

The Chopin Scherzos – Rubinstein (1960)

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1 No. 1, Op. 20 In B Minor 9:07 2 No. 2, Op. 31 In B-Flat Minor 9:46 3 No. 3, Op. 39 In C-Sharp Minor 7:17 4 No. 4, Op. 54 In E 10:58 Arthur Rubinstein – piano

Magnificent, vintage Chopin here, acting as a timely reminder of why Artur Rubinstein's interpretations of this composer's music are held in such high esteem. These are considered, mature readings with no trace of self-serving virtuosity about them.

The Scherzos offer a fair amount of surprises. The chords of the opening of the First is almost petulant, the speed and clarity that follows is simply amazing; and Rubinstein has a gently rocking contrasting section that never even hints at being somnambulant. Although all four offer much to the listener, again there is one that stands out, this time a magisterial Scherzo No. 2 in B flat minor. Rubinstein's delicacy remains in the memory, as does his sonorous 'chorale' ... as does the evenness of his left-hand accompaniment to the famous cantabile right-hand melody. Characteristically, the use of the sustaining pedal is kept almost to a minimum, allowing Chopin's voice-leading to speak clearly.

Throughout this disc, Rubinstein's search for clarity, his emphatic refusal to use the music to serve his own ego and his evident respect for Chopin's text make for compelling listening. --- Colin Clarke, musicweb-international.com

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