

Nikolai KAPUSTIN (b. 1937)

| Eight Concert Etudes, Op. 40 (1984) | 27:59 |
|---|--------------|
| □ No. 1 Prelude | 2:25 |
| 2 No. 2 Rêverie | 4:19 |
| 3 No. 3 Toccatina | 2:29 |
| 4 No. 4 Reminiscence | 5:26 |
| 5 No. 5 Shuitka (Raillery) | 2:40 |
| 6 No. 6 Pastoral | 3:10 |
| 7 No. 7 Intermezzo | 4:31 |
| 8 No. 8 Finale | 3:00 |
| 24 Preludes in Jazz Style, Op. 53 (1988) | 47:14 |
| | |
| | 2:05 2:07 |
| Till Prelude No. 2 in A minor | 1:38 |
| 111 Prelude No. 3 III G major 112 Prelude No. 4 in E minor | 1:36 |
| 73 Prelude No. 5 in D major | 2:00 |
| M Prelude No. 6 in B minor | 2:00 |
| 15 Prelude No. 7 in A major | 1:28 |
| 6 Prelude No. 8 in F sharp minor | 1:37 |
| 77 Prelude No. 9 in E major | 2:47 |
| 18 Prelude No. 10 in C sharp minor | 1:54 |
| Prelude No. 11 in B major | 2:21 |
| Prelude No. 12 in G sharp minor | 2:14 |
| 21 Prelude No. 13 in G flat major | 2:37 |
| 22 Prelude No. 14 in E flat minor | 1:14 |
| 23 Prelude No. 15 in D flat major | 2:11 |
| 24 Prelude No. 16 in B flat minor | 1:38 |
| 25 Prelude No. 17 in A flat major | 1:46 |
| 26 Prelude No. 18 in F minor | 2:16 |
| 27 Prelude No. 19 in E flat major | 1:21 |
| 28 Prelude No. 20 in C minor | 1:52 |
| 29 Prelude No. 21 in B flat major | 1:27 |
| 30 Prelude No. 22 in G minor | 2:29 |
| 31 Prelude No. 23 in F major | 2:00 |
| 32 Prelude No. 24 in D minor | 2:50 |

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Nikolai Kapustin (b. 1937)

Eight Concert Etudes, Op. 40 · 24 Preludes in Jazz Style, Op. 53

Few composers have bridged the divide between the classical and jazz worlds as effectively as Nikolai Kapustin. Born in Golovka, now in Ukraine, on 22nd November 1937, he studied piano with Avrelian Rubakh, a pupil of Felix Blumenfeld, then with Alexander Goldenweiser at the Moscow Conservatory. During the 1950s and 1960s, he built up a reputation as a jazz pianist, composer and arranger, working with a number of big-bands and jazz orchestras as well as individual pianists and ensembles. vet claims always to have been a classical composer who happens to write music in a jazz idiom. Although his focus on composition came only latterly (his Op. 1, a Concertino for Piano and Orchestra, dates from 1957 and by 1980 he had reached only Op. 30), he has become increasingly prolific and had reached Op. 140 by 2009. To date his output includes six piano concertos, several concertos for solo instruments, music for orchestra or big-band. ensemble and instrumental works, collections of shorter pieces for piano, and no less than eighteen piano sonatas. all but one composed over the last two decades. For many years his music was known largely through his own recordings, but over the past quarter-century increasing numbers of pianists have taken up his works so that they are now viewed as a significant component of the Western post-war piano repertory.

Although his solo piano music takes in the broad spectrum of jazz pianism from Scott Joplin to Keith Jarrett, Kapustin has often cited Oscar Peterson as his single biggest influence; one that can be heard, moreover, in the ease with which he manipulates and, over the course of a single piece, transforms its melodic and rhythmic essence in a manner notably akin to the jazz legend's skill when improvising upon a given motif or melody. This, in turn, is what most attracted Kapustin to the tried and tested forms of the classical legacy, whether in the (generally) multi-movement format of the sonata or in short pieces that can be grouped according to an expressive mood or a specific method. The two collections featured on this disc respectively exhibit each

of these tendencies, and while jazz procedures are never far below the surface in either, their connection with études and preludes to be found in classical music from earlier eras is not to be gainsaid.

The Eight Concert Etudes (1984) have become the locus classicus of Kapustin's approach. Although they can be performed separately or in smaller groups (and several are now regarded as standard encore fare equivalent to those of Chopin and Liszt), they take on an undeniable cohesion and proportion when performed as an integral sequence. One of the most diverting aspects of this music is the way in which other composers can seem to be alluded to, even quoted directly, only for that which seems to be referenced being the creation of Kapustin.

Prelude opens in hectic abandon, melody and accompaniment finely intertwined as the music pursues its headlong course. Rêverie begins reflectively, taking on greater emotional thrust before regaining its poise. Toccatina is as propulsive as its title implies, evoking memories of the bravura pianism of an earlier era as it unfolds. Reminiscence is all limpid figuration and intricate passagework, winding down to a gently undulating motion before its close. Raillery then focuses on bristling syncopation and stride playing in the most jazz-like of all these studies. Pastoral is more animated as well as unpredictable than its generic title might suggest. Intermezzo betrays little evidence of classical precedent. sauntering on its way with an unflagging wit and relish. Finale than rounds off the sequence with a revisiting of the abundant energy of the initial study and concludes with a scintillating flourish.

The 24 Preludes in Jazz Style (1988) are among the most significant such cycles in the modern piano repertory, not least in their traversing the same key-sequence as that established by Chopin and later followed by such Russian composers as Rachmaninov and Shostakovich. Allied to this is their open embrace of the gamut of jazz idioms – whether blues, swing, stride or even funk. Not that any of these styles draw attention to

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themselves, any more than Kapustin's music evokes their famous exponents other than in terms that are uniquely and inimitably its own.

No. 1 exudes a nonchalant wit and a pulsating energy, both of which are characteristic of the cycle as a whole. No. 2 opts for a capricious demeanour that takes on a rather greater degree of reticence as it proceeds. No. 3 introduces a blues inflection, one that reinforces its easy gait and covertly smouldering emotion. No. 4 makes inventive play of a repeated-note accompaniment as it heads by on its lively course. No. 5 is among the most elegant and poetic of the cycle, centering on a melody of undoubted finesse. No. 6 is a study in harmonic resilience and rhythmic alacrity, and one that proves wholly engaging on its own terms. No. 7 embodies wit and sophistication, redolent of that inter-war era often referred to as the 'iazz age'. No. 8 is among the more oblique and recalcitrant of the cycle, elegant and inscrutable by turns. No. 9 is the longest and most likely the deepest in expression, exuding a nocturnal spirit all its own. No. 10 then returns to the fray with a vengeance, its chords and figuration seeming to fall over each other. No. 11 is a further study in frustrated expectation, one whose rhythmic profile is teasing and tardy by turns. No. 12 marks the cycle's mid-point with a capering study, which

additionally takes in a host of jazz idioms. No. 13 is among the most distinctive and appealing, not least for its nimble harmonic side-slips. No. 14 is a study in propulsive figuration, with an unstoppable energy curtailed only by the double barline. No. 15 draws upon a wide range of rhythmic puns, put into effect over the length of the keyboard. No. 16 builds a notable degree of expressive momentum, mainly through the reiteration of its primary motif. No. 17 again draws on earlier twentieth-century practice, as is evident in its breezy manner, No. 18 amounts to a theme and variations, witness the frequently elaborate play on its initial phrase. No. 19 might almost be a signature-piece for the cycle as a whole, notably for its ready wit and rhythmic brio. No. 20 is another slow number, exuding a melodic poise thrown into relief by ironic asides. No. 21 is guicker in motion, a fact disguised by its harmonic and rhythmic subtleties. No. 22 is probably the most classical of the cycle, unfolding via a sustained development and reprise. No. 23 is among the most affable and engaging, alluding to a melody that stays out of reach. No. 24 is a fitting end to the cycle, drawing on previous elements in a compendium of irresistible verve

Richard Whitehouse

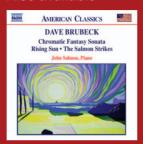
Catherine Gordeladze



Born in Georgia and now living in Germany, the pianist Catherine Gordeladze has earned critical acclaim as a recitalist, orchestral soloist and chamber musician. Her concert activity includes participation in major festivals, broadcasts and television transmissions. She is the winner of several international competitions. Her recent engagements include solo appearances at the Engelberg Piano Festival, the Bad Homburger Schlosskonzerte with the South-West German Chamber Orchestra Pforzheim, the Munich Philharmonic Hall at the Gasteig in the Winners and Masters series, and at the Hessischer Rundfunk Frankfurt in its lunchtime concert series. She received her musical training in Tbilisi, Frankfurt, and Weimar, graduating with a concert diploma. Her début CD Hommage à Haydn, for Ars Musici, has attracted particular attention.

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Nikolai Kapustin built his reputation as a jazz pianist during the 1950s and 1960s. Staking a claim as a classical composer who happens to work in a jazz idiom, he cites Oscar Peterson as his single biggest influence. The Eight Concert Etudes balance stylistic allusions to long established pianistic tradition with an exuberance which has made them favourite encores. Using the same key-sequence as Chopin and Shostakovich, the extraordinary 24 Preludes in Jazz Style exude nonchalant wit and pulsating energy.

Nikolai **KAPUSTIN** (b. 1937)

18 Eight Concert Etudes, Op. 40 (1984) 27:59

9-32 24 Preludes in Jazz Style, Op. 53 (1988) 47:14

Catherine Gordeladze, Piano





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This recording was sponsored by the con moto Foundation A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet

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