



Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 5 (Emperor) and Choral Fantasy

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN: Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat Major "Emperor" · Choral Fantasy

Boris Berezovsky, piano · Swedish Chamber Orchestra Örebro · Thomas Dausgaard, conductor · DR Vocal Ensemble and Choir

Berezovsky pedals sparsely, letting his sharply honed fingers do the work with eloquence and just the right force. The Rondo is a good example of how fanciful dynamic hairpins enhance rather than detract from Berezovsky's stylish brio and continuity. The musicians take the Adagio's "Un poco mosso" directive to heart. Many pianists understandably and effectively liberally stretch the right hand cantabiles for expressive purpose. Conversely, Berezovsky applies rubato discreetly and generates genuine tension, observing the phrase markings that begin and end between beats. [Jed Distler / ClassicsToday.com]

The 12th and final volume of Beethoven's Complete Orchestral Works is ready! Concluding the Complete Orchestral Works of Beethoven, this vol. 12 finds Thomas Dausgaard, Boris Berezovsky and the Swedish Chamber Orchestra on top form.

Though close to each other in date, the two works on this disc, which are the last in which Beethoven wrote for piano and orchestra together, are in other respects quite dissimilar.

Emperor

The Fifth Piano Concerto – known (almost exclusively within the English-speaking world, incidentally) by the nickname of the 'Emperor' – was Beethoven's last completed work in the genre. It is a standard piano concerto, or so it seems to us, because it was uniquely influential in defining the form for the next 100 years. To its first audiences it must have seemed highly individual, and even idiosyncratic. The Choral Fantasy, on the other hand, appears to us an unorthodox, even unique conception, much freer in form, as befits the title 'fantasy' which Beethoven chose for it. Yet both are entirely characteristic of the composer in their deployment of a structure that served the purposes of the content of the work itself to its greatest advantage.

The series has received outstanding reviews throughout:

- If you're in the mood, it's like driving a Beethoven Porsche: strap yourself in, start the engine, and let her rip. [Laurence Vittes / Audiophile Audition]
- the recording is gorgeous: beautifully balanced, wide in dynamic range and utterly natural in timbre, with an arresting presence that illustrates how effective a small (38-piece) orchestra can be in this repertory. [International Record Review, Mortimer H. Frank]
- a recorded performance of compelling truthfulness [...] A recording which will stand the test of time [...] A life-affirming recording. [The recommended recording of the Triple Concerto, Building a Library, Hilary Finch / CD Review BBC3]

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Complete Orchestral Works, Concerto, Orchestral, Complete, Choir, Piano

"– Med plate nummer 12 runder orkesteret under ledelse av Thomas Dausgaard av dette prosjektet – den eneste komplette syklusen med Beethovens komplette symfoniske musikk – inkludert konsertene – med samme orkester, dirigent og solist. Tolkningene som her foreligger er definitivt noen det er verdt å studere i ens søken etter en mer inderlig forståelse av Beethoven [Magnus Andersson / Klassekampen]"



"– The playing of Berezovsky is just as assured as in the concerto and I would say that the vocal contributions are about the best I have heard in this music.

– It is a scintillating performance, vital with springy rhythms: brisk but not breathless, rather big-boned but nuanced. Berezovsky is fleet-fingered and poetic but has the requisite power to make the conclusion of the first movement grandiose. – general listeners who want fresh and riveting readings in superb sound of the two works here, will arguably search in vain for something that surpasses this disc. It goes straight to that close-at-hand shelf with favourite recordings of favourite repertoire. [Göran Forsling / MusicWeb]"



"– In the Choral Fantasy, Dausgaard's penchant for crisp chordal attacks and timbral diversity demonstrates the virtues of the period instrument influence minus the mannerisms. Note Berezovsky's combination of virtuosic flair and classical poise in the opening unaccompanied cadenza, and the performance features one of the best integrated vocal ensembles to be heard in any recorded version. [9/10 Jed Distler / Classicstoday.com]"



"– A minimalist performance of the most maximal of Beethoven's piano concertos, the Piano Concerto No. 5 in E flat major, Op. 73 might seem a tall order, but this recording has the virtues of the others in Dausgaard's series and can be recommended as long as you know what you're getting into. One attraction is the exceptional sensitivity of the interplay between Dausgaard and pianist Boris Berezovsky, who often supplies a marvelous dancing quality when Dausgaard opens up the texture. [J]"