



24 Preludi
per pianoforte
OP 38

KABALEVSKY

pianoforte

Maria Gabriella Bassi



KABALEVSKY, DMITRY BORISOVICH (1904-1987)

24 Preludi per pianoforte OP 38

Maria Gabriella Bassi pianoforte

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | Andantino <i>in do maggiore</i> | 13 | Allegro non troppo <i>in fa diesis maggiore</i> |
| 2 | Scherzando <i>in la minore</i> | 14 | Prestissimo possibile <i>in mi bemolle minore</i> |
| 3 | Vivace leggero <i>in sol maggiore</i> | 15 | Allegretto marcato <i>in re bemolle maggiore</i> |
| 4 | Andantino <i>in mi minore</i> | 16 | Allegro tenebroso <i>in si bemolle minore</i> |
| 5 | Andante sostenuto <i>in re maggiore</i> | 17 | Andantino tranquillo <i>in la bemolle maggiore</i> |
| 6 | Allegro molto <i>in si minore</i> | 18 | Largamente con gravità <i>in fa minore</i> |
| 7 | Moderato e tranquillo <i>in la maggiore</i> | 19 | Allegretto <i>in mi bemolle maggiore</i> |
| 8 | Andante non troppo. Semplice e cantando
<i>in fa diesis minore</i> | 20 | Andantino semplice <i>in do minore</i> |
| 9 | Allegretto scherzando <i>in mi maggiore</i> | 21 | Festivamente. Non troppo allegro
<i>in si bemolle maggiore</i> |
| 10 | Non troppo allegro ma agitato. Recitando, rubato
<i>in do diesis minore</i> | 22 | Scherzando. Non troppo allegro
<i>in sol minore</i> |
| 11 | Vivace scherzando <i>in si maggiore</i> | 23 | Andante sostenuto <i>in fa maggiore</i> |
| 12 | Adagio <i>in sol diesis minore</i> | 24 | Allegro feroce <i>in re minore</i> |

Immagine di Teresa Ciulli

Translated from the Italian by Sara Donahue

Digressione
contempl **A**TTIVA

Progetto direzione artistica: **Girolamo Samarelli**
www.digressionecontemplativa.org

COMPACT **DISC** Digressione
DIGITAL AUDIO **Contemplativa**
© & © 2011 - DCTT15

24 PRELUDES FOR PIANO OP. 38 (1944)

notes by Maria Gabriella Bassi

This work brings together twenty-four piano miniatures in which the Russian soul – with its typical style drenched in colours and delicious dissonances – explodes in a blinding kaleidoscope of characters and emotions.

Dedicated to his teacher Nicolas Miaskovskij, the Preludes are some of the most interesting compositions by Kabalevsky, a composer of rare formal balance, whose hallmarks remain his simplicity and clarity of technique.

Kabalevsky is true to the classical tradition in which the preludes must touch upon the 24 tonalities, and from this tradition he also gleans the intuitions of the great composers who shaped the course of piano history, from Liszt (in Prelude no. 10), to Debussy (in Prelude no. 11), to Musorgskij (in Prelude no. 13). The folk element is always of central importance: traditional songs and folk references resound throughout the lines of the melodic theme in all the preludes.

Listening to the Preludes it seems possible to see all the characters created by the pens of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Pushkin, almost as if the music had been inspired by great Russian literature.

During the interpretative work on these marvellous Preludes, I noticed that an “intimate” atmosphere was created thanks to their brevity and the compositional structure of each of the pieces. The quality of Kabalesky’s music in this work touches deep and delicate inner chords without ever abandoning the “Russian” piano style, which is traditionally spirited and powerful.



Maria Gabriella Bassi

1. Andantino in C Major

A fragile curtain opens the series of preludes.

The right hand ambiguously introduces the tonality with an almost undecided alternation between A natural and A flat, shifting then to the left for an accompaniment that is only rhythmically linear, while a cantabile melodic tune of simple beauty is then doubled in sixths up to the delicate finale.

2. Scherzando in A Minor

Brilliant and expressive, typically Slavic dance rhythms soon make themselves heard in this piece.

3. Vivace leggero in G Major

A rhythmically well-defined theme emerges in a vortex of speed and lightness, making use of both hands alternately, and then dissipating in a rapid and invisible finale.

4. Andantino in E Minor

An ancient song

The theme is a sad song which seems to evoke the toil and dignity of the peasants in the Russian countryside and acquires an aching pitch when it focuses on the difficult chromaticism entrusted to the left hand.

5. Andante sostenuto in D Major

The two hands compete in a theme of eloquent and solemn spatiality, which echoes traditional religious songs.

6. Allegro molto in B Minor

Fireworks

Notably difficult because of the coordination of the hands in unison with speed, like fireworks which reach their destination with enthusiasm.

7. Moderato e tranquillo in A Major

This prelude has an aching tenderness and graciously offers supremely soft phrases, childlike lullabies and Slavic rhythms. From a simple incipit, the piece is enriched with sweet, dancelike details.

8. Andante non troppo. Semplice e cantando in F Sharp Minor

What are you doing, moon, up in the sky? Tell me what you are doing, silent moon?
(from the “Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell’Asia” /”Nocturnal song of a nomadic Asian shepherd” by the Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi)

This is one of the loveliest preludes thanks to the lunar beauty of its melody as well as its design, both structurally and in timbre, which are similar to some of the experiments by Erik Satie.

9. Allegretto scherzando in E Major

This is a lighthearted dance which the composer seems to use to create a sort of ironic improvisation.

10. Non troppo allegro ma agitato.

Recitando, rubato in C Sharp Minor

A stately prelude that is unmistakably a homage to the romantic piano style, from the rhapsodies of Liszt to the preludes of Sergei Rachmaninov.



Maria Gabriella Bassi

11. Vivace scherzando in B Major

This prelude alternates the lightness of the theme with the complex interweaving of all the compositional elements, from its chromaticisms to the difficult “volatines” played in arpeggio. The refined chromaticisms celebrate Debussy’s harmonic-timbre lesson in his piano studies.

12. Adagio in G Sharp Minor

Exotic atmospheres are evoked by frequent changes in tempo, up to the lull of the central part which mutates into simple quaternary tempo. The result is similar to the contemporary classical language.

13. Allegro non troppo in F Sharp Minor

Almost evoking Musorgskij, Kabalesky masterfully makes use of the keyboard’s potential in an intersection of themes, rhythmic elements and volumes of sound.

14. Prestissimo possibile in E Flat Minor

Alternating hands form a single stream of sound in difficult positions, above all because of the need to respect the proportions of timbre. The approach to the central theme appears at times almost to be an obstacle to the flow of the sonorous material which resumes its tortuous and impetuous path until it suddenly disappears in the finale.

15. Allegretto marcato in D Flat Major

This is a brief and sunny musical parenthesis, in which the martial rhythm is not an obstacle to the playful ingenuity of the theme until its tongue in cheek finale.

16. Allegro tenebroso in B Flat Minor

In the forest

Over a relentless ostinato, a disquieting theme emerges from the bass and slowly rises to high registers, in chromatic intervals up to a fierce finale.

17. Andantino tranquillo in A Flat Major

A sensual and lunar lullaby which revolves around a harmonic idea developed in syncopation.

18. Largamente con gravità in F Minor

On the mountain

A dense chordal notation makes it difficult to define the melody. Arpeggios moving the two hands in opposition make it possible to see, even visually, the difficulty of an ascent as arduous as it is desired.

19. Allegretto in E Flat Major

With continuous alternation between 4/8, 3/8 and 2/8, the chords played in arpeggio, the swift scales on the left and the continuous leaps of the right hand make this prelude one of the most difficult for technical and interpretative performance.

20. Andantino semplice in C Minor

The theme echoes back to a childlike song which is countered by the insertion of embellishments of dissonance and countermelody, evoking a perception of the past as an oasis of happiness.

21. Festivamente (Non troppo allegro) in B Flat Major

The term “festivamente,” or “festively,” is the perfect introduction to the powerful character of the piece, in 5/4, which finds its joyous and free character in the asymmetrical alternation of its rhythmic accents.

22. Scherzando. Non troppo allegro

in G Minor

The melodic lines seem to try to stand out, in the search for a thematic stability which sometimes appears, but deceptively, above all because of the constant staccato and the phrases which do not support the metric rhythm.

23. Andante sostenuto in F Major

A solo theme in the medioacuto register, almost a prophetic voice, is countered in the bass by a chromatic line, an almost feeble resistance. The tale unwinds later in a central part, up to the unison of the two hands.

24. Allegro feroce in D Minor

The longest of the preludes engages its performer in all registers and all timbres of the piano, requiring, first, maximum sound power (see the approach to the *Meno mosso Marciale*) and then a conclusion in a gentle and whispered, but totally satisfying, finale.



Maria Gabriella Bassi

Maria Gabriella Bassi

Maria Gabriella Bassi started playing the piano at the age of four. She graduated with top grades and honours in 1991 under the guidance of Marta Grilletti. She then went on to study at the “Russian” school of Konstantin Bogino. Her career as a concert pianist began with a series of first prizes won in Italian piano competitions. But the two-time victory, in 1987 and then in 1991, of first prize at the prestigious International Piano Competition at the Liszt Centre of Lucca led her to more decisive concert work. An enthusiast of the Liszt repertory, Bassi continued her concert activity, distinguishing herself for her intense musicality, rich in refined nuances. She has held concerts, both as a soloist and with an orchestra, in Italy, France, Germany and Mexico. She has played as a soloist in prestigious halls such as the Teatro del Giglio in Lucca, the Naucalpan Forum in Mexico City, the Felipe Villanueva Auditorium of Toluca, the Teatro Puccini of Merano, the Musikschule Auditorium of Mannheim, Palazzo della Rovere in Roma, the Throne Room of Villa d’Este in Tivoli, Teatro Giordano in Foggia, the historic Caffè Florian in Piazza San Marco in Venice, the Palazzo Ducale in Genoa, the Salle L’Escale in Paris, La Sorbonne in Paris and many more. She was asked to interpret rare compositions by Liszt (*Improptu Brillante Variazioni* by Rossini and Spontini, *7 Variazioni Brillanti* by Rossini) in a premiere presentation on the occasion of the First National Franz Liszt Conference, presided over by Gottfried Wagner and recorded for the “RAI – Radiotelevisione Italiana” works by Franz Liszt. After graduating with a university degree in Law, in 1996 she won a post as a teacher of piano and since 1998 she has had tenure as a professor of piano at the Nino Rota Music

Conservatory in Monopoli. After winning the Jean Françaix International Piano Competition in Paris, in 2001, she developed a passion for the work of the French composer and performed the Italian premiere of the Concert for Piano and Orchestra with the Bari Provincial Symphonic Orchestra. She formed a duet with the artist's daughter, Claude Françaix, with whom she also presented the Italian premiere of the Concert for Two Pianos and Orchestra.

The Ricordi - Bmg Publications publishing house of Milan entrusted her with the critical-didactic revision of an anthology dedicated to the piano music of Nino Rota, published with catalogue number BMG139194.

In her career as a pianist and professor, her choice of repertory has aimed at the interpretation of rarely performed works so as to expose the listener to an invaluable and modern beauty.

<http://www.mariagabriellabassi.com/>