



Vintage/Reissues

Liszt Piano Concertos – no.1 S212 in E flat major; no.2 S125 in A major. **Liszt-Busoni** Rhapsodie espagnole S254. **Schubert-Liszt** Ständchen.

Paganini-Liszt La campanella S140 no.3. **Ginzburg** Fantasia on a theme of 'Largo al factotum' from 'The Barber of Seville'.

Grigory Ginzburg (pf).

Vox Aeterna VACD 00101 (Vol.1) **SE** 66minutes **ADD**

Bach-Busoni Prelude and Fugue BWV532 in D major. Toccata and Fugue BWV565 in D minor. Chorale Prelude BWV639 'Ich ruf' zu dir, Herr Jesu

Christ'. Chaconne from Partita no.2 BWV1004 for solo violin in D minor. **Bach-Galston** Siciliano from Sonata no.2 for flute and clavier BWV1031 in E flat major.

Grigory Ginzburg (pf).

Vox Aeterna VACD 00105 (Vol.3, CD1) **SE** 45 minutes **ADD**

Prokofiev Piano Sonata no.3 op.28 in A minor.

Scriabin Four etudes from op.8.

Gershwin Three preludes.

Liszt Réminiscences de 'Don Juan' S418.

Chopin Mazurka no.13 op.17 no.4 in A minor.

Grigory Ginzburg (pf).

Vox Aeterna VACD 00106 (Vol.3, CD2) **SE** 43 minutes **ADD**

Although practically unknown to Western audiences during his lifetime, the legendary Russian pianist Grigory Ginzburg (1904–1961) has attained posthumous recognition through archival releases. The Russian label Vox Aeterna has begun to issue some of Ginzburg's concert recordings in commemoration of his 100th anniversary. Two volumes have been released so far – numbers one and three, with more to come.

The first volume comprises orchestral works by Liszt and a selection of encores recorded on 24 February 1949 at a USSR State Symphony concert under Nikolai Anosov at the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatoire. Ginzburg's affinity to Liszt is well documented and his playing is refined with elegant phrasing and effortless virtuosity. The colourful orchestration of Busoni's *Rhapsodie espagnol* is played with expertise and flair, although the orchestra's rough playing and a poorly balanced recording are major drawbacks making this volume only for diehard Ginzburg fans – who are rewarded by his masterful playing. The encores capture Ginzburg at his best: the instinctively spontaneous and warm Schubert-Liszt *Ständchen*, Paganini-Liszt's *La Campanella*, played in one breath with true elegance and flair, and Ginzburg's own pyrotechnical paraphrase of the 'Largo al factotum' cavatina from Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, played with great panache and humour, and published here for the first time.

Volume 3 features Ginzburg's solo recital of 25 December 1957 at the same hall in the Moscow Conservatoire. The first half is dedicated to Busoni's and Galston's transcriptions of Bach (CD1). Ginzburg's playing of Busoni's organ transcriptions is majestic: the textures are rich and powerful without the slightest percussiveness. Rhythms are strict yet the timing is spacious with a feeling of grandeur and velvety legato. The Chaconne from Partita BWV1004 has continuous momentum, combining great architectonic sense of structure with depth of passion (Michelangelo's famed 1950 recording sounds like a perfectly chiseled sculpture by comparison). The Siciliano BWV1031 in Galston's arrangement, is mesmerising in its sense of timeless wonder, the tender melody well-cushioned in the layers of hushed 'lute' figurations and gently sustained basses. Compare this with Dinu Lipatti's recordings of the same Prelude BWV532 and the Siciliano (in Kempff's arrangement), which come across as cooler, more objective and straightforward.

Ginzburg finds his natural voice in Prokofiev's Third Sonata op.28, which opens CD 2 of Volume 3 (the second half of the recital): there is no forced tone to the music's excitement, which is filled with ingenuousness of expression and long, arching phrases. A similar affinity to the music's style is shown in the four Scriabin etudes from op.8. This is evident in the graceful sweeping lines of the C sharp major, the airy flight of the B flat minor (no.7), a dignified monologue of the other B flat minor etude (no.11), and the total

abandonment and frenzy with which Ginzburg throws himself into the pathetic drama of the final D sharp minor etude. Ginzburg's treatment of the three Gershwin Preludes is unconventional: he was one of the first Russian artists to perform this music after a long ban and was thus unburdened by tradition, imbuing each of the preludes with his own warm interpretation. One of the highlights of this recital is Ginzburg's reading of Liszt's paraphrase of *The Réminiscences of Don Juan*. The cohesiveness and diversity of expression with which he paints different characters and the elemental power and refinement of his pianism are remarkable. His idiomatic performance of Chopin's Mazurka in A minor op.17 no.4 puts a fine finishing touch to this recital.

The booklet essay on Ginzburg, written by A. Kandinsky-Rybnikov, suffers from an awkward English translation by Miriam Fleishman. In spite of that, this is an important release for piano historians and listeners alike.

Dmitry Rachmanov