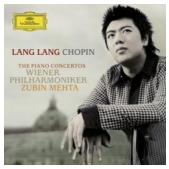
Chopin - The Piano Concertos (Lang Lang) [2008]



01] Piano Concerto No. 2 In F Minor, Op. 21: I. Maestoso 02] Piano Concerto No. 2 In F Minor, Op. 21: Ii. Larghetto 03] Piano Concerto No. 2 In F Minor, Op. 21: Iii. Allegro Vivace 04] Piano Concerto No. 1 In E Minor, Op. 11: I. Allegro Maestoso 05] Piano Concerto No. 1 In E Minor, Op. 11: Ii. Romance (Larghetto) 06] Piano Concerto No. 1 In E Minor, Op. 11: Iii. Rondo (Vivace) 07] 12 Etudes, Op. 10: No. 3 In E "Tristesse" Lang Lang – piano Vienna Philharmonic Zubin Mehta – conductor

Given the complexity and depth of expression heard in the two piano concertos of Frédéric Chopin, it's sometimes easy to forget that they are in fact youthful works, written only a short time after completing his studies at the Warsaw Conservatory. They were instrumental in cementing Chopin's reputation both as a performer and composer during his early premieres. Despite the now-customary numbering and gap in opus numbers, the two concertos were written within only about a year of each other, with Concerto No. 1 actually written before Concerto No. 2. The present recording of pianist Lang Lang and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Zubin Mehta does a splendid job of overcoming some of the shortcomings inherent in these works. The orchestral tuttis, often criticized as being derivative and poorly scored, are played with exceptional vigor and intensity. Mehta treats the accompanimental passages as what they truly are: vehicles to enhance the piano part; the dialogue between soloist and conductor is fluid and seamless. Lang Lang's playing deftly avoids the trap of over-romanticizing or over-indulging in rubato. Lang Lang cites Artur Rubinstein as one of his primary inspirations for Chopin interpretation; this is quite clear in these recordings. Both Lang Lang and Rubinstein trod the fine line between lush Romanticism and outright sappiness, and both pull a rich, lush tone from their instruments. Whereas Rubinstein's performances were notoriously marred by technical errors and over-pedaling to cover them, Lang Lang's playing is as technically precise as it is musically. Throughout the recording, listeners are presented with a true sense of intimacy and closeness to the piano's sound; recorded sound quality is well-rounded and balance between orchestra and piano is exceptional. --- Mike D. Brownell, Rovi

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