

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

PIANO

From **The Sunday Times**

August 2, 2009

Haydn: Piano Sonatas Vol II, Marc-André Hamelin

Hugh Canning



In 2007, Hamelin recorded 10 of Haydn's mature piano sonatas in a two-disc set. It was a surprise, because the Canadian klaviertiger is prized above all for his staggering feats of bravura in the Romantic repertoire. His Haydn demonstrated not only that the pianist was a classicist at heart, but that this music, among the most neglected aspects of the composer's oeuvre, deserves to be taken as seriously as the piano works of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. Now he has selected another 10 sonatas and added the sparkling Fantasia, or Capriccio in C, a brilliant opera buffa number characteristic for its mercurial wit and full of Haydnesque surprise, for eight fingers and two thumbs. As always, Haydn's originality astonishes and delights in his piano music as much as it does in his symphonies and string quartets. Hamelin revels in the high tongue-in-cheek jinks of the finale to the E minor sonata (No 34), marked *Vivace molto* (innocentemente) — very lively, but innocently! Most of the sonatas follow the early classical three-movement pattern, but the latest work (1793) on the disc is the single-movement work in F, ironically entitled *Un piccolo divertimento* (a little diversion), which is a lovely set of variations alternating between minor and major. Written for the gifted amateur Babette Ployer, it is one of the jewels of this set. Hamelin is especially compelling in the great C major (No 48) and E flat major (No 49) sonatas, works that rank with the finest creations of the Viennese Classical period. An unmissable bargain at two-discs-for-the-price of one.

Hyperion CDA67710

Colbert Artists Management

111 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019

www.colbertartists.com ~ 212-757-0782