

REVIEWER'S CHOICE

SELECTED PIANO WORKS

Satie

Schott, ED20200, £10.99

This new collection ranges further afield than most, and samples most periods except the 'Rose Croix'. Besides the *Gymnopédies* and all 6 *Gnossiennes*, we have two waltzes from 1885, the 9 *Danses gothiques* (in which fragments of No 1 are randomly recycled later), the notorious 'play 840 times' *Vexations* (its first performance, under John Cage, took ten pianists nearly 19 hours to complete), *Caresse* from 1897, a cabaret bunch comprising *Je te veux* (at eight pages, an excellent French-restaurant musak-pianist time-filler



though there's no contents page: an irritating omission even if the album does proceed in chronological order.

and my favourite piece in the album), *Jack-in-the-Box* (theatre music later orchestrated by Milhaud), the *Petite Overture à danser*, *La Diva de 'L'Empire'*, the *Piccadilly* march and – the only pieces post-dating Satie's Schola Cantorum spell under d'Indy and Roussel yet still full of silly remarks and musical commonplaces – the *Danse cuirassée* and *Les Pantins dansent* of 1913. The preface is informative, the music layout exemplary and the whole collection great value. My choice of the month,

his articulation-marks remained sloppy throughout. The necessary tweaking here is logical and discreet.

COMPLETE SONATAS II

Scriabin

Bärenreiter, BA9617, £22.50



Owners of the old Dover (still available at £14 or less) or Leeds one-volume albums of all ten Scriabin sonatas may blink at the price of this

new edition of just Nos 4 and 5 (one of four projected volumes at presumably similar prices). Worth considering nonetheless: these remarkable and pioneering works, now nearly a century old, receive a splendid editorial makeover, ushered in by a Foreword from Marc-André Hamelin, no less, and a quote from Boris Pasternak, even less less. The editors have consulted hitherto untouched sources, and offer by way of considerable bonus Scriabin's complete *Poème de l'extase* (the literary poem, that is, not the orchestral masterpiece), all 374 lines of it. A fragment of this is routinely quoted at the head of most editions of Sonata No 5, usually in Russian and French; Bärenreiter now provide the whole thing in German plus Fabion Bowers' English translation of 1996 (sniggerers should note line 41: 'Eilt er dahin, er tollt,' or 'It is transported, it tittups'). They have even unearthed a little-known poem written *post hoc* to accompany Sonata No 4. The music is wildly exhilarating, and fiendishly hard to play; the spacious new layout makes it look a bit easier though the slight increase in page-count throws more page turns the way of the hard-pressed pianist. No 5, incidentally, is the sonata containing Scriabin's unintentionally hilarious footnote to the player: 'this note [just one of a torrential cascade almost entirely blackening the page] may be omitted in emergency.'

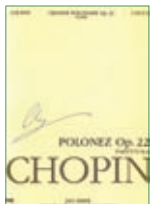
GRANDE POLONAISE
OP 22

Full Score

Chopin (ed Ekier)

PWM, €9.95

ISBN 978-83-87202-84-2



This is the piano-and-orchestra piece prefaced by the lengthy solo *Andante spianato* (literally 'planed' smooth, as in woodwork),

properly included here. The *Polonaise* fireworks are fun for the soloist, less so for the orchestra (oddly including one trombone but no trumpets). This publication, part of Jan Ekier's much sought-after though sometimes hard-to-find Chopin National Edition, picks carefully through the usual minefield of inconsistent slurrings *et al*. This full score, however, is mildly unhelpful for conductors and orchestration students: Chopin's original clarinet and horn parts (for instruments in C and E \flat respectively) have here been needlessly transposed 'for modern readers' into the more familiar B \flat and F. This move obscures Chopin's horn writing, particularly his selective

deviations (for special effect) from the basic written C-E-G harmonics to which contemporary horns were generally limited. A mistake, I fear, especially in a scholarly edition.

BALLADE IN F MAJOR
OP 38

Chopin (ed Mülleemann)

Henle Urtext, HN936, £5.50



This new Henle nicely supplements Jonathan D Bellman's entire book on the piece (*Chopin's Polish Ballade, Op 38 as Narrative of*

National Martyrdom, OUP, £27.50).

Chopin himself sometimes played the easy first section alone, so strugglers may authentically do likewise. Henle's edition is clean, with helpful preface and *in situ* footnotes pointing out alternative readings. For £8.95 or thereabouts you could get all four Ballades in Jim Samson's definitive Peters edition (No 7531, reviewed October 2006), but you'd lose Henle's unfussy but useful fingerings – Samson is for scholars and has no fingerings at all. The very first phrase-

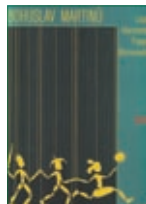
mark is different in both, too.

PUPPETS

Books 1-3

Martinů

Bärenreiter Prague, H7970, £18.00



Collectors of misleading numbering in music (Bach Cantatas, Haydn and Dvořák symphonies, Beethoven's first

two piano concertos) should add Martinů's 'Puppets' to their lists forthwith. Composed piecemeal between 1917 and 1925, their publication into three books happened in reverse order (yes, Book 3 coming first). Teachers will recognise several Grades 4-to-7/8 exam options from the recent and distant pasts: charming and often wistful, these are ideal 20th-century items for the nervous. Martinů diehards will want all 14 pieces, others maybe just Book 2 (same publisher, £8.00), reviewed here in August 2006. Aspiring editors should note that although Martinů's own notation improved with experience,



REVIEWED BY MICHAEL ROUND

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