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SCHUBERT: Piano Sonatas in G, D 894; in A, D 959
David Korevaar—MSR 1557— 72 minutes

Having given fair reviews to a few other recordings by this pianist, I was curious to see what his Schubert would bring. Not that we are lacking for coverage of this repertory, but because it is his first venture in Schubert's direction. He also asserts his interest in the composer with his own enthusiastic notes.

Currently on the faculty of the University of Colorado at Boulder, Korevaar combines the best of two worlds, teaching and performing. There is nothing on this disc to indicate it is to be part of a Schubert series; all of his recordings to date show his proclivity to explore as many different composers as possible. He also remains very active in chamber music.

The Sonata in G is completely different from most of what you have heard before. Korevaar plays the 'Molto moderato e cantabile' (I) with special emphasis on the Molto. His approach is gentle, almost dainty, though he leaves room for contrast later on. In less sensitive hands this movement can become boring. It is certainly not so here. Everything is caressed, fondled in a manner most attractive, as he never pushes things beyond the bounds of good taste. There may be some who would disagree with me, but few will remain unmoved by his restrained emotionalism.

The Andante follows in this gently caressed manner, but the middle section suddenly bursts forth before things return again to the gentle opening. It's all ineffably lovely, and the following movement contrasts very well in its controlled vigor. The final Allegretto does not depart from this more placid approach, but shows all the necessary movement required for this most beautiful interpretation. The Shigeru Kawai piano is recorded with just the right perspective and sounds wonderful.

The other sonata is a completely different animal, and is performed with more dramatic impetus. This is most apparent in the Andantino, where the pianist seizes on the virtuosic elements and makes them come astonishingly alive. The Scherzo is kept frothy and light, with the pedal kept at bay. The Rondo finale is both as spirited and sensitive as one could wish—Schubert's charming theme cajoled with attractive freshness.

There is much to enjoy in both these performances, and the pianist has obviously given great thought into his interpretations. I look forward to more from this artist.