Bartók, Liszt, Prokofiev – Chamber Music (1999)

Prokofiev - Quintet for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola & double bass in G minor, Op. 39 *1. Tema (Moderato). Variation 1 & 2 5:10 2. Andante energico 2:47 3. Allegro sostenuto, ma con brio 2:12 4. Adagio pesante 3:08 5. Allegro precipitato, ma non troppo presto 2:38 6. Andantino 4:34 7. Liszt - Concerto pathétique (I & II), for 2 pianos, S. 258 (LW C18) 18:32*
Bartok - Contrasts, pieces (3) for clarinet, violin & piano, Sz. 111, BB 116
8. I. Verbunkos (Recruiting Dance) 5:07 9. II. Piheno (Relaxation) 4:31 10. III. Sebes (Fast Dance) 7:02
Martha Argerich – piano Michael Collins – clarinet Richard Woodhams – oboe Chantal Juillet – violin Isabelle van Keulen – viola Nelson Freire – piano

The presence of Martha Argerich is the selling point on this rather haphazard collection of live recordings from the 1998 Saratoga Festival in California; she plays in both the two-piano Concerto Pathétique (with Nelson Freiere) and Bartók's work for clarinet, violin and piano (with Michael Collins and Chantal Juillet). As one would expect from performers of this calibre, the music-making is consistently high class. Argerich and Freiere have great fun with the self-conscious grandeur of the Liszt; Contrasts is full of pungent textures and sharp rhythmic bite. The Prokofiev Quintet for oboe, clarinet, violin, viola and double bass is an eccentric rarity, which began life in 1924 as the music for a ballet, when the composer was trying strenuously to maintain his modernist credentials in Paris. ---theguardian.com

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