



Johannes
BRAHMS

Sergei
RACHMANINOV

Jouni SOMERO
piano



The Brahms Intermezzi (1892) Opus 117 (1892) No.1-3 form a cycle of programmatic piano works. Brahms called these three Intermezzi, "three lullabies to my sorrows." The first two intermezzi were inspired by the ancient english poem, "Lady Ann Bothwell's Lament" by Herder. It has been stated by one source that the Intermezzo No. 3 was also based on one of Herder's poems. However, it is most likely that this intermezzo was inspired by the poem "Victor Galbraith" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Through harmonic, rhythmic and textural variation, Brahms vividly interpreted the text expressed in these poetic works.

Sergei Rachmaninov completed the **Piano Sonata No.1 in D minor** in 1907, shortly after the second Symphony. The three movements constitute three portraits from literature: Faust, Gretchen and Mephistopheles. Rachmaninov entrusted **Konstantin Igumnov** (1873-1948) with the world premiere of the sonata on 17th October 1908 in Moscow. This was the first time one of Rachmaninov's piano works had not been premiered by the composer but Rachmaninov was unable to attend the performance.

If the work's epic length, unrelieved emotional intensity and extreme difficulty have contributed to its comparative neglect...

Jouni Somero (b. 1963) is one of the most active Finnish musicians on the scene today. So far he has given over 3,000 concerts all over the world, including Australia, Japan, Ukraine, Spain, Suisse, France, Germany, Sweden, Estonia, Kosovo, Russia, Brazil, Canada and Finland. He began studying the organ when he was eight years old but switched to the piano at the age of 12, studying the latter in Switzerland and at the Music Academy in Cologne under Professor Herbert Drechsel. Under the legendary Hungarian pianist Georges Cziffra he gained a deeper insight into the music of Liszt. Michael Ponti, the American virtuoso, has also acted as Somero's musical advisor. From 1981 to 1989 Somero lived in Germany, working as an assistant at the Music Academy of Düsseldorf and in other capacities. Since 1990 he has pursued his career solely as a concert pianist. He was awarded a diploma at the International Music Competition in Rio de Janeiro.

Jouni Somero's recording career began in 1989 (with Liszt's 12 Transcendental Etudes), since when he has made about 100 discs for different labels (Naxos, BMG, MILS, Jubal, FC-Records etc.). These include Bach's Das Wohltemperierte Klavier and Die Kunst der Fuge, Liszt's Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses, Liszt's transcriptions of Beethoven's sympho-

nies 1 and 5, Rebikov's Piano Works, Henselt's Concert Etudes Op. 2, Schubert's Wanderer Fantasy, Sonata B and Impromptus op.90, Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition, Rachmaninov's Piano Works (Vol.1-4), An Anthology of Finnish Piano Music (Vol. 1-5) and the world premiere recording of several piano works by Felix Blumenfeld, Benjamin Godard, Hans Seeling and Hugo Reinhold. He also recorded the complete piano music of Sergei Bortkiewicz (Vol.1-9) Pjotor Tshaikovsky (Vol.1-6) Toivo Kuula and Erkki Salmenhaara. Somero's wide repertoire includes all the solo piano works of Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky, Bortkiewicz, Salmenhaara and Kuula as well as seldom heard music by such composers as Alkan, Godard, Arensky, Godowsky, Henselt, Thalberg, Cui, Glinka, Blumenfeld, Rebikov, Reinhold, Seeling, Rubinstein and Gottschalk. Somero has also made many piano arrangements of orchestral, operatic and pop music.

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Sergei Bortkiewicz: Complete Piano Works



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