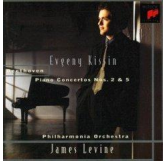


Ludvig van Beethoven – Piano Concertos 2 & 5 (Kissin) [1997]

Written by bluesever

Wednesday, 21 October 2009 16:35 - Last Updated Friday, 23 August 2013 10:58

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1. *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19/I. Allegro con brio* 13:39 2. *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19/II. Adagio* 9:10 3. *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 2 in B-flat Major, Op. 19/III. Rondo. Molto allegro* 5:45 4. *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73 "Emperor"/I. Allegro* 20:56 5. *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73 "Emperor"/II. Adagio un poco mosso (attacca)* 9:10 6. *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 5 in E-flat Major, Op. 73 "Emperor"/III. Rondo. Allegro* 9:52 Evgeny Kissin - piano Philharmonia Orchestra James Levine - conductor

I am not a big fan of Evgeny Kissin or James Levine, although I respect both of their talents and impressive discographies. When I listen to Beethoven Piano Concertos, I tend to go for Kempff/Leitner (DG), Rubinstein/Leinsdorf (RCA), Barenboim/Klemperer (EMI), or Ashkenazy/Solti (Decca). But when I read in AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE's 2003 BEETHOVEN OVERVIEW of the excellence of this recording - I respect their reviewers' opinions - I checked it out on Amazon.com, and bought my own copy.

I'm very happy that I did. Levine sets tempos which are fresh and youthful, showing Beethoven as the young virtuoso. The Age of Enlightenment, an optimism that the world was getting better, a trend of the late 1700s/early 1800s, shines through in Kissin's and Levine's interpretations. We could really use this optimism in our current, post-9/11 age, even while facing facts about how things are. (This recording was made in 1997, if that's important to you). Kissin's virtuosity is secure and without question; if he doesn't plumb the depths of Beethoven's soul as say Backhaus, Edwin Fischer, or other pianists of a few generations ago have done, I can settle for the emphasis on youthful virtuosity.

Both Piano Concerto 2 (Beethoven's 1st completed piano concerto, but the 2nd to be published, dating from 1795) and the later "Emperor" Concerto (No. 5) benefit from Kissin's and Levine's

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interpretation. Pianist and conductor work as a team, and are in complete accord with one another. I recommend this, and would it be too much to hope for that Kissin and Levine record Beethoven's Piano Concertos 1,3,and 4 to make a complete cycle of all 5 Beethoven Piano Concertos? ---Alan Majeska, amazon.com

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