



Schumann & Grieg Piano concertos

Elisabeth Leonskaja

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With Schumann in concert:
14/15 January 2024 - Elbphilharmonie

Robert Schumann: Piano concerto a-Minor, op. 54 • Edvard Grieg: Piano concerto a-Minor, op. 16

Elisabeth Leonskaja (piano)
Luzerner Sinfonieorchester, Michael Sanderling (chief conductor)

Sharpened daring in A minor

„The pairing of the piano concertos of Robert Schumann and Edvard Grieg – both much-loved Romantic works in the key of A minor – became customary in the LP era. While Elisabeth Leonskaja is admired as a standard-bearer for great musical traditions (those of both Russia and Vienna), she renews them with her questing spirit: “She constantly asks questions of the music, looks for different ways into it,” wrote the Guardian. “Her answers are always convincing, even in a piece she has played many times before.” The British newspaper has also admired her “innate pianism, with musical sensibilities and a daring honed by a lifetime of experience”. In 2022 the Observer reminded us that, “‘Legendary’ is a term to keep in strict reserve. It can be used categorically for the Soviet-born Austrian pianist ... a septuagenarian with the energy and agility of a player half her age and the wisdom of ages in her playing ... Leonskaja has a radiance in her presence, yet the muscularity and vigour of her playing has the power to shock.” Leonskaja has recorded the Schumann and Grieg concertos with the Lucerne Symphony Orchestra and its Chief Conductor Michael Sanderling, a musical team that in 2023 released a recording of the four Brahms Symphonies. “This set’s opening gambit is an account of the First Symphony that’s both gemütlich and gripping – no easy feat,” wrote Gramophone, “... a sense of forward motion is always maintained, even in the spaciouly conceived Andante sostenuto. Sanderling manages this, I think, by investing the musical lines with an urgent lyricism. Above all else, this is a Brahms First that sings.”

Warner Music Group Germany Holding GmbH – Alter Wandrahm 14 – 20457 Hamburg
Luca Goossen – promoclassics@warnermusic.com
www.warnerclassics.de

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