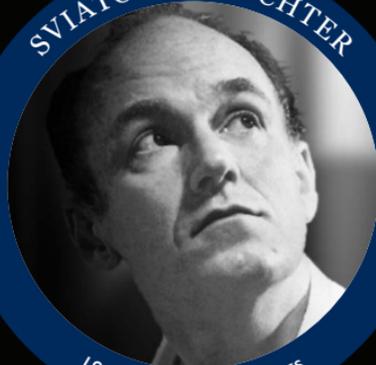


SCHUMANN
Fantasiestücke • Humoreske
SCHUBERT • CHOPIN

SVIATOSLAV RICHTER



1948 - 1956 Recordings

Sviatoslav Richter, Piano

NAXOS

Sviatoslav Richter (1915-1997):

Early Recordings. Vol.1 (1948-1956): Schubert • Chopin • Schumann

Sviatoslav Richter was born in Zhitomir in the USSR, now the Ukraine, in 1915. His father was a German pianist and composer who had studied in Vienna and then taught at the Odessa Conservatory where Richter's mother was his pupil. Sviatoslav began piano lessons at the age of seven and with a natural musical curiosity he received great pleasure in sight-reading any music he could find including operatic scores. This was the way he learnt music rather than studying with a famous teacher. In 1930 from the age of fifteen to seventeen he earned his living as accompanist at the House of Sailors in Odessa, then became accompanist to the Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre the following year.

Richter's formal training began at the age of 22 when he entered the Moscow Conservatory studying with Heinrich Neuhaus from 1937 to 1944. At his adult debut in 1940 he played works by Prokofiev including the first performance of the *Piano Sonata No. 6, Op. 82*. He became friends with Prokofiev and gave the premiere of the *Piano Sonata No. 7, Op. 83*, in 1943 whilst the composer dedicated his *Piano Sonata No. 9, Op. 103*, to Richter.

In 1945 Richter won joint first prize at the All-Union Piano Competition in Moscow and soon earned a reputation in the USSR in the years after the war and was awarded the Stalin Prize in 1949. His first appearance outside the Soviet Union was at the Prague Spring Festival in 1956, and the following year he played in China. It was not until 1960, however, that he travelled to the West, causing a sensation with his playing. In October of that year he gave no less than five recitals at Carnegie Hall within twelve days. From then on he had a prestigious career throughout the world and died in Moscow in 1997.

During the 1940s Richter played Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy*, which he had first played in 1938, and a few of the Sonatas. 'The first Schubert work I played was the *Wanderer Fantasy* when I was still a student, and then later the *Sonata in D major, D. 850*. I had once heard it from a woman student, terribly long

and tedious, so that it was unendurable. I then said to myself, "But it cannot be possible for Schubert to be that tedious", and I decided to play the sonata myself.... Later I took up the *Fantasy Sonata in G major*: it is the one I love most, more even than the *D major*.... I think altogether I have ten Schubert *Sonatas* in my repertoire.' In the short pieces heard here recorded in the early 1950s Richter's fluency of execution is admirably displayed in the *Impromptu in E flat* whilst the *A flat Impromptu* is played on a grand scale with a wide range of dynamics and beautifully balanced chords.

Richter played a good deal of Schumann during his career. During the 1940s he played the *Piano Concerto* and a handful of short pieces. In 1948 he played the *Fantasie, Op. 17*, and *Papillons, Op. 2*, and at one of his early recording sessions in the same year he recorded five of the eight movements comprising the work *Fantasiestucke, Op. 12*. He recorded these same five movements again in 1956 and added *No. 7*. On this compact disc is the first release, since the original 78rpm issue, of the earlier 1948 recording. The slower movements show Richter's seamless *legato*, while the young pianist's impetuosity is to the fore in *Aufschwung*.

Throughout the 1950s Richter added more of Schumann's larger works to his repertoire. In 1950 he played the *Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op. 26*, *Introduction and Allegro, Op. 92* and, on 29th May in Prague, Richter performed one of Schumann's rarely played works, the *Humoreske, Op. 20*. Richter liked to play works that most of his audience would have never heard such as the *Four Fugues, Op. 72*, and the *March, Op. 76, No. 2*. In 1954 he added the *Waldscenen, Op. 82*, and the *Piano Sonata No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22*, to his repertoire and continued to play the *Toccata, Op. 7*. Although few pianists play Schumann's *Humoreske* the work was also recorded by the great Russian pianist Samuil Feinberg (1890-1962). Richter spoke of his working methods, referring specifically to the

Humoreske. 'I never play a piece in its entirety until I've learned each page separately. But I often leave things to the very last minute – which isn't a good thing, but that's how it is: if I didn't have the pressure of a forthcoming concert, I'd never force myself to do any work. As a result, it's not unknown for me to play through a whole piece for the first time on stage. That was the case with Schumann's *Humoreske*. I'd included it in the programme of one of my recitals, but ran out of time. I'd started to practise it only a week before the concert. On a purely technical level, it bristles with all manner of technical difficulties – all, that is, except for the finale, and so I set this to one side. Having spent the week studying the rest of the score, I couldn't make a start on the final movement until the night before the concert. I knew it would be less difficult to manage. I must say the concert wasn't too bad.'

During the 1940s Richter only played a handful of

Chopin's shorter works together with the odd ballade and scherzo. In 1950 he gave an all-Chopin recital then played nothing by Chopin until the mid 1950s when he only played the *Scherzo No. 4*. He was happy to play the works of Chopin that he liked and did not feel that complete works had to be performed. In Japan at the end of his career he played thirteen of the *24 Preludes*. Of the Chopin *Etudes* he said, 'I do not consider it absolutely essential to have played all the Chopin studies. In fact, I am against this playing of everything, every sonata, every study etc. For me, the exception is the *Well-Tempered Clavier*.' In the recording of the *Etude, Op. 25, No. 5*, Richter follows Chopin's marking of *vivace* playing the first section in a lively and scintillating fashion contrasting this with the haunting melody of the central E major section.

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GREAT PIANISTS • Sviatoslav RICHTER

Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Moments musicaux, Op. 94, D. 780

- | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | No. 1 in C major | 5:24 |
| | Recorded in Moscow in 1952 | |
| | First issued on 78 rpm CCCP 20857/8 | |

Franz SCHUBERT

Impromptu, Op. 90, D. 899

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 2 | No. 2 in E flat major | 4:05 |
| | Recorded in Moscow in 1950 | |
| | First issued on 78 rpm CCCP 021051 | |

Franz SCHUBERT

Impromptu, Op. 142, D. 935

- | | | |
|----------|---|-------------|
| 3 | No. 2 in A flat major | 7:02 |
| | Recorded in Moscow in 1952 | |
| | First issued on Microgroove 8" 78 rpm D 00370 | |

Fryderyk CHOPIN (1810-1849)

12 Etudes, Op. 25

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|-------------|
| 4 | No. 5 in E minor | 3:22 |
| | Recorded in Moscow in 1952 | |
| | First issued on 78 rpm CCCP 021051 | |

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Fantasiestücke, Op. 12 (excerpts)

- | | | |
|----------|--|-------------|
| 5 | No. 1. Des Abends | 3:40 |
| 6 | No. 2. Aufschwung | 2:51 |
| 7 | No. 3. Warum? | 2:57 |
| 8 | No. 5. In der Nacht | 3:41 |
| 9 | No. 8. Ende vom Lied | 4:45 |
| | Recorded in Moscow in 1948 | |
| | First issued on 78 rpm CCCP 15876/7, 27428/9
and 15879/80 | |

Robert SCHUMANN

Humoreske in B flat major, Op. 20

- | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| 10 | I. Einfach: Sehr rasch und leicht | 5:38 |
| 11 | II. Hastig | 4:07 |
| 12 | III. Einfach und zart: Intermezzo | 4:58 |
| 13 | IV. Innig | 2:36 |
| 14 | V. Sehr lebhaft | 1:49 |
| 15 | VI. Mit einigem Pomp | 1:38 |
| 16 | VII. Zum Beschluss | 7:36 |
| | Recorded in Moscow in 1956 | |
| | First issued on Melodiya LP D 03642/3 | |

Sviatoslav RICHTER, Piano

Special thanks to Daniel Barolsky, Farhan Malik and Donald Manildi

Producer's Note

Richter recorded only five of the eight pieces from Schumann's *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12 in 1948. These recordings have never been re-issued on LP or CD. He re-recorded these five pieces in 1956 and added No. 7. *Traumes Wirren*. Since this recording is widely available, I decided to use the earlier recording for this reissue.

Ward Marston

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Playing
Time
66:09

SVIATOSLAV RICHTER (1915-1997)

Early Recordings • 1 (1948-1956)

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1	Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828) Moments musicaux, Op. 94, D. 780 No. 1 in C major Recorded in Moscow in 1952	5:24
2	Impromptu, Op. 90, D. 899 No. 2 in E flat major Recorded in Moscow in 1950	4:05
3	Impromptu, Op. 142, D. 935 No. 2 in A flat major Recorded in Moscow in 1952	7:02
4	Fryderyk CHOPIN (1810-1849): 12 Etudes, Op. 25 No. 5 in E minor Recorded in Moscow in 1952	3:22
	Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856): Fantasiestücke, Op. 12 (excerpts)	17:54
5	No. 1. Des Abends	3:40
6	No. 2. Aufschwung	2:51
7	No. 3. Warum?	2:57
8	No. 5. In der Nacht	3:41
9	No. 8. Ende vom Lied Recorded in Moscow in 1948	4:45
	Robert SCHUMANN: Humoreske in B flat major, Op. 20	28:22
10	I. Einfach: Sehr rasch und leicht	5:38
11	II. Hastig	4:07
12	III. Einfach und zart: Intermezzo	4:58
13	IV. Innig	2:36
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15	VI. Mit einigem Pomp	1:38
16	VII. Zum Beschluss Recorded in Moscow in 1956	7:36

Indisputably one of the greatest pianists of the 20th century, Sviatoslav Richter mesmerized audiences with his stunning pianism, charismatic stage presence and powerful interpretations of music ranging from Bach to Shostakovich. In these recordings, the earliest of which were made after he had won joint first prize at the All-Union Piano Competition in Moscow, Richter's dazzling technique, fluency of execution and seamless *legato* are already to the fore. His 1948 recording of the *Fantasiestücke, Op. 12*, is here reissued for the first time since the original 78rpm issue.

Reissue Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Ward Marston
Special thanks to Daniel Barolsky, Farhan Malik and Donald Manildi.
Cover image: Sviatoslav Richter (Private Collection)

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