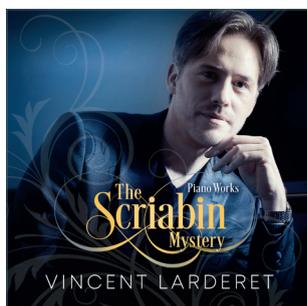


## SOLO REPERTOIRE



**The Scriabin Mystery**  
Works by Scriabin and Kelkel  
**Vincent Larderet** *pf*  
Avie AV2500

Vincent Larderet offers a comprehensive survey of Scriabin's oeuvre. Ranging through the early Chopin-inspired Etudes to the Second Sonata (inspired by the composer's first glimpse of the Baltic Sea), he arrives at both the *White* and *Black Mass* Sonatas (Nos 7 and 9), *Vers la flamme* and finally the Op 74 Preludes – far-reaching experiments which however dark for the listener became part of a haven of light for the composer.

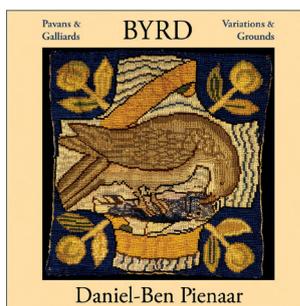
Finally, and by way of a tribute and encore, there is *Tombeau de Scriabin* by Manfred Kelkel (1929-1999).

Scriabin is among Larderet's favourite composers and his energy and burning commitment are strongly in evidence throughout his programme. But if intensity is clearly of the essence in Scriabin's Romantically fraught and tremulous world, it can be so relentlessly applied that it becomes self-defeating.

Opening with the popular C-sharp minor Etude Op 2/1, Larderet makes it clear that this is not 'watered-down Chopin' (a once widely accepted view in France) but he can be bold to the point of aggression both here and in a tub-thumping emphasis in the G-sharp minor Etude Op 8/2. Again, while I applaud the inclusion of the *Prelude and Nocturne for the Left Hand*, I would have liked a greater sense of sustained vocal lines.

You miss Pogorelich's razor-sharp attack in the Second Sonata's turbulent finale where Larderet lets the relentless forward propulsion to slacken. He is more successful in the necromancy of the Ninth Sonata, his stealthy opening a promise of nightmarish things to come. Avie's sound is as bold and dramatic as the playing.

**BRYCE MORRISON**



**Byrd Pavans and Galliards, Variations and Grounds**  
**Daniel-Ben Pienaar** *pf*  
Avie AV2574 – 2 CDs

Daniel-Ben Pienaar's two-disc set of keyboard music by Byrd, performed on a modern piano, follows on from Kit Armstrong's DG album of Byrd and Bull reviewed in Issue 75. Pienaar's approach is more robust and intent on conveying the earthiness of Byrd, though some listeners may prefer DG's crystalline sound over the warmer Avie.

As the 400th anniversary of Byrd's death nears, this interest is surely a good thing – can the Elizabethans become core piano repertoire? Pienaar includes two complete sets of Pavans and Galliards (those in *My Lady Nevell's Book* and *Parthenia*). He clearly



**Rarities of Piano Music at Schloss vor Husum 2021**  
DACOCD 939

With this disc the Husum Festival celebrates 35 years of delighting audiences with the byways of the repertoire. And although there are occasional reminders that all that glitters is not gold, the slant on tireless exploration is exemplary.

Yet how significant that the music which truly leaves its mark is by Schubert, Liszt and Rachmaninov. You may warm to the languid charms of Hahn's *Le ruban dénoué* or be dazzled by the reeling aplomb of the Duo Berlinskaya & Ancelle in Alexandre Tsfasman's 'Career' from his *Jazz Suite*, but when it comes to Schubert's *Hungarian Melody*, where the Hungarian idiom is so magically transformed, you enter a world far beyond entertainment. The same can be said of Zlata Chochieva's Liszt (the second *Valse oubliée*) and Rachmaninov (Prelude in F major, *Morceau de fantaisie* in G minor and that tour de force, *Oriental Sketch*). Overly free in the hallucinatory half-lights of the Liszt she is superb in the Rachmaninov.

Pride of place, however, must go to Peter Froundjian, the festival's founder and artistic director. In Issay Dobrowen's Medtneresque *Jugend Sonate* and Rued Langgaard's 'The Sea

of Silence' from *Gitanjali-Hymner*, Froundjian's expressive beauty and haunting cantabile confirm his love of all things Romantic.



**Rarities of Piano Music at Schloss vor Husum 2022**  
DACOCD 949

The music of Charles-Valentin Alkan (1813-1888) is at the heart of this issue. All four offerings by four different pianists (including Marc-André Hamelin, Alkan champion *par excellence*) speak of a delight in being able to turn away from the over-familiar or commercially acceptable. A reminder, too, of Alkan's gentle as well as his more ferociously demanding virtues.

Lovers of adventurous repertoire will surely delight in Billy Eidi's warmly expressive playing of 'Les muletiers devant le Christ de Lliva', an extended, inward-looking rhapsody by Déodat de Séverac (1872-1921). Clare Hammond takes us on a dextrous whirl through 'Fairy Knoll' by William Grant Still (1875-1978), while Mel Bonis (1858-1937) offers a graphic depiction of Ophelia's fate.

There are a few enervating examples of music with too little to say but Husum's booklet notes are outstandingly informed and Danacord's recorded sound is excellent.

**BRYCE MORRISON**