Saint-Saëns - Piano Concertos (2004)



1. *Concerto for Piano no 1 in D major, Op. 17*
2. *Concerto for Piano no 2 in G minor, Op. 22*
3. *Concerto for Piano no 3 in E flat major, Op. 29*
4. *Concerto for Piano no 4 in C minor, Op. 44*
5. *Concerto for Piano no 5 in F major, Op. 103 "Egyptian"*
6. *Wedding Cake – Caprice Valse Op. 76*
7. *Africa Fantasie Op. 89*

Jean-Philippe Collard - piano
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
André Previn – conductor

As a tourist, Camille Saint-Saëns felt compelled to climb every mountain and ford every stream. As a composer, however, Saint-Saëns felt perfectly comfortable staying at home with the most conservative of late nineteenth century composers. Indeed, in his piano concertos, Saint-Saëns sounds less like a late nineteenth century composer than like a Gallic Schumann, a composer of tuneful, virtuoso works that delight and beguile by rarely soaring and never challenging. Even in these warmly affectionate performances by pianist Jean-Philippe Collard with André Previn leading the Royal Philharmonic, Saint-Saëns sounds like a stay-at-home composer. The works are superbly crafted and the performances are brilliantly effective with Collard's impressive playing and Previn's sympathetic accompaniment. But while they are charming enough as they happen, they are forgettable once they are over. No one who listens to these discs will regret it but few will want to do it more than once. ---James Leonard, Rovi

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