

MARC-ANDRÉ HAMELIN

PIANO

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CLASSICAL NOTES

CHOPIN LIST

by Russell Platt

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“Is there a composer who blends shadow and substance as unforgettably as Chopin? The music invades our soul but also stands apart with an aristocratic reserve; the melodies quiver with sensitivity but arise from an intricate web of counterpoint that emulates Bach. And we will never get enough of it, as a new batch of recordings proves.”

“Marc-André Hamelin, the Canadian phenom who made his bones by offering stupendous performances of near-forgotten works by such composers as Alkan and Busoni, has reached middle age, and with it the standard repertory. In an album on Hyperion, he brings his effortless dexterity, columnar tone, and intellectual insight to such pieces as the Piano Sonata No. 2, in which he gives an improbable coherence to the work’s jump-cut transitions, bizarre motivic gestures (as in the Funeral March), and asymmetrical forms. (His mercurial interpretation of the beloved Nocturne in D-Flat Major, Op. 27, No. 2, is at once fastidious and disturbing.) The logical precision and structural balance of the Sonata No. 3 leave him slightly at sea; a listener may prefer to double back to the warm equanimity of Nadia Reisenberg, whose performance, on the appealing four-disk Bridge release devoted to her (“A Chopin Treasury”), is a model of mid-twentieth-century conservatism. ♦”

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111 West 57th Street, New York, NY 10019
www.colbertartists.com ~ 212-757-0782