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Haydn · Ligeti

Haydn Piano Concertos^a - No 4, HobXVIII/4;
No 11, HobXVIII/11. Capriccios - 'Acht
Sauschneider müssen sein', HobXVII/1;
Fantasia, HobXVII/4 Ligeti Piano Concerto^a.
Two Capriccios

Shai Vosner *pf*^a Danish National
Symphony Orchestra / Nicholas Collon
Onyx © ONYX4174 (80' • DDD)



Shai Vosner, the
Israeli-born pianist
now based in New
York, already has

several well-received solo discs to his credit, encompassing repertory by Schubert, Brahms, Sciarrino and Mazzoli. For his first recording with orchestra, he collaborates with the Danish National Symphony under Nicholas Collon in an interesting combination of concertos by Haydn and Ligeti, interspersed with solo pieces.

Unlike the Mozart concertos, Haydn's seem to present unusual obstacles when performed on modern pianos with full-size orchestras. Vosner's performances demonstrate that solutions to these challenges are possible, even using a concert grand. Both his Haydn concertos are fresh, agile, lithe and never less than expressive.

Vosner's plentiful embellishments derive from the organic structure of the phrase and always seem apt. As is often the case in Beethoven, Haydn's slow movements also seem to encompass the physical heart and *raison d'être* of the entire work. If the eloquence achieved in both *Adagios* derives from Vosner's poised rhetoric, much of their atmosphere is creditable to the tactful acumen of Collon and the Danes. Though not so distant stylistically (both concertos are thought to have been composed within four years), each speaks with a strikingly individual voice.

Naturally it is in Ligeti's 1988 Piano Concerto that the DNSO get to unfurl their full colours. During the course of five kaleidoscopic movements, a hand-in-glove ensemble is immediately apparent. Ligeti's compelling document of late-20th-century sensibility is revealed with finely calibrated attention to detail and an almost luridly sensual array of sonorities.

From this dazzling display of colour and sound, soloist and ensemble convey a fundamental humanity so appealing that the concerto's 18 minutes seem over before they have begun.

The three large concerto gems are set in paired bouquets of Capriccios – Haydn's from 1765 and 1789, and Ligeti's set from 1947 – in performances that amplify and complement. I think few would disagree that, in terms of concept and execution, this is Shai Vosner's finest recording to date. **Patrick Rucker**

ORCHESTRAL REVIEWS



Pianist Shai Vosner (left) collaborates with conductor Nicholas Collon in Haydn and Ligeti on Onyx