

COOK SOUNDS OF OUR TIMES

long play 1038

piano

the Romantic fabric

CHOPIN • GRANADOS • LISZT • SCRIABIN

SAMUEL SORIN pianist



PIANO *the romantic fabric*



VIRGIL THOMSON, commenting on a Carnegie Hall performance wrote: "His are a master's technique and a first class tone . . . phrase and volume were musicianly, and the dynamic range from whispering soft to grandly singing loud. There was love in Mr. Sorin's performance." In an age distinguished by its wealth of fine young pianists, Sorin is unique. For one thing he probably holds an all-time record for winning competitive prizes — starting at the age of 12 in Detroit, and including the important Schubert Memorial Award.

IT IS hard to think of Beethoven and Chopin as contemporaries. Comparing the dates of their life spans, however, shows an incredibly swift transition from the classical Beethoven to the romantic Chopin. Beethoven died when Chopin was 17, and Chopin's death occurred only 22 years later. In these few years not only did the very nature of music change, but with Chopin, the new romantic approach reached heights which still remain unsurpassed.

The fact is, by some fragile chemistry of forces, the artistic climate was exactly ready for the new element in music: the free emotional expression we call *romanticism*. Today, over one hundred years later, our response to this music is still strongly colored by its power.

Samuel Sorin's program on this record explores the essence of romanticism. These selections do not attempt to define; rather, each exemplifies a different approach to romantic music. Heard here as a program, they comprise an uncanny revelation . . . of the romantic fabric.

THE FANTASIE in F MINOR is a work of the mature Chopin. It emerged from Chopin's most intensely creative period, two years late in his life after he had already suffered serious attacks of the disease which was to prove prematurely fatal. The series of masterpieces composed during this period are often explained by dwelling on his passion for Madame Sand which was at its height at the same time. Of equal importance perhaps is the fact that Chopin had reached the zenith of his powers and he was possessed by the compulsions of his own musical

maturity. Whatever the explanation, the *Fantasie* is one of Chopin's greatest and most sweeping works. *Greatest* is an understatement when applied to a composer who changed the face of music, devised new harmonies, originated new forms and extended piano technique a century ahead of his time. For the romantic tradition of the piano, this composition is a landmark.

* THE MAIDEN AND THE NIGHTINGALE by Enrique Granados is the gem of a collection called *Goyescas*. These are musical portraits suggested by the tapestries and paintings of Goya. With these, Granados created the special elegance we now associate with modern Spanish piano music. A virtuoso pianist himself, he uses the piano with an extraordinary sense of poetry . . . a distillation and refinement of Chopinesque magic. In the "Maiden" he creates a moment of enchantment which has no parallel in piano literature. In 1916 Granados died, a victim of a submarine attack as he was returning home from the premiere of an opera version of *Goyescas* at the Metropolitan.

LISZT was a stormy and competitive contemporary of Chopin. They were subjected to comparison as pianists . . . sometimes on the same program. The thundering Liszt was completely overpowering in a large concert hall . . . undoubtedly a reason for Chopin's preference for the intimate *salon* performance. Historically, however, they were giant collaborators in shaping a new musical tradition — Chopin with composition, Liszt with the instrument.

Liszt's career as a virtuoso was already established at 16, and continued to his death

at 75. At 28 he was the first to ever give an entire program of piano solos. He inaugurated the custom of playing the piano side-wise to the audience, *thereby assuring a clear view of his celebrated profile!* He revolutionized the art of piano showmanship in every detail — even to his entrance wearing gloves which he flung grandly to the floor before starting. An incidental by-product of his bewitching flair was the growth of the piano as the supreme medium for romantic music.

Of all of Liszt's 1400 compositions with their technical sorcery, none are more alive today than his HUNGARIAN RHAPSODIES. Their earthy gypsy melodies give them an exuberance and reality which assure their permanence in piano repertoire and the warm affections of listeners.

* In the Scriabin NOCTURNE FOR THE LEFT HAND ALONE, (Op. 9 No. 2) the Chopin heritage is clear. As with so many other later composers, this well-spring was the basis for an intensely personal musical development. In his later work Scriabin devised a new harmonic idiom for music which expressed his own mystic-religious creed. Like Chopin he was a pianist. He composed in many forms developed by Chopin including *preludes, nocturnes, etudes* and *mazurkas*.

The recording situation used for this record was identical with #1039: BEETHOVEN - PIANOFORTE. Both used the same piano, concert hall, microphone placement and equipment.

**Available in Monaural Only*

another SOUNDS OF OUR TIMES recording by

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