

and slowing down does not mean losing momentum as surge and sweep are always kept to the forefront. The Adagio offers the necessary relief, while his aching lyricism is still directed forward. With the Presto and final Allegro fugue we are given volume without pounding and sparkle without brittleness. This easily joins my favorites (Curzon, Fleisher, Lewis, Richter—there are others) as representing the best in the current catalog.

Right on the heels of Jeffry's Schubert Sonata in A (below) is this fine one from Schuch. They are both well attuned to the sonata's needs and embrace its loveliness fully. Schuch rolls the opening chord and is the more dramatic in this undramatic work. Jeffry's is more reflective and inward. If I lean more to the latter, it's simply a matter of enjoying an ultra-refined lyrical wallow without indulgences. Both are superlative in every way, and both will give the listener great satisfaction. I do love the way Schuch gives an added rhythmic lift beginning measure 44 of the last movement.

Janacek's much sparer sonata is in two brief movements. There was a third movement funeral march, but the composer burned it shortly before the premiere. In this program Schuch sees the work as a "funeral march, framed by the dashing *Wanderer Fantasy* and the bright A-major Sonata". He further claims to have decided on this after listening to the recordings. The listener need not feel any obligation to view it this way.

Most listeners will immediately recognize the Janacek sound world. The music is powerfully expressive and aching with meaningful thoughts and pauses to which Schuch responds magnificently. I cannot think of another performance I prefer to this one. I also cannot think of another young artist seemingly able to get inside of any music he plays and to recreate it from the inside out. Sound engineering is terrific, and the notes are brief and informative. Get your wallets open for this one.

BECKER

SCHUBERT: *Piano Sonata in A, D 664;*
Impromptus, D 899;

DEBUSSY: *Images I*

Jai Jeffryes

Steel Wig 0—72 minutes (800-BUYMYCD)

Jeffryes studied with Barbara Wasson of Dayton, Ohio, James Ruccolo at Arizona State University, and Steven De Groote at Texas Christian University. Now a resident of New York City, he keeps active in musical circles and is an avid dancer of Argentine Tango. This is his first recording, and he makes a very positive impression.

These are gentle performances, all quite lovely and all played with affection. Jeffryes

lets the music unfold naturally and never seeks to call attention to himself. There are no aberrations and absolutely nothing in the way of quirks and dare-to-be-different distortions. His sound is always mellow and falls most graciously on the ear. Even the faster Impromptus draw from poise and charm rather than from fire and brimstone.

Listeners will also find Jeffryes taking pains to make contrast between *f* and *mf*, *mf* and *p*, as well as *p* and *pp* dynamics. These often slide by without notice, but here they actually sound different. The Steinway D has rarely been treated with such respect.

If the C-minor Impromptu is played a little more staccato than I prefer, it is a choice that I can accept from this pianist in view of his traditional approach to the others. With unflinching fingers I can see some listeners feeling that too much caution is applied. That is not my finding at all, and listening several times has been a continually rewarding experience.

The Debussy *Images* are impressionist essays that have been treated in every which manner over the years, from gauze-soaked marshmallows to brightly lit sun-stinging crystalline jewels. Jeffryes leans towards the impressionist, but uses dynamic shading extensively rather than relying on an abundance of pedal. All works well and reveals an impressive and even technical apparatus that makes these gems speak with a fully satisfying voice.

Jeffryes enters the realm of young artists of great promise. No notes.

BECKER

SCHUBERT: *Songs*

Florian Boesch, bar; Roger Vignoles, p

Hyperion 68010—65 minutes

In his excellent notes for this program Richard Wigmore writes, "The final lines of 'Der Wanderer' ("There, where you are not, is happiness!") and 'Der Pilgrim' ("and the There is never here!") encapsulate a recurrent theme of German romantic art: the rootless outsider. It is the world of Goethe's mysterious Harper and Mignon, and of the solitary, silhouetted figures in the darker landscapes of Caspar David Friedrich. In music it found its supreme expression, not only in Schubert's *Winterreise* but in these many individual "wandering" songs: some grimly resigned, some serenely contemplative, others imbued with a sense of physical and spiritual isolation and longing for a finally unattainable 'otherness'."

The program of 19 songs (titled "Das Wanderer") presents the theme of wandering and travel in a variety of expressions. Each in some way is a metaphor for existential isolation: facing the forces of nature ('Der Schiffer'), longing

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