

PIANO REVIEWS 21 pages of the latest CDs, concerts, DVDs and sheet music **WIN THE NEW SOKOLOV DVD**

INTERNATIONAL PIANO

KARL ULRICH

The unsung story of Schnabel's son

JOHN TILBURY

Five decades at the epicentre of new music

COMPETITIONS

Reports from Leeds, Busoni and Manchester

No.66 November/December 2009

FREE MUSIC
**Jazz on a
Winter's Night**

By Nikki Iles
Oxford University Press

LEIF OVE ANDSNES

HIS DRAMATIC RETELLING
OF MUSSORGSKY'S *PICTURES*

THE IP INTERVIEW

'It's a perfect piece of music,
but it's also a piece in evolution'

INTERNATIONAL
PIANO
AWARDS
2009

Find out which CDs, DVDs,
books and sheet music impressed
our judges this year



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Welcome to our fourth annual International Piano Awards, bringing together the best piano recordings, sheet music, books and DVDs from the past twelve months

INTERNATIONAL PIANO AWARDS 2009



'Her music making was of the most powerfully human kind: she could make any piano sing like the most beautiful voice. Her ability to make the music moving, eloquent, sublime, transcendent – all those extraordinary things – was absolutely unique'

LEON FLEISHER



SERVICES TO MUSIC: MARIA CURCIO

THERE ARE MANY POTENTIAL worthy recipients of the Services to Music Award, but one name in particular stood out. The intention of the award is to recognise lifetime achievement, and the awardee should be someone who has made an immeasurable contribution in the fields of piano recording, piano playing, piano repertoire, piano education or other areas of piano playing. Maria Curcio was a piano teacher whose influence spread far and wide. Until her death earlier this year at the age of 89, few people outside the piano world had heard of this tiny Italian woman who gave advice to an endless stream of pianists – among them many of today's most eminent international concert artists – from her basement flat in north London. But within the piano world, her reputation was massive. Martha Argerich, Radu Lupu, Mitsuko Uchida, Alfred Brendel, Alfredo Perl, Leon Fleisher,

Anthony Goldstone, Pierre-Laurent Aimard and Barry Douglas are just some of the pianists who benefited from her tutelage over the years, and in our tribute in the last issue five of them offered their memories of her.

Curcio's extraordinary life began under the tutelage of Artur Schnabel, and his approach to piano playing continued through her work as a pedagogue after events during the second world war robbed her of a promising performing career. Her lifelong friend, Leon Fleisher, recalls: 'Her general approach to piano playing was similar to Schnabel's, but she had a sunny quality – she was terribly Italian. There was a sense of optimism, of joy – a quality we all inherited from Schnabel – but she also brought to her playing eloquence and a quality of Italianness. Her music making was what I like to call "angel babble". It was a language unto itself.'

BEST INTERPRETATION OF STANDARD REPERTOIRE



WINNER

JEAN-EFFLAM BAVOUZET

Debussy Complete Piano Works vol. 4 –
Images, series I & II. Etudes, books I & II.
Chandos CHAN10497

The fourth and final disc of Jean-Efflam Bavouzet's complete Debussy piano music cycle contains one of the finest of all accounts of the Etudes, and compelling performances of both series of *Images*, said our reviewer Tim Parry writing in *IP* January/February 2009. The pianist brings elegance and Gallic refinement to his interpretations, coupled with textual clarity and a sense of atmospheric tension, all of which has helped to put Bavouzet's recording – and his cycle as a whole – above other benchmark versions.



RUNNERS-UP

STEVEN OSBORNE

Rachmaninoff Complete Preludes. Hyperion CDA67700

Osborne's sensational account of the complete Rachmaninoff preludes is a formidable achievement. The depth of his musical insight and the ease with which he traverses the technical challenges is something to behold.



ALEXANDRE THARAUD

Satie Avant-dernières pensées.
Harmonia Mundi HMCS02017

The most delicious of all Satie anthologies to date with one CD devoted to solo piano works, the other to a collection of duos. An essential introduction to Satie, and a treasure store for Sateistes.

BEST REISSUE/VINTAGE RECORDING


WINNER SHURA CHERKASSKY
– THE COMPLETE HMV STEREO
RECORDINGS
First Hand Records FHR04

'This is a remarkable release,' said our reviewer Jonathan Summers in *IP* July/August 2009. Here, First Hand Records has licensed previously unissued early stereo tapes from EMI, which Cherkassky recorded for HMV/EMI in 1956 and 58. These excellent transfers give a faithful presentation of Cherkassky's unique palette of tone colours. A fitting tribute to one of the most extraordinary pianists of the 20th century.


RUNNERS-UP
PERCY GRAINGER

Grieg Piano Concerto. Rex Lawson (pianola), Øyvind Bjørå (vn);
 Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra/Rolf Gupta. 2L 060 SABD

The magic of a 'time machine' brings Percy Grainger's original performance back to life via a piano roll in this modern surround-sound recording.


VLADIMIR SOFRONITZKY EDITION –
LIVE RECORDINGS MADE BETWEEN
1946 AND 1960
Brilliant Classics 8975 9

This collection from the man Emil Gilels described as 'the greatest pianist in the world' includes exceptional recordings of performances of Scriabin, Chopin and Liszt. 'His ability to hone in on the music's emotional core is unlike anything you are likely to have experienced before,' said Julian Haylock in *IP* March/April 2009.

BEST RECORDING OF
NEW PIANO MUSIC
WINNER BEAT FURRER

Piano Concerto.
 Nicolas Hodges (pf). Kairos 0012842K4I

Beat Furrer (born 1954) studied composition with Haubenstock-Ramati in Vienna; he also founded Klangforum Wien. His work searches for new directions in sound. The challenging Piano Concerto (challenging for listener and performer), a 20-minute work, shares disc space with chamber and vocal works, two of which include piano; throughout, everything is impeccably realised and recorded.


RUNNER-UP

SIMON HOLT *A Book of Colours.*
 Rolf Hind (pf). NMC CD D128

Rolf Hind's sterling pianism has placed him at the forefront of today's pianists who specialise in contemporary music. His saturation in this repertoire enables him to render this disc of multi-faceted piano music by Simon Holt with ease and excellence. Holt's music veers from Debussyian influences through composed stasis to an intriguing 'insect snuff movie' (the composer's own phrase, referring to the piece *Klopp's Last Bite*).

DVD OF THE YEAR
EDUCATION CATEGORY
WINNER ANDRÁS SCHIFF

Masterclass Media Foundation MMF001,
MMF002, MMF003

András Schiff works on Bach and Schubert with students at Prussia Cove, but the tour-de-force is his solo masterclass held at the Royal Academy of Music, in which he holds his audience spellbound as he discusses Beethoven and the late piano sonatas for close to three hours. These DVDs offer viewers access to the innermost thoughts of a truly great performer and teacher.

PERFORMANCE CATEGORY


WINNER
ALFRED BRENDEL

Plays and introduces Schubert
 vols. 1–5 *Medici Arts*

These glorious filmed accounts from 1976 and 77 of Schubert's finest piano sonatas (including the 'Wanderer' Fantasy) find Brendel at the peak of his powers. Combining the probably intellectual and physically propulsive with a thrilling spontaneity unmatched by either of his studio cycles, Brendel makes even the most luxurious of Schubert's sonata structures magnetically compelling. A major achievement.

BOOK OF THE YEAR


WINNER THE ART OF FRENCH

PIANO MUSIC by Roy Howat
Yale University Press, ISBN 978-0-300-14547-2

Roy Howat's thinking is as original as his writing is lucid. Every page brims over with his knowledge and love of this repertoire. It is a book to read and think about often, and it's guaranteed to send you to your scores and recordings with new ears.

**RUNNER-UP**

MENACHEM PRESSLER: ARTISTRY IN PIANO TEACHING by William Brown
Indiana University Press, ISBN 978-0-25-335241-5

An invaluable insight into the world of an outstanding musician and teacher. Former Pressler student William Brown presents his master's approach to performance and teaching through interviews with Pressler and his students.

BEST DEBUT CD**WINNER YUJA WANG SONATAS & ETUDES**

Chopin Piano Sonata no.2 in B flat minor op.35. Ligeti Etudes – no.4 & no.10. Scriabin Sonata no.2 in G sharp minor op.19. Liszt Sonata in B minor. Deutsche Grammophon 477 8140

What marks out the playing of Yuja Wang is the mix of superb technique, a remarkable sensitivity and formidable musical intelligence. She traverses a wide repertoire with ease. Still, there is no doubt that there is room for her to grow, and that makes tracking her career all the more exciting.

**WINNER ILONA TIMCHENKO**

Brahms Paganini Variations op.35. Robert Schumann Kreisleriana op.16. Clara Schumann 3 Preludes and Fugues op.16.
Londor Records LAN 286

An auspicious release. Ilona Timchenko's performances of Schumann's *Kreisleriana* and Brahms's *Paganini Variations* bear comparison with the very finest versions available, and she includes three rarely heard gems in the form of Clara Schumann's *Preludes and Fugues* op.16. Despite all the virtuosic demands, she unfailingly draws attention to the music foremost, demonstrating the ideal combination of technical prowess allied with a thoughtful and searching musical mind.

**BEST SHEET MUSIC
NEW WORK CATEGORY****WINNER ALBAN BERG;
MARVIN WOLFTHAL**

Lulu Fantasy for piano.
Universal Edition UE 33970 ISMN M 008 07970-2

It is extraordinary to find a large-scale contemporary work looking back to the spirit of the 19th century whilst utilising contemporary techniques in a highly creative way. The piece is utterly convincing and extremely powerful.

EDITION CATEGORY

WINNER MOZART Sonata in A minor K310.
Wiener Urtext Edition (with facsimile).
Schott/Universal Edition ISMN M-50057-283-1

It is wonderful to have a facsimile of the manuscript as an insert here. Because Mozart's handwriting is so clear, pianists can play through the entire sonata from it. Furthermore the printed edition is first rate.

**WINNER CHOPIN**

Four Ballades.
Ed. Jim Samson. Edition Peters. ISMN 979-0-57708-258-5

It is extremely hard to produce an edition of Chopin's Ballades because there are so many different sources to choose from. Peters have triumphantly succeeded in offering many possibilities without confusing the pianist. Decisions taken appear to have been made with sensitivity and musicianship. Many revelatory discoveries appear.

**READERS' CHOICE AWARD
FOR BEST RECORDING****WINNER PIOTR ANDERSZEWSKI
AT CARNEGIE HALL**

Bach Partita no.2 in C minor. Schumann Faschingschwank aus Wien. Janáček In the Mists. Beethoven Sonata in A flat major op.110. Bartók Three Hungarian Folksongs from the Csik District.
Virgin Classics 6 94688 2

READER COMMENT: 'Anderszewski's recordings of the Bach Partita and the Beethoven Sonata are the best live accounts I have ever heard. In addition we hear rare but equally perfect renditions on Bartók and Janáček.'
George Bournoutian

**RUNNER-UP GARRICK OHLSSON**

Scriabin Complete Etudes.
Bridge 9287

READER COMMENT: 'Since I heard this CD it became my reference for Scriabin's piano music. Ohlsson has superb musicality, combined with the advantage of his enormous hands, and his accounts sound almost effortless as a result.'
Alfred Rony Stumorang