

applications of chromaticism that presaged developments that didn't come to full fruition until well into the 20th Century.

The singers of *I Vocalisti* perform impeccably, as do the occasional soloists and instrumentalists involved (organ, violin, and harp). This album is bound to be a real revelation for people who know only the glitzy and self-absorbed showman of his youth and early adulthood. If you're inclined to gain a more complete understanding of this amazing composer's full range of creative genius, this album is essential listening. While you're at it, see if you can find a copy of Carus's splendid release of the *Choralis Mass* and *Via Crucis* that I reviewed in *J/A* 2003: it will acquaint you with Liszt's larger-scale choral works from late in his life—and it, like this album, will move you beyond reckoning. Sound quality is very good, and we get full texts and translations.

KOOB

### **LISZT:** *Piano Concertos; Malediction*

Alexandre Kantorow; Tapiola Sinfonietta/ Jean-Jacques Kantorow

BIS 2100 [SACD] 58 minutes

Unhurried swagger, power held in confident reserve and then unleashed right when you want it, unanimity of vision—conductor, orchestra, and pianist of one mind, one heart—all captured by BIS in sound that's clear, full, and rich, with deeply sonorous bass. This is one of the best discs I've heard all year and among the best ever from BIS—and that's saying something, since BIS routinely produces fantastic recordings.

The stereo program is excellent and the surround-sound SACD layer even better, enveloping the listener in a front-to-back three-dimensional halo that brings the Tapiola Hall into your listening room. And the bass is notably heftier. A phenomenal release in every way, and I hope these artists record the rest of Liszt's works for piano and orchestra.

WRIGHT

**LISZT:** *Hungarian Folk Song 5; Piano Piece 2; Bagatelle sans Tonalite; Michael Mosonyi; Funerailles; Il Penseroso; Au Lac de Wallenstadt; Wiegenlied; En Reve; Cloches du Soir; Feast of Transfiguration; Resignazione; O Heilige Nacht;*

**ADAMS:** *China Gates;*

**RIHM:** *Piano Pieces 6+7;*

**LIGETI:** *Touches Bloquees*

Marino Formenti—Kairos 13292 [2CD] 130 min

Formenti uses some odd, daring juxtaposi-

tions, pairing Liszt's works with contemporary pieces by Adams, Ligeti, Feldman, and others. He attempts to show how Liszt's ideas prefigured 20th Century composers' approaches to tonality and form. Because of his formidable technique and versatility, the project yields unexpected resonances.

I was less satisfied with Formentia's interpretations of Liszt, though his effortless, steady playing is excellent for the contemporary works, many of which demand a measured, calculated approach. He plays 'Au Lac de Wallenstadt' a little too deliberately and slowly, though his touch is smooth. Rihm's Piano Pieces 6 and 7, sandwiching 'Funerailles', are among the most substantial contemporary works, making the most of the full range of the instrument in a similar manner to Liszt. While I have heard more exciting interpretations of 'Funerailles', Formenti's straightforward performance nevertheless has plenty of nuance and conviction.

Beyond any connection to Liszt is the sheer stylistic variety of the contemporary works, from the minimalism of John Adams's 'China Gates' to the dense tone clusters of Galina Ustvolskaya's Sonata 6.

KANG

### **LISZT:** *Songs*

Hein Jung, s; Grigorios Zamparas, p

Centaur 3386—61 minutes

A lovely recording of Liszt songs. It includes the *3 Petrarch Sonnets*; I'm not sure I've ever actually heard them all performed together. Jung has the perfect voice for this music—terrific ease in her upper register and a silvery, clear tone.

The rest of the program includes favorites like 'Oh! Quand Je Dors', 'Comment Disaient-ils', and 'Die Lorelei', as well as *Drei Lieder Aus Schiller's Willem Tell* and the only song Liszt wrote in English, 'Go Not Happy Day'. The latter was the only part of the program that didn't work for me; it's easy to understand why we never hear it.

**Jung and Zamparas are great in each piece.** They're both suited to this music; **Zamparas plays with clarity in each piece** and Jung's voice is just right. I didn't love all the phrasing but they made me think of things in new ways, and there is something to be said for that. Notes but no texts or translations.

HEISEL