, op. 90
Sonata n° 21 in do maggiore op. 53, "Waldstein"

Venerdì 11 settembre, ore 18:30

Sonata n° 9 in mi maggiore, op. 14 n° 1
Sonata n° 4 in mi bemolle maggiore, op. 7
Sonata n° 20 in sol maggiore, op. 49 n° 2
Sonata n° 29 in si bemolle maggiore, op. 106 "Hammerklavier"

Martedì 15 settembre, ore 18:30

Sonata n° 10 in sol maggiore, op. 14 n° 2
Sonata n° 3 in do maggiore, op. 2 n° 3
Sonata n° 30 in mi maggiore, op. 109
Sonata n° 23 in fa minore, op. 57 "Appassionata"

Martedì 22 settembre, ore 18:30

Sonata n° 14 in do diesis minore, op. 27 n° 2, "Chiaro di luna"
Sonata n° 12 in la bemolle maggiore, op. 26
Sonata n° 19 in sol minore, op. 49 n° 1
Sonata n° 28 in la maggiore op. 101

Venerdì 25 settembre, ore 18:30

Sonata n° 2 in la maggiore, op. 2 n° 2
Sonata n° 17 in re minore, op. 31 n° 2, "La Tempesta"
Sonata n° 7 in re maggiore, op. 10 n° 3
Sonata n° 18 in mi bemolle maggiore, op. 31 n° 3

Venerdì 2 ottobre, ore 18:30

Sonata n° 1 in fa minore, op. 2 n° 1
Sonata n° 13 in mi bemolle maggiore, op. 27 n° 1
Sonatina n° 25 in sol maggiore, op. 79
Sonata n° 26 in mi bemolle maggiore, op. 81a "Gli Addii"

Martedì 6 ottobre, ore 18:30

Sonata n° 16 in sol maggiore, op. 31 n° 1
Sonata n° 8 in do minore, op. 13, "Patetica"
Sonata n° 24 in fa diesis maggiore, op. 78
Sonata n° 32 in do minore, op. 111

Teatro Sociale. Terminata l'impresa di Leotta

Che successo per il "Progetto Schubert"

Il pianista comasco Christian Leotta ha portato a termine, al Teatro Sociale di Como, il suo "Progetto Schubert" in quattro recital comprendente il corpus delle Sonate compiute per pianoforte del musicista austriaco. Una eccezionale rarità che rende merito alla cultura comasca, grazie anche all'Amministrazione comunale-Assessorato alla Cultura. Christian diventa così il primo pianista italiano ad avere in repertorio sia il ciclo delle Sonate per pianoforte di Beethoven (del quale ricorrono quest'anno i 250 anni dalla nascita) sia quelle del compositore austriaco

di concerti di Schubert mai eseguite da un unico pianista. Suo dunque il merito di avere proposto composizioni spesso dimenticate, che tendono a rivalorizzare un grande compositore, spesso sottovalutato specialmente nella sua musica da camera, dove ritrova invece tutto se stesso. Christian Leotta ha saputo rivivere, in maniera sorprendente, le gioie e le pene di Schubert riuscendo a penetrare nella sua grande anima di poeta, nell'innocenza e nella mitezza

del suo carattere, riuscendo quasi a fare un tutt'uno con la propria sensibilità. La squisita tenerezza di Beethoven è fusa in una tempra di energia e di consapevolezza altera del proprio valore; la dolce sentimentalità di Schubert invece assorbe in sé quanto di robusto vi è nel suo temperamento di artista. Paradossalmente si può asserire che egli è il corrispondente femminile di Beethoven. L'anima austriaca di Schubert, solida e sentimentale nello stesso

tempo, pulsa nella sua vita come nella sua arte. Povero, e non compreso dalla maggior parte dei contemporanei, non aveva impeti di ribellione poiché precocemente aveva intuito la vanità dei beni terreni. Sembrava che visse unicamente in un creato di suoni. Le sue composizioni prodigiose si collocano in un ambito del tutto particolare, di pura e trasfigurata bellezza, in cui ogni elemento mondano appare superato in una creazione che rinuncia a ogni orpello, a ogni possibile traccia di decorativismo. Il compositore austriaco è l'ultimo grande artista nella cui opera pianistica la Sonata occupi un posto centrale e di rilievo. Schubert non ha ancora raggiunto il rango che gli spetta; grande merito perciò a Christian Leotta, il quale ha riproposto le

sue pagine pianistiche dando un'interpretazione che, senza tema di smentita, può oggi essere considerata fra le migliori in assoluto, non solo in Europa, ma anche nell'Estremo Oriente. Ha unito una tecnica, a volte persino trascendentale, a un suono costantemente bello, limpido, pulito, con un approccio arioso e amabile. Ha messo profondamente in luce la dinamica, passando con disinvoltura ed estrema bravura dai suoni "pp" a "ppp", rendendo pieno merito, come pochi altri pianisti, alle peculiarità schubertiane. La sua interpretazione va oltre il terreno, sembra quasi proiettarsi verso l'interiorità e l'intimità per raggiungere le vette più elevate, quasi paradisiache.

Pagina a cura di ALBERTO CIMA



Concert Review

What a success for the “Schubert Project” - Christian Leotta becomes the first Italian pianist to have in his repertoire both the cycle of the Piano Sonatas by Beethoven (whose 250th birth anniversary is celebrated this year) and those by Schubert

“Il Settimanale”, Como (Italy) – February 20th 2020, by Prof. Alberto Cima

Italian pianist Christian Leotta has rounded off, at the Teatro Sociale of Como, his “Schubert Project” presenting in four recitals the corpus of the “completed” Piano Sonatas composed by the Austrian musician. This was an event of exceptional rarity that honors Como’s culture, owing immensely to the Cultural Office of the City.

Christian Leotta becomes this way the first Italian Pianist to have in his repertoire both the cycle of the Piano Sonatas by Beethoven (whose 250th birth anniversary is celebrated this year), and that of the Piano Sonatas by Schubert. It is important to remind that Mr. Leotta played for the very first time this series of Schubertian works last year at the famous Alti Hall of Kyoto, Japan, where he has achieved an exceptional success supported by several standing ovations. On that occasion Mr. Leotta performed, in seven recitals, almost the entire corpus of Schubert’s Piano music, playing, at this date, the largest series of Schubertian programs ever performed by one pianist.

It is therefore Mr. Leotta’s merit to have presented compositions often forgotten, thus contributing to the reevaluation of a great composer often underrated, especially in respect to his chamber music production, genre in which he actually excelled.

Christian Leotta has been able to revive, in an exceptional manner, the joys and the sorrows of Schubert, penetrating into his great soul of poet, into the innocence and the mildness of his character, almost merging his own sensibility with the composer’s. In Beethoven’s music, an exquisite tenderness is melted into a temper of energy and lofty awareness of his own value; while the sweet sentimentality of Schubert absorbs in itself all the robust sides of the composer’s temperament. Paradoxically, it is possible to assert that Schubert is Beethoven’s female correspondent. Schubert’s Austrian soul, solid and sentimental at the same time, pulsates in his art as in his life. Poor and misunderstood by the majority of his contemporaries, he did not have impulses of rebellion since he had precociously sensed the vanity of the earthly goods. It seemed that Schubert was living solely into a world of sounds. His prodigious compositions occupy a very special ambit, of a pure and transfigured beauty, in which any mundane element is overpowered in a creation that renounces to any adornment, to any decoration.

The Austrian composer is the last great artist to grant in his creation to the Piano Sonata a central place of great importance. Schubert did not reach yet the rank he truly deserves. It is hence Christian Leotta’s incontestable merit to propose not only in Europe but also in Asia almost the entire body of Schubert’s piano music, giving an interpretation that can be considered today, without any doubt, among the best ever. Leotta combines a transcendental technique to a sound always beautiful, limpid, clear, of great breath and lovable.

He brought to light the dynamics, switching with ease and great skill from “pp” (pianissimo) sounds to those marked “ppp” (more than pianissimo), highlighting thus, as very few pianists do, all the Schubertian peculiarities. His interpretation goes beyond this world and seems to project itself towards the most intimate and deeply felt emotions, to reach the highest, almost heavenly, pinnacles.

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Leotta e la promessa-Schubert Il viaggio finisce tra gli applausi

Recensione

Il bilancio del ciclo di quattro concerti offerti dal pianista comasco

Aveva promesso di farsi testimonial di un gigante della musica tuttora ancora troppo poco conosciuto, di svelarne la complessità inaudita, le mille possibilità di fraseggio, il mondo espressivo intimo e interiore unici e senza paragone, l'individualità assoluta di ciascun brano con uno studio profondo. Consapevole già a inizio progetto, ormai quasi tre anni fa, che avrebbe affrontato, anche verso il pubblico, qualcosa di assolutamente diverso dall'intera sua esperienza precedente, un mettersi in gioco verso nuovi oceani fatti di inesplorati abissi espressivi, dal profondissimo e meno immediato appeal.

Oggi che Christian Leotta ha concluso i quattro concerti con i quali ha offerto alla città che lo ha visto crescere musicalmente - peraltro parte corposa ma non esaustiva del proprio ciclo completo di sette recital - le undici Sonate per pianoforte compiute di Franz Schubert come première nazionale dopo il debutto

assoluto in terra nipponica, si può solo dar conferma a tante intenzioni. Un viaggio che lo stesso pubblico ha compreso, accostandolo con partecipazione crescente.

È un approccio radicalmente riflessivo, quello di Leotta con le Sonate di Schubert: evidente il confronto con la poetica ponderata, di ricerca del suono del suo ponderoso bagaglio dell'integrale delle Sonate beethoveniane. La distribuzione dei brani nelle quattro serate è attenta a conciliare poetica e appeal, una visione delineata come parabola e evoluzione. Leotta parte dai passaggi beethoveniani dell'op. 143, intrecciati a accortezze che vanno nell'intimo. Nei momenti enfatici c'è sempre quello scatto di metronomo contenuto che da sempre fa il carattere riflessivo del pianista, come nell'adorabile op. 120: Leotta la intimizza molto e il tenero Andante diventa crepuscolare, aprendo a un Allegro convinto e convincente come l'originalità con cui affronta l'op. 53: interessante, geniale, affrontata con cipiglio per poi perdersi nell'apparente assoluta semplicità dello Scherzo.

Assoluta pulizia, tecnica impeccabile fanno anche il secon-



Christian Leotta ha completato il ciclo dedicato a Schubert

do recital, nel quale il Beethoven che ancora aleggia nell'op. 164 viene percorso in una ricerca di vie nuove da Leotta, attentissimo a rispettare la scrittura lucida dell'Allegretto. Il caleidoscopio di sfumature create sembra non esaurirsi: dalla delicatezza di certi passaggi dell'op. 122 al tactus interiore dell'op. 53, conclusa con molta energia fra gli applausi convinti.

È con il gran finale del quarto recital, però, che Leotta corona il suo itinerario schubertiano: se l'approccio alla "Première Grande Sonate" op. 42 è un inno impetuoso, solenne, sonoro

pronto a lasciarsi condurre nelle sfumature intimiste del Moderato, sempre attraverso un tocco cristallino, è con il vertice della Sonata D 960 che Christian Leotta sublima l'equilibrio. Un senso perfetto della misura fra sogno, flusso del discorso musicale schubertiano e sfumature che trasporta, coinvolge e affascina. L'estrema delicatezza dell'Andante sostenuto, il candore dello Scherzo, colorato di portati e accentuazioni singolari, l'Allegro ma non troppo che il pubblico vorrebbe non finisse mai salutano il viaggio concluso.

Stefano Lamon

Concert Review

Leotta and the Schubert promise: the voyage ends between applauses Analysis of the cycle of four recitals performed by the pianist from Como

La Provincia, Como (Italy) – February 9th 2020, by Prof. Stefano Lamon

Before starting the cycle, Christian Leotta had promised to render justice to a giant of the music that is still too little known by revealing his extreme complexity, the thousands of phrasing possibilities, the expressiveness of his intimate and internal world, unique and without comparison, the absolute individuality of each Sonata, thanks to a profound study. Since the beginning of the project, almost three years ago, he was aware that he would have to face, even towards the public, something absolutely diverse from his entire precedent experience that would challenge him into new oceans of unexplored expressive abysses, made up by a very deep and less immediate appeal.

Today, as he concluded to perform in Como the four-recital cycle comprising the eleven “completed” Piano Sonatas by Schubert, as an Italian premiere, offering to the city that saw him grow musically a substantial but not exhaustive part of his original seven-recital series of Schubertian programs previously performed in Japan, we can only confirm so many intentions. It has been a music voyage that also the public understood, with a growing participation.

Mr. Leotta’s approach to Schubert’s Piano Sonatas is thoroughly meditative: it is evident its affinity to the thoughtful poetry of sound research which derives from his great cultural baggage of the Piano Sonatas by Beethoven. The distribution of the works in the four recitals was carefully made in order to show both poetry and appeal, a vision which can be outlined as parabola and evolution. Mr. Leotta started the cycle with the Beethovenian passages of the Op. 143 (D 784), alternating them with those of intimate refinements. The emphatic moments were never too fast, confirming the meditative character of the pianist, as in the adorable Op. 120 (D 664): Leotta gave a very intimate rendition and the tender Andante became crepuscular, introducing a convinced and convincing Allegro, followed by the originality with which he faced the Op. 53 (D 850): it was a fascinating performance, played with genius and great energy, which led us into the only apparently absolute simplicity of the Scherzo.

An extraordinary clearness and an impeccable technique marked also the second recital, where the Beethovenian passages, which are recognizable in the Op. 164 (D 537), were played by Leotta by searching new expressive ways, always with extreme care of the indications of the composer. The kaleidoscope of nuances that were triggered seemed endless: from the delicacy of certain passages of the Op. 122 (D 568) to the internal tactus of the Sonata D 959, that was concluded with a lot of energy between convinced applauses.

It was with the great final fourth recital, however, that Leotta crowned his Schubertian voyage: if the approach to the “Première Grande Sonate” Op. 42 (D 845) was an impetuous, solemn and sonorous hymn leading us into the intimate nuances of the Moderato, always with a very pure touch, it was with the apex of the Sonata D 960 that Christian Leotta sublimated the balance. A perfect mix between dream, flow of the Schubertian musical discourse and nuances that let us get carried away, engaged and fascinated by his playing. The extreme delicacy of the Andante sostenuto, the purity of the Scherzo, colored by precious accentuations and Portato, the Allegro ma non troppo which the public wished it would never end, marked the conclusion of this musical voyage.

Con la collaborazione e il contributo di



Christian Leotta

interpreta

Franz Schubert Le Sonate per pianoforte

Teatro Sociale

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Sonata in La minore D 784 (Op. 143)
Sonata in La maggiore D 664 (Op. 120)
Sonata in Re maggiore D 850 (Op. 53)

Lunedì 13 gennaio 2020, ore 18:00

Sonata in Sol maggiore D 894 (Op. 78)
Sonata in Si maggiore D 575 (Op. 147)
Sonata in Do minore D 958

Domenica 3 novembre 2019, ore 20:30

Sonata in La minore D 537 (Op. 164)
Sonata in Mi bemolle maggiore D 568 (Op. 122)
Sonata in La maggiore D 959 (Op. 53)

Domenica 9 febbraio 2020, ore 18:00

Sonata in La minore D 845 (Op. 42)
Sonata in Si bemolle maggiore D 960



Christian Leotta performs the complete cycle of Schubert's Piano Sonatas at the Teatro Sociale of Como, Italy, February 2020



A Como l'integrale schubertiana di Leotta



Christian Leotta

IL NUMERO IN EDICOLA



SCHUBERT *Sonata in sol maggiore D 894 (op. 78); Sonata in si maggiore D 575 (op. 147); Sonata in do minore D 958*
pianoforte **Christian Leotta**

Como, Teatro Sociale, 13 gennaio 2020

Christian Leotta è stato definito dalla leggendaria Rosalyn Tureck come "uno straordinario talento con una meravigliosa musicalità innata" e il grande Ulrich Schnabel ha scritto di lui: "Il suo rispetto delle indicazioni dei compositori Classici e Romantici è perfetto e notevole è la loro comprensione". Apprezzato interprete beethoveniano, Christian Leotta si è imposto sulla scena concertistica internazionale nel 2002 quando, all'età di soli 22 anni, ha eseguito a Montreal l'integrale delle 32 *Sonate* per pianoforte di Beethoven; ora si sta avvicinando alla conclusione dell'analoga impresa pianistica dedicata a Franz Schubert, eseguendo l'integrale delle 11 *Sonate* ("compiute") per pianoforte. Ha eseguito questa serie di composizioni per la prima volta lo scorso anno in Giappone, presso la notissima Alti Hall di Kyoto, riscuotendo un grande successo di pubblico e di critica in tutto il Paese. In quell'occasione ha inoltre interpretato la quasi totalità dell'opera per pianoforte di Schubert, presentandola in un ciclo di sette recital, che rappresenta a tutt'oggi la più ampia serie di concerti schubertiani mai eseguiti da un solo pianista.

Della prima serata di questa integrale comasca ha dato conto Luca Segalla in *MUSICA* di novembre: noi, invece diamo conto della terza.

La *Sonata in sol maggiore D 894 (op. 78)*, grazie al suo contenuto poetico del primo movimento, è stata definita *Fantasia*. Come Schumann, anche Liszt amava molto questa composizione, che definiva un "poema virgiliano". Il *Molto moderato e cantabile* può essere considerato il più originale fra i primi movimenti di Sonata scritti da Schubert. È pregevole per il suo puro lirismo. Di notevole bellezza e intensità espressiva è il successivo *Andante*, scritto in forma di *Lied*. Delizioso il *Menuetto. Allegro moderato*, che può essere considerato un'eco amplificata delle *Valses nobles*, dal tipico carattere viennese. I ritmi energici della sezione principale, con le sincopi capricciose e i trilli, si oppongono al canto celestiale ed estatico del *Trio*, la cui intimità sognante sembra voler concentrare in un solo attimo di felicità, in un miracolo armonico, tutte le virtù che rendono Schubert ineguagliabile. L'*Allegretto* conclusivo è un *Rondò*. Le melodie derivano il loro carattere inimitabile da varie fonti popolari. È una delle pagine più significative della maturità del compositore austriaco. Eccellente l'interpretazione di Christian Leotta, che è stata di assoluto valore per perizia tecnica, resa sonora ed espressività. Quello che stupisce nella sua esecuzione è il contrasto fra un virtuosismo acceso e quasi visionario, sbrigliato ed estroverso da un lato, e una concentrazione ai limiti dell'estasi dall'altro. Spettacolare la tavolozza sonora con una notevole varietà di suoni, dal pianissimo al fortissimo, dal crescendo al diminuendo. Ha saputo penetrare autorevolmente nell'intimo di Schubert. Classica la sua postura, che richiama alla memoria lo stile di Backhaus (pianista purtroppo poco conosciuto dai giovani, per altro numerosi al concerto).

Di rara esecuzione è la giovanile e raffinata *Sonata in si maggiore D 575 (op. 147)*. È la più libera e ispirata fra le Sonate schubertiane. È un'opera felice, a tinte forti, colma di impressioni della natura, vivificata soprattutto dallo splendore di un'inesauribile invenzione armonica. La melodia dell'*Andante* colpisce per la sua intimità. Lo *Scherzo. Allegretto*, con il suo tema capriccioso e galo, le sue armonie raffinate e le affascinanti imitazioni, è un piccolo capolavoro di humour delicato. La stessa gioia magica e irrealistica si trova nell'*Allegro giusto* finale. Christian Leotta ha esibito un suono prezioso, morbido e rotondo, abile e scattante. Sopraffina la tecnica. Ha alternato momenti di virtuosismo sfrenato e di ripiegamento intimo e poetico. Tutto ha esaltato il suo pianismo, estremamente raffinato ed elegante.

Un capolavoro di straordinaria espressività drammatica, composta solo due mesi prima della morte, è la *Sonata in do minore D 958*. È una composizione agitata, triste e appassionata e, nel complesso, anche la più beethoveniana pur mantenendo una struttura tipicamente schubertiana. Di potenza titanica è il primo tempo (*Allegro*) che, con i suoi accordi martellati, ricorda l'inizio dell'*op. 111* di Beethoven. L'*Adagio* è uno dei più profondi movimenti scritti da Schubert. Il *Menuetto. Allegro*, praticamente uno Scherzo, oscilla continuamente fra il sorriso e la passione drammatica. La Sonata si conclude con l'*Allegro*, un'impetuosa tarantella in cui non mancano tuttavia momenti di estasi lirica. Anche in questa Sonata Christian Leotta dà il meglio di sé. Affascina e sorprende non solo per l'agilità e il senso del canto, ma anche per un suono di straordinaria densità e potenza, delicatezza e sensibilità, al limite dell'umano. Il suo pianismo è pulito e scintillante nei movimenti rapidi, espressivo ma con equilibrato distacco in quelli lenti e moderati, molto inventivo nella timbrica e nella dinamica.

Nonostante l'impegno del programma, Christian Leotta ha donato al pubblico un bis: l'incantevole *Improvviso in la bemolle maggiore, op. 142 n. 2* dello stesso Schubert, eseguito con tutti i ritornelli. Una pagina sublime nella sua apparente semplicità. L'evento è stato realizzato grazie al Teatro Sociale e al Comune di Como. Il recital ha voluto inoltre unire la grande musica alla solidarietà; infatti il ricavato è stato devoluto all'Associazione Comocuore Onlus.

Alberto Cima

Concert Review

Christian Leotta performs in Como his complete cycle of Schubert

Rivista "Musica" (Italy) – January 13th 2020, by Prof. Alberto Cima

Como, Teatro Sociale, January 13th 2020

Christian Leotta has been defined by the legendary Rosalyn Tureck as "an extraordinary talent with a beautiful innate musicality", and the great Karl Ulrich Schnabel wrote about him: "his respect of the indications of the Classical and Romantic composers is perfect and their understanding considerable". Esteemed interpreter of Beethoven, Christian Leotta burst onto the international scene in 2002, by presenting in Montreal, at the age of only 22, the complete cycle of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas; now he is near to complete the analogous pianistic undertaking dedicated to Franz Schubert, performing the complete series of his "completed" 11 Piano Sonatas. He performed this series of works for the first time in 2018, at the well know Alti Hall of Kyoto in Japan, winning a great public and critic success in the whole country. On that occasion he has furthermore presented nearly the whole production for piano by Schubert, playing it over a cycle of seven recitals which represents today the largest series of Schubertian programs ever performed by one pianist.

On the first recital of this series gave an account Mr. Luca Segalla on "MUSICA" of November: we will report about the third concert.

The *Piano Sonata in G major D 894 (Op. 78)*, thanks to the poetic content of the first movement, it has been defined "Fantasy". As Schumann, also Liszt loved very much this composition, which he defined as a "Virgilian poem". The *Molto moderato e cantabile* can be considered as the most original between the first movements of Sonata written by Schubert. It is remarkable for his pure lyricism. Of great beauty and expressive intensity is the following *Andante*, written in a Lied form. Delightful the *Menuetto, Allegro moderato*, which can be considered as an amplified echo of the Valses nobles, showing a typical Viennese character. The energetic rhythms of the principal section, with capricious syncopé and acciaccaturas, are opposite to the celestial and ecstatic melody of the *Trio*, of which the dreaming intimacy seems to want to concentrate just in a moment of felicity, in an harmonic miracle, all the virtues that make Schubert peerless. The closing *Allegretto is a Rondo*. Its melodies derive their inimitable character from several folk sources. It is one of the most significative page of the maturity of the Austrian composer. **Excellent the interpretation of Christian Leotta, which was of an absolute value for technical skill, sound rendering and expressiveness. What is astonishing in his playing is the contrast between a great and almost visionary virtuosism, unbridled and extroverted on one side, and a concentration to the limit of ecstasy on the other. Spectacular his palette of sonorities, which shows a great variety of sounds, from the Pianissimo to the Fortissimo, from the Crescendo to the Diminuendo. He was capable to penetrate authoritatively into Schubert's intimate. His posture is Classic and calls to memory the style of Backhaus (a pianist unfortunately not so known by the young, which were moreover numerous at the concert).**

Of rare performance is the juvenile and refined *Piano Sonata in B major D 575 (Op. 147)*. It is the most free and inspired between the Schubertian Piano Sonatas. It is a cheerful work, of bright colors, full of feeling from the nature, vivified especially by the splendor of an endless harmonic invention. The melody of the *Andante* strikes for its intimacy. The *Scherzo, Allegretto*, with its capricious and merry theme, its refined harmonies and the fascinating imitations, is a little masterpiece of a delicate humor. The same joy, magical and fantastical, can be found in the closing *Allegro giusto*. **Christian Leotta showed a precious sound, soft and round, precise and rapid. Exceptional his technique. He alternated moments of unrestrained virtuosity and poetic intimacy. Everything exalted his pianism, always extremely refined and elegant.**

The *Piano Sonata in C minor D 958*, is a masterpiece of extraordinary expressiveness, composed only two months before Schubert's death. It's a restless work, sad and full of passion and, overall, the most Beethovenian while maintaining a structure typical of Schubert. Of a titanic moment *Allegro* which, with its hammered chords, recalls the beginning of the Op. 111 by Beethoven. The *Adagio* is one of the most profound movements ever wrote by Schubert. The *Menuetto, Allegro*, practically a *Scherzo*, oscillates constantly between the smile and the dramatic passion. The Sonata ends with an *Allegro*, an impetuous tarantella in which however are not missing moments of lyrical ecstasy. **Also in this Sonata Christian Leotta gives the best of himself. He is capable to fascinate and surprise not only for his technique and his sense of the line, but also for a nearly supernatural sound of an extraordinary density and power, delicacy and sensitivity. His pianism is clear and shimmers in the rapid movements, while is expressive with a balanced objectivity in the slow and moderate ones, being always very inventive in the timbre and the dynamic.**

In spite of the demanding program, Christian Leotta gave to the public an encore: the enchanting *Impromptus in A-flat major Op. 142 No. 2* of Schubert, performed with all the prescribed repeats. A sublime page in its apparent simplicity. The event was organized thanks to the Teatro Sociale and the City of Como. The recital has furthermore brought together a great music event and solidarity, devolving its tickets sale to the association "Comocuore Onlus".

■ Grande successo per il secondo recital del pianista

In 300 al Sociale per Leotta

Circa trecento persone hanno assistito, al Teatro Sociale di Como, al secondo recital del pianista comasco Christian Leotta dedicato al ciclo "Franz Schubert: Le Sonate per pianoforte", un'iniziativa di elevato livello artistico e culturale promossa dal Comune di Como unitamente al Teatro Sociale.

Christian ha eseguito due Sonate giovanili del musicista austriaco (D. 537, D. 568) e una della maturità (D. 959). Si è così potuto constatare l'evoluzione artistica schubertiana. L'aspetto interessante delle prime Sonate è dato dalla ricerca di un linguaggio volutamente sobrio, per certi aspetti quasi tradizionalista. Non mancano inflessioni galanti, di un rococò aggiornato, nonché raffinatezze timbriche e coloristiche, che ravvivano il quadro complessivo con tocchi di originalità. La "Sonata D. 568", in particolare, è una delle composizioni pianistiche più equi-

librate, unitarie e riuscite. Dal "vecchio stile" si giunge, considerando il periodo in cui sono state composte, a inusuali percorsi armonici.

La "Sonata D. 959" presenta una particolare ricchezza di stati d'animo ed è una composizione di singolare genialità, con un "Allegro" ampio e sviluppato. Spicca nell'opera una soave melodia di estrema sensibilità, che sfrutta impeccabilmente la dinamica (pp e ppp), che solo un grande interprete, come Christian Leotta, riesce a interpretare perfettamente, rendendo plausibili i momenti più intimi.

L'esecuzione di Christian Leotta è stata di assoluto valore per perizia tecnica, resa sonora ed espressività. Quello che stupisce nella sua esecuzione è il contrasto fra un virtuosismo acceso e quasi visionario, sbrigliato ed estroverso da un lato, e una concentrazione lirica ai limiti dell'estasi dall'altro.

ALBERTO CIMA



CHRISTIAN LEOTTA



Concert Review

An extraordinary success for the pianist's Second Recital - Three hundred showed up to hear Leotta at the Teatro Sociale

"Il Settimanale", Como (Italy) – November 3rd 2019, by Prof. Alberto Cima

About three hundred persons were present to listen to the recital of pianist Christian Leotta, playing at the Teatro Sociale of Como the Second Recital of his Cycle of Franz Schubert's Piano Sonatas, an event of great artistic and cultural value presented under the auspices of the City of Como in collaboration with the "Teatro Sociale".

Mr. Leotta performed two Piano Sonatas composed by Schubert in his youth (the D 537 and the D 568), plus one of his maturity (the D 959). Listening to these compositions it made it possible to understand the artistic evolution of Schubert. The most interesting aspect of the first Piano Sonatas is the research of an intentionally sober language, in certain ways almost traditionalist. Nonetheless there are moments of romantic inflections, suggestive of a revisited "Rococo", as well as a research of refined timbres and colors that give freshness and originality to these works. The Piano Sonata D 568, particularly, is one of the most balanced, unitary and successful composition for piano. Considering the period of their composition, these sonatas evolve from the "Classic style", showing unusual harmonic paths.

The Piano Sonata D 959 presents an extremely rich range of moods and it is a work of unique geniality, with an "Allegro" greatly developed. In this opus, it stands out a beautiful cantabile line with a melody of profound sensitivity, that exploits impeccably the dynamics of "Pianissimo" (PP) and "more than Pianissimo" (PPP), sonorities that only a great interpreter, such as Christian Leotta, is capable of playing perfectly, rendering thus plausible the most intimate moments. The performance of Christian Leotta was of an extraordinary value thanks to his great technique, to his beautiful sound and to his expressivity. What is astonishing in his playing is the contrast between a great and almost visionary virtuosism, unbridled and extroverted, on the one side, and a lyrical concentration to the limit of the ecstasy, on the other.

■ Sociale

Superba interpretazione di Leotta



Grazie al Comune di Como e al Teatro Sociale, martedì 1 ottobre, si è potuto assistere a uno straordinario evento culturale, di livello internazionale, che ha visto eccezionale interprete il pianista comasco Christian Leotta, impegnato nel primo recital dedicato alle Sonate per pianoforte di Schubert. Tre le Sonate eseguite: in la minore D 784, in la maggiore D 664 e in re maggiore D 850. Le Sonate schubertiane sono le composizioni meno note e ingiustamente trascurate di tutto il suo repertorio pianistico. Ipnottizzati dalle prodigiose conquiste della sonata beethoveniana, molte generazioni di ascoltatori e di critici hanno dato meno risalto a quelle di Schubert. Ulteriore merito a Leotta che, dopo avere affrontato l'integrale delle Sonate di Beethoven, affronta ora, il primo italiano, i capolavori di Schubert rendendo ammirevolmente le qualità intrinseche delle sue opere. Il melos e il lirismo schubertiano sono apparsi in tutta la loro reale entità. Christian Leotta ha messo in luce un superbo virtuosismo, delicate sonorità, un'articolazione incomparabile, un fraseggio di notevole levatura, vertiginose e infinite sfumature (dal pianissimo al fortissimo). Sembra alla ricerca dell'esattezza dello scienziato nel misurare l'incommensurabile e nel circoscrivere la cifra sonora, all'insegna della poesia. Tutto lascia presagire che la sua interpretazione dell'integrale delle Sonate di Schubert si possa porre fra le più belle ed entusiasmanti di questi tempi.

Concert Review

A magnificent interpretation by Christian Leotta

Il Settimanale, Como (Italy) – October 1st 2019, by Prof. Alberto Cima

Last Tuesday October 1st, thanks to the City of Como and to the Teatro Sociale, it has been possible to listen to an extraordinary musical event of international level, which saw as its exceptional protagonist the pianist from Como Christian Leotta, playing the first recital of the Piano Sonatas cycle by Franz Schubert.

Three Sonatas have been performed: in A minor D 784, in A major D 664 and in D major D 850. The Piano Sonatas by Schubert are the less known and unjustly overlooked works of his entire piano repertoire. Mesmerized by the prodigious achievements of Beethoven's Sonatas, many generations of music lovers and critics paid much less attention to those of Schubert.

A further credit to Christian Leotta who, after playing the entire cycle of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas, is now the first Italian pianist to perform also the cycle of Schubert's Piano Sonatas, admirably bringing to the light the inner qualities of these works. The melos and the lyricism of Schubert were evident in all of their real entity. Christian Leotta showed an extraordinary virtuosism, delicate sonorities, an incomparable articulation, a great phrasing, as well as dizzying and endless nuances, from Pianissimo to Fortissimo.

He seems to research the exactness of the scientist while measuring the incommensurable and in defying the sonority style, all of that with a poetic sensitivity.

Everything let us to predict that his interpretation of the complete cycle of Schubert's Piano Sonatas will stand out as one of the most beautiful and most exciting of our time.

Christian Leotta
with Alicia de Larrocha,
Griante (Italy),
“Fondazione Internazionale
Theo Lieven per il Pianoforte”,
September 2000



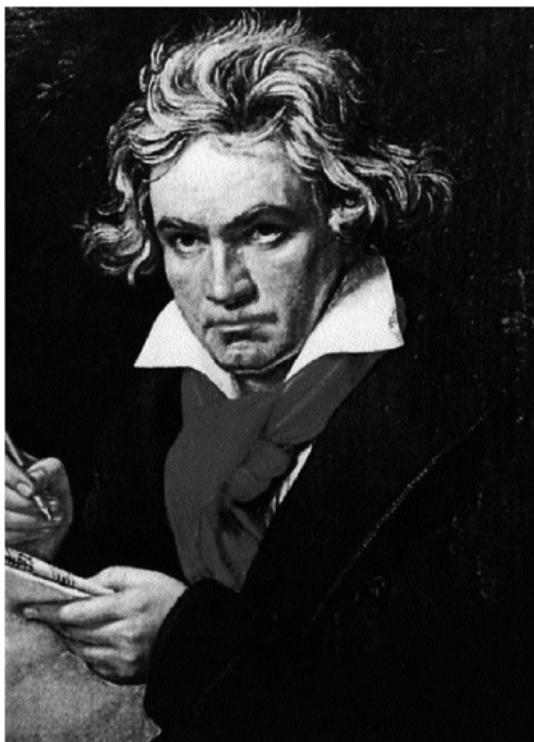
Christian Leotta
with Leon Fleisher,
Griante (Italy),
“Fondazione Internazionale
Theo Lieven per il Pianoforte”,
May 2000

Cultura & Spettacoli

Christian Leotta, giovane pianista comasco d'adozione, è il protagonista dell'esecuzione integrale delle trentadue Sonate di Beethoven organizzata nell'ambito delle celebrazioni per il centenario della fondazione dell'Associazione Carducci di Como. La prima delle sette serate è in programma martedì 28 gennaio alle 21 nel salone «Musa» dell'Associazione.

di Christian Leotta

La stesura e l'edizione di ogni composizione di Beethoven sono sempre stati materia di grande riflessione, sia ad opera degli interpreti (come dovrebbe sempre essere), sia (ed in maggioranza) ad opera dei musicologi. Numerosi sono infatti i problemi e le questioni storico-filologiche che accompagnano questa meravigliosa letteratura musicale. Sappiamo con certezza, per esempio, che nessun schizzo del Maestro è andato perduto, essendo stato in qualche modo da lui prima o poi utilizzato, ed in certi casi anche riutilizzato. In successive composizioni. Noto a tutti è il caso del celeberrimo tema dell'*Inno alla gioia* del Finale della Nona Sinfonia, op.123, già utilizzato nell'*Allegretto*, ma non troppo della Fantasia Corale op. 80, che addirittura si poteva già ripescare in una romanza concepita da Beethoven fra il 1794/95, nota come *Gegehnisse* WoO 118. Per quanto riguarda le sonate per pianoforte, l'opera 14 n. 1, per esempio, composta nel 1798, è stata successivamente interamente strumentata per quartetto d'archi nel 1801 (catalogata come Hess 34), o la Marcia funebre dell'opera 26, composta nel 1800, è stata anch'essa strumentata nel 1816 quale ultimo dei quattro brani costituenti il dramma *Leonore Prohaska* (catalogata come WoO 96). Altro aspetto non trascurabile, è che spesso la stesura e la gestazione di alcune delle opere di Beethoven risalgono a diversi anni prima della loro effettiva data di edizione: le sonate dell'opera 2, pubblicate da Artaria a Vienna nel 1796, erano già state composte sotto forma di appunti quando l'Autore era ancora a Bonn, quindi prima del 1792; le due sonate cosiddette "facili" dell'op. 49, pubblicate a Vienna da *Bureau des Arts et d'Industrie* solo nel 1805, erano state già scritte da Beethoven fra il 1797 e il 1798, quindi contemporaneamente alle sonate opera 13 *Pathétique* e opera 14 n. 1 e 2. Ciò dimostra, evidentemente, la presenza di casi di incongruenza nella catalogazione delle opere di Beethoven. Queste divergenze fra periodo di composizione ed effettiva pubblicazione, nel quadro solo apparentemente cronologico della catalogazione delle opere di Beethoven, non sono disperse solo dal volere dell'Autore, cioè da quando Beethoven stesso avesse deciso di dare alle stampe le proprie composizioni; in verità, numerosi altri fattori, spesso anche extramusicali, hanno contribuito in modo decisivo in merito a ciò. Per quanto riguarda le due sonate dell'opera 49 per esempio, sappiamo che è stato addirittura il fratello Kaspar a dare alle stampe le due *Leichte Sonaten*, senza neanche aver ricevuto il consenso dell'Autore. Davvero numerosi sono poi casi di accese discussioni che Beethoven stesso si vide costretto ad intraprendere con gli editori dell'epoca, più volte terminate con veri e propri litigi, causate sia dai vistosi errori presenti (molte volte addirittura "voluti" dagli editori), sia per ragioni prettamente di natura



Christian Leotta eseguirà per il «Carducci» l'integrale delle trentadue Sonate di Ludwig van Beethoven



La stesura e l'edizione di ogni composizione del Maestro sono sempre state materia di grande riflessione ad opera di interpreti e musicologi: numerose sono infatti le questioni storico-filologiche che le accompagnano

Numerosi i casi di accese discussioni che Beethoven stesso si vide costretto a intraprendere con gli editori dell'epoca, più volte terminate con veri e propri litigi, causati sia dai vistosi errori contenuti sia da ragioni economiche

senza dubbio di notevole importanza per quel che ci riguarda, è quello del significato che l'appellativo "Patetico" avesse per Beethoven. Nell'accezione del linguaggio comune, che spesso è stata attribuita erroneamente anche all'istestazione che caratterizza il titolo dell'opera 13, tale aggettivo descrive un sentimento di compassione, pena, malinconia; Beethoven, sicuramente non intendeva questo. Il "patetico" in questione, è stato infatti teorizzato nei tre Saggi di estetica pubblicati nel 1793 da Friedrich Schiller, sulla scia di quell'idealismo etico del quale l'autore aveva trovato giustificazione nella ricerca e nell'entusiastico approfondimento del pensiero morale kantiano. Da Schiller apprendiamo dunque che in arte il patetico è la «forza tragica di rappresentazione», scaturita con violenza dal conflitto interno di stati d'animo dolorosi e attraverso la quale la «santa libertà» dello spirito, in un eroico imperativo etico, può raggiungere il superamento del dolore stesso, dunque la catarsi. Come si sa, Beethoven è stato sempre lettore appassionato ed attento sia di Schiller, sia di Kant, ed estrapola questa «forza tragica di rappresentazione» descrivendola in musica per mezzo del conflitto, sempre in primo piano nella sua dialettica musicale, di quei due principi costituenti (il principio d'opposizione e quello implorante) a lui ispirati a loro volta dai kantiani *Fondamenti metafisici della scienza della Natura*, e che ora ha consapevolmente acquisito quali elementi strutturali della sua poetica. Credo sia indispensabile che ogni interprete rifletta su queste problematiche, alla radice del pensiero e della poetica e dell'universalità del messaggio artistico di Beethoven. È stato quindi l'insieme di tutte queste considerazioni che mi ha indotto a compiere la scelta riguardo all'ordine ed ai criteri adottati per la compilazione di ciascuno dei 7 recitals da me previsti per l'esecuzione delle 32 sonate, ed a preferirle, dunque, di eseguirle in pubblico non nell'ordine di catalogazione "ufficiale", ed a ritenere, in fin dei conti, che quello che può sembrare in principio un grande problema come questo, sia in realtà ben poca cosa rispetto a quanto sta veramente dietro la musica del genio di Bonn. Un'ultima parentesi riguarda il modo di presentare le ultime tre sonate (le opere 109, 110 e 111), che si distacca eccezionalmente dai parametri da me prima esposti: considerando infatti in questo caso il breve arco di tempo che ha visto nascere queste tre composizioni e, soprattutto, la strettissima comunanza del messaggio musicale-espressivo che le unisce, ho ritenuto fosse il caso di presentarle in stretta successione, anche a dimostrazione del fatto che sonate pubblicate separatamente possano avere maggiori aspetti in comune di altre facenti parte dello stesso numero d'opera. Nella viva speranza che ognuno dei 7 recitals costituenti l'integrale delle 32 sonate per pianoforte di Ludwig van Beethoven risulti il più interessante e coinvolgente possibile per qualsiasi tipo di spettatore, dal musicologo più preparato a colui che si accosta anche per la prima volta a questa straordinaria musica, auguro a tutti di ascoltarla con vera gioia e piacere il più grande corpus della letteratura pianistica di tutti i tempi, rappresentazione di uno dei più alti momenti dello Spirito Umano, lasciandosi condurre nel meraviglioso mondo di suoni da esso creato.

EVENTI / Verso l'esecuzione integrale delle trentadue Sonate a Como

Invito a BEETHOVEN una vetta dello spirito

economica. Riguardo al primo caso, l'allievo e biografo di Beethoven Ries ci riferisce di quanto avvenuto nella pubblicazione delle sonate op. 31, da parte dell'editore Nägeli: «Quando arrivarono le bozze Beethoven disse: "Fatemi sentire le sonate", pur continuando a lavorare. La parte era zeppa di errori, cosa che lo fece irritare violentemente. Alla fine dell'*Allegro* della prima Sonata, l'editore Nägeli aveva addirittura aggiunto, arbitrariamente, quattro battute... Quando io le eseguii, Beethoven si alzò furioso, si precipitò verso di me e, spingendomi verso l'altra metà della tastiera, gridò: "Dove leggi tutto questo?

Porco diavolo!". Quando si rese conto che avevo eseguito quanto stampato sullo spartito, non vi potete immaginare il suo sconcerto e la sua indignazione. A quel punto mi ordinò di fare la lista di tutti gli errori e di inviare immediatamente le Sonate a Simrock, a Bonn, affinché le ristampasse con la scritta "édition très correcte"». Riguardo al secondo caso, invece, non posso fare a meno di citare parte della incredibile lettera che Beethoven scrisse il 19 aprile 1818 al già menzionato Ries, riguardo i consigli sull'ipotetica disposizione dei vari movimenti della sonata op. 106 (la più vasta e complessa in assoluto del catalogo!) per l'edizione in-

glese: «...se a Londra la Sonata non piace, potrei inviargene un'altra. Oppure potrebbero togliere il Largo e aprire subito con la fuga dell'ultimo movimento; oppure ancora: come primo brano l'Adagio, come terzo lo Scherzo e il Largo, e infine l'Allegro risoluto. Lascio a Lei la decisione, come riterrà più conveniente... La sonata è stata scritta in circostanze urgenti, ed è difficile guadagnarci il pane. Ma sono ridotto a questo». Un'attenta analisi di tutti questi fattori, unita sicuramente anche ad un approfondimento del contesto storico-politico-sociale dell'epoca, dimostrerà che sicuramente numerosi altri elementi extramusicali

hanno influito, e non di poco, sulla stesura delle opere di Beethoven. Un esempio significativo in merito è quello della sonata op. 81a, che nei suoi tre movimenti reca le indicazioni, in questo caso originali dell'Autore, di *Les Adieux*, *L'Absence* e *Le Retour*. Cronologicamente inserita nel corso della guerra che scoppiò nell'aprile del 1809 tra Austria e Francia, vide il suo celebre dedicatario, l'arciduca Rodolfo (al quale Beethoven era legato da un forte legame affettivo), costretto a fuggire per ragioni di sicurezza dalla capitale austriaca, quando già le truppe francesi erano nei pressi di Vienna. È ovvio che Beethoven non voleva

qui rappresentare la descrizione delle tre situazioni prima elencate (l'addio, l'assenza e il ritorno), quanto la sua personale interpretazione emotiva di stati d'animo universali (come la tristezza del distacco, la nostalgia della lontananza e la gioia del riabbraccio), ispirati in ogni caso dal drammatico contesto storico-sociale che ha circondato il nascere di questa composizione. Avendo accennato all'opera 81a, non posso ora non aprire un'altra parentesi riguardante l'unica altra sonata di Beethoven che reca un titolo originale: la celeberrima opera 13, chiamata *Pathétique*. L'argomento di riflessione in questo caso,

ONGAKU NO TOMO 音楽の友

Concert Reviews

盤
クリスチャン・レオッタ p

12月9日・京都府立府民ホール「アルティ」●シューベルト「ピアノ・ソナタ第15番」「同第9番」「同第21番」
このホールでベートーヴェンのピアノ・ソナタ全曲演奏も果たしているクリスチャン・レオッタによる7回に及ぶシューベルト・ツィクルスの最終回。レオッタにとっても聴衆にとっても万感の思いがこもる演奏会だっただろうが、演奏はそれにふさわしい圧倒的な名演。特に最後に弾かれた「第21番」の素晴らしさは筆舌に尽くし難い。レオッタはこれを弾くために、聴衆はこれを聴くためにともに歩みを進めてきたのではないか。この曲にはシューベルトの全てが集約されているが、レオッタは余計な気負いもなく、しかしどこまでも温かく深く完全無欠にその全てを明らかにして見せた。長時間に及んだ演奏がまるで一瞬と感じられるほど凝縮され、その音楽には一音たりとも無駄はなく、全てに深い意味や情感が宿り、シューベルトはどこまで人間や世界を、否それを越えて彼岸の世界までも見通していたのかと空恐ろしくさえなった。しかもそれを徹底的に明らかにするレオッタの、シューベルトの全てを理解しているかのような絶妙の演奏。第2楽章など、この世の深淵を想わせる深み帯びた歌に、身も心も金縛りにあったかのような感動を覚えた。これ一曲聴けただけでもこのツィクルスに出会えて幸せだった。

●中村孝義



Christian Leotta performs the complete cycle of Schubert's Piano Sonatas at Kyoto's Alti Hall, Japan, December 2018

Concert Review

ONGAKU NO TOMO, Japan –February 2019, by Prof. Takayoshi Nakamura

I had the chance to listen to the final recital of Christian Leotta's seven concerts cycle dedicated to Franz Schubert, performed at the same venue where he also played the cycle of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas.

This Schubert's cycle was surely an extraordinary series of concerts for everybody, and Christian Leotta's exceptional performances well deserved his great success. Especially the Piano Sonata D 960, performed on the last recital, was beyond any description.

I guess that Leotta and the audience were both really looking forward one to play it, the other to listen to this masterpiece.

The D 960 is the piece where all Schubert is summarized, and Leotta revealed us everything about him warmly, deeply, with an absolute perfection and without showing any unnecessary gesture.

His performance was so condensed that it seemed to last only for an instant, in spite of its very long duration.

There was not a single unnecessary sound and every sound had deep meanings and emotions, making me feeling petrified by Schubert's own vision on the humanity, on this world, and on the world beyond us.

Leotta was capable to reveal us that vision with a refined performance, which showed his complete understanding of Schubert's world. I was so touched especially by the second movement of Piano Sonatas D 960.

I felt as if my body and my soul were tied down by its song, which evoked us the deep edge of this existence.

It has been such a joy to have the privilege of knowing about this cycle and listening to this piece.



ALTI開館30周年記念公演
クリスチャン・レオッタ
シューベルト・プロジェクト 7Days

1st stage

2015〜2016年に9夜にわたってベートーヴェンのピアノ・ソナタ全曲演奏会を開催。アルティに一大旋風を巻き起こしたイタリアの名ピアニスト、クリスチャン・レオッタが、今回7夜にわたる「シューベルトプロジェクト7Days」を開催。シューベルトでもレオッタの感性豊かなピアノがホールに響き渡った。

シューベルトのソナタ第4、7、8、9、13、14、15、16、17、18、19、20、21番（2回演奏）、更にさすらい人幻想曲、4つの即興曲D899、D935、3つのピアノ曲D915、ヒュッテンブレンナーの主題による13の変奏



曲D576を、7日間で弾き通す。

前半の3日間（3/10、14、18）では、ソナタ7曲と「さすらい人幻想曲」、4つの即興曲を弾く。レオッタのシューベルトはメリハリがある。シューベルトの嬌々とした感じというより、むしろ古典派の剛毅さを前面に押し出す。とはいっても第21番のソナタの第2楽章など、これぞシューベルト！ というロマンティックな表情も表現しつつのことであるが……

プロジェクトは作曲順ではなく、シューベルトの初期、中期、後期をばらばらに分解し、2〜3曲を一夜でという構成なので、1回のプログラムでシューベルトの全体像がつかめる主旨となっていることもうれしい。

残る4Days（11/27、12/1、5、9）は遺作の19、20、21番のソナタを初め、「楽興の時」や、4つの即興曲D935などお馴染みの曲に、ヒュッテンブレンナー主題による13の変奏曲という珍しい作品も弾く。前半の3日間にも増して楽しみなコンサートとなる。3月18日、京都府立府民ホール・アルティ、セカンド・ステージの問合せは、☎075-4411414

Concert Review

Christian Leotta performs “The Schubert Project” in seven recitals

ONGAKU GENDAI, Japan –May 2018, by Shigeru Otsubo

Italian pianist Christian Leotta, who caused quite a sensation in Kyoto’s audience while performing the cycle of Beethoven’s 32 Piano Sonatas in a series of nine recitals in 2015 and in 2016, has come back to Kyoto’s Alti Hall and began to play “The Schubert Project”.

This time Christian Leotta is presenting, in a series of seven recitals, an extraordinary big program of Schubert’s Piano music, including his Piano Sonatas, the “Wanderer Fantasy”, “Moments Musicaux”, the “Four Impromptus” D899, the “Four Impromptus” D 935, the “Drei Klavierstücke” D 946, the “13 Variations on a theme by Anselm Hüttenbrenner” D 576 and the “Allegretto in C minor” D 915.

Christian Leotta’s sensitive interpretation of Schubert showed the great spirit of this composer, as well as that of his music, rather than his feebleness, which could be a musical echo of his ill-health condition. While listening to him, we immediately recognized that special “Romantic” sound, which made us prompt instantaneously the thought: “This is the real Schubert!”, as it happened especially listening to the second movement of the last Piano Sonata, the No. 21 D 960.

The programs are not presented in a chronological order. Christian Leotta has divided Schubert’s Piano Sonatas in three groups that include the Sonatas composed in the early, the middle, and the latter period of Schubert’s life, performing at least two Piano Sonatas from different creative periods in each recital, along with other relevant works. Thanks to such combinations, the audience is able to appreciate and enjoy, in each concert, the whole image of Schubert’s music.

Christian Leotta is awaited to be back to Kyoto next November and December and he will conclude “The Schubert Project” performing the second part of this seven-recitals cycle, playing the Piano Sonatas Nos. 7, 9, 15, 18, 19, 20 and 21, plus other important works such as the “Moments Musicaux”, the “Four Impromptus” D935 and the “13 Variations on a theme by Anselm Hüttenbrenner” D 576, this last piece being rarely performed in Japan.

ONGAKU NO TOMO 音楽の友

Concert Reviews



クリスチャン・レオッタ (p)

クリスチャン・レオッタ p

2年前に行ったベートーヴェンのソナタ全曲ツィクルスで、精神的にもピアノ的にも強靱な演奏で聴衆を圧倒したレオッタが、今度はシューベルト・プロジェクトを行うことになった。レオッタは、シューベルトはベートーヴェンの明確な後継者だと言うが、演奏に際して要求されるものは随分異なる。私はその第2日目を聴いた。この日はイ短調の二つの「ソナタ」(「第14番」と「第16番」)の間にD899の即興曲集を挟むという重量プログラム。彼の音の美しさはすでに前回の公演で実証済みだが、その指から紡ぎ出される音の美しさが、シューベルト演奏にどれほど大きな強みとなったことか。「ソナタ第14番」でも「第16番」でも、天から降ってくるような清澄な音を駆使して、厳しさを秘めた深い叙情と劇的世界の交錯が遺憾なく繰り広げられた。彼の演奏を耳にしているとシューベルト後期の世界が一筋縄ではなかったことが身に沁みる。2曲の間に演奏された即興曲もビーダーマイアー的な小品としてではなく、懐の深さを持った叙情的世界の表出が印象的だった。(3月14日・京都府立府民ホール・アルティ)

〈中村孝義〉

Concert Review

ONGAKU NO TOMO, Japan –May 2018, by Prof. Takayoshi Nakamura

Christian Leotta, who quite overwhelmed the Japanese audience two years ago thanks to his great technique and deep music understanding of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas, has come back to Kyoto to play "The Schubert Project".

Although Leotta declared that Schubert is the spiritual heir of Beethoven, the musical demands of the two composers are quite different. I had the chance to listen to Christian Leotta's second recital. The program presented was very big, including the Four Impromptus D 899 and the Piano Sonatas No. 14 D 784 and No. 16 D 845, both in A minor.

As I expected, knowing his playing very well, Christian Leotta produced a beautiful sound, and that gave already so much to Schubert's music. He created a lyrical and dramatic music world and thanks to his marvelous sonorities he made the audience feel like as his playing was falling from heaven.

Listening to Christian Leotta, I understood the great complexity of Schubert's late works. I was especially impressed by his performance of the Four Impromptus D 899. Christian Leotta was able to highlight their "Biedermeier" style, as well as their deep and lyrical world, succeeding in a task not simple at all.



Christian Leotta performs the complete cycle of Schubert's Piano Sonatas at Kyoto's Alti Hall, Japan, December 2018

Instrumental



Bryce Morrison reviews Christian Leotta's latest Beethoven volume:

'Musicianly to the core, this young Italian pianist quietly but unmistakably commands your attention at every level' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 66**



Jeremy Nicholas listens to the latest tranche of Richter reissues:

'I'd hate you to miss Richter's muscular, life-enhancing performance of Schubert's D major Sonata' ► **REVIEW ON PAGE 69**

Beethoven

'Piano Sonatas, Vol 4'

Piano Sonatas - No 1, Op 2 No 1; No 4, Op 7;

No 5, Op 10 No 1; No 15, 'Pastoral', Op 28;

No 26, 'Les adieux', Op 81a; No 27, Op 90

Christian Leotta *pf*

ATMA Classique © ② ACD2 2489 (136' • DDD)



Italian Beethoven specialist's fourth disc of sonatas

For once the hyperbole rings true. Christian Leotta's fourth volume of Beethoven sonatas is indeed 'a major addition to other sets currently available'. Musicianly to the core, this young Italian pianist quietly but unmistakably commands your attention at every level. His musical focus and concentration are unswerving, nothing is rushed or overly volatile, everything is scrupulously placed yet illuminated with acute detail and vitality. You will rarely encounter performances more meticulously prepared.

An exceptionally measured start to the *Les adieux* Sonata is followed by a robust and eloquent *Allegro* and in the *Adagio* there is a magical awareness of Beethoven's departure from classical precepts into a pioneering world of Romantic evocation. Again, Leotta's way with slow movements is a particular source of wonder, with a near-mystical aura hanging over Op 10 No 1's central *Adagio*; something that takes you far ahead to the transcendental world of the last sonatas. I could imagine a more free-flowing opening *Allegro* to the *Pastoral* Sonata; this is unusually pensive but such is Leotta's musical strength that everything coheres and convinces. In the grand design of Op 7 he achieves an admirable vigour and impulse and, more generally, you note the way codas, whether hushed or virtuoso, are given a special sense of occasion and finality. ATMA Classique's sound captures all of the pianist's quality and Vol 5 will be welcomed with open arms. **Bryce Morrison**

Leotta ha Beethoven nel sangue

MAURIZIO GIANI

Ludwig van Beethoven Piano Sonatas Vol. 5

pianoforte Christian Leotta
ATMA CLASSIQUE (2 CD)



Christian Leotta



Christian Leotta è da molti considerato il maggiore interprete beethoveniano della sua generazione. Appena ventiduenne, nel 2002, eseguì con grande successo a Montréal l'integrale delle 32 *Sonate*, risultando così il più giovane pianista al mondo ad aver presentato in pubblico il formidabile ciclo, dopo le esibizioni di Daniel Barenboim a Tel Aviv negli anni Sessanta. Da allora il pianista catanese ha riproposto ben tredici volte l'intero corpus in Europa e nelle Americhe, e nel 2007 ne ha avviato la registrazione per l'etichetta canadese Atma. L'impresa giunge ora a compimento con il quinto volume, in cui, come nei precedenti, si ha una sapiente miscelazione di capolavori celeberrimi ed opere relativamente meno eseguite: intorno al *Chiaro di luna* e alla *Sonata op. 101* troviamo infatti *Prima e Terza Sonata dell'op. 31*, l'*op. 2 n. 2*, l'*op. 10 n. 2* e la *Sonata op. 54*.

Stilando un primo bilancio complessivo, si può dire che l'ascolto conferma i giudizi lusinghieri espressi dalla stampa internazionale: Christian Leotta è un pianista di prim'ordine,

rigoroso e concentrato, che Beethoven sembra averlo nel sangue, tanta è la sicurezza e la sorprendente maturità con cui lo suona. Al di là di una organizzazione tecnica tanto più ammirevole quanto meno è esibita come fine a sé stessa, i punti di forza delle sue esecuzioni stanno nel saldissimo senso formale che le caratterizza e soprattutto nella coerenza della visione complessiva di ogni singola Sonata. Sono, queste, letture di stampo "classico", in cui si riconosce il discepolo di Karl Ulrich Schnabel (figlio del grande Artur), che però sa avventurarsi non di rado lungo sentieri poco o punto frequentati dai colleghi, scovando tesori nascosti negli anfratti della scrittura beethoveniana. Ora è un lieve respiro nel profilare la nota perno di un tema, ora il rilievo conferito a masse accordali nel registro grave a restituire, senza ostentazione, freschezza e il sapore della novità a pagine gravate da una tradizione esecutiva sgomentante. Agli Adagi più introspettivi Leotta si accosta senza timore, adottando tempi di magnifica ampiezza, e non deludendo mai le aspettative; nel *Chiaro di luna* compie il miracolo di farci riascoltare con vivo interesse, e senza mai forzare la mano, un capolavoro logorato dalla celebrità; e se il finale della sua *Appassionata* non può competere con la versione sconvolgente di Richter, ha quanto meno il merito di ricordarci che Beethoven lo ha indicato Allegro ma non troppo, non Precipitato (per parte mia, preferisco di gran lunga questa interpretazione a quella, osannata ma in fondo così prevedibile, di Lang Lang). Anche nelle ardue ultime cinque Sonate Leotta sa imporsi con letture meditate e partecipi: la *Hammerklavier* regge a mio avviso il confronto con la versione di Pollini, specie nella resa esemplare dello sterminato Adagio e nella tensione mai vacillante della fuga conclusiva, mentre nell'*op. 111* colpiscono l'introduzione al primo movimento, scavata in ogni più riposto dettaglio con un'articolazione inedita dei periodi, e la fissità quasi allucinata della quarta variazione dell'*Arietta*.

In sintesi, dobbiamo a Christian Leotta una delle più significative integrali beethoveniane degli ultimi anni. Ben registrati, e con ottima ambientazione, i cd sono meritevoli di fitti ascolti; anche chi possiede altre più blasonate registrazioni vi troverà molti motivi di soddisfazione.

m-

CD Review

Review on the recording of the 32 Piano Sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven

IL GIORNALE DELLA MUSICA, Italy – June 2014, by Maurizio Giani

Leotta has Beethoven in his blood

Christian Leotta is considered by many as the greatest beethovenian interpreter of his generation. At the early age of 22, in 2002, he performed with enormous success in Montreal the integral of the 32 Piano Sonatas, becoming the youngest pianist in the world to perform in public the formidable cycle since a youthful Daniel Barenboim presented it in the '60 in Tel Aviv.

Since his debut in Montreal, the Catanese pianist presented the entire corpus of the sonatas thirteen times in different venues in Europe and in the Americas.

In 2007 he started to record the sonatas for the Canadian label Atma Classique. This important feat is now completed with the release of the fifth volume, which comprises, as well as the precedent albums, an interesting mix of very famous masterpieces as well as works relatively less performed: along with the "Moonlight" and the Piano Sonata Op. 101, we find in this album also the First and the Third Piano Sonatas of the Op. 31, the Op. 2 No. 2, the Op. 10 No. 2 and the Piano Sonatas Op. 54.

After listening to this recording we can surely confirm the flattering judgments expressed by the international press: Christian Leotta is a first class pianist, rigorous and very focused, who seems to have Beethoven in his blood, such are his self-confidence and the marvelous maturity of his playing.

Besides his technique, so much more admirable because it is always serving the music, the strong points of his performances reside in his extraordinary understanding of the form, and, above all, in his coherent overall vision of each Sonata. These are "classical" interpretations, in which we recognize the disciple of Karl Ulrich Schnabel (son of the great Artur) who, nonetheless, knows how to venture himself on new pathways that have been very little or not at all explored by his colleagues, discovering thus rare treasures in Beethoven's writing.

At times it is a delicate breath to outline the keystone note of a theme, at other it is the significance given to chord masses in the lower register, which are meant to render, never with ostentation, a sense of freshness and of newness to pages on which weight a dismaying performance tradition.

To the most introspective Adagios, Leotta approaches himself without fear, choosing tempos of a magnificent amplitude and never disappointing our expectations. In the "Moonlight" he accomplishes the miracle of letting us hear with a fresh interest –and never forcing the hand– a masterpiece worn out by its own celebrity.

If the final movement of his Appassionata cannot compete with the shocking version of Richter, it has at least the merit of reminding us that Beethoven marked it as an Allegro ma non troppo, not as a Precipitato (personally, I prefer this interpretation by far rather than that, acclaimed but in the end so predictable, of Lang Lang).

Also in the arduous last five Sonatas, Leotta knows how to impose himself with profound and captivating readings:

his Hammerklavier withstands in my opinion the comparison with the version of Pollini, especially in the exemplar rendition of the extensive Adagio and in the never vacillating tension of the closing Fuga, while in the Op. 111 strikes the introduction of the first movement, which reveals all of its hidden details, and the amazing firmness of the fourth variation.

To conclude, we owe Christian Leotta one of the most significant Beethovenian integrals of the last years. Well recorded, and with an excellent sound setting, his CDs are worthwhile to be listened to many times and even those who already own other recordings more emblazoned will certainly find in Leotta's interpretations many reasons of gratification.



Kyoto, Japan, April 2016

American Record Guide

independent critics reviewing classical recordings and music in concert

September/October 2016

BEETHOVEN: *Diabelli Variations*

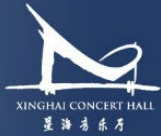
Christian Leotta, p
ATMA 2485—56 minutes

It is a bold move these days to issue a recording of this monumental variations without a coupling—usually another short variation piece by the composer or some of the many variations contributed by other composers. Still, the Beethoven is the main thing, and a performance as good as this can stand on its own feet. Italian pianist Leotta has already given us impressive recordings of the sonatas, and it seems logical that he turn to *Diabelli* next. That his recording is one of the best makes one admire his achievement all the more.

Given the technical complexity, along with the musical and intellectual challenges of the score, we are sometimes led down a path of low inspiration and pure boredom. Such is definitely not the case here, and we are immediately drawn in by the forthright statement of the little waltz tune. Every variation that happens from that point on becomes a logical outgrowth of the tune. While there is plenty of contrast, it all seems to happen as part of a natural flowing growth. With virtuosic challenges piling up, every one of them is dispatched without allowing it to tear away from the fabric of the music's structure.

Leotta is also careful to avoid sounding precious or too wound up in attempting expressive devices that call attention to themselves. Sound engineer Carlos Prieto deserves full praise for giving us a natural perspective of the Steinway D that, while close, does not place you inside the mechanism. Since everything has conspired to place this recording among my favorites, I will list my other favorites: Anderszewski, Brendel, Demidenko, Kovacevich, Pollini, Schnabel, and Serkin. Since no respectable collector can have just one, it is time to make room for this newcomer. Even the creative notes by Robert Rival give us more to think about than usual.

BECKER



星海音乐厅

XINGHAI CONCERT HALL

2014.09 — 2014.12

奈瑞克·哈克纳扎莱恩 Narek Hakhnazaryan

10.17

柴可夫斯基金奖大提琴奈瑞克独奏音乐会



莱因霍尔德·弗莱德里希 R. Friedrich

10.19

小号大师弗莱德里希与管风琴音乐会



雷纳·霍内克 Rainer Honeck

10.25

维也纳爱乐首席雷纳·霍内克与广州交响乐团



克里斯蒂安·莱欧塔 Christian Leotta

11.02

意大利钢琴家克里斯蒂安独奏音乐会



弗拉基米尔·阿什肯纳齐 Vladimir Ashkenazy

11.08

音乐大师阿什肯纳齐与广州交响乐团



朱晓玫 Zhu Xiao-Mei

11.21

朱晓玫演绎《哥德堡变奏曲》·首次中国巡演



么红 Yao Hong

12.05

四季如“红”·花腔女高音么红独唱音乐会



伊沃·波戈莱里奇 Ivo Pogorelich

12.11

神级钢琴大师波戈莱里奇独奏音乐会



水蓝 Lan Shui

12.20

著名华人指挥家水蓝与广州交响乐团



米哈伊尔·普雷特涅夫 Mikhail Vasilievich Pletnev

12.29

指挥大师普雷特涅夫与俄罗斯国家交响乐团



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Christian Leotta's solo debut at Xinghai Concert Hall, Guangzhou (China), November 2014



熱狂！正統派のベートーヴェン

クリスティアン・レオッタ「ベートーヴェン ピアノ・ソナタ全曲演奏会」

スタンディング・オヴェイションに沸く京都府立府民ホール「アルティ」



気さくにサインに応じるレオッタ



モントリオール、バンコク、コモ、アルジェリアなどで「ベートーヴェンピアノ・ソナタ全曲演奏会」を行ってきたイタリアの名匠、クリスティアン・レオッタが京都府立府民ホール「アルティ」で「ベートーヴェンピアノ・ソナタ全曲演奏会」をスタートした。「琳派四百年」の記念のシリーズに位置づけられたこのシリーズ、それぞれマスタークラスを挟んで2015年12月に4回、2016年4月から5月にもまた開催される。

シリーズ2回目となる12月9日、「アルティ」を訪ねた。この日は、「ピアノ・ソナタ第17番（テンペスト）」で開始され、「同第13番」、「同第19番」、そして「同第29番（ハンマークラヴィーア）」へと続く、重量級のプログラム。

レオッタは、街いのない、王道とも言うべき堂々たるベートーヴェン解釈を示した。とりわけ「ハンマークラヴィーア」第1楽章での揺るぎないテクニックを示し、第3楽章の深遠なベートーヴェン晩年の世界、そして第4

楽章の長大な3声のフーガを説得力のある構成感をもって聴かせ、シユナーベル、バックハウス、ケンプといった往年のドイツの、ベートーヴェン弾きの演奏を髣髴とさせ、万雷の拍手とスタンディング・オヴェイションで会場は沸いた。

開演前には「ベートーヴェン 器楽・室内楽の宇宙」を上梓した、本誌「コンサート・レヴュー」などでもお馴染みの中村孝義氏による「ベートーヴェン」の歌中心の音楽から器楽中心の音楽に変えた」などと話した。2016年4〜5月にかけての再来日が待たれる。

開演前、本誌でもお馴染みの中村孝義氏によるレクチャーも。レオッタの次回の来日は4月から5月にかけて。「ピアノ・ソナタ第14番（月光）」「同第23番（熱情）」「同第29番（ハンマークラヴィーア）」「同第31番」は、その際にも演奏される

Concert Review

An extraordinary public success! Playing the authentic spirit of Beethoven's music

ONGAKU NOTOMO, Japan –February 2016, by Manabu Imahashi

The great Italian pianist Christian Leotta started last December to perform in Kyoto the complete cycle of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas, which he had performed already in many cities such as Montreal, Bangkok, Como and Alger.

I had the chance to hear his second recital at Kyoto's Alti Hall, scheduled last December 9th. The concert started with the Piano Sonata No. 17 "The Tempest", followed by the Piano Sonatas Nos. 13, 19 and 29, the "Hammerklavier".

Leotta gave a majestic interpretation of Beethoven, especially of the Piano Sonata "Hammerklavier". In the first movement, he displayed a great technique; in the third one, his playing revealed the abyssal depth of Beethoven's world. The performance of the following fourth movement was equally impressive.

His Beethoven reminded me the playing of great German pianists such as Schnabel, Backhaus and Kempff.

The recital was an extraordinary public success: the audience rewarded Leotta with a prolonged standing ovation.

Prior to the performance, Prof. Nakamura addressed the audience talking about "The universe of Beethoven".

Kyoto is eager to hear Christian Leotta's next concerts, scheduled this spring.



Bangkok Post

2 | MONDAY, JULY 3, 2017 | Bangkok Post

Christian Leotta.



PHOTO COURTESY OF EMBASSY OF ITALY

Making history on the piano

Italian virtuoso pianist Christian Leotta returns to Bangkok to perform an all Beethoven programme with the Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Vanich Potavanich at the Thailand Cultural Centre, Ratchadaphisek Road, on Thursday at 7.30pm.

Presented in the framework of the Italian Festival in Thailand 2017 by the Embassy of Italy, the 37-year-old musician will complete the entire cycle of the 5 Beethoven's Piano Concertos with *Piano Concerts No.1, No.2 and No.4*. Last year he performed *Piano Concerts No.3 and No.5* with the RBSO. This will mark an exceptional and historical first time in Thailand and probably Southeast Asia.

If in the first and in the second Piano Concertos the brio and the youthful fervour prevail, in the fourth Piano Concerto, considered by many as the most sublime example of this form, maestro Leotta will take us to the full

Romanticism thanks to one of the greatest masterpieces of all time, written in the same years of the famous Piano Sonatas *Waldstein* and *Appassionata*.

Leotta has worked with major orchestras, regularly performing in important theatres and concert halls such as the Philharmonie at the Gasteig in Munich, the Konzerthaus of Vienna, the Tonhalle of Zurich, the Sala Verdi and the Auditorium of Milan, the Salle Claude-Champagne of Montreal, and the Great Hall at the Bunka Kaikan Theatre of Tokyo.

He recently completed the fifth and final volume of his recordings of the complete 32 Beethoven Piano Sonatas and his constant international touring as both a recitalist and concerto soloist.

There is no admission fee but registration is required. Visit www.eventbrite.com.

ROYAL BANGKOK SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



RBSO 2017 CONCERT SERIES

JULY

Thursday 6 July 2017, 8 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Small Hall

Italian Festival 2017

Christian Leotta, Piano

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Vanich Potavanich | Soloist : Christian Leotta, piano

Programme : Beethoven

Embassy of Italy and BSOF

จำหน่ายบัตร : ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 26 พฤษภาคม 2017

Saturday 15 July 2017, 8 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Main Hall

การแสดงดนตรีเฉลิมพระเกียรติสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัวมหาวชิราลงกรณ เพื่กรรณของราชวงศ
เมืองไทยกลางดงวันพระบรมมหาราชวัง 28 กรกฎาคม 2560

Celebration Concert on the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King's
65th Birthday Anniversary 28th July 2017

The Royal Celebration Concert

Stefan Vladar plays Schumann

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Charles Olivieri-Munroe | Soloist : Stefan Vladar, piano

Programme : Narongrit Dhambutra, Schumann, Brahms

จำหน่ายบัตร : 500 / 1,000 / 1,500 / 2,000 / 2,500 ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 26 พฤษภาคม 2017

AUGUST

Friday 4 August 2017, 7.30 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Small Hall

RBSO Classical Concert No.4

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Vanich Potavanich | Soloist : Siripong Tiptan, violin & Iris Regev, cello

Programme : Mendelssohn, Elgar, Dvořák, Haydn, Stravinsky

จำหน่ายบัตร : 500 / 800 / 1,000 ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 22 มิถุนายน 2017

Sunday 13 August 2017, 8 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Main Hall

การแสดงดนตรีเฉลิมพระเกียรติสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์

พระบรมราชินีนาถเมืองไทยกลางดงวันพระบรมมหาราชวัง 12 สิงหาคม 2560
Celebration Concert on the Auspicious Occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's
85th Birthday Anniversary 12th August 2017

Thai Classical Music

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Rear Admiral Veeraphan Vawklang | Soloist : to be advised

Programme : to be advised

จำหน่ายบัตร : 300 / 700 / 900 / 1,200 / 1,500 ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 30 พฤษภาคม 2017

Friday 25 August 2017, 8 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Main Hall

การแสดงดนตรีอุทิศรำลึกโศกนาฏกรรมกบฏ และบาทสมเด็จพระปรมินทรมหาภูมิพลอดุลยเดช

A Tribute in Memory of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej

Dorothea Herbert, Soprano

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Damrith Banawitayakit

Vocalist : Dorothea Herbert, soprano & Kittinant Chinsamran, bass-baritone

Programme : Johann Strauss, J Massenet, Puccini, Giuseppe Verdi

จำหน่ายบัตร : Free Entrance | ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 12 กรกฎาคม 2017

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 2 September 2017, 8 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Main Hall

การแสดงดนตรีเฉลิมพระเกียรติสมเด็จพระนางเจ้าสิริกิติ์ พระบรมราชินีนาถ
เมืองไทยกลางดงวันพระบรมมหาราชวัง 12 สิงหาคม 2560

Celebration Concert on the Auspicious Occasion of Her Majesty the Queen's
85th Birthday Anniversary 12th August 2017

Hitomi Niikura plays Elgar Concerto

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Michel Tilkin | Soloist : Hitomi Niikura, cello

Programme : Ravel, Elgar, Franck

จำหน่ายบัตร : 400 / 800 / 1,200 / 1,600 / 2,000 | ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 18 กรกฎาคม 2017

NOVEMBER

Saturday 4 November 2017, 8 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Main Hall

การแสดงดนตรีเฉลิมพระเกียรติสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัวมหาวชิราลงกรณ เพื่กรรณของราชวงศ

A Concert to Celebrate the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King

Music from the Movies

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Vanich Potavanich | Soloist : TBA | Programme : TBA

จำหน่ายบัตร : 500 / 1,000 / 1,500 / 2,000 / 2,500 | ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 20 กันยายน 2017

Tuesday 28 November 2017, 8 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Main Hall

การแสดงดนตรีเฉลิมพระเกียรติสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัวมหาวชิราลงกรณ เพื่กรรณของราชวงศ

A Concert to Celebrate the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King

Boris Belkin, Violin

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Junichi Hirokami | Soloists : Boris Belkin, violin

Programme : Verdi, Sibelius, Tchaikovsky

จำหน่ายบัตร : 500 / 1,000 / 1,500 / 2,000 / 2,500 | ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 6 ตุลาคม 2017

DECEMBER

Friday 15 December 2017, 8 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Main Hall

การแสดงดนตรีเฉลิมพระเกียรติสมเด็จพระเจ้าอยู่หัวมหาวชิราลงกรณ เพื่กรรณของราชวงศ

A Concert to Celebrate the Auspicious Occasion of His Majesty the King

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Charles Olivieri-Munroe | Soloists : Valentina Lisitsa, piano

Programme : Handel, Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky

จำหน่ายบัตร : 400 / 800 / 1,200 / 1,600 / 2,000 | ทั้งหมดแล้วจำหน่ายบัตร : 6 ตุลาคม 2017

Wednesday 20 December 2017, 7.30 PM
Thailand Cultural Centre, Small Hall

RBSO Classical Concert No.5

Royal Bangkok Symphony Orchestra

Conductor : Wim Steinmann | Soloists : Arunkorn Chaisubanankorn, trombone

Programme : Grieg, Larson, Bach, Schubert

Programme is correct at the time of printing but may be subject to change
Revised 22/06/2017



Spettacoli 45

Pianismo da scultore Leotta sorprende nella Sala Greppi



Christian Leotta alla Sala Greppi

Concerti d'Autunno

Il Festival ha inaugurato la trentaseiesima stagione con l'atteso programma beethoveniano

Christian Leotta prosegue le sue fatiche beethoveniane, oramai all'ultimo anno di quattro. Giovedì sera, all'inaugurazione del 36° Festival internazionale dei Concerti d'Autunno, ha sorpreso il pubblico degli appassionati, che ormai ben conoscono il suo spirito analitico nella lunga cavalcata delle 32 sonate beethoveniane, con un'interpretazione decisamente particolare delle quattro Sonate in programma.

Due i brani salienti, la cosiddetta Pastorale, ossia la Sonata op. 28 e in conclusione la Sonata op. 110, una delle più sontuose del cosiddetto (secondo la nota ripartizione di Wilhelm Lenz) «terzo periodo». Anche se non meno interessanti, come lui stesso ha raccontato sulle colon-

ne de L'Eco, sono le altre due sonate in programma, l'op. 54, anomala nei suoi due soli tempi, e l'op. 10 n.2.

Quello di Leotta è un pianismo che scolpisce il suono con una misura geometrica, definisce le forme, seguendo una propensione costruttiva del genio di Beethoven. Anche nelle fluide pagine della Pastorale, e non di meno nelle curve spesso morbide e accoglienti della 110 (molto meno arcigna e ruggente, per capirci, della Sonata op.106, con cui divide la prevalenza di scrittura contrappuntistica).

È un pianismo da scultore, da artigiano raffinato che opera di scalpello e cesello. Certo non mancano gli affondi - ne ha dato prova inequivocabile la gigantesca fuga finale con Arioso della 110 - con suoni vibranti e aggressivi, molto materici. L'idea complessiva è di una musica molto architettonica che alla melodia contrappone la costruzione. Bis ancora beethoveniano.

Bernardino Zappa

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Cultura & Spettacoli

Ascolti digitali, Leotta verso quota un milione

Successo in rete per l'interpretazione delle "Variazioni Diabelli" di Beethoven

Non sono numeri da popstar ma nella classica fanno il botto. Successo digitale per il pianista comasco di fama internazionale Christian Leotta. Che totalizza quasi un milione di acquisti tra streaming e download per la sua incisione delle *Variazioni Diabelli* su etichetta Atma Classique effettuati negli ultimi dodici mesi (più di 700.000 solo su Spotify che è la maggior piattaforma di streaming sul pianeta, mentre le incisioni delle *Diabelli* di Alfred Brendel e di Maurizio Pollini che sono da dieci anni online non arrivano a 200mila).

«Si tratta di uno strepitoso successo di pubblico e commerciale che conferma i lusinghieri elogi espressi dalla critica internazionale su prestigiose riviste quali *American Record Guide*, *Pizzicato* e *Fansfare*, unanimi nell'annoverare le mie *Diabelli* fra le migliori registrazioni di sempre del capolavoro beethoveniano».

«Il mercato discografico tradizionale è fermo, i miei cd vanno bene specie in Giappone, mentre il digitale registra un boom. Anche perché c'è la possibilità di ascoltare e scaricare la singola traccia e non tutto l'album. Sono su oltre 50 portali», continua Leotta.

«Un successo, per le mie *Diabelli* perché non è il solito brano classico "pop" come *Sogno d'amore* di Liszt o



Il pianista

Sono tra i brani più sublimi, complessi e difficili, richiedono una grande cultura musicale



Christian Leotta dopo un concerto della tournée del 2016 in Giappone, in uno scatto della fotografa Sayaka Fuke

Appassionata di Beethoven, ma uno dei brani più sublimi complessi e difficili, richiede una grande cultura musicale».

Christian Leotta il prossimo settembre inaugurerà la prestigiosa stagione della Sala Greppi di Bergamo, esibendosi nell'ambito del *Festival Internazionale i Concerti d'Autunno* e completando il ciclo delle 32 *Sonate*

di Beethoven i giorni 19 settembre e 19 ottobre.

La prestigiosa Alti Hall di Kyoto in Giappone ha intanto già messo in vendita i biglietti per le date del ciclo di sette recital interamente dedicati a Franz Schubert, che Leotta interpreterà nel 2018 i giorni 10, 14 e 18 marzo, 27 novembre, 1, 5 e 9 dicembre. Il programma comprenderà, oltre alle *sonate*,

anche la *Fantasia Wanderer*, i *Moments Musicaux*, gli *Impromptus D 899 e D 935*, i *Drei Klavierstücke D 946*, le *Variazioni D 576* e l'*Allegretto D 915*. Leotta è il primo pianista al mondo che esegue un ciclo di sette recital dedicati a Schubert e uno dei pochi nella storia ad avere in repertorio anche l'integrale delle 32 *sonate* di Beethoven.

Leottas beeindruckende Differenzierung der Diabelli-Variationen

29/06/2016



Ludwig van Beethoven: Diabelli-Variationen op. 120; Christian Leotta, Klavier; 1 CD
Atma Classique ACD2 2485; Aufnahme 07/2014, Veröffentlichung 04/2016 (56'18) – Rezension von Remy Franck



Der italienische Pianist Christian Leotta spielt Ludwig van Beethovens 33 Diabelli-Variationen op. 120 mit dem hohen künstlerischen Anspruch, den das Meisterwerk verdient. Er fügt eine Variation nahtlos an die andere, erzeugt also ein geschlossenes Ganzes, und der Hörer nimmt dennoch jede Zäsur wahr, weil der Pianist jeder Variation ihren ganz eigenen Charakter gibt, so, dass die einzelnen Teile deutlich voneinander abgehoben werden. Und so ernst und dramatisch manches klingt, so hat das Verspielte genauso seinen Platz wie der romantische Atem und das Gefühlsvolle. Neben brilliantem, kraftvollem und sehr virtuosem Spiel gibt es bei sparsamem Pedalgebrauch und mittig angesiedelten Tempi für Leotta viele Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten, um Kontraste und Nuancen jeglicher Art herauszuarbeiten. So scharf er einzelne Variationen herausmeißeln kann, so berückend ist die Kantabilität in anderen Stücken. Seine Interpretation muss daher unbedingt zu den sehr guten gerechnet werden, die es auf Tonträgern gibt. Leotta hat Beethovens Absichten gut verstanden und er kann sie gut mitteilen.

Christian Leotta's account of Beethoven's Diabelli Variations has to be counted among the best performances available on disc.

CD Review

Review on “Diabelli Variations”

PIZZICATO, Luxembourg – June 2016, by Remy Frank (5*****)

Leotta’s impressive differentiation of the Diabelli Variations

Italian pianist Christian Leotta plays Beethoven’s 33 Diabelli Variations Op. 120 with the high artistic standards this masterpiece deserves.

He seamlessly connects each variation to the next, thus producing a coherent whole and yet the listener still perceives every break because the pianist brings forth each variation’s own character, so that the individual parts are clearly distinguished from each other.

While there are variations that sound serious and dramatic, in others prevail the joyfulness; the romantic breath and profound feelings, found their place too.

In addition to a brilliant, powerful and very virtuoso performance, thanks to his careful use of the pedal and well balanced tempo choices, Mr. Leotta generates a plethora of creative possibilities that bring about contrasts and nuances of all kinds.

Many variations sound sharply chiseled, while his cantabile is quite enchanting in others.

Christian Leotta’s account of Beethoven’s Diabelli Variations is to be counted among the best performances available on disc.

Mr. Leotta has deeply understood Beethoven’s intentions and communicates them very well.

CutCommon

THE NEW GENERATION OF CLASSICAL MUSIC

Live Review: Christian Leotta Plays Beethoven

June 2, 2015 Reviews



BY STEPHANIE ESLAKE

Christian Leotta Plays Beethoven Federation Concert Hall, 26 May 2015

There's a reason Christian Leotta is known as the King of Beethoven. The Italian pianist performed a program of all-Beethoven sonatas in Hobart's Federation Concert Hall and the result was as close to perfection as I feel comfortable admitting.

Before the concert, an unusual calm seemed to come over the audience. No nervous coughs, not much chitchat. Perhaps it was the absence of an intimidatingly sized orchestra warming up instruments. Regardless, when Christian stepped out on stage my ears were relaxed and ready to receive whatever music he had to give. With a delightfully friendly grin, he sat down to commence the concert with Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 10, Op. 14, No. 2.

The work opened more slowly than I had expected, and even through brighter passages the sound was quite sustained. He performed tension and release with meaning and deliberacy. The following Andante was almost exaggerated and comical in its pomposity, but with a brilliantly smooth contrast in the middle. It sounded like Christian was having fun – he certainly wasn't afraid to pound the notes when the moments struck – and he seemed to take the audience along for the ride.

The Piano Sonata No. 21, Op. 53, 'Waldstein' had an appropriate feel of immediacy. It wasn't rushed, but its catchy melody had a sense of urgency – though it was a little bottom heavy. At the end of the first movement there was chatter among the audience. Well, the urge to clap had to be replaced by something, didn't it? An entirely different mood washed over the ears through the following movements, but a satisfying reappearance of Beethoven's lovable theme was followed by another ripping big finish.

After the interval, the Piano Sonata No. 30, Op. 109 started at a tempo which seemed to match the very textbook definition of Beethoven's instruction: 'Vivace, ma non troppo'. The following Adagio espressivo was a nice retreat, and Christian demonstrated his outstanding dedication of priority between left and right hands. The concert ended with Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 31, Op. 110, and a feeling of utter satisfaction to have heard a magnificent set of works, magnificently performed. A complete success.

芸能

6月2日 朝日(夕刊)

音楽評

クリスチャン・レオッタ

山脈を一望したような満足感

シチリア生まれのピアニスト、クリスチャン・レオッタが、京都でベートーベンのピアノソナタ32曲の全曲演奏に挑み、完結した。あまり知られていないピアニストを招いて9回の演奏会を企画し、しかもそれがほぼ満席になるというのは希有の事態。第16番、8番「悲愴」、24番、32番をとりあげた最終回の演奏を聴いた(5月15日、京都府立府民ホール アルティ)。

レオッタは30代後半だが、こういったベートーベンのソナタ全曲演奏を、イタリアなどですでに19回も行ってきたらしい。そう聞くと、派手な話題作りに長けた人なのか、と思ってしまうが、実際には全く違う。舞台ではむしろシャイで、淡々とピアノと向き合う。ベートーベンという神殿に、くる日もくる日も祈りを捧げる修行僧のように見える。いや、そんな悲壮感はなく、もっと恬淡とした堂守



アルティ提供

と言ったほうが良いか。

演奏は最初は少しつかみ難いが、彼の焦点が、ベートーベンのソナタ全曲にあることが徐々にわかってくる。この大きな山脈の全体を一望のもとに収めたい、というのがレオッタの意思なのだろう。だから、規模の小さい曲(この日の演目で言えば第24番など)では、隙もほころびもある。それが第32番のような大曲になると、曲が進むにつ

れて精彩を帯びてくる。息の長い変奏曲である第2楽章。賑やかな第3変奏が終わって、静かにくもったような響きを聴かせる第4変奏あたりから、どんどん音楽に引き込まれ、ほとんど宗教的な恍惚のようなものが降りてきた。高揚や興奮とは別の満たされ方が音楽にはあるのだ、ということに改めて教えてもらった演奏会だった。

(伊東信宏・音楽評論家)

Concert Review

Joyfulness, watching the immense mountain of Beethoven

THE ASAHI SHIMBUN (National Edition), Japan — May 30th 2016, by Nobuhiro Ito

Italian pianist Christian Leotta, born in Sicily, has concluded his nine recital series at Kyoto's Alti Hall performing the complete cycle of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas.

The Alti Hall organized this rare event inviting only one pianist who is not very well known in Japan yet; in spite of it, recitals were all sold out or quasi, an occurrence that is really exceptional in Japan.

Last May 15th, I went to hear the last concert of the series, listening to the Piano Sonatas No. 16, No. 8, No. 24 and No. 32.

Mr. Leotta, still in his thirties, has already performed nineteen times throughout the world the cycle of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas. Avoiding any histrionic attitude while on stage, he approaches the piano with great simplicity. His playing is so profound as to give us the impression of a monk praying in the temple of Beethoven's music day by day. But no, he isn't just that, he is the Guardian of Beethoven's music: indifferent to gain, he devoted his entire self with no restraint to the great composer.

It is not easy to get close to Mr. Leotta's touch at first, but listening to his playing we gradually understand how deeply he knows the entire corpus of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas. I truly believe that he sees and knows minutely the whole of this immense mountain.

His performance of a small scale Piano Sonata such as the No. 24 seemed to be in a careful, cautious manner whereas his playing became brilliant in one of the most demanding and important Piano Sonata such as the No. 32. Following the third powerful variation of its second movement, the audience was increasingly caught into quiet and introspective sounds and the entire hall seemed wrapped in such an atmosphere as if we were in a church: Christian Leotta has led the audience to a state of ecstasy.

It has been the first time that a performance filled up my soul in such a way.

GRAMOPHONE

gramophone.co.uk

Beethoven

'Piano Sonatas, Vol 5'

Piano Sonatas - No 2, Op 2 No 2; No 6, Op 10 No 2; No 14, 'Moonlight', Op 27 No 2; No 16, Op 31 No 1; No 18, Op 31 No 3; No 22, Op 54; No 28, Op 101

Christian Leotta *pf*

ATMA Classique © ② ACD2 2490 (152' • DDD)



Volume 5 of five two-CD sets completes Christian Leotta's cycle of Beethoven's

32 piano sonatas. He will shortly have played the sonatas 15 times in public; and even in a fiercely competitive marketplace his devotion to his task shines with an exceptional musicianship.

Generally speaking, he reminds us that in Italy, the land of operatic glory, pianists tend towards an aristocratic approach, one which scorns undue idiosyncrasy or heavily personalised gestures. And so it is that in the opening movement of the *Moonlight* Sonata, his flowing *Adagio* allows for a subtle coloration and inflection as natural as it is pensive and subdued. Indeed, such is the fine balance between sense and sensibility that you may well find yourself listening afresh to this familiar masterpiece. He probes to the very heart of the *Largo* from Op 2 No 2 and his gentle rather than aggressive sparkle in the following *Scherzo* ensures that nothing is pushed beyond its natural limit.

He can also break out into the light, showing a robust humour in the finale of Op 10 No 2, as also in the finale of Op 31 No 3, where his brio combines with a scrupulous care for the score. In Op 54, where a touch of whimsy comes between the two mountain peaks of the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* Sonatas, Leotta takes a firm if arguably severe hand to Beethoven's playfulness. And here I missed something of Kempff's mercurial genius (and never more so than in his live Queen Elizabeth Hall recital – BBC Legends, 2/01). Again, you may feel that everything is kept on too tight a rein in Op 101, though the third-movement *Adagio* is finely poised and speculative.

Overall, Paul Lewis's is the more wide-ranging and comprehensive cycle but there is so much to admire here in these eminently serious performances, particularly when they are so well if closely recorded. **Bryce Morrison**



CHRISTIAN LEOTTA

Pianiste

**Chapelle historique
Bon-Pasteur de Québec**

DU 1^{er} FÉVRIER AU 10 MARS 2005

2 \$

Sergei KHACHATRYAN, violoniste
Lusine KHATHCATRYAN
Grand Théâtre de Québec
Le lundi 25 octobre 2004

NOCHE FLAMENCA
Ensemble de flamenco
Grand Théâtre de Québec
Le lundi 22 novembre 2004

L'ORCHESTRE BAROQUE DE VENISE
Direction: **Andrea Marcon**
Solistes: **Katya et Marielle LABÈQUE**, pianistes
Grand Théâtre de Québec
Le dimanche 20 février 2005

Martha ARGERICH, pianiste
Nelson FREIRE, pianiste
Grand Théâtre de Québec
Le samedi 26 mars 2005

LANG LANG, pianiste
Grand Théâtre de Québec
Le mardi 5 avril 2005

Felicity LOTT, soprano
Angelika KIRCHLAGER, mezzo-soprano
Graham JOHNSON, pianiste
Grand Théâtre de Québec
Le lundi 18 avril 2005

PRINTEMPS BEETHOVEN
en collaboration avec L'Orchestre symphonique de Québec
et l'Institut italien de la culture
**Intégrale des 32 sonates pour piano
de Ludwig van Beethoven**

Christian Leotta, pianiste

À la Chapelle historique Bon-Pasteur de Québec

Récital n° 1	Le mardi 1^{er} février 2005, 20 h
Récital n° 2	Le dimanche 6 février , 16 h
Récital n° 3	Le dimanche 13 février , 16 h
Récital n° 4	Le jeudi 17 février , 20 h
Récital n° 5	Le mardi 22 février , 20 h
Récital n° 6	Le dimanche 27 février , 16 h
Récital n° 7	Le dimanche 6 mars , 16 h
Récital n° 8	Le jeudi 10 mars , 20 h

Amadeus

BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonatas Volume 3

Christian Leotta

Atma Classique / 2 cd / ACD2

2488 / Distr.: Codaex Italia / 2010 /

DDD / Libretto: buono /Italiano

Artistico: ★★★★★

Tecnico: ★★★★★

Prosegue con continuità l'incisione dell'intero corpus delle Sonate per pianoforte di Ludwig van Beethoven intrapresa da Cristian Leotta, giunta ora al terzo volume. Altri due cd con altre nove sonate: *n. 17 op. 31 n. 2 "La tempesta", n. 9 op. 14 n.1, n. 13 op. 27 n. 1, n. 20 op. 49 n.2, n. 25 op. 79, n. 3 op. 2 n. 3, n. 10 op. 14 n. 2, n. 19 op. 49 n. 1 e n. 31 op. 110.*

Un lavoro, quello del giovane pianista italiano, che entra a tutto diritto nella discografia dedicata al maestro di Bonn, appropriandosi di un suo posto ben definito. Infatti Leotta, oltre a sfoderare un pianismo sicuro, composto e intelligente



lascia altresì intendere di aver compreso a fondo la lezione di Beethoven.

Il tutto con personalismi molto efficaci e coerenti nel fraseggio, nella dinamica e nella sublimazione espressiva. Per questo appare oltremodo giustificata l'onorificenza a lui attribuita nel 2004 dall'allora presidente della Repubblica italiana Carlo Azeglio Ciampi per l'esecuzione integrale del ciclo realizzato in Italia, in Europa e nelle Americhe. Quella di Leotta è un'incisione "in progress" frutto di una maturazione interpretativa in corso realizzata sul campo, in cui confluiscono le integrali beethoveniane già presentate in sede di concerto: la prima risale al 2002 a Montréal, allorché, in qualità di più giovane pianista al mondo dai tempi di Daniel Barenboim, affrontò in pubblico (in meno di un mese) l'eccezionale impresa musicale. Fu un trionfo che si è ripetuto nel corso di altre prestigiose manifestazioni concertistiche.

ANTONIO BRENA

CD Review

Review on “Volume III” Beethoven’s 32 Piano Sonatas Series

AMADEUS, Italy – February 2012, by Antonio Brena (Artistic: 5*****/Sound: 5*****)

The recording by Christian Leotta of the complete corpus of Beethoven’s 32 Piano Sonatas is proceeding with no interruption, reaching now its third volume. Two more CDs were released, featuring nine additional Piano Sonatas: the No. 17 Op. 31 No. 2 “The Tempest”, the No. 9 Op 14 No. 1, the No. 13 Op 27 No. 1, the No. 20 Op. 49 No. 2, the No. 25 Op 79, the No. 3 Op. 2 No. 3, the No. 10 Op 14 No. 2, the No. 19 Op. 49 No. 1, and the No. 31 Op 110.

It is a great work that of the young Italian pianist, who rightfully comes to integrate the discography dedicated to the master from Bonn, conquering for himself a well defined position. In fact, Leotta, beyond of showing a sovereign, poised and intelligent pianism, is letting the listener understand how deeply he penetrated into the world of Beethoven. He achieves this by using highly personal and convincing phrasing, dynamics and expressive sublimation. As a result of all the above, it appears fully justified the medal bestowed on him in 2004, by the then President of the Italian Republic Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, for his performances of the complete cycle in Italy, in Europe and the Americas

A “work in progress”, Leotta’s recordings of the 32 Piano Sonatas are revealing an increasingly more mature interpretation, which is the result of the experience he gained in concert halls performing the entire cycle many times. The first performance of the 32 Piano Sonatas goes back to 2002 and took place in Montreal; Leotta became then the youngest pianist in the world, since Daniel Barenboim’s, to perform in public, in less than one month, this exceptional musical undertaking. It was a triumph which was replicated since in many other prestigious concert halls around the world.



Classic Note - クラシックノート -

関西音楽新聞



音楽評

クリスチャン・レオッタ

ベートーヴェン

ピアノ・ソナタ全曲演奏会

全9回にわたる全曲演奏会の前半4回のうち、2回目と4回目を聴く。第17番「テンペスト」で始まる2回目だけが夜の

部で、内容的にも充実したプログラムだった。豪快さのなかに波乱を秘めた曲想はドラマティックで腕の見せどころも多い

右手の音色が美しい



提供：京都府立府民ホール「アルティ」

が、レオッタのピアノは若さにあふれて、ベートーヴェンもこの曲を書いた頃はまだ若かったのだと気づかせる。しかし圧巻は第29番「ハンマークラヴィーア」だった。メロディーの歌わせ方が巧みで、右手の音色が美しい。さらに終楽章のフーガのすばらしさにはレオッタのピアノリズムの説得力のすべてがあった。

前半のプログラムを締める第31番もすばらしい出来栄だった。技巧的には50才を越えたピアノの名手が到達しうる最高の境地だろうが、旋律の自然な動きを単純なトリルなどの装飾で際立たせ、重層的な意味をフリーにして読み込むなど、やはりベートーヴェンならではのと思わせる。レオ

ッタのピアノがまたそれにふさわしい自然体のタッチで聴かせるのだが、彼はまだ30代半ばだという。この日、最初に弾いた第6番の気取りのない歌心の方が現在のレオッタの可能性を捉えているかもしれないのだ。

レオッタはイタリア人だが、アルテュール・シュナーベルを理想の「ベートーヴェン弾き」と考える。世界初のベートーヴェン・ピアノ・ソナタ全曲演奏と全曲録音で一世を風靡した名手である。4月29日から始まる後半5回の連続演奏会でも必ずやレオッタの真骨頂が聴けるものと期待される。(12月9、20日、京都府立府民ホール「アルティ」)

(嶋原真一)

Concert Review

Christian Leotta performs the Beethoven Piano Sonatas cycle

CLASSIC NOTES, Japan —January 2016, by Shigihara Shinichi

Last December I had the chance to hear Christian Leotta play twice. It was at Kyoto's Alti Hall on the occasion of his second and fourth recitals of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas complete cycle, a program scheduled to conclude next April and May with a series of five more concerts.

The second recital started with the Piano Sonata "The Tempest", and ended with the Piano Sonata "Hammerklavier".

It was a remarkable program, performed in a sold out hall, that conveyed deep feelings and displayed a great technique, as well as youthful enthusiasm that overflowed particularly in the Piano Sonatas Nos. 13 and 17, composed when Beethoven himself was young.

The Piano Sonata No. 29 "Hammerklavier" concluded the concert and it reached the climax of the recital. What a beautiful sound we had the chance to hear! In the slow movement Mr. Leotta's right hand produced a magnificent cantabile melody. The Piano Sonata ended with a Fugue which I have no words to describe! The only one thing I can say, is that this execution was extraordinary and absolutely fantastic. Christian Leotta playing Beethoven is a true force of nature.

The IV recital of the cycle was the last one performed last December and Leotta rounded it off with a moving performance of the Piano Sonata No. 31, Op. 110. Showing an artistic stature and maturity characteristic rather for a pianist in his fifties, Mr. Leotta conveyed to us the feeling that everything was easy and natural to him. Owing to his remarkable technique, trills and melodies were flowing to our delight. He also gave an outstanding performance of the complex Fugue of this Sonata, making us love Beethoven's music even more.

Leotta displayed his unique abilities and his potential also in the Piano Sonata No. 6, which opened the recital: in all instances his touch was singing with simplicity and a great cantabile.

Leotta reveres Artur Schnabel, considering him the best and ideal interpreter of Beethoven. He was the first pianist ever to record the complete Beethoven's Piano Sonatas.

Next April 29th Christian Leotta will open the second part of his Piano Sonatas cycle. We are eager to hear him again, confident that he will record another great success in Kyoto.

279

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BEETHOVEN *Variazioni su un tema di Diabelli op. 120* pianoforte **Christian Leotta**
ATMA CLASSIQUE ACD2 2485
DDD 56:18



Quando un interprete ha già felicemente effettuato l'incisione delle trentadue sonate di Beethoven, beh, non è obbligatorio aspettarsi che faccia anche il resto della produzione del grande compositore di Bonn... Ma se magari, come in questo caso, ci arriva come graditissimo completamento nientemeno che la più monumentale opera pianistica del suddetto, ossia le *Variazioni su un valzer di Diabelli*, non possiamo che ringraziare. Tanto più che ci giungono da un pianista che ha dimostrato *ad abundantiam* di trovarsi a suo agio nel linguaggio beethoveniano. Dio sa, e i pianisti lo sanno anch'essi senza essere Dio, quali difficoltà, tecniche e interpretative, occorrono per dare un'immagine convincente di questo capolavoro, che ne ha viste di tutti i colori nella sua storia: non è questa la sede per enumerare le più diverse visioni che anche la sola discografia ha dimostrato, dalla calma e matura saggezza di un Arrau, alla sacralità oggettiva di un Backhaus, alla coerenza strutturale di uno Schnabel, alla rapinosa estroversione di un Serkin, all'esperienza mistica di una Yudina, all'intellettualismo di un Pollini, al manierismo edonistico estetizzante di un Anderszewski, fino alla concezione umanistica di un Brendel, che vede nelle *Diabelli* un « *Kompendium musikalischer Komik* » in cui il « comico » va inteso naturalmente in senso teatrale (il *teatro delle marionette* di von Kleist?), come metamorfico divenire di momenti psicologici dell'uomo, come rappresentazione parodiata di aspetti di varia

umanità. Non quindi mistero, sublimazioni oniriche, incantamenti rarefatti. Il genio di Beethoven estrae valorizzandoli, costruendovi sopra questa o quella variazione, tutti i minimi dettagli del tema, in genere così bistrattato per la sua banalità, ma in realtà così ricco di spunti musicali. Evitando il pericolo del frammentario, e creando invece due forze uguali e contrarie, che conferiscono – o dovrebbero conferire – unità e tensione all'esecuzione: una forza coesiva data dalla forma, una forza centrifuga data dalla differenziazione psicologica e agogica. Ma è proprio il dominio della componente strutturale nel suo divenire che rende efficace la narrazione psicologica, collegando o addirittura facendo scaturire una variazione dalla precedente.

Dopo un'esposizione del tema non veloce, ma leggera e danzante, malgrado la ricca accentuazione originale che tenderebbe a creare inattesi contrasti, la visione qui dimostrata da Christian Leotta i contrasti li crea seguendo fedelmente la linea beethoveniana, opponendosi a decise tentazioni virtuosistiche e valorizzando invece la caratterizzazione di quelle variazioni dove precise indicazioni beethoveniane (*una corda*, *dolce*, *teneramente*) spingono verso un'espressività lirica e concentrata. La prima variazione è veramente « maestoso », le successive sono un crescendo di movimento e di tensione ben controllato: il lirismo, la « dolcezza » si accompagnano a una interiorità meditativa che trova il suo culmine nella ventesima variazione, eseguita lentissima (sarebbe solo un « andante ») e pianissimo (sarebbe solo un « piano »). Nonostante l'impostazione seria, Leotta riesce comunque a realizzare non solo i dovuti contrasti di dinamica e di movimento, ma anche quelli di carattere, specialmente alla fine, dove la struttura serrata della fuga si scioglie in una celeste rievocazione neoclassica.

Riccardo Risaliti

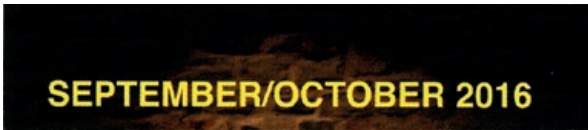
CD Review

Review on “Diabelli Variations”

MUSICA – September 2016, by Riccardo Risaliti , 4**** (Excellent)

When an interpreter has already successfully completed the recording of the 32 Piano Sonatas by Beethoven, well, it is not obligatory to expect that he will record also the remaining works by the great composer from Bonn... But if, as in this case, we receive as a very welcome completion nothing less than the most monumental of the piano works by Beethoven, the “Diabelli Variations”, we can only say: Thank you! Particularly because it arrives from a pianist who has widely demonstrated to feel comfortable with the Beethovenian language. God knows, and pianists know too without them being God, how many challenges of a technical and interpretative nature must be solved in order to give a convincing interpretation of this masterpiece, which had seen so many versions in its history. This is not the right place to mention the most diverse versions which the discography can show: from the calm and mature wisdom of Arrau, to the objective sacredness of Backhaus, to the structural coherence of Schnabel, to the sparkling extroversion of Serkin, to the mystic experience of a Yudina, to the intellectualism of Pollini, up to the aesthetic mannerism of Anderszewski, until the humanistic conception of Brendel, who sees in the Diabelli a “Kompendium musikalischer Komik”, in which the “comic” must obviously be intended as theatrical (the puppet theatre of von Kleist?), as a metamorphic becoming of different psychological moments in a man’s life, as a parodied representation of a wide range of facets of humanity. Therefore, no mystery, dreamlike sublimations, rarefied spells. Beethoven’s genius extracts, enhancing and building them up in this or in that variation, all the smallest details of the theme, commonly so badly treated because of its banality, but on the contrary so rich of musical cues. The composer avoids the danger of becoming fragmentary and creates instead two identical and opposite forces, which confer – or they should do so – unity and tension to the performance: a cohesive force that originates in the form, and a centrifuge force that derives from the psychological and agogic differentiation. But it is the command of the structure in its progression which renders effective the psychological narration, connecting each variation to the one that precedes and even originates it.

After an exposition of the theme, played not fast but lightly and with a dancing character, in spite of the rich original accentuation which would tend to create unexpected contrasts, Christian Leotta’s interpretation does create contrasts by accurately following Beethoven’s prescriptions, opposing his playing to virtuosic temptations, giving on the contrary value to those variations where Beethoven, with precise indications (*una corda*, *dolce*, *teneramente*), prescribes a lyric and deep expressivity. His performance of the first variation is a real “*maestoso*” and the following ones are a crescendo of a very well controlled motion and tension: the lyricism and the “*dolcezza*” are accompanied by a meditative interiority which founds its climax in the twentieth variation, played very slowly (it should be an “*andante*”), and *pianissimo* (it should be *piano*). Although his approach is mainly serious, Leotta manages to successfully create not only the due contrasts of dynamic and motion, but also those of character, especially at the end of the piece, where the severe structure of the fugue dissolves into a celestial neoclassic evocation.



Review By **Dave Saemann**

BEETHOVEN *Diabelli Variations* • Christian Leotta (pn) • ATMA 2 2485 (56:18)

Having recorded Beethoven's complete piano sonatas, Christian Leotta now turns his attention to the *Diabelli Variations*. Leotta is a thoughtful and elegant pianist, with a notably warm sound. He achieves a balance in the voicing of his tone that is particularly impressive. I would recommend his 2014



BEETHOVEN: Diabelli Variations
Audio CD
ATMA
Buy now from Amazon.com

YouTube concert videos of Beethoven's 10th, 23rd, and 30th Sonatas, along with the first two movements of number three. It is particularly delightful to see the naturalness of Leotta's rapport with the keyboard: There's nothing showy and there are no histrionics. Leotta's main quality as a Beethoven interpreter is patience. He lets events happen within a natural flow. In his performance of the *Diabelli Variations*, he establishes a continuum from the start in which the incidents occur. There is an underlying pulse uniting the entire cycle. No matter the variety of the variations, one always is aware of a personality that is Beethoven's. One of the keys to the set for me is the 22nd Variation, where Beethoven quotes the beginning of Leporello's opening aria from *Don Giovanni*: "Slaving night and day/for one whom nothing pleases." I believe Beethoven has placed this smack in the middle of the work to define his relationship to his muse. Beethoven is a slave to his inspiration, and it is not an easy burden. Leotta gives us a *Diabelli Variations* that, of all Beethoven's late works, shows us what the composer was like as a person. There is a verisimilitude to Leotta's *Diabellis*, creating a unity amidst the nobility, pranksterishness, obstreperousness, passion, and profundity of the whole work.

As a performer, Leotta has to make you believe throughout the *Diabellis* that the individual who created the Ninth Symphony and the *Missa Solemnis* also composed the late bagatelles and the folk-song settings. He must explain why Beethoven would be drawn to the tavern music of Diabelli's waltz and find in it a vehicle perhaps for self-portraiture. It goes without saying that this task requires a re-creative artist of the utmost resourcefulness. Leotta meets this challenge. Beethoven is a child of the Enlightenment; rather than compose a work to the glory of God, as Bach and Haydn would, he finds nothing astonishing in creating a work to his

own glory, warts and all. It is not coincidental that Richard Strauss wrote his own self-portrait, *Ein Heldenleben*, to give orchestras an alternative to playing the "Eroica." Leotta reveals Beethoven's intent in the first variation, where a march announces the mock heroic epic that is to follow, as if the composer had read Alexander Pope. Three is a lullaby. Five has little sham fanfares, as if announcing a disreputable noble's arrival. Leotta makes nine a sinister parody of a dance. Thirteen is a procession that keeps on being interrupted. A mock announcement of great importance occurs in 15. At Leotta's slow tempo, 20 possesses a cosmic emptiness. Beethoven achieves a momentary serenity in the guise of Bach in 24. Leotta plays 26 with a serendipitous elegance. Thirty-one has an unearthly sorrow, as at Christ's crucifixion. Thirty-two begins with an imitation of a Handel concerto grosso, becoming a vehicle of transfiguration. In the final variation, Diabelli's tavern waltz has become a halting minuet, this dance of the nobility portraying Beethoven's now refined, if still amused, sensibility.

The CD's sound engineering is very good, if a little brittle in *fortes*. Edmund Battersby made a quite special recording of the *Diabellis*, performing it first on fortepiano and then on a Steinway. It is fascinating to hear how the same performer achieves quite different interpretations on the two instruments. There also are fine recordings of the *Diabellis* by Vladimir Ashkenazy and Bernard Roberts. Alfred Brendel's live 2001 performance is not as sharply etched technically as these, but is full of great insight. Christian Leotta's rendition can stand beside any of these. His Beethoven is a person both absorbed by mundane existence and remote from the average individual. The Beethoven of Leotta's *Diabellis* remains a source of endless fascination. **Dave Saemann**

theWholeNote

Keyed In - June 2016

Alex Baran, Toronto, 30 May 2016



With all 32 Beethoven sonatas in his discography, **Christian Leotta** has now added **Beethoven – Diabelli Variations (ATMA ACD2 2485)** to his growing list of recordings.

The *Diabelli Variations* have a history of divided critical opinion. At worst, Anton Diabelli's original theme is considered a trite offering containing very little that any composer can use for a credible variation. That Beethoven used the material to write an entire set of 33 variations, is then something of a miracle that speaks directly to the composer's inventive gift. Regardless of the theme's actual merits, or lack of them, a performer needs to understand what Beethoven is actually doing in each variation in order to perform them intelligently.

This is where Leotta proves his standing as a highly respected Beethoven interpreter. He understands that Beethoven uses as little as a single interval and often barely more than that, a pick-up note, an ornament or a rhythmic pattern, to construct his variations. He remains highly focused on this, and in doing so holds the set of variations together despite its diverse moments of comedy, tumult, melancholy and contemplation.

Leotta has discerned Beethoven's deepest imprint and conveys it in each of these utterances. What he makes clear by the end of it all is that Beethoven's creative genius is for him, supreme.



Ludwig van Beethoven: Piano Sonatas Vol. 5 (Nrn. 2 op. 2/2, 6 op. 10/2, 14 op. 27/2, 16 op. 31/1, 18 op. 31/3, 22 op. 54, 28 op. 101; Christian Leotta, piano; 2 CDs Atma Classique 2490; 2012 (152') – Rezension von Remy Franck



Mit der fünften und letzten Folge seiner Beethoven-Einspielungen bestätigt der sizilianische Pianist Christian Leotta den guten Eindruck, den seine Gesamtaufnahme bisher machte. Was in Leottas Spiel imponiert, ist die absolute technische Sicherheit und Souveränität der Gestaltung. Der Pianist hat dieses Opus Magnum derart sein eigen gemacht, die Sonaten nicht nur intellektuell, sondern auch instinktmäßig erfasst, dass alles richtig klingt, obgleich die Interpretationen durchaus persönlich wirken.

Das Klavier ist sonor, der Anschlag ist immer schön und warm, der Tempofluss vorbildlich, auch in langsamen Sätzen, die durchaus verinnerlicht klingen und entsprechend bewegend auf den Hörer einwirken.

Ein weiteres wichtiges Merkmal ist die Nähe der frühen Sonaten zu den späten Werken. Das ist das Resultat eines perfekt abgewogenen Spiels, einer immer spontan wirkenden Inspiriertheit mit einer glücklichen Verbindung von Energie und Sensibilität. Man missverstehe mich nicht: Leotta mag auf Extreme verzichten, keine überdehnten langsamen Tempi wählen und keine tobende Wildheit anstreben, aber in der Bandbreite dessen, was er formuliert, manifestiert sich eine Tiefe und eine Genauigkeit der Einfühlung sowie ein Reichtum agogischer, dynamischer und farblicher Zwischenwerte, die seine Interpretationen sehr persönlich werden lassen.

Dass dieses wunderbare Spiel dann auch noch in einem vorbildlich transparenten und natürlichen Klangbild zum Hörer gebracht wird, ist ein weiteres Plus der Atma-Aufnahmen.

Christian Leotta concludes his Beethoven cycle with, once more, very personal, highly inspired and overall sovereign performances. With out any doubt he is one of the major Beethoven soloists of our time.

CD Review

Review on "Volume V" of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas Series

PIZZICATO, Luxembourg – February 2014, by Remy Frank (5*****)

A perfect understanding with intellect and instinct

With the fifth and final volume of his recordings of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas, the Sicilian pianist Christian Leotta confirms the excellent impression which his cycle has already made so far.

What is really impressive in Leotta's playing, is the absolute technique's command and the sovereignty of the form. The pianist made this Opus Magnum so well his own, understanding it not only with his intellect but also with his instinct, that everything sounds perfectly, although his interpretations seem to be truly personal.

The piano is sonorous, the touch is always beautiful and warm, the tempo's flow exemplary, even in the slow movements, which sound deeply introspective moving the listener.

Another important feature of this recording is the closeness of the early sonatas to the late works. This is the result of a perfectly harmonious interpretation and of an always spontaneous inspiration, combined with a fortunate synthesis between power and sensibility. Please do not misunderstand me: Leotta may avoid extremes, he may not choose overstretched slow tempos or seek raging wildness in the fast ones, but in the spectrum of his playing we perfectly hear a deep and precise feeling, as well as a wealth of agogics and a search of colorful halftones, that render his interpretations very personal.

The fact that this wonderful pianism is transmitted to listeners through to an exemplary sound, remarkable for its transparency and its naturalness, is another plus of this Atma-recording.

Christian Leotta concludes his Beethoven cycle with, once more, very personal, highly inspired and overall sovereign performances. Without any doubt he is one of the major Beethoven soloists of our time.

RONDO

Das
Klassik
& Jazz
Magazin
6/2014

KLASSIK

Beethoven Revisited

Von MATTHIAS KORNE MANN



Bei den ersten Folgen seines vielleicht etwas früh begonnenen Zyklus war ich wohl allzu streng. Aber in der letzten Lieferung erfüllt **Christian Leotta** alle in ihn gesetzten Hoffnungen, ja mehr als das. Man findet schlichtweg keinen leeren, unbedacht formulierten Takt, so anfechtbar und betulich-langsam vieles auch gerät. Mit welchem klanglichen und agogischen Feinsinn lässt er „die Schöne und das Biest“ im op. 54-Kopfsatz aufeinandertreffen, wie einfühlsam und schlicht ist die versöhnende Coda! Und hat man je diesen kleinen Zwist zwischen hymnischem Des-Dur-Choral und markant abschweifender Unterstimme im kleinen Allegretto des op. 10/2 gehört? In seiner Not, den humorig-polternden Beethoven nicht recht zu mögen, verwandelt er das lustig zulangende op. 31/1-Allegro in eine ironisch steife Maschinenkomödie, die von notorischer Desynchronisation handelt und in deren Adagio-Akt sich Drahtpuppen ungelenk in Grazioso-Gesten versuchen – es ist witzig neben der Spur. Einsamer Gipfel ist ein schon verboten langsam beginnendes op. 101, dessen Thema sich in einer magischen Gespanntheit entfaltet. Genug der Schwärmerei, der mittlerweile 34-jährige Italiener ist ein bedeutender Beethoven-Interpret geworden. (*Atma Classique/New Arts International*)

CD Review

Review on "Volume V" of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas Series

RONDO, Germany, No. 6 (November/December) 2014, by Matthias Kornemann

Beethoven revisited

I might have been too severe with his first recording of a cycle which may have been started too early. However, in the last releases Christian Leotta meets all the expectations, and beyond that.

There is no –not even one– empty and unconsciously expressed beat in his playing, and in the unhurried slow movements transpires a rare beauty. How remarkable are the tonal and agogic subtleties in the first movement of Op. 54 and his ability to let converge "the Beauty and the Beast", and how empathetic and frugal sounds the conciliatory following Coda!

And has anybody ever heard this little twist between the hymn-like D-flat choral section and the distinctive digressing lower voice in the short Allegretto of Op. 10 No. 2?

Having the dilemma of being not too fond on the humor blustering Beethoven's music, he transforms the funny Allegro of Op. 31 No.1, which deals with the notorious desynchronization between the right and the left hand, into an ironic and stiff comedy, while, in the following Adagio, wired puppets are trying gracious gestures awkwardly – that's really spirituous.

The absolute highlight of the recording is the normally forbidden slow beginning of Op. 101, where the theme unfolds with a magical tension. I have expressed my enthusiasm extensively now; in the meanwhile, the 34-year-old Italian has become a great Beethoven-interpreter.



CD Review

BY JOHN TERAUDS ON JUNE 26, 2012



Montreal's ATMA Classique today released the fourth volume in a five-volume complete set of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas, performed by Italian pianist Christian Leotta.

The 2-CD set jumps around Beethoven's chronology, combining three early efforts (Nos 1, 4 and 5) with a middle sonata (No. 15, the "Pastoral") and later works (Nos 26 "Les Adieux" and 27).

Leotta is meticulousness itself, having carefully consulted every credible edition of the works, adhering to the composer's interpretation instructions, and then laying out each piece on a modern concert piano with a fine mix of warm, elegant restraint and fiery outbursts of virtuosity.

This fourth volume of sonatas is very good. Leotta's programming mix provides a nice set of contrasting moods and structures. It builds nicely on his previous three releases, which ATMA began releasing four years ago, and bodes well for the final volume, due out next year.





HÖREINDRUCK



Interpretation: ⑤⑤⑤⑤⑤
Klang: ⑤⑤⑤⑤⑤
Repertolwert: ⑤⑤⑤⑤⑤



Die Diskographie des italienischen Pianisten Christian Leotta ist nicht umfangreich und nicht vielseitig – im Wesentlichen sind es drei CDs mit Beethoven-Sonaten, die bei dem französisch-kanadischen Label Atma Classique erschienen.

Zwei erfolgreiche CDs mit *Pathétique*, *Appassionata*, *Waldstein*- und *Hammerklavier-Sonate* gingen voran, die dritte CD der Serie umfasst frühe Sonaten wie op. 2 oder op. 49 und endet mit der späten Sonate op. 110. Und Christian Leotta, Schüler von Karl-Ulrich Schnabel, dem Sohn Artur Schnabels, spielt Beethoven sehr vordergründig, frei von Gefühlsduselei. Er hat einen gleichermaßen ernsthaften, nachdenklichen wie auch freien und experimentierfreudigen Zugang zu den Sonaten. Außerdem hat er die notwendige Brillanz, den rhythmischen Puls und die vorwärtsdrängende Unruhe so vieler Sonaten fesselnd heraus-

zuheben. Er ahmt nicht die gewollte Expressivität mancher Interpretationen nach, sondern entwickelt ein natürliches Spiel, das immer in Bewegung bleibt, und erreicht eine ausgewogene Mischung von packendem Zugriff und lyrischem Ton. Schon seit 2002 spielt der Pianist den Zyklus auswendig vielfach in der Gesamtheit – seine intensive Beschäftigung mit Beethoven spürt man an seiner erstaunlichen Farbpalette, der Anschlag ist feinsinnig und Melodisches wird so intensiv herausgehoben, wie man es eher bei romantischen Klavierwerken erwarten würde. Seine Gestaltung reicht bis in die kleinen rhythmischen Nuancen und Akzentuierungen. Unbedingt hörenswert.

Isabel Fedrizzi

Ludwig van Beethoven
Klaviersonaten Vol. 3
Sonaten op. 2 Nr. 3, op. 14 Nr. 1 + 2,
op. 27 Nr. 1, op. 31 Nr. 2 „Sturm“, op. 49
Nr. 1 + 2, op. 79, op. 110
Christian Leotta, Klavier (Steinway D)
Atma Classique 2488 (2 CDs)
(Vertrieb: Musikwelt)

März / April

2/2012

CD Review

REVIEW ON VOLUME III BEETHOVEN'S 32 PIANO SONATAS SERIES

PIANO NEWS, Germany, No. 2 – March/April 2012, by Isabel Fedrizzi (5*****: Interpretation, Repertoire, Sound)

The discography of Italian pianist Christian Leotta is neither particularly ample nor multiform: it essentially consists of three double albums comprising some of the Beethoven's Piano Sonatas, published by the French-Canadian label Atma Classique.

Two successful albums, including the Pathetic, the Appassionata, the Waldstein, and the Hammerklavier, were released first followed by the third one of the series, which includes some of the early Piano Sonatas, such as the Op. 2 and the Op. 49, as well as the late Op. 110.

Christian Leotta, pupil of Karl-Ulrich Schnabel, son of Artur Schnabel, plays Beethoven with great clarity and without sentimentalism. His approach to the Sonatas is always profound, meditative, but nonetheless capable of being free and very inspired. In addition, he knows how to confer to his performances the right brilliancy, which he brings out very compellingly to render in the best way possible – in such diverse Piano Sonatas – the right rhythmic impulse and tense pace expressiveness.

Leotta does not imitate the intentional expressiveness of certain interpretation, but knows how to draw out and develop a natural sound, which is always characterized by emotion, possessing a perfect balance between a very precise playing and a more cantabile tone.

It is since 2002 that he has been playing by memory the complete cycle of the 32 Piano Sonatas in public several times. His great work with Beethoven is immediately recognizable thanks to his extraordinary palette of colors, to his refined touch and to his cantabile, performed so intensely as would be expected of the great interpretations of the past.

Christian Leotta shows great care also for the form, which extends to the most subtle stylistic nuances and to all the accentuations. Absolutely worthy to be listened to.

Christian Leotta displays forte with sublime pianism in Manila

ANALYSIS

By ANTONIO C. HILA

Philippine Daily Inquirer/Asia News Network

Italian pianist Christian Leotta's Manila recital at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) was a rare moment of intimate listening. It was virtuosity of the first order.

Technical prowess and expressive temperament blended into a dynamic unity that brought out awesome pianism.

Leotta's concert was the first and only performance in Manila, said Italian Ambassador Massimo Roscigno, who, together with Philippine Italian Association President Nedy Tantoco and CCP President Raul Sunico, prefaced the concert with a warm welcome to the audience who came in droves.

Leotta maximized tonal output sans distracting bodily or choreographic movement. It made pianism an aural art to be relished.



Philippine Daily Inquirer

In this photo taken from the Philippine Daily Inquirer's webpage, Christian Leotta is seen. Leotta gave a first-time performance in Manila, maximizing tonal output sans distracting bodily or choreographic movement. It made pianism an aural art to be relished.

Leotta etched vivid colors in bringing out the different stylistic nuances and polarities of sensitive tonalities.

He provided the framework of his pianism in brief notes he wrote for the program: He said he sought the disclosure of the "ideals" of the composers he was playing.

Integrity, Fidelity

The emotional bent (*adagiosissimo*) and rhythmic vitality (*fuga*) in Bach's programmed work, "Capriccio," had foreshadowed Schubert's posthumous "Sonata in A Minor, Op. 143 (or D 784);" Beethoven's famous sonata, "Appassionata"; and the lyricism Rossini expressed in "Memento Homo" and "Une Caresse a Ma Femme."

Leotta infused his playing with much integrity and fidelity to the stylistic nuance of the work. His tone was singing. The tonal balance between the two hands was simply fabulous.

From the fugue of Bach's work to the demanding fast octaves of the last movement of the Schubert work, and the powerful chords and rotating passages of the technically demanding first movement of the "Appassionata," Leotta carved out those sparkling tones with singular ease.

He was uncompromising in both temper and spontaneity. There was no triteness or calculated exactness.

Deep Knowledge

Throughout, he remained connected with the works, which undoubtedly he had deep knowledge of, and played with dynamic fire.

Furthermore, he had shown expressive musicality that was never intuited, but harnessed by an intelligent understanding of the pieces. One appreciated the richness of tone his sensitive fingers carved out.

Bach was intimately buoyant; Schubert, sensitively melodious; Beethoven, dramatically passionate; Rossini, caressingly legatè. These were all expressed in appropriate tonal textures that differentiated one stylistic nuance from the other.

His playing was beamed on the screen, showing the positioning of his fingers, as well as his playing, for the appreciation of both connoisseur and layman, who both noted his arresting pianism.

Indeed, Leotta is for keeps. He deserves a return engagement.

Wholenote™

The Toronto Concert-Goer's Guide
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DISCOVERIES: recordings reviewed

CLASSICAL & BEYOND

Beethoven - Piano Sonatas 8; 15; 27; 30
Jonathan Biss
EMI 3 94422 2

Beethoven - Piano Sonatas Vol.1
Christian Leotta
ATMA ACD2 2486



The American pianist Jonathan Biss and the Italian Christian Leotta are still in their twenties, but on the evidence of these new recordings, they are both thoroughly compelling musicians. The fact that they both reveal such deep musicality reflects their pedagogical lineage. Both studied with teachers who themselves studied with the visionary Artur Schnabel - Biss with one of Schnabel's greatest students, Leon Fleisher, and Leotta with his son Karl-Ulrich Schnabel.

In these recordings of Beethoven sonatas, both pianists, in different ways, resist the many opportunities to settle for dazzling surfaces that abound in Beethoven's writing, with its complex textures and powerful rhythms. Instead, they each use their prodigious techniques to better express the poetry of Beethoven's music.

Biss grasps the longing behind Beethoven's vision. His singing lines create dreamy, rhapsodic moods. But he also provides lots of the brio that Beethoven asks for, with elegant ornaments and deft passagework. His tempos can get a bit erratic, especially when he takes a big breath before reaching the top note of an ascending passage, or holds on to a chord well past its written value. But it is exciting how he highlights the bass line, and brings out the inner voices, especially in contrapuntal textures. Biss writes his own booklet notes, and they actually illuminate the music.

Both recordings offer the *Pathétique* sonata. Biss takes the introductory andante slowly, but Leotta takes it even more slowly, which leads to even greater dramatic contrasts. Leotta's approach is muscular, with driven dynamics and tempos. With Leotta you get the intense struggling Beethoven. This is passionate music-making. Details are spelled out, and the dance movements really dance. His ornaments can be so deliberate that they miss Beethoven's playfulness. But his textures remain delightfully clear throughout, thanks to his extraordinary legato technique and light foot on the sostenuto pedal.

The sound from ATMA is brighter and more present than the sound from EMI here, though not as warm.

Pamela Margles

MUSICA

PUBBLICAZIONE MENSILE - ISSN 03925544



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Zecchini Editore

MUSICA

RIVISTA DI CULTURA MUSICALE E DISCOGRAFICA • APRILE 2014

CD

BEETHOVEN *Sonata in do diesis op. 27 n. 2 « Chiaro di luna; Sonata in LA op. 2 n. 2; Sonata in SOL op. 31 n. 1; Sonata in FA op. 10 n. 2; Sonata in MI bemolle op. 31 n. 3; Sonata in FA op. 54; Sonata in LA op. 101* pianoforte **Christian Leotta**
ATMA ACD2 2490
DDD 153:04 (2 CD)

★★★★★



Arriva in porto, con il quinto doppio CD, l'integrale delle Sonate beethoveniane del pianista

Christian Leotta per l'etichetta canadese Atma Classique. Un'integrale curata, solida e coesa. Leotta, nato a Catania e residente a Como, restituisce all'ascoltatore un Beethoven robusto nei tratti e delicato nei dettagli, nobile nel cantabile, sostenuto da una notevole tensione drammatica. La storia dell'interpretazione e della discografia sono costellate di integrali beethoveniani, il confronto con le quali rischia di risolversi in un fallimento, a meno che non si scelga la scorciatoia del bizzarro, del virtuosismo effettistico, del puro spettacolo. Un pianista con il coraggio, a meno di trentacinque anni, di cimentarsi in un'integrale beethoveniano in sala da concerto e soprattutto in sala di registrazione desta un certo stupore. E desta ammirazione la coerenza stilistica con cui la affronta.

In questo ultimo volume ritroviamo le stesse coordinate interpretative dei volumi precedenti. L'equilibrio dell'insieme prevale sempre sui singoli dettagli, come rivelano i ridotti scarti del tactus, il colore timbrico uniforme, il tocco sempre nitido, incisivo e mai sforzato. Il virtuosismo,

senza essere stellare, è molto solido e si sostanzia soprattutto nell'uguaglianza del tocco e nelle definizioni precise di ogni particolare, per esempio i trilli. Il cantabile è morbido e parlante (ascoltare il *Muuetto* dell'op. 31 n. 3), il legato è di ottima fattura, come rivelano l'esordio dell'op. 101 e il primo movimento dell'op. 27 n. 1.

Mancavano e mancano, in Leotta, da un lato gli abbandoni alla malinconia dall'altro la leggerezza lieve e scherzosa che in alcune sonate (in questo Brendel è stato un interprete rivelatore) può diventare un elemento chiave. L'op. 27 n. 1 è molto asciutta, anche nell'*Allegretto* centrale e nell'inquieto – ma qui è inquieto pochissimo – movimento conclusivo. L'op. 2 n. 2 è robusta, aliena da ogni preziosismo timbrico, con un *Largo appassionato* perfino arcigno, come si era già notato, per esempio, nella *Sonata « Les Adieux »*.

La malinconia e la leggerezza sono una questione di indole. È evidente, d'altro canto, che Leotta compie delle scelte che lo portano a valorizzare la dimensione drammatica. Non a caso nei precedenti volumi a colpire erano le interpretazioni di due sonate « monstre » come l'op. 110 e l'op. 111, per non dire dell'arco emotivo e drammatico dell'op. 106. Qui a colpire è l'op. 10 n. 2, sia per la cantabilità profonda e nobile sia per la tensione della forma: emozionante, per citare un dettaglio, l'effetto di suspense all'inizio dello sviluppo.

Luca Segalla

CD Review

Review on “Volume V” of Beethoven’s 32 Piano Sonatas Series

MUSICA, Italy, No. 255 – April 2014, by Luca Segalla (4****: Excellent)

Christian Leotta’s recording of the 32 Piano Sonatas by L.v. Beethoven, released by the French Canadian label Atma Classique, reached its conclusion with the launching of the fifth double CD. This is a well-curated, strong and cohesive integral. Leotta, born in Catania and living in Como, offers to the listener a vigorous in traits and delicate in details Beethoven, noble and cantabile, sustained by a remarkable dramatic tension. The history of the interpretation and recording of the 32 Piano Sonatas is strewn by Beethovenian integrals, and the attempt to compare with them may result in failure, unless the interpreter chooses the shortcut of the bizarre, the virtuosity as mere effect, the pure show. A pianist that has the courage, at less than 35, to defy an integral by Beethoven – in concert and particularly in the studio recording – may arouse a certain wonder. Leotta instead arises admiration for the stylistic coherence with which he faced such an undertake.

In this last volume we find the same interpretative coordinates as in the previous volumes: the balance of the whole prevails always on the single details, as revealed by the very little tempo changes, the uniform color’s timbre, the touch always clear, incisive and never forced. The virtuosity, without being stellar, is solid and takes form particularly in the evenness of touch and in the precise definition of every detail, as the trills for example. The cantabile is intense and speaks by itself (listen to the Menuetto of Op. 31 No. 3); and his legato is of extraordinary quality, as revealed by the beginning of the Op. 101 and the first movement of the Op. 27 No. 1.

In Leotta were and are missed the abandons to melancholy, on one side, and, on the other, the soft and the playful lightness that in some sonatas can became a key element (in this regard, Brendel was a revelatory interpreter). The Op. 27 No. 1 is very concise, even in the central Allegretto and in the restless – but here not too much so – closing movement. The Op. 2 No. 2 is robust, far away from any sentimentalism of timbre, with a Largo appassionato severe, as we have already noticed, for example, in the Sonata “Les Adieux”.

The melancholy and lightness are a matter of one’s inner nature. On the other hand, it is obvious that Leotta makes choices that lead him to value mostly the dramatic dimension of Beethoven’s music. It is no coincidence that in the previous volumes the interpretations that impressed most were those of two Piano Sonatas “monsters” as the Op. 110 and the Op. 111, not to mention the emotive and dramatic span of the Op. 106. In volume V, it’s the Op. 10 No. 2 that strikes for the profound and noble cantabile as well as for the tension of the form. Just to mention a detail, it is utterly moving the effect of suspense obtained at the beginning of the development section of this sonata.



HÖREINDRUCK

Interpretation: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
 Klang: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
 Repertoirewert: ① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥



Es ist die letzte Doppel-CD der Gesamteinspielung aller Beethoven-Sonaten des italienischen Pianisten Christian Leotta, die er in den vergangenen sechs Jahren vorgenommen hat. Dieses

letzte Volume beginnt er mit der „Mondschein“-Sonate Op. 27 Nr. 2. Und schon hier zeigt sich wieder einmal die Stärke von Leottas Beethoven-Spiel: Er lässt der Musik ihren ganz eigenen Raum, ihre eigene Ausdruckskraft, versucht erst gar nicht – so hat man den Eindruck – zu viel persönliche Interpretation einfließen zu lassen. Vielmehr spielt er, was da in den Noten steht, weiß Phrasierungen immer überzeugend einzusetzen. Allein: Im Vergleich mit Kollegen ist dieses Spiel vordergründig weniger aufgeregt und damit für den Zuhörer vielleicht auch weniger spannend. Doch es ist ein Spiel, das unaufgeregt ist, aber die dramatischen Innigkeiten zum Ausdruck zu bringen vermag. Man muss sich auf dieses feinsinnige Spiel mit den kleinen Nuancen einlassen, dann erkennt man, dass Leotta zum Herzen der Musik Beethovens vordringt. **CD**

Ludwig van Beethoven
 Klaviersonaten Op. 27 Nr. 2; Op. 2 Nr. 2;
 Op. 31 Nr. 1 & 2; Op. 57; Op. 101
 Christian Leotta, Klavier
 ATMA Classique 2490 (2 CDs)
 (Vertrieb: New Arts International)

März / April
 2/2014

CD Review

REVIEW ON VOLUME V BEETHOVEN'S 32 PIANO SONATAS SERIES

PIANO NEWS, Germany – March/April 2014, by Carsten Dürer

(Interpretation: 5*****/Sound: 4*****/Repertoire: 4*****)

It has been released the final double CD of the cycle of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas, which the Italian pianist Christian Leotta began to record six years ago.

This last double album starts with the "Moonlight", the Piano Sonata Op. 27 No. 2. And, already here, it is evident once more the power of the Beethovenian interpretations of Christian Leotta: the music is the absolute protagonist, with all its expressiveness, without even trying – we get the impression- to show an interpretation which could add anything too personal. Instead, Leotta plays everything is written on the score, with a clean phrasing, always compellingly used.

One note: compared to his colleagues, this playing is apparently less excited and it might be less exciting also for the listener. But, nonetheless, it is a playing capable of bringing to the light the dramatic profoundness of the soul. You must refer to this refined interpretations, full of subtle nuances, then you will recognize how deep Leotta penetrated into the heart of the music of Beethoven.

Proyectos & Giras

INTEGRAL DE LAS SONATAS TERMINADAS DE SCHUBERT, CHRISTIAN LEOTTA - INTEGRAL DE LAS SONATAS PARA PIANO DE BEETHOVEN. CHRISTIAN LEOTTA, pianista - INTEGRAL DE LOS CUARTETOS DE BEETHOVEN, CUARTETO CASALS - LAS SEIS SUITES PARA VIOLONCELLO SOLO DE BACH, YO-YO MA



SCHUBERT

INTEGRAL DE LAS SONATAS TERMINADAS



CUARTETO CASALS

Un ciclo Beethoven mediterráneo



YO-YO MA

Septiembre-octubre 2018



BEETHOVEN

INTEGRAL DE LAS SONATAS PARA PIANO



Date : 2 February 2013
 Publication : HK ECONOMIC TIMES
 Page : C12
 Circulation : 90,000

經濟日報

MEDIA CLIPPING

觀後
感

Christian Leotta 的藝術盛宴



觀賞場次：
1月28日，
上環文娛中心

經濟邏輯裏容不下免費午餐，周一晚意大利年輕鋼琴家 Christian Leotta 無私地在「上環文娛中心」舉辦免費音樂會，香港樂迷有幸一嘗免費的藝術盛宴。其實，藝術本質缺不了「分享」二字。免費演出卻絕不取巧，音樂會主題為「貝多芬的三種風格和奏鳴曲式的藝術」，4首樂曲涵蓋早期輕巧的 Op. 14, No. 2 和 Op. 49, No. 2，也有中晚期光輝炫技的 Waldstein 和 Hammerklavier，年輕的貝多芬專家使盡看家本領。Christian Leotta 技巧堅實，聲部清晰流麗，即使最兇猛炫技的樂句，也不忘如歌地演奏。中場後會場忘記調暗燈光，Leotta 堅忍至 Hammerklavier 沉思性的第三樂章前才停下來請求關燈，卻慘在台上呆坐近 10 分鐘，那是因為後台人員聽得心神俱醉動彈不得或是甚麼原因，都必須嚴厲檢討。燈滅琴音再起，依然完美無瑕，好音樂能令人即時忘掉之前的不快，Leotta 的專業精神令人佩服。場地人員不足，但「上環文娛中心」的音色其實不差，雖然有點偏乾，迴聲不足，但音色是清晰的，比起文化中心那足讓任何超技大師也糊成一團的演奏廳，好上不止一個層次。

話說貝多芬晚年聲名被意大利作曲家羅西尼追過，但若面對現在這位風度、技藝、專業、品格俱全的意大利鋼琴家，貝氏和香港樂迷都會由衷祝福他將來有更遠大的前程。



撰文：leno · 相片由 Italian Cultural Institute 香港提供

Concert Review

Christian Leotta's Recital - a Music Feast

HONG KONG ECONOMIC TIMES, Hong Kong (China) – February 2nd, 2013

There is no free lunch in economic theory but the recital of the young Italian pianist Christian Leotta at the Sheung Wan Civic Centre Theatre was indeed a magnificent free music feast for the Hong Kong audience: Art is about sharing.

The concert title was "The Three Manners of Ludwig van Beethoven and the Art of the Sonata Form", featuring the lighter music of Beethoven's early stage, Op. 14, No. 2 & Op. 49, No. 1, and also the bright and technically demanding middle and late stage music of the "Waldstein" and the "Hammerklavier".

Christian's technique is sovereign: the four Sonatas sounded brilliant and clear. Besides, he demonstrated great professionalism: in the second part of the concert, the venue forgot to dim the light; thus, Christian played till the 3rd movement of Hammerklavier, having then to wait for the light technicians for about 10 minutes to fix the problem: certainly, the venue is to be blamed for that. While Christian resumed playing perfectly, his music made the audience forget about the inconvenience.

The impeccable performance of Christian was much admired.

The acoustic of the venue was not bad, being at least better than that of the music hall of the HK Cultural Centre, which can ruin any music.

Christian is a pianist who showed to be good in attitude, technique, professionalism and personal qualities. After the recital we heard in Hong Kong, I'm convinced that his Beethoven will no doubt ensure him a great future on the international music scene.



MUSICA

RIVISTA DI CULTURA MUSICALE E DISCOGRAFICA - SETTEMBRE 2011

BEETHOVEN

BLOW

CD

BEETHOVEN *Sonata in re op. 31 n. 2; Sonata in MI op. 14 n. 1; Sonata in SOL op. 14 n. 2; Sonata in MI bemolle op. 27 n. 1; Sonata in sol op. 49 n. 1; Sonata in SOL op. 49 n. 2; Sonata in SOL op. 79; Sonata in DO op. 2 n. 3; Sonata in LA bemolle op. 110* pianoforte Christian Leotta
ATMA ACD2 2488
DDD 148:11 (2 CD)



Nel panorama discografico attuale i pianisti italiani tra i trenta e i quaranta sono ben rappresentati. Tre nomi su tutti: Andrea Bacchetti per Bach, Pietro De Maria per l'integrale chopiniana e Christian Leotta per questa integrale delle *Sonate* di Beethoven, giunta al terzo volume. Più noto oltre oceano che in Italia, meno virtuoso di De Maria e meno stravagante di Bacchetti, a piccoli passi Leotta sta costruendo un'integrale molto coerente nelle sue linee di fondo. Lo avevamo già notato a proposito del primo doppio CD (cfr. il n. 199 di *MUSICA*). Leotta attenua i contrasti e smussa le asperità, senza eccessi

virtuosistici, attraverso un paziente lavoro analitico. Il suo è un Beethoven settecentesco, anche in una sonata come l'op. 31 n. 2 che piaceva molto ai Romantici e che lo stesso compositore (secondo la testimonianza del solito Schindler) avrebbe paragonato alla *Tempesta* di Shakespeare.

Tempi tranquilli, sonorità morbide e controllate, fraseggio fluido: per Leotta Beethoven deve essere in primo luogo eloquente. Il contrasto, nel primo movimento, tra il motivo arpeggiato al basso (il «widerstrebende Prinzip») e la risposta implorante al registro medio (il «bittende Prinzip») alla battuta 21 e ss. viene sottolineato con un rallentando e non con un accelerando, che rischierebbe di ridurre il tutto a un mero effetto strumentale. Altri giovani e lanciati interpreti che in questa sonata si preoccupano soprattutto di mostrare i muscoli, come l'inglese Paul Lewis, in queste battute risultano generici. Asciutto ed essenziale è anche il secondo movimento, mentre l'*Allegretto* conclusivo è un vero allegretto e non allegro come spesso capita di ascoltare: un saporito rondò, non una cavalcata virtuosistica.

La registrazione pulita, senza molto riverbero e di ottima qualità si sposa bene con questa prospettiva. È

stata effettuata nella Sala Mahler a Dobbiaco, dal suono più morbido e più spazializzato rispetto a quello del primo volume, registrato a Lonsanna.

Leotta rispetta scrupolosamente i segni della partitura, eseguendo tutti gli sforzati, i legati e gli staccati indicati da Beethoven. È un interprete controllato e misurato, poco incline alle esplosioni drammatiche (infatti la sua *Patefica*, nel primo volume dell'integrale, appariva un poco fredda). Si prenda l'*Allegro con brio* della *Sonata* op. 2 n. 3, che per i pianisti è una bestia nera, perché richiede grande agilità e pulizia. Leotta non punta allo spolverio virtuosistico, alle magie dei dettagli resi con precisione chirurgica anche a grande velocità. Punta a far parlare la musica. Del resto una delle doti per cui Beethoven veniva apprezzato come interprete era proprio il cantabile e il Classicismo viennese deve senza dubbio qualcosa alla cantabilità di ascendenza italiana. Certo, lo scotto da pagare è la perdita della brillantezza esecutiva, che in alcuni casi rappresenta un limite, come si è notato per la *Sonata* op. 10 n. 3, nel primo volume dell'integrale.

L'*Adagio* della *Sonata* op. 2 n. 3 è un capolavoro di introspezione psicologica, un lento procedere verso il basso e non uno sprofonda-

dare nell'abisso. E capolavori di introspezione ed eloquenza sono tutta la *Sonata* op. 27 n. 1 e l'*Andante* dell'op. 14 n. 2, lontano da ogni preziosismo. Così il secondo movimento della *Sonata* op. 14 n. 1 appare serio e robusto e le scale del movimento conclusivo sono corpose e colloquiali, piuttosto che sgranate con cristallina perfezione. La *Sonata* op. 79 è robusta e diretta come deve essere, anche nello stacco di tempo, più lento rispetto al tempo staccato da un beethoveniano doc come Badura-Skoda, ma anche rispetto a un fortepianista come Brautigam (cfr. n. 202 di *MUSICA*), che pure, come Leotta, punta tutto sull'eloquenza. Lo stesso discorso vale per la *Sonata* op. 49 n. 1, il cui finale dura 3:40, mentre con Badura-Skoda durava solo 3:11: meno vitale, ma molto raffinato. E l'*Andante*, una sorta di barcarola all'italiana, è intimo e delicato, di una cantabilità più intensa rispetto all'interpretazione, leggera e svagata, di Badura-Skoda. Paradossalmente il momento culminante di questo volume coincide con la *Sonata* op. 110. Anche nel primo volume l'interpretazione meglio riuscita era quella della sonata più problematica, l'op. 111: evidentemente un interprete riflessivo e coerente come Christian Leotta si trova nel suo elemento naturale con pagine dall'architettura complessa. Una 110 misurata e senza eccessi; senza affanni, tutta sprofondata in se stessa. Anche il secondo movimento, l'*Allegro molto*, che di solito suscita negli interpreti incontrollabili furori virtuosistici, viene declamato e non gridato. Nell'*Adagio ma non troppo* sono da apprezzare il raffinato impiego dei pedali e il controllo dei piani sonori, mentre la fuga è di una bellezza rara, per la messa a fuoco dei dettagli e per l'omogeneità timbrica. Anche in questo caso la prospettiva di Leotta è molto chiara ed è quella di un intimismo commosso e misurato, piuttosto che del sublime romantico.

Luca Segalla

CD Review

REVIEW ON VOLUME III BEETHOVEN'S 32 PIANO SONATAS SERIES

Musica, Italy – No. 229, September 2011, by Luca Segalla (4****: Excellent)

At present, on the recording scene, the Italian pianists between thirty and forty years of age are well represented. Three names stand out above all: Andrea Bacchetti for Bach, Pietro de Maria for his recordings of Chopin's works and Christian Leotta for this complete recording of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas, now at its third Volume. Better known overseas than in Italy, less virtuoso than De Maria and less extravagant than Bacchetti, Leotta is gradually building up a very coherent cycle in its base lines. We have already noted that in regard of the first double album (see No. 199 of Musica): Leotta smoothes out contrasts and rough edges, with no virtuoso excesses, through a patient analytic work. He has a XVIII Century vision of Beethoven's music, even in a Sonata as the Op. 31 No. 2, which the Romantics loved so much and which the composer himself (according to an account given by Schindler) had compared to the "Tempest" by Shakespeare.

Tempos are tranquil, sonorities are pleasing and well controlled, phrasing is fluid: for Leotta, first and foremost, Beethoven must be eloquent. In the first movement, the contrast between the motive to be played in arpeggio at the bass (the "widerstrebende Prinzip") and the imploring answer at the medium register (the "bittende Prinzip") at the bar No. 21 and the subsequent ones, is underlined by slowing down the tempo and not by speeding it up, as this last option would risk to reduce the whole section to a mere instrumental effect. Other young and well promoted interpreters, who are, primarily concerned to show their muscles in this sonata (as Paul Lewis from the United Kingdom), sound vague in these bars. The second movement is equally sober and essential, while the conclusive Allegretto is a true allegretto and not an allegro, as we often happen to hear: in Leotta's interpretation, it sounds as an exquisite rondo and not as mere demonstration of virtuoso technique.

The recording is clear, not excessively reverberated and of excellent quality: it goes well together with this perspective. Produced at the Mahler Hall of Dobbiaco, its sound is smoother and more spatial in comparison to that of volume I, recorded in Lausanne.

Leotta scrupulously respects the score indications, playing all the sforzato, the legatos, and the staccatos as written by Beethoven. He is a precise and poised interpreter, little inclined to dramatic explosions (in fact his "Pathetic", in Volume I of the cycle, seemed to be somewhat cold). In the Allegro con brio of the Sonata Op. 2 No. 3, which is a "black beast" for pianists because it requires great agility and accuracy, Leotta does not aim to show off virtuoso effects, but the magic of details, conveyed with surgical precision also while playing at great velocity. He aims to let the music speak by itself. In fact, one of the gifts for which Beethoven was most admired as an interpreter, was precisely the cantabile, and, no doubt, the Viennese Classicism owes this characteristic to the cantabile of Italian ancestry. Certainly, the price to pay in obtaining it is a loss in brilliance and, in some cases, that may represent a limitation as we noted in the Sonata Op. 10 No. 3, included in Volume I of the cycle.

The Adagio of Sonata Op. 2 No. 3 is masterly performed thanks to Leotta's psychological introspection, a slow profound proceeding, without sinking to the abyss. Masterworks of introspection and eloquence are also the Sonata Op. 27 No. 1 in its entirety, as well as the Andante of the Op. 14 No. 2, which is far away from any preciousness. The second movement of the Sonata Op. 14 No. 1 is intense and vigorous and the scales of the conclusive movement are dense and colloquial rather than delivered with crystal-clear perfection. The Sonata Op. 79 is forceful and direct as it should be, although the tempo chosen is slower than the one used by the distinguished Beethovenian Badura-Skoda, and also if compared to that used by a forte-piano player like Brautigam (see No. 202 of Musica) who, as Leotta does, aims everything at the eloquence. The same happens in the Sonata Op. 49 No. 1. Leotta's finale last for 3:40, while Badura-Skoda performs it in only 3:11. Leotta may sound less vibrant but he is extremely refined. And the Andante, evocative of an Italian barcarola, is intimate and delicate, and Leotta's cantabile is more intense if compared to the light and amusing interpretation of Badura-Skoda.

Interestingly enough, the climax of this volume is reached with the Sonata Op. 110. In the first volume as well, the best interpretation was that of the Sonata Op. 111. Obviously, a thoughtful and coherent interpreter as Christian Leotta, finds himself at his best when playing works of a complex architecture. The result is a well-balanced 110, with no excesses, quite and inwardly immersed. Even the second movement, the Allegro molto, which normally induces in interpreters an uncontrolled virtuoso frenzy, is declaimed, not shouted, by Leotta. In the Adagio ma non troppo are to be admired the refined use of the pedal and the control of the sonorities, while the fugue is of rare beauty thanks to its well focused details and to its tone homogeneity. Here again, Leotta's perspective is very clear and it is that of an heartfelt and poised introspection, rather than that of an exalted romantic.



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Beethoven: Diabelli Variations

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AllMusic Review by Blair Sanderson

In 1819, the Viennese music publisher Anton Diabelli challenged contemporary composers to write variations on a waltz theme of his own devising, for a publication he titled Vaterländischer Künstlerverein (The Fatherland's Society of Artists). While the second volume of this large collection contained 50 variations, by such figures as Carl Czerny, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, a young Franz Liszt, Ignaz Moscheles, Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart, and Franz Schubert, among others, the first volume was devoted entirely to Ludwig van Beethoven's set of 33 variations, known commonly as the Diabelli Variations. This work is regarded as one of Beethoven's supreme achievements, comparable in depth, variety, and expressive power to the late sonatas, and it is frequently played and recorded, unlike the other variations, which are seldom heard. Christian Leotta's recording on ATMA Classique is a lively exploration of Beethoven's set, notable for its briskness and high energy. At times, Leotta's crisp attacks and clangorous sonorities remind one of the brittle timbres of a fortepiano, though the piano he uses is a modern Steinway, so he manages this effect through touch and spare use of the pedals. Perhaps some Romantic grandeur is lost in this interpretation, but excessive emoting is avoided as well, and the wit and cleverness of the music shine through, altogether a fair trade-off. The studio sound is a little dry, but the recording is clean and every note is distinct.



BEETHOVEN Piano Sonatas: No. 11 in B \flat , op. 22; No. 21 in C, op. 53 "Waldstein"; No. 29 in B \flat , op. 106 "Hammerklavier"; No. 30 in E, op. 109 • Christian Leotta (pn) • ATMA ACD2 2487 (2 CDs: 126:10)

Born in 1980, Italian pianist Christian Leotta studied with Karl Ulrich Schnabel, Artur's son and a revered teacher and pianist in his own right. The musical legacy that extended back in a teacher-pupil line from Karl Ulrich to his father to the elder Schnabel's teacher, the famous Leschetitzky, to Czerny, and finally Beethoven is significant in its communication of styles and ideas. Christian Leotta, in his musical interests and ability, seems to have benefited from this heritage (he is one of many of today's most admired pianists—e.g., Richard Goode and Peter Serkin—who studied with K. U. Schnabel). Leotta's devotion to Beethoven can be seen in his many performances of the entire cycle of Beethoven sonatas; also of interest is that he is the youngest pianist since Daniel Barenboim to play the complete cycle in concert over a period of less than one month; this is not a project for the faint of heart! Since his first such series he has repeated it more than a dozen times in cities around the world.

It is a given that a traversal of the Beethoven sonatas requires a prodigious technique, and like his compatriot Maurizio Pollini, Leotta certainly has one. But a good technique encompasses more than agile fingers—it requires also a good deal of finesse: a variety of keyboard touches, an ear for the nuances of dynamic and thematic changes. As I followed his performances with my score, I was struck with the fidelity of his readings, including the specific pedaling indications given by the composer. He comes close to Beethoven's metronome markings for the "Hammerklavier," although they have been declared virtually unplayable by many pianists, and succeeds in producing a clear and lucid account of the final fugue without sacrificing its underlying power and drive. His tempo for the great F \sharp -Minor slow movement—marked *Adagio sostenuto*—is a little slower than Schnabel's, but has an intensity that propels it through its extended length. He is sensitive to those heart-stopping changes of harmony heard in the theme (and in its repetitions throughout the movement), where Beethoven unexpectedly modulates from C \sharp -Major to G Major before returning to F \sharp -Minor.

I find Leotta's forceful energy completely compelling in the demanding opening movements of both B \flat -sonatas, op. 22 and op. 106. The repeated notes of the opening of the "Waldstein" sonata unfold with suppressed energy waiting to explode. Leotta digs deep into the keyboard for his *fortes* and *fortissimos*, but does so without banging. The serenity of the opening theme of the finale, with Leotta following Beethoven's indications to pedal over tonic and dominant harmonies, is perfectly executed, so that the melody rings out softly but clearly beneath the gentle blurring of the accompaniment. The tempo is on the slow side, but has an appropriately serene and magisterial feeling to it. In the first movement of op. 109, the changing character of the music demands flexibility from the player in terms of sound and expressiveness, which Leotta provides beautifully in the shaping of the movement. In the final (variations) movement, the pianist sometimes hesitates before the final beat of a phrase, which although surely meant as an expressive device, becomes something of a mannerism. But in technical matters the variations are brilliantly played.

The excellent recording was made in the Gustav Mahler Auditorium in Dobbiaco, Italy, on a magnificent-sounding instrument—not identified (although, oddly enough, the name of the piano tuner is). However, since the sonatas in both the first and third volumes were recorded on Hamburg Steinways, one can assume the same for this second disc in the series.

Christian Leotta is an intelligent and vivid pianist who brings a deft keyboard technique and a musical mind to the challenge of playing Beethoven. The remaining sonatas of the cycle, as he continues to record them, are eagerly anticipated. **Susan Kagan**



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN 1770-1827

Sonaty fortepianowe: nr 8, 12, 23,
7, 24, 32

Christian Leotta, fortepian
Atma Classique ACD2 2486 · w.
2008, n. 2005/6 · DDD, 142'16"

Muzyka21
płyta miesiąca

Pojawienie się albumu wytwórni Atma Classique, będącego pierwszym woluminem *Sonaty fortepianowych* Ludwiga van Beethovena w wykonaniu Christiana Leotta, jest wydarzeniem wielkiej wagi, które powinno poruszyć nie tylko wielbicieli genialnego kompozytora, ale także koneserów wybitnej pianistki. Proszę Państwa, w osobie 28-letniego Włocha narodził się jeden z najwybitniejszych beethovenistów naszych czasów, na grę którego powinniśmy zwrócić uwagę wszyscy, nawet najwięksi sześćdziesięcioletkowie... Jest bowiem pierwszym od czasów Daniela Barenboima wykonawcą, który w tak młodym wieku podjął się ambitnego zadania: wykonania na koncertach pełnego cyklu *Sonaty*, a jak dowodzą entuzjastyczne krytyki oraz nagranie, będące przedmiotem niniejszej recenzji, decyzja Christiana Leotta jest tyleż odważna, co jak najbardziej uzasadniona.

Jego pierwszy w barwach Atmy album, który mam niewątpliwą przyjemność przedstawić, powinien zyskać uznanie nawet wśród najbardziej wymagających miłośników pianistycznej sztuki; mam na-

dzieje, że nie będzie mi dane długo czekać na kolejne pozycje tego cyklu: jeśli ma być wyznacznikiem całości, to na wszystkie tytuły należy czekać z ogromną niecierpliwością. Leotta w sposób zapierający dech w piersiach zanurza się w świat twórczości wielkiego kompozytora, by pokazać go jakby na nowo, od siebie, przez swoją wrażliwość, wyobraźnię, szacunek dla intencji twórcy, co przynosi fascynujący rezultat. Bardzo mi się spodobało fenomenalne wprost odczytanie partytury, wydobyte jej całego bogactwa, ukazanie wielu szczegółów, umykających zwykle w powierzchownych bądź zbyt szybkich interpretacjach. Dzięki temu, jak również odpowiednim, nieprzeogranionym tempom, jego wizja oszalała siłą wyrazu, integralnością formy, zwartością przebiegu. Imponuje stosowana przezeń skala dynamiki; od najcichszych, poruszających ustępów pianissimo, subtelnych, acz wyrazistych, po potężne, pełne blasku i mocy fortissima, które np. we wspaniałej zagranej *Appassionacie* zdają się wprost rozsądzać instrument. Umiejętność stosowania kontrastu przez Leottę zasługuje na szczególną uwagę, gdyż jest bardzo ważną cechą określającą jego podejście do muzycznej materii, jak też czynnikiem wzbogacającym formę – dotyczy zresztą nie tylko wspomnianej powyżej rozpiętości wolumenu brzmienia. Pianista umiejętnie różnicuje utwory; części skrajne, utrzymane w żywych tempach, są pełne wigoru, radości, energii, elementów tanecznych i żartu, jak też rytmicznej wyrazistości; ogniwa powolne są, nie waham się tego określić, wykreowane genialnie, zachwycają i porywają swoją głębią, nastrojem, logiką rozwoju, a nierzadko wprost wprawiają słuchacza w zdumienie, jak np. *Largo z Sonaty D-dur* op. 10 nr 3, czy też imponująca bogactwem myśli, nastrojów i pomysłów, dalekich już zresztą od problemów materialnego świata, ostatnia *Sonata c-moll* op. 111. Pianista tempa daje raczej niespieszne, mądrze dopasowując je do wyrazu i konstrukcji danych utworów, dzięki czemu muzyka wydaje się być bogatsza w detale, wyraźniej przy tym słychać wszystkie harmonie, kontrapunkty, słowem całą strukturę. Wyznawcom efektywnych, szybkich temp to rozwiązanie może się nie spodobać, ja je jednak bardzo doceniam, tym bardziej, że Włoch nie robi wszystkiego na jedno kopyto: w odpowiednich miejscach nadaje kompozycjom żywy puls i dramatyczny przebieg, dzięki czemu jego koncepcje idealnie pasują do autorskich zamysłów. Uważne wczytanie się w partyturę i wierność jej zapisowi, skrupulatne przeniesienie zapisane-

go w nutach bogactwa na klawisze instrumentu, niezwykła mądrość, wrażliwość i muzykalność, jak również nie pozostawiająca żadnych wątpliwości technika i wirtuozeria, zdają się świadczyć, że w osobie młodego włoskiego pianisty *Sonaty fortepianowe* Ludwiga van Beethovena znalazły wiernego, zaangażowanego i bardzo kompetentnego wykonawcę.

Jest wiele słów, które chciałyby się jeszcze napisać o tej dojrzałej – muzycznie i czysto ludzko – kreacji Christiana Leotta. Jego trzeba po prostu posłuchać i dać się porwać fascynującym, przykuwającym uwagę słuchacza od początku do końca, występem. Już od dawna nie słyszałem tak doskonale zagranych dzieł Beethovena, z którymi mierzą się przecież wszyscy mistrzowie klawiatury. Jestem przekonany, że włoski pianista po nagraniu wszystkich sonat trafi do grona najwybitniejszych interpretatorów dzieł genialnego twórcy. Czekając z niecierpliwością na kolejne części fonograficznego cyklu i stale zachwycając się zapisanym na pierwszym albumie wykonaniem, można tylko powiedzieć jedno: „Brawo!”

Paweł Chmielowski

CD Review

REVIEW ON VOLUME I BEETHOVEN'S 32 PIANO SONATAS SERIES

MUZIKA21, Poland – No. 99, October 2008, by Pawel Chmielowski

CD of the Month

The recording label Atma Classique has recently released the first album of Christian Leotta's recording of Beethoven's 32 Piano Sonatas. This release is an event of immense significance, which should move not only fans of the great composer but also connoisseurs of great pianism. Ladies and gentlemen, in the person of a 28 year old Italian, is born one of the most extraordinary Beethovenian interpreters of our time, whose way of playing is noteworthy of everybody's attention, including that of the greatest sixty-year-olds... Christian Leotta is the first pianist since Daniel Barenboim who, at such young age, has embarked on the ambitious task of performing in concert the complete cycle of the Sonatas and, considering the enthusiastic reviews he gained and the recording which is the subject of this review, Christian Leotta's decision is as courageous as absolutely well founded.

His first album for Atma, which I have great pleasure in presenting, should be very well received even by the most demanding fans of piano art; I hope that I will not have to wait long for the other recordings of the cycle: if we consider this album as an indicator of the complete series, all titles should be looked forward to. It is breathtaking to hear Leotta immersing himself in the world of the great composer's masterworks in order to present it anew and to reveal it in the way he sees and perceives it through his own sensitivity, imagination, and respect for the author's intention. The result is fascinating. I liked very much his simply phenomenal reading of the score and the way he has brought out its full richness and highlighted many details which usually go unnoticed in superficial, or too fast, interpretations. Owing to such approach and to an appropriate, not hurried over tempos performances, his vision dazzled with its power of expression, integrity of form and coherence. The scale of dynamics he uses is truly impressive; from the softest, moving pianissimo passages, subtle but expressive, to powerful fortissimo full of brilliance and power, which simply seem to blast the instrument, e.g., in the wonderfully played *Appassionata*. What particularly deserves an emphasis is Leotta's skilful use of contrasts as it is a very important feature which characterizes his musical approach and it is a factor which enriches the form and applies not only to the above-mentioned range of sound volume. The pianist is also skilful in differentiating pieces; outermost parts, kept in lively tempos, are full of vigour, joy, energy, elements of dance and scherzo as well as of rhythmical distinctiveness; slow chains are, and I am saying this with full awareness, created with genius, they delight and rouse listeners with their depth, mood, logics of development and, not infrequently, cause amazement in listeners, e.g., the *Largo* from *Sonata in D-major* op. 10 no. 3 or the last *Sonata in C minor* op. 111, impressive for its richness of thoughts, moods and ideas, which are far from the problems of the material world. Tempos given by the pianist are unhurried and adjusted wisely to the expression and structure of pieces. As a result, music seems richer in details, while all harmonies, counterpoints – all the structure – can be clearly heard. Followers of spectacular, fast tempos might not like this solution, but I do appreciate it, even more so since the Italian avoids shaping all parts from the same mould: where appropriate, he gives the music a lively pulse and a dramatic course and, owing to this approach, his concepts fit author's ideas perfectly. The careful reading and faithfulness to the score, a scrupulous transfer of the richness of the notes to the keyboard, the exceptional wisdom, sensitivity and musicality as well as his technique

and virtuosity which leave no field for doubt, seem to prove that the Piano Sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven have found a faithful, committed and very competent performer in the young Italian pianist.

Much could still be said about this creation of Christian Leotta, which is mature in both musical and purely human terms. One should simply listen and let oneself be carried away and enraptured by this fascinating performance, which rivets one's attention from the beginning to the end. It's been a long while since I have listened to Beethoven's masterworks played so perfectly even though they are performed by all piano masters. I am convinced that, after recording all the sonatas, the Italian pianist will be considered one of the most extraordinary interpreters of Beethoven. While looking forward to the next recordings of the cycle and continuously enjoying the performance recorded on this first album, one can only say one thing: "Bravo!".



Amadeus

BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonatas Volume 1

Christian Leotta

Atma / 2 cd / ACD2 2486 / 22056 /

Distr.: Milano Dischi / DDD /

Libretto: buono / Italiano / 090808

Artistico: ★★★★★

Tecnico: ★★★★★

Di primo acchito, trovandosi di fronte all'ennesima riproposta delle 32 Sonate per pianoforte di Ludwig van Beethoven verrebbe da pensare a un'operazione commerciale mirata esclusivamente a far conoscere un giovane pianista emergente. Poi si ascolta la registrazione e, man mano che la musica scorre, ci si può rendere conto che in questi primi due compact disc della serie c'è qualità e un qualcosa di più. Si rimane affascinati dallo scavo espressivo e, soprattutto, dall'intelligente e meditata scelta dei tempi qui considerati più appropriati per interpretare le *Sonate in*



do minore

"Patetica"

op. 13, in

la bemolle

maggiore

op. 26, in fa

minore "Appassionata" op. 57,

in re maggiore op. 10 n. 3, in

fa diesis maggiore op. 78 e in

do minore op. 111. Tempi che

non raramente si mostrano

fuori della consuetudine

(specialmente nella "Patetica"

e nell'"Appassionata"), che

suscitano interesse e sorpresa

e invitano a un nuovo ascolto.

E allora ci si rende conto

che l'approccio di Leotta al

pianismo di Beethoven è tutto

in funzione della dialettica

sottesa alla musicalità di queste

composizioni del maestro di

Bonn, del pensiero sonoro che

s'ispira a un concetto filosofico,

del percorso armonico che si

sviluppa come un'ascesa ideale.

Christian Leotta convince

e conquista l'ascoltatore

all'insegna del garbo e di un

gusto sapiente, soprattutto per

quel suo porsi al servizio della

musica anziché del mercato

discografico. Un'incisione

pienamente riuscita: da

attendere i prossimi volumi.

ANTONIO BRENA

CD Review

REVIEW ON VOLUME I BEETHOVEN'S 32 PIANO SONATAS SERIES

AMADEUS, Italy – No. 8, August 2008, by Antonio Brena (5*****)

At first sight, being once again presented with a new version of the 32 Piano Sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven, one would be tempted to think of it as a commercial operation exclusively aimed at launching a young emerging pianist.

But once we start to listen to the recording and, while the music is flowing, we realize that in these first two compact discs of the series there is quality and something more.

One is fascinated by the expressive search and, even more, by the intelligent and meditated choice of the tempos considered most appropriate for interpreting the Sonatas in C minor Op. 13 "Pathétique", in A flat major Op. 26, in F minor Op. 57 "Appassionata", in D major Op. 10 No. 3, in F sharp major Op. 78 and in C minor Op. 111. Tempos that not rarely appear outside the customary usage (especially in the "Pathétique" and in the "Appassionata"), and which trigger interest and surprise, inviting one to listen to this recording over and over again.

And so we realize that Leotta's approach to Beethoven's pianism is all for the dialectic implied in the musicality of these compositions by the master from Bonn, for the musical thought inspired by a philosophical concept, for the harmonic pathway, that develops itself as an ideal ascent.

Christian Leotta convinces and conquers the listener with his refinement and his sapient taste and especially by his attitude of serving music rather than the recording market.

A very well made recording: waiting eagerly for the next volume.

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CORRIERE DEL TICINO

G.A. 6900 LUGANO / ANNO CXXI NUMERO 70

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Sabato 24 marzo 2012

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RECITAL A CAMPIONE

Il Beethoven controcorrente di Christian Leotta

■ Il giovane pianista Christian Leotta si è esibito giovedì sera nella Chiesa Parrocchiale San Zenone a Campione d'Italia, in un récital di elevata difficoltà, sia tecnica sia espressiva. In programma quattro *Sonate* di Beethoven: op. 14 n. 2, op. 53 «Waldstein», op. 49 n. 1 e op. 106 «Hammerklavier».

Molto personali le interpretazioni di Christian Leotta, che comunque danno un tocco particolare alla visione beethoveniana, del tutto condivisibile. La conoscenza della grammatica pianistica non è sufficiente per interpretare il genio di Bonn, è necessario penetrare il suo mondo poetico. Cosa che riesce assai bene a Leotta. I tempi sono generalmente più «allargati» rispetto alla consueta prassi esecutiva di Beethoven, specialmente gli «Adagio», proprio perché il pianista vuole mettere in risalto l'aspetto più interiore del compositore. Risulta quindi un Beethoven più intimistico, maggiormente cantabile, meno veemente e titanico, anche se non mancano i momenti tecnici e virtuosistici «alla Beethoven». In un mondo dove sembra predominare l'aspetto virtuosistico, quasi robotizzato, all'insegna della tecnica e delle note sempre «perfette», prive di sbavature, Christian Leotta sembra andare controcorrente e scova inoltre la riflessione, la meditazione, il raccoglimento, la contemplazione all'insegna di un Beethoven sempre più umano. Aspetti dei quali il mondo moderno sembra avere ognora bisogno. Sia la comprensione spirituale delle musiche pianistiche di Beethoven, che si richiede al loro esecutore, sia il superamento delle non lievi difficoltà possono essere raggiunti solo se si impara a conoscerle e studiarle tutte e trentadue, cosa che ha fatto Leotta (è infatti l'unico pianista, unitamente a Barenboim, ad avere eseguito pubblicamente l'integrale beethoveniana a soli ventidue anni). Poiché se anche un abile esecutore può imparare un singolo pezzo sino a un certo grado di perfezione, pure gli rimarrà estraneo quello spirito e carattere (humor) proprio, quella geniale libertà e quel profondo sentimento per le bellezze che si trovano, talvolta nascoste, nella massa totale delle composizioni di Beethoven e che danno quindi, in un certo senso, la chiave di lettura per ogni singola opera.

L'interpretazione di Christian Leotta va, in definitiva, oltre il classicismo comunemente inteso per approdare allo «Sturm und Drang» e al «Romanticismo» non apertamente dichiarato dagli storici, ma che è un tutt'uno con la musica e l'anima beethoveniana. In questo senso le sue interpretazioni faranno «storia».

Le interpretazioni di Christian Leotta si apprezzano non solo per la tecnica agguerrita, ma anche per la poeticità che questa sa emanare. Magnifico il suo tocco, suadente la sonorità sempre ricercata, continua la ricerca del sound e della timbrica. Un bis: l'«Andante» dalla *Sonata op. 79*, sempre di Beethoven.

ALBERTO CIMA

CULTURA
& SPETTACOLI

Concert Review

THE COUNTERCURRENT BEETHOVEN OF CHRISTIAN LEOTTA

CORRIERE DEL TICINO, Lugano (Switzerland) – March 24th, 2012, by Alberto Cima

A very demanding program, from both the technical and expressive points of view, was performed by the young pianist Christian Leotta on Thursday evening in the San Zenone's Auditorium in Campione d'Italia. The program consisted of four Piano Sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven: the Op. 14 No.2, the Op. 53 "Waldstein", the Op. 49 No. 1, and the Op. 106 "Hammerklavier".

Very personal, the interpretations of Christian Leotta are granting nonetheless a special contribution to the Beethovenian vision, which is absolutely sharable. Mastering an excellent technique is not sufficient to perform Beethoven's music. Something more is necessary and that is a deep understanding of this genius' poetic world. Leotta succeeds in this task very well. His tempos are generally "expanded" in regard to what's considered the usual practice in performing Beethoven, especially the Adagios, precisely because the pianist wishes to bring to light the innermost world of the composer. The ensuing result is, thus, a more intimist Beethoven, greatly cantabile, less vehemently titanic, even though the so characteristic Beethovenian technical and virtuosic passages are not missing. In a world where the virtuosic – at times almost robotic – interpretation seems to prevail, showing just technique and "perfect" notes, totally devoid of any flaw, Christian Leotta seems to go against the tide, bringing forth also reflection, meditation, introspection and contemplation, uncovering thus an infinitely more humane Beethoven. Aspects which today's modern world needs more and more.

Both the spiritual understanding of Beethoven's piano music and the overcoming of major technical difficulties, required from the performer, can only be achieved if the entire corpus of all the 32 Piano Sonatas is mastered, as in the case of Leotta, who is, in fact, the only pianist along with Barenboim, to perform in public the Beethovenian cycle at only 22. Although an able performer can learn a single sonata to some degree of perfection, foreign to him and missing will always be the true Beethovenian spirit and character (humor), the genial sense of freedom and that deep sense of beauty are found, hidden at times, in the entire corpus of his compositions, and give, therefore, in a certain way, the key to the reading of each single opus.

The interpretation of Christian Leotta extends ultimately beyond classicism, as commonly intended, reaching the "Sturm und Drang" and the Romanticism not openly declared by historians, but which are a whole in Beethoven's music and soul. Thanks to this Christian Leotta's interpretations will make history.

Christian Leotta's interpretations are to be appreciated not only for their outstanding technique but also for the poetry that is exuded thanks to it. His touch is magnificent, his sonority is always fascinating and refined, his search for sound and colors is continuous. As an encore, the "Andante" from the Sonata op. no. 79 by Beethoven.

Projet de vie

Christian Leotta offre à Québec l'intégrale des 32 Sonates pour piano de Beethoven

RICHARD BOISVERT

RBoisvert@lesoleil.com

■ Exceptionnel dans toute l'histoire de la musique tant par sa diversité que pour son envergure, l'ensemble des 32 Sonates pour piano de Ludwig van Beethoven représente un vaste univers dont assez peu de pianistes osent faire la conquête. À 25 ans, Christian Leotta, lui, en a déjà fait une sorte de spécialité, d'art de vivre. Dès mardi soir à Québec, il s'y replonge pour la septième fois en carrière.

Piloté par le Club musical de Québec et présenté à la Chapelle historique Bon-Pasteur, l'événement garde bien sûr un caractère toujours très exceptionnel. Il s'agit en fait d'une expérience musicale totale qui invite l'auditeur à non seulement réentendre les sonates les plus fréquentées, mais aussi et surtout à découvrir toutes les autres, celles que négligent la plupart des interprètes, pour enfin considérer l'ensemble dans sa continuité, sa cohérence et son incomparable richesse.

«Aucun autre compositeur, que ce soit Brahms, Schubert, Chopin ou Schumann, n'a, dans sa production, soutenu une telle variété dans la structure comme dans le sens musical, rappelle Christian Leotta. C'est extraordinaire ! Chaque sonate est une expérience unique, chacune est différente de toutes les autres, chacune met en lumière un aspect inédit.»

En outre, constate le pianiste, les sonates pour piano tracent une ligne autobiographique parfaitement évidente. «Toute la vie de Beethoven est là, plus ou moins.»

Jeune mais déjà fort expérimenté, Leotta a présenté sa première intégrale à Montréal en 2002. Les suivantes ont été organisées au Mexique, au Brésil et en Italie, notamment dans la région du lac de Côme, où le pianiste s'est établi.

«Je joue Beethoven en public depuis l'âge de 10 ans, indique-t-il. Depuis, presque à chaque concert, j'ai pris l'habitude d'inscrire une sonate au programme. Cette intégrale est donc le résultat de plusieurs années de travail.» C'est cette longue fréquentation des sonates qui, fort probablement, permet au pianiste d'exécuter chacune d'entre elles de mémoire. Ouf ! Quand on sait que, mises bout à bout, cela représente pas moins de 13 heures de musique !

Pour bien comprendre ce qui pousse un jeune musicien à se mesurer à une telle épreuve, il faut s'enlever de la tête l'idée d'un quelconque défi à relever. Plus, beaucoup plus qu'un exploit, il s'agit d'un véritable projet de vie.

LA BASE D'UNE CARRIÈRE

Diplômé du Conservatoire de Milan à 17 ans, Christian Leotta a poursuivi ses études auprès

du maître Karl Ulrich Schnabel, le fils d'Arthur. «Ce fut pour moi une sorte de révélation. Il connaissait tellement bien les aspects les plus profonds (des sonates), à la fois musicalement, techniquement et philosophiquement. Travailler avec lui m'a permis de vraiment comprendre le style classique, spécialement celui de l'école de Vienne. Ensuite, Charles Rosen, Rosalyn Tureck, Alexis Weissenberg m'ont encouragé à apprendre toutes les sonates.»

«Je joue Beethoven en public depuis l'âge de 10 ans.

Presque à chaque concert, j'ai pris l'habitude d'inscrire une sonate au programme »

Dans les faits, Rosen et Weissenberg avaient eux aussi l'habitude de jouer l'intégrale. «Eux, ils savaient exactement ce que ça représentait. Quand on réussit à jouer 16 ou 20 sonates, une bonne partie du chemin est déjà faite, mais pour comprendre l'ensemble du message, il faut jouer les 32 sonates sans exception. Chaque élément devient beaucoup plus clair parce que, plutôt de l'isoler du reste, on le place dans le contexte global, on le met en relation avec le développement de la forme sonate et celui de l'instrument.»

DEUX INTÉGRALES SIMULTANÉES

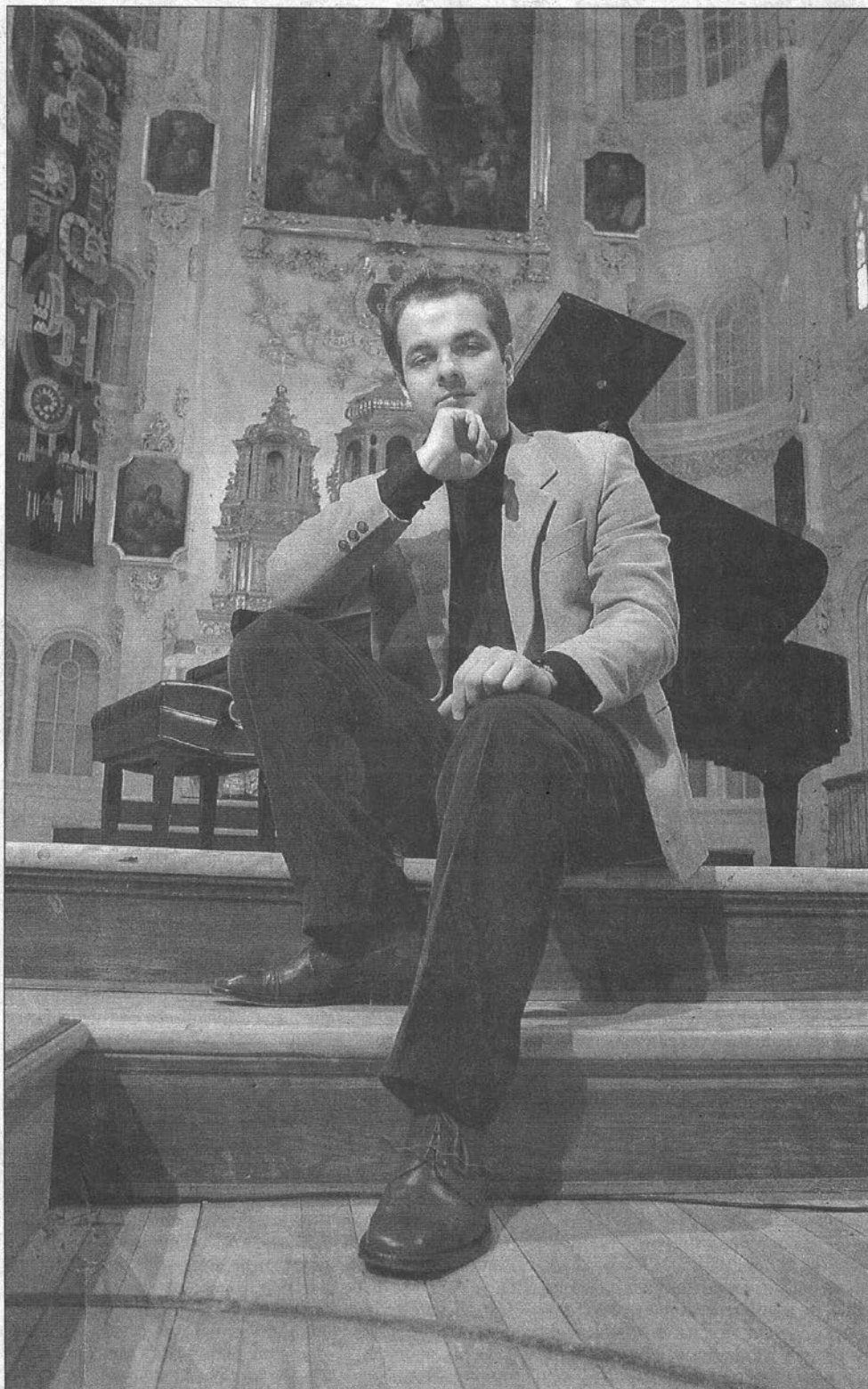
Pour Christian Leotta, son séjour à Québec se distingue de ses expériences précédentes dans la mesure où l'OSQ y offre simultanément l'intégrale des symphonies de Beethoven (les 1^{er}, 3, 8 et 11 mars au Grand Théâtre). «C'est quelque chose d'assez extraordinaire», fait-il avec une joie évidente.

Notons que les sonates ne seront pas présentées suivant l'ordre chronologique de composition. Question de bien montrer la variété des formes et des caractères, chacun des huit récitals propose des œuvres tirées des trois différentes périodes créatrices de la vie de Beethoven.

Précédant le tout premier récital à Bon-Pasteur, une conférence sera prononcée, mardi à 19 h, par la pianiste Monique de Margeri, professeure à la faculté de musique de l'Université Laval.

► Vous voulez y aller ?

- QUOI** : Intégrale des 32 Sonates... de Beethoven
- QUI** : Christian Leotta, pianiste
- QUAND** : du 1^{er} février au 10 mars
- OÙ** : Chapelle historique Bon-Pasteur
- BILLETS** : 20 \$ (un laissez-passer pour les huit récitals est offert à 140 \$) ; 1/2 prix pour les étudiants
- TÉL.** : 643-8131



LE SOLEIL, STEVE DESCHÈNES

« J'aime chaque sonate pour différentes raisons, parce que chacune est différente, explique le pianiste italien Christian Leotta. C'est pourquoi je les considère comme une seule grande œuvre faite de petits univers différents aussi aimables les uns que les autres. »

LE SAMEDI 29 JANVIER 2005

LE SOLEIL

ARTS MUSIQUE

Interview

A LIFELONG PROJECT – Christian Leotta presents in Quebec City the 32 Piano Sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven

Le Soleil, Quebec City (Canada) – Saturday, January 29th 2005, by Richard Boisvert

Exceptional in the history of music both for its variety as well as for its size, the corpus of the 32 Beethoven Piano Sonatas is a vast universe of which relatively few pianists dare to make a conquest. At age 25, Christian Leotta has already made of the interpretation of the Sonatas cycle a sort of specialty, an *art de vivre*. Starting Tuesday evening he will be performing the complete cycle in Quebec City for the seventh time in his career.

Sponsored by the Club Musical de Québec and presented at the Chapelle historique Bon-Pasteur, the event is indeed exceptional. It consists of an all-encompassing musical experience that invites the listener not only to hear again the best-known Sonatas, but also and especially to discover all the others, the neglected ones that most performers ignore, thus, at last, enabling the audience to consider the whole set in its continuity, coherency and incomparable wealth.

“No other composer, whether Brahms, Schubert, Chopin or Schumann, features in his production such a variety from both the structural as well as the musical points of view”, said Leotta. “It’s amazing! Each Sonata is a unique experience, each is different from all others, each discloses a novel aspect in some area”.

“In addition, says the pianist, the Piano Sonatas draw a perfectly obvious autobiographical line. The whole life of Beethoven is there, more or less”.

Young but already very experienced, Christian Leotta presented his first Sonatas cycle in Montreal in 2002. It followed by Mexico, Brazil and Italy... “I have played Beethoven in public since I was ten, says he. Since then I’ve grown accustomed to include a Sonata in the program of almost every concert. This integral is therefore the result of several years of work”. It is this long association with the Sonatas, which most likely allows the pianist to perform each of them from memory. Wow! Being aware of this, played end to end, the Sonatas represent no less than 13 hours of music!

To understand what drives a young musician to measure himself against such an exploit, one has to forget the idea of this being any kind of challenge to defy. Much more than a challenge or a feat, Leotta’s is a lifelong project.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF A CAREER

Graduated from the Conservatory of Milan at 17, Christian Leotta has pursued studies with maestro Karl Ulrich Schnabel, the son of Artur. “Having had the chance of knowing him was for me a revelation, so to speak. He was so knowledgeable of the intricate aspects of the Sonatas from all viewpoints: musically, technically and philosophically. Thanks to working with him, I really got to understand the classical style, especially that of the Viennese School. Then, there were Charles Rosen, Rosalyn Tureck, Alexis Weissenberg. . . They all encouraged me to learn all of the Sonatas”.

In fact, Rosen and Weissenberg used to play the entire cycle of the Sonatas themselves. "They knew exactly what that meant. When one succeeds to play 16 or 20 Sonatas, a pretty good distance is covered, but one has to play the 32 Sonatas without exception to understand the message in its entirety. Only then, each element becomes perfectly clear, since, instead of isolating it from the rest, one integrates it in the overall context and connects it with the development of the Sonata form and that of the instrument".

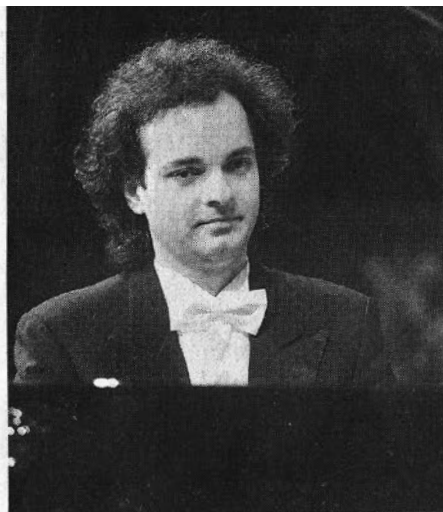
TWO SIMULTANEOUS PERFORMANCES OF BEETHOVEN'S INTEGRALS

As the Club Musical de Québec is offering simultaneously the complete cycle of Beethoven's Symphonies, Christian Leotta's stay in Quebec City is very special to him. "This is quite extraordinary", said he, with obvious joy.

It is to be noted that the Sonatas are not presented in their chronological sequence. In order to show their variety of form and character, each of the eight recitals features works from Beethoven's three different creative periods.

Before the first recital at the Chapelle Bon-Pasteur, a lecture will be given by pianist Monique de Margerie, professor at the Faculty of Music of the University of Laval.





EL INFORMADOR • S. NÚÑEZ

• El primer concierto de la presente temporada de la OFJ contó con la participación destacada como solista del pianista Christian Leotta.

Con Beethoven, en el Degollado

A Leotta solo le faltó levitar

A Christian Leotta no hay que perderlo de vista. Hay que tener su nombre en la memoria los próximos años, porque quizá se cumpla el vaticinio de que será el mejor intérprete de Beethoven de la primera mitad del siglo XXI. De momento, los mejores de las últimas décadas del XX -Brendel, Arrau, Mitsuko Uchida, etcétera- aún le llevan una ventaja: la maestría que dan los años.

Con el antecedente de la magistral interpretación de las 32 sonatas de Beethoven durante el Festival Cultural de Mayo (FCM) de 2008 como tarjeta de presentación, Leotta inició el viernes, en el Teatro Degollado, otra empresa titánica: la interpretación de los cinco conciertos para piano del mismo autor, en tres entregas.

La Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco (OFJ), con su director titular, Héctor Guzmán, en el pódium, aportó el marco artesanal, especialmente en el segundo de los conciertos, en Do menor, Op. 37. El balance entre las distintas secciones de la orquesta se afinó a medida que avanzaba la velada. La concertación del segundo, por ende, fue más pulcra que en el primero.

Leotta, en ambos, confirmó como solista la excelente impresión que había causado como recitalista: técnica impecable, fraseo nítido, interpretación inspirada. Sin detrimento del virtuosismo -patente en las cadenzas de los dos conciertos-, la mayor virtud del joven pianista italiano es la comprensión de la partitura, la identificación con el alma de la música. Si en el segundo movimiento del primer concierto, en Do mayor, Op. 15, fue excelente, en el correspondiente del segundo concierto, Leotta se sublimó: aportó energía, agilidad, lirismo a raudales. En el solo inicial de ese movimiento, con fagot y flauta a la altura de las exigencias del solista, éste desbordó inspiración. A Leotta sólo le faltó levitar.

El programa se complementó con la obertura de *La Novia Vendida*, de Smetana, y la muy prescindible *La Valse*, pletórica en las típicas estridencias de Ravel.

El "pelo en la sopa" del programa apareció en la parte final del segundo concierto: los coheteros con que se celebraba, en la vecina Plaza de la Liberación, el aniversario 467 de la fundación de Guadalajara. Un inconveniente del que quedarán exentos quienes acudan este mediodía al "repris" del programa, a partir de las 12:30 horas.

Jaime García Elías

Concert Review: The Five Piano Concertos and the Choral Fantasy Cycle

LEOTTA ONLY MISSED LEVITATING

El Informador, Guadalajara (Mexico) – February 15th 2009, by Jaime García Elías

“Christian Leotta is a pianist to watch. One must keep his name in mind for the following years, because perhaps the prophecy that he will be the best Beethovenian interpreter of the first half of the XXI century will come true. . .

Having introduced himself in 2008 with a masterly interpretation of the 32 Piano Sonatas by Beethoven performed for the Festival Cultural de Mayo, Leotta began, last Friday at the Teatro Degollado, another titanic undertaking: the interpretation of the Five Piano Concertos by the same composer, performed in three evenings. . .

Leotta, in both Concertos, in C major Op. 15 and in C minor Op. 37, has confirmed, as soloist, the excellent impression he gave us as recitalist: impeccable technique, clear phrasing, inspired interpretation. Without minimizing the virtuosity revealed in the cadenzas of both Concertos, the major virtue of the young Italian pianist is the understanding of the score and the capacity to identify himself with the soul of the music. If in the second movement of the First Concerto, in C major Op. 15, he was excellent, in the corresponding movement of the Second Concerto, Leotta was sublime: he brought forward energy, agility, and a cascade of lyricism. In the starting “solo” of this movement, highlighted by interventions of the bassoon and the flute, rising up to the level required by the soloist, the latter exulted inspiration. Leotta only missed levitating. . .”



• El pianista italiano Christian Leotta hipnotizó al público del Teatro Degollado, en el concierto de la Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco del viernes pasado.

Con Beethoven en el Degollado Leotta volvió a hipnotizar al público

No siempre es cierto que “nunca segundas partes fueron buenas”. El viernes, por ejemplo, en la segunda de las tres sesiones en que Christian Leotta presenta en el Teatro Degollado (con sala y palcos casi llenos) los cinco conciertos para piano y orquesta de Beethoven, el joven pianista italiano ratificó ampliamente la buena impresión que dejó en la velada inicial.

Con Anshel Brusilow como director huésped de la Orquesta Filarmónica de Jalisco (OFJ), el programa incluyó esta vez los conciertos No. 2 en *Si bemol mayor, Op. 19*, y el No. 4 en *Sol mayor, Op. 58*, como platos fuertes.

La ejecución de Leotta llevó el sello de la casa: excelente. La concertación fue eficiente; la dirección, sobria. La interpretación del solista cumplió con creces en las demandas de la partitura, lo mismo cuando debió ser vigorosa (el *allegro con brío* o el *molto allegro* del *Concierto No. 2*, o el célebre *vivace* del *Concierto No. 4*) que cuando debía ser exquisita (la exquisita introducción del No. 4 y los segundos movimientos de ambas obras). De hecho, fue en los movimientos lentos que Leotta mostró nuevamente, como en la interpretación de los conciertos primero y tercero una semana antes, mayor identificación con Beethoven. Merced al respeto casi religioso de Brusilow al tempo de esos pasajes, Leotta logró una ejecución intensa, plena de intimidad. Resultó sobresaliente, en ese aspecto, el *andante moderato* del *Concierto No. 4*, en que resplandecieron los celebrados “silencios de Beethoven”, y el ejecutante hipnotizó, literalmente, a la audiencia, casi obligándola a dejar de respirar para hacer eterna cada una de las notas.

En el *encore* que obsequió (el *adagio* de una sonata del mismo Beethoven), Leotta, inspirado, volvió a poner al público en trance y redondeó otra jornada memorable.

El programa -que se repite hoy, a partir de las 12:30 horas en el mismo escenario, seguramente con buena entrada- se complementó con la *Oberatura Festiva Americana*, de William Schuman (obra “light”, más de corte de comedia musical que de concierto) y el bellissimo -y bastante conocido- *Adagio para cuerdas*, de Barber.

Jaime García Elías

Concert Review: The Five Piano Concertos and the Choral Fantasy Cycle

LEOTTA HYPNOTIZED THE PUBLIC ONCE AGAIN

El Informador, Guadalajara (Mexico) – February 22nd 2009, by Jaime García Elías

“... with Anshel Brusilow as guest conductor of the Jalisco Philharmonic Orchestra, the program has included this time the Concertos No. 2 in B-flat major, Op. 19 and No. 4, in G major, Op. 58, as major works of the evening.

Leotta's performance was excellent. . . He succeeded in giving an intense interpretation, full of intimacy. In the “Andante con moto” of the Concerto No. 4, in which the famous “Beethoven's silences” shined, the performer hypnotized, literally, the audience, almost obliging the public to stop breathing, thus rendering each note eternal.

With the encore that followed (an Adagio from a Sonata of the same Beethoven), an inspired Leotta entranced the public once again and crowned another memorable day”.



Audio Video Club of Atlanta

Phil's Classical Reviews

Audio Video Club of Atlanta

May 2009

by Phil Muse

Leotta's Beethoven the best yet?



ATMA Classique ACD2 2487

Italian pianist Christian Leotta builds on his earlier release in an ongoing cycle with an even more impressive entry of Beethoven Piano Sonatas: Vol. 2. The 2-CD slimline consists of **Sonatas No. 11 in B-flat, Op. 22; No. 21 in C, Op. 53, "Waldstein"; No. 29 in B-flat, Op. 106, "Hammerklavier" and No. 30 in E, Op. 109.** In terms of texture, rhythm, and keyboard effects that are often nothing short of sensational, it's a formidable lineup.

Leotta's skills are more than equal to the task. His tone is beautifully centered, his timing impeccable. His feeling for the rhythm and the degree of energy to invest in any particular passage is flawless, and his dynamic prowess includes a true pianissimo in a variety of discrete shadings. Most significantly, he constantly thinks his way through Beethoven's music, balancing the intellectual and emotive elements so perfectly that we have the exciting awareness of intimately knowing the heart and mind of this composer.

Sonata No. 11 comes across here as Beethoven at his most carefree. The flowing arpeggios in the opening *Allegro con brio* set the tone for a work that will end in a brilliant Rondo with cross-rhythms and syncopations. In Leotta's hands, it seems as if it could go on forever and we wouldn't mind. There's even a quasi-fugal passage that foreshadows what the composer will do in the "Hammerklavier." Sonata No. 30 is another "happy" sonata, but with a difference. Its opening, marked *Vivace ma non troppo*, seems to flow carelessly and easily, like a free improvisation, until it arrives at a sudden cadence, as if the heady dreams of youth were confronted by the sobering thought, "Is that all there is?" A brief, impassioned scherzo marked *Prestissimo* is succeeded, unusually, by a slow finale, marked *Andante* and twice as long as both its predecessors combined. It's in the form of a theme with six variations, which Leotta characterizes beautifully in terms of Beethoven's unusually detailed expressive markings.

In the "Waldstein" Sonata, Leotta takes the *Allegro con brio* opening movement with all the vivacity and high-profile rhythm that it requires, but not with the excessive velocity with which some pianists have endowed it. This, after all, is not the climax of the work. He does a great job with the development section, which is built of the most diverse materials that include some quasi-fugal stuff before the brilliant coda. His remarkable sense of timing really comes into play here in this most dramatic and suspenseful of Beethoven movements. The *Andante* is not a true

slow movement, but the introduction to a Rondo finale that builds in complexity and excitement as it releases the harmonic tensions created by the opening movement. These are pyrotechnics with a purpose, and Leotta conveys it to us in all its explosive vitality.

Leotta's superb sense of pacing and grasp of fine distinctions in musical time receive their ultimate test in Sonata 29, the "Hammerklavier." So does his command of the finely shaded distinctions of *pianissimo* phrasing that we hear at both ends of the remarkable slow movement, *Andante sostenuto*, which is further marked *appassionato e con molto sentimento*, requiring the utmost in the pianist's expressive range. At 19:42 this movement is unhurried without losing any of the vital tension that holds it together. Here, as in the opening movement, Leotta shows a masterful grasp of Beethoven's use of trills and variations in tempi to generate excitement and lead us forward into new and ever more interesting vistas of the imagination. His mastery is undiminished in that massive whirlwind of a double fugue that concludes the work in the most decisive manner imaginable. In a two-year period when we've heard some really distinguished Beethoven performances, this new offering by Leotta may be the best yet.

GRANDI COMPOSITORI

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Il mito

**SPECIALE
BEETHOVEN**

CONTIENE
L'analisi
musicologica
delle opere
del CD

Christian Leotta: the young pianist highly regarded by Schnabel, Tureck and by other great pianists.

**Leotta: il giovane
pianista stimato da
Schnabel, Tureck e da
altri grandi pianisti**



BEETHOVEN Piano Sonatas, Vol. 3: No. 17 in d, op. 31/2 ("Tempest"); **No. 9 in E**, op. 14/1; **No. 13 in E \flat** , op. 27/1; **No. 20 in G**, op. 49/2; **No. 25 in G**, op. 79; **No. 3 in C**, op. 2/3; **No. 10 in G**, op. 14/2; **No. 19 in g**, op. 49/1; **No. 31 in A \flat** , op. 110 • Christian Leotta (pn) • ATMA ACD2 2488 (2 CDs: 154:21)

With this volume, Italian pianist Christian Leotta (b.1980) is more than halfway through his complete Beethoven sonata cycle; there are two more volumes ahead. He has organized the cycle so that each two-CD volume contains a selection representing the three periods of Beethoven's creative life, as can readily be seen in the above headnote.

Leotta's background as a student of the fine pianist/pedagogue Karl Ulrich Schnabel has significantly influenced his interpretive approach to playing Beethoven. Schnabel emphasized the importance of a reliable score, and expected his students to supply themselves with one. (It should be noted that as the modern piano in the second half of the 19th century became as important a fixture in every home as a television set did during the second half of the 20th, publishers brought out often unreliable editions of music as fast as their presses could work.) So it is not surprising to see that Leotta's credits in the notes include a list of the editions he consulted in preparing the sonatas: a facsimile of the first edition by Tecla, Schnabel (Artur)'s edition, and two of the most scholarly and widely respected of contemporary editions, those published by Henle in Germany and Wiener Urtext in Vienna. I mention this only to underscore my belief that Leotta is a seriously dedicated Beethovenian.

In my review of Leotta's Vol. 2 (*Fanfare* 34:1), I was struck by his strict adherence to Beethoven's markings in the music. He observed every nuance of dynamics and phrasing and, especially, pedaling. He has a powerful technique that gives him fluency and strength on the keyboard, and his musical intelligence is compelling. He seemed especially at home with the unbridled energy and vitality of Beethoven's early sonatas, and so it is on this disc in the third of the op. 2 sonatas and the "Tempest" Sonata. All of Beethoven's "simple" works are in this set—that is, the two op. 49 "leichte" (easy) sonatas (the Menuetto, the final movement of op. 49/2, achieved popularity in its reincarnation in Beethoven's Septet, op. 20, composed several years later), and the so-called sonatina, op. 79. Leotta does not breeze through them as if condescending to them, but plays them with the same verve and attention he gives to the other sonatas.

Leotta gives a lovely reading of that profound and lyrical jewel in the crown of the late sonatas, the A \flat -Sonata, op. 110. The first movement is played simply, almost placidly, a calm prelude to the energetic storm of the scherzo that follows. Then there is the Adagio, and its first statement of the *Arioso dolente*—a long, expressive lament—followed by the first fugue, which Leotta plays very steadily and clearly, building up to the return of the *Arioso*, this time transfigured with its little sighing motifs. When the fugue returns again, it is in half voice, empty and emotionless, until it slowly builds again to a massive dramatic climax. A fine and most satisfying performance.

The one aspect of Leotta's playing that I find fault with is his choice of tempos in some slow or moderately slow movements, which are often dragging and too deliberate. In almost all cases, they are considerably slower than Schnabel's (although one cannot always use Schnabel's recordings as a yardstick because of the limitations imposed on him when he was recording the sonatas in the early 30s). Still, one always hears in Schnabel's readings a pushing forward of the music that is important to its flow, and this bears directly on the ultimate shape and interest of the music. Leotta's personality is different from Schnabel's, and it is reflected in his tempo choices. But unquestionably this gifted and intelligent young pianist has a great deal to offer, and his Beethoven cycle, when completed, should prove to be of estimable interest. **Susan Kagan**

Atlanta Audio Society

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New Classik Reviews

Atlanta Audio Society

July, 2008

Christian Leotta: remember his name



ATMA Classique ACD2 2486, 2 CD

Pianist Christian Leotta, a native of Catania, Italy, has performed the complete cycle of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas no less than ten times in musical capitals around the world, beginning in Montreal in 2002. He studied for a time with the celebrated teacher Karl Ulrich Schnabel, who has declared, "The dynamic range of his playing from nearly inaudible *pp* to a powerful *ff* is truly impressive." Not just impressive for its own sake, but for the sake of the most expressive features in Beethoven's writing.

On a specially priced 2-CD ATMA slim line, apparently the pianist's debut recording, we get to hear what the world has been raving about. As Volume 1 in a projected Beethoven cycle, the program consists of **Sonatas Nos. 8 in C minor** ("Pathétique"), **12 in A-flat major** ("Funeral march"), **23 in f minor** ("Appassionata"), **7 in D major, Op. 10, No.3, 24 in F-sharp major, and 32 in C minor, Op. 111**. In their variety, these six sonatas show the broad range of the composer's genius, from classical balance to romantic stress and tumult, and with moods ranging from comically playfulness to impassioned fury and finally deep, peaceful resignation.

Besides his afore-mentioned prowess in dynamics, which must be heard to be fully appreciated, Leotta has a well developed feeling for rhythm and pacing, vital requisites in a Beethoven interpreter, and for the differentiation of keyboard registers, something that was easier to accomplish with the pianofortes of the composer's day than on a modern Hamburg Steinway such as we have in these recordings. Leotta's keyboard technique and interpretive insight form a complete package, which we hear right from the beginning with the "Pathétique" Sonata. Here, the famous nickname notwithstanding, there is much scope for humorous music in the whimsical slow movement and the central episode in the fleet-footed finale. The most remarkable feature of Sonata No. 12 is the slow movement, described as a "Funeral March on the Death of a Hero." Leotta makes much of the movement's orchestral sonorities in the context of a superbly

paced movement. He captures also the real violence in the development section in the Allegro of the "Appassionata," as well as well as the very forceful cadence at the end. And he makes a superb transition from the two diminished seventh chords at the end of the slow movement to the controlled fury of the finale, ending brilliantly in a diabolic maelstrom of jostling, syncopated notes.

Disc 2 begins with the under-sung Sonata No. 7, ranging in mood from light-hearted and impish to surprisingly sad and introspective in the slow movement, marked *Largo e mesto* (broad and sad), before restoring us to good spirits with a classically proportioned minuet and a humorous finale. In Sonata No. 24 Leotta captures the intimate charm of the opening movement as well as the calculated eccentricities of the *Allegro vivace* finale, with its many hand-crossings and sudden dynamic contrasts.

That brings us to No. 32 in C minor, Beethoven's very last sonata. This amazing work is a study in opposing forces, with its contrasts in dynamics, mode, characterization, time and duration. At 22:36, Leotta takes the *Arietta* and five variations that make up the final movement very slowly and expressively, bringing out every nuance with consummate skill and a feeling for musical time that is ultimately timeless.

VENEZIAMUSICA

e dintorni

Note veneziane

Christian Leotta esegue Beethoven

Le 32 sonate in otto concerti a Palazzo Vendramin Calergi

di Chiara Squarcina

Le trentadue sonate di Beethoven sono state le protagoniste dell'impareggiabile capitolo musicale proposto, nel salone delle feste di Palazzo Vendramin Calergi, dall'Associazione Richard Wagner di Venezia e affidato al pianista Christian Leotta. Un programma voluto espressamente dal presidente dell'Associazione Richard Wagner, Giuseppe Pugliese, in quanto da sessant'anni a questa parte non era mai stata riproposta l'integrale delle sonate beethoveniane affidata, peraltro, ad un solo interprete. Un aspetto non marginale perché solo attraverso un'esecuzione complessiva e grazie ad una chiave interpretativa legata ad un solo pianista si può garantire uno sviluppo coerente e consequenziale del discorso pianistico espresso da Beethoven in queste pagine.

L'opera nella sua complessità identifica, infatti, un edificio poderoso che evidenzia i principali passaggi stilistici di Beethoven ma soprattutto le concezioni intellettuali e politiche dello stesso. In queste creazioni convivono, qualche volta anche in maniera contrastante ma sempre equilibrata, l'aspetto più strettamente compositivo e quindi più aulico e quello più legato al versante umano, ovviamente più materiale.

Il non facile compito di focalizzare la complessa maturazione creativa del compositore è stato svolto in modo eccezionale da Leotta che ha saputo costruire con lucidità un evento compiuto, sempre rispettoso della scrittura beethoveniana. La tastiera per Leotta era diventata come una tavolozza inesauribile da cui estrapolare i suoni e le sfumature per creare gli splendidi «quadri» armonico-melodici beethoveniani animandoli con espressività at-



tentamente misurata, mai enfatica.

Così con Leotta le impervie costruzioni stilistiche del compositore sfumano nell'interpretazione per dare la possibilità all'ascoltatore di percepire al massimo la purezza espressiva e la forza della dinamica creativa. Nella sfida, non facile, di proporre queste 32 pagine, Leotta ha compiutamente dato vita a un capitolo pregevole evidenziando, a seconda della sonata, quella costante e, a volte, sotterranea tensione dialettica fra due principi contrastanti: da una parte l'adesione di Beethoven al mondo delle simmetrie formali che egli eredita dalla tradizione classica di Haydn e Mozart, dall'altra la tendenza a inserire in questa organizzazione razionale della materia sonora elementi di contrasto, di impeto e di spregiudicatezza che ne spezzano la linearità, ne turbano la limpidezza, ne tormentano il profilo. Il pianista ha portato alla luce con assoluta coerenza tutti questi aspetti trovando, di volta in volta, un equilibrio consona al tema della sonata concretizzando pertanto un'esecuzione prodigiosamente compatta dove le sfumature che ne costituiscono la peculiare ricchezza sono state illuminate con sapiente maestria. Infatti fra i vari capitoli tematici si sono perfettamente rispecchiati gli slanci che caratterizzano la fase eroica della conquista delle libertà borghesi innalzate a ruolo di sublimi raggiungimenti ideali.

Il tutto esaurito ai singoli concerti, il totale e completo consenso di pubblico nonché la costante forza esecutiva di Leotta, mai venuta meno grazie alla sua incisività e introspezione esecutiva, hanno caratterizzato uno degli eventi più significativi della primavera veneziana. ■

Numero 16 – Maggio/Giugno 2007

Concert Review

CHRISTIAN LEOTTA PERFORMS BEETHOVEN – The 32 sonatas in eight recitals at Palazzo Vendramin Calergi

VENEZIA MUSICA, Venice (Italy) – No. 16, May/June 2007, by Chiara Squarcina

Beethoven's thirty-two Sonatas, interpreted by the pianist Christian Leotta, have been the protagonist of the unparalleled musical event organized in the "Salone delle Feste" of Palazzo Vendramin Calergi by the Venetian "Richard Wagner Society". A program which was expressly chosen by its Chairman, Mr. Giuseppe Pugliese, given that such an event of the complete performance of the Beethoven Sonatas, played moreover by a single pianist, has not been presented in Venice for sixty years. An aspect worthy of note, especially in view of the fact that a coherent and consequential interpretation of Beethoven's Sonatas and of his pianistic aspects, can only be guaranteed by a performance of the complete works if given by a single pianist. In fact, taken as a whole and in their complexity, these compositions identify a powerful structure which brings Beethoven's most important stylistic passages to light and, above all, highlights his intellectual concepts and political ideas. In these creations live side by side, sometimes in contrast but always balanced, the *stricto sensu* creative aspects, which are therefore more elevated and ethereal, alongside those closest to the human dimension, which are naturally more material.

Leotta carried out outstandingly the difficult task of focusing on the complex pathway embarked on by the composer while evolving towards creative maturity. He was capable of lucidly constructing a well-rounded, remarkable event, always respecting Beethoven's musical intentions. The keyboard has become in Leotta's hands an inexhaustible palette from which he coaxed shades and nuances recreating, in harmonies and melodies, beautiful Beethovenian "paintings" in which he instilled life with carefully measured, never emphatic, expressiveness.

As such, the impervious stylistic constructions of the composer acquire new shades in Leotta's interpretation, giving the listener the possibility of perceiving, at the highest level, Beethoven's expressive pureness and his dynamic creative force. In taking on the demanding challenge of interpreting these 32 pages, Leotta has willingly brought to life an extraordinary musical event, highlighting the constant – even though sometimes subterranean – dialectic tension between two divergent principles: on the one hand, Beethoven's adhesion to the world of formal symmetries, which he inherited from the classical tradition of Haydn and Mozart, on the other, his tendency to insert contrasting, impetuous and unconventional elements within this rationally organized music, thus breaking its linearity, disturbing its limpid nature, and tormenting its form. The pianist has brought to life all of these aspects time and again with total coherence, always finding a balance admirably suited to the theme of each Sonata. As such, he gave a prodigiously compact performance whose nuances – which constitute its singular richness – have been illuminated with skilful mastery. In the many thematic chapters, the headlong rushes which mark the heroic phases of the conquest of bourgeois freedoms, lifted up to the role of the attainment of sublime ideals, have been perfectly reflected. Each recital was completely sold out. This, combined with a total and complete consensus from the public and Leotta's steady, forceful performances – present in each recital thanks to his incisiveness and introspection – were the features of one of the most significant events of this Venetian Spring.

ARTS ET SPECTACLES

Leotta, héros de l'intégrale Beethoven

CLAUDE GINGRAS

CRITIQUE

L'Ensemble instrumental Appassionata complétait vendredi soir sa présentation des cinq Concertos pour piano de Beethoven avec autant de solistes. Après un premier concert groupant les deux derniers concertos, ce sont les trois premiers qu'on entendait le dernier soir.

L'Italien Christian Leotta – dont l'intégrale des 32 Sonates du même Beethoven, en 2002 au Bon-Pasteur, nous a surtout laissé de bons souvenirs – donna du troisième Concerto une interprétation de très haut niveau, tant musical que pianistique, et d'un contrôle absolu malgré un environnement orchestral plus approximatif encore que le premier soir. Des cinq solistes, il fut incontestablement le plus fort. Venant en dernier, il dut hélas! se contenter d'un piano à l'aigu passablement faux.

Maneli Pirzadeh, soliste du premier Concerto (qui est en fait le deuxième), mériterait d'être placée ex aequo avec Leotta. Malheureusement, elle s'est trompée au début du premier mouvement et eut par la suite deux moments d'hésitation qui ralentirent son élan. Dommage car l'ensemble de sa prestation fut, comme chez

l'Italien, magnifique de clarté et de musicalité.

La série comportait deux parfaits inconnus qui méritent d'ailleurs de le rester. Celui de vendredi, un Mexicain du nom d'Alejandro Vela qui s'aventura dans le deuxième Concerto, multiplia erreurs et trous de mémoire, changeait de tempo comme il respirait, jouait tantôt mou, tantôt très dur. Pourtant, il y avait là – parfois! – une vraie sonorité de piano et le mouvement lent se déroula sans problème.

En général, le chef et ses musiciens suivaient bien les solistes, mais on nota à l'orchestre bien des imprécisions dans les entrées – et même les sorties! – et bien des fautes individuelles. Comme le premier soir, toutes les cadences étaient celles de Beethoven.

Le programme (le même les deux soirs) ne contenait aucune note sur les œuvres, même pas les titres des mouvements de chaque concerto... mais la photo d'une sculpture intitulée *Concert pour un sourd*. Souhaitons que le destinataire ne soit que le pauvre Beethoven.

ENSEMBLE INSTRUMENTAL APPASSIONATA.

Chef d'orchestre : Daniel Myssyk.

Deuxième et dernier programme de l'intégrale des Concertos pour piano et orchestre de Beethoven.

Maneli Pirzadeh: Concerto n°1, en do majeur, op. 15 (1797-1798).

Alejandro Vela: Concerto n°2, en si bémol majeur, op. 19 (1794-1795).

Christian Leotta: Concerto n°3, en do mineur, op. 37 (1800-1803).

Vendredi soir, salle Claude-Champagne de l'Université de Montréal.

Concert Review

LEOTTA, HERO OF BEETHOVEN'S INTEGRAL

LA PRESSE, Montreal (Canada) – Sunday, November 26th 2006, by Claude Gingras

“Last Friday evening the Ensemble Appassionata has completed the performance of Beethoven’s Five Piano Concertos with as many soloists. After the first concert made up by the last two Piano Concertos, we listened to the first three of them last night.

The Italian Christian Leotta – who left us specially good memories performing in 2002 at the Bon-Pasteur the complete cycle of the 32 Sonatas by the same Beethoven – gave of the Third Concerto an interpretation of the highest level, both musically and technically, and of an absolute control. . . He was without any doubt the best of the five soloists. . .”





THE SUNDAY TIMES

Sunday August 23, 1998

Como is resounding to the sound of music

THE SHORES of Lake Como have always been the preferred refuge for great musicians such as Toscanini; enough to say that the Teatro Sociale was used as a temporary base when La Scala was bombed during the war.

So it comes as no great surprise that the International Piano Foundation should have found its home in this idyllic setting. What is surprising is how it all came about. Its founder is Theo Lieven, a German businessman who abandoned plans for a career as a pianist and opted for the more lucrative world of computers. Now, 20 years on, at the age of 48, he has provided two million dollars to promote the instrument that has always remained his passion.

"I could have created a new music competition but decided instead to do something that no one else has done," he said. "For the money that you pay a musical celebrity to spend a week on a journey, you can get that same person to teach a series of master classes - and I know from my own experience which is the more useful."

What began as a vague dream crystallised when Lieven heard that a 19th century villa beside Lake Como was for sale. He bought it, renovated it and imported six Steinway pianos. Then he appointed the American pianist William Grant Naboré as director of his new foundation.

Naboré set about finding five young pianists with potential enough to merit nine months' free tuition under some of the world's greatest musicians: Karl Schnabel, son of Arthur Schnabel, the great Beethoven pianist who used to live on Lake Como, Rosalyn Tureck, Murray Perahia, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Leon Fleischer, Dame Moura Lympany, Fou Ts'ong, Charles Rosen, Alexis Weissenberg, Dmitri Bashkirov and Stephen Kovacevic.

Most of those whom Naboré approached accepted with alacrity, for the disturbing lack of enduring names to replace past immortals is a cause for alarm in the musical world.

Music has become an industry, and success often rests with these

competitions which treat artists like car models. Each year's winner has to be better than the last. Very often it is not the best player who wins but one who fits the judges' preconceptions. This restricts originality. At the same time, sudden fame can have drastic consequences for a young musician without the experience of coping with the rigours of public and professional life, and many burn themselves out when their careers have scarcely begun. And so from its opening in 1993 the results are just beginning to be noticed in the music world.

The students are not only winning many of the major competitions but are being helped personally by the jury members: One only has to think of the sensational debut by Frederic Guy in London last April and more recently, in June, the Rome debut of five of the students.

Christian Leotta, who is only 19, has already won the Vercelli Competition and is greatly admired by Rosalyn Tureck, with a quite memorable performance of Beethoven's last sonata (op. 111):

Davide Cabassi's extremely rich and sensitive palate reminiscent of Radu Lupu in Schubert's great A minor sonata; Amir Katz's stunning *Don Giovanni* transcription by Liszt, and Naida Cole's amazingly exotic Messiaen, fresh from her triumph in the Van Cliburn Competition in Fort Worth.

Last, but not least, the quite remarkable performance by Katherine Chi. This young Canadian pianist not only gave an incredible account of Godowsky's *Die Fledermaus* transcription, that could not have been bettered by Godowsky himself, but such an extraordinary account of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* sonata that Dame Moura Lympany exclaimed: "My God, that's the sort of person that we should be helping..."

And that, coming from one of the great pianists of our time, is proof enough that indeed Lake Como is resounding to the sound of music again thanks to the enterprise, vision and dream of an all too rare few.

B.S.

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Vivere Musica

La facilità tecnica e musicale di Christian Leotta è immediatamente riconoscibile, ma l'aspetto più straordinario del suo modo di suonare è la sua equilibrata sicurezza, rarissima in uno così giovane. *(Rosalyn Tureck, Aprile 1999)*



**Una nuova,
splendida
esecuzione del
più grande
capolavoro di
L. v. Beethoven**

"Christian Leotta's technical and musical facility is immediately recognizable but the most extraordinary aspect of his playing is his poise, rare in one so young".

Rosalyn Tureck *Vivere Musica*, Rome (Italy) April 1999

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Cultura | 67



Leotta ofreció anoche su octavo recital de sonatas de Beethoven

A.V.

MADRID. El talentoso pianista italiano Christian Leotta ofreció anoche en el Auditorio del Instituto Italiano de Cultura el octavo y último recital de sonatas de Ludwig van Beethoven. A lo largo de las ocho actuaciones que el músico italiano ha venido realizando desde principios de mayo en este mismo escenario, ha interpretado la totalidad de las 32 sonatas para piano, compuestas por el genio de Bonn cuando ya sufría una sordera acuciante.

Esta misma interpretación supuso para Leotta que Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, presidente de la República Italiana, le otorgara en 2004 la Medalla al Mérito Artístico. Esta colección de sonatas que ayer concluía en Madrid lleva recorriendo el mundo con un gran éxito de crítica desde el año 2002, cuando fue presentado en Montreal con otra serie de ocho conciertos. Muchos críticos y aficionados sitúan al joven Leotta en la misma tradición que a Daniel Barenboim.

Concert Review

LEOTTA PERFORMED YESTERDAY EVENING HIS EIGHTH RECITAL OF BEETHOVEN'S PIANO SONATAS

ABC, Madrid (Spain), Friday, June 2nd, 2006

MADRID. The talented Italian pianist Christian Leotta performed yesterday evening in the Auditorium of the Italian Cultural Institute his eighth and last recital of the piano sonatas by Ludwig van Beethoven.

Throughout the eight recitals offered at the above-mentioned venue since early May, the Italian musician interpreted the 32 piano sonatas composed by the hearing-impaired genius of Bonn.

The interpretation of the complete piano sonata cycle earned young Leotta the distinction of the Medal for Artistic Merit bestowed on him in 2004 by the President of the Italian Republic, Hon. Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

The cycle that concluded yesterday in Madrid has been touring the world with great critic success since 2002, when the eight-recital series were performed for the first time in Montréal.

Many critics as well as music lovers are considering that young Leotta belongs to the same tradition as Daniel Barenboim.

DA ASCOLTARE

Christian Leotta, la sfida di un giovane pianista



Christian Leotta

Trentadue sono le "Sonate per pianoforte" di Ludwig van Beethoven eseguite, a partire da oggi, in sette concerti tra febbraio e marzo. Ventitré è l'età di Christian Leotta: il più giovane pianista al mondo, dopo Daniel Barenboim, ad aver accettato la temibile sfida. Ma non sono soltanto i numeri a dare la portata dell'exploit di Leotta, ci sono anche i lusinghieri commenti espressi dalla critica nel novembre scorso in occasione della prima mondiale a Montreal, in Canada. Il debutto italiano ha un sapore del tutto particolare per Leotta che, nato a Catania, a Como è cresciuto

musicamente diplomandosi con il massimo dei

voti e la lode al Conservatorio cittadino "Verdi". In programma per l'apertura dell'Integrale sono tre Sonate: n. 11 in si bemolle maggiore op. 22, n. 21 in do maggiore op. 53 - L'"Aurora" e n. 29 in si bemolle maggiore op. 106. Dopo aver suonato come solista e con orchestre in Italia, America e Giappone, Leotta a metà marzo si esibirà nella Mozart Saal di Vienna al fianco dei Wiener Kammerorchester. A **Como**, Associazione Carducci, viale Cavallotti 7, stasera alle 21. Le altre date sono 5, 12, 19 e 26 febbraio; 4 e 8 marzo. Ingresso a serata 10 euro tel. 031.267365.

Severino Colombo

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News

Da Ascoltare: CHRISTIAN LEOTTA, THE CHALLENGE OF A YOUNG PIANIST

CORRIERE DELLA SERA, (Italy) – January 28th 2003, by Severino Colombo

Thirty two are the “Piano Sonatas” by Ludwig van Beethoven to be performed in seven recitals from February to March beginning today. Twenty three is the age of Christian Leotta: the youngest pianist in the world, after Daniel Barenboim, to accept the formidable challenge.

But there are not only the numbers to underline the importance of Leotta’s exploit, there are also the flattering comments expressed by the press in November of last year, on the occasion of the first world premiere, performed in Montreal, Canada.

The Italian debut has a very special flavor for Leotta, who was born in Catania, grew up musically in Como and graduated magna cum laude at the “Verdi” Conservatory.

Three Sonatas are scheduled to open the cycle: No. 11 in B-flat major Op. 22, No. 21 in C major Op. 53 “Waldstein” and No. 29 in B-flat major Op. 106 “Hammerklavier”.

After having performed in Italy, America and Japan, Leotta will debut this March with the Wiener Kammerorchester at the Mozart Saal of Vienna.



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