

REVIEWS:

Editorial:

The **Hungarian Liszt Society's 34th annual Franz Liszt International Grand Prix du Disque** in 2009 has been awarded to "Gabor Farkas - An evening with Liszt" Please click [here](#) for more details of this award presented on 22 October 2009 in Budapest.

Gramophone

An Evening With Liszt – Gabor Farkas

"Liszt's technical challenges are met and surpassed in an impressive debut.

It is a pleasant task to welcome a new name on the block with a debut recording as impressive as any I have heard in the past few years. From the word go you know you are in a safe pair of hands – not that Farkas is inclined to play it safe when it comes to tempi and the music's more perilous passages – with a warm, velvety sound throughout his wide dynamic range, and an innate grasp of Liszt's idiom.

The greatest compliment I can pay him is that there are none of the kind of disquieting mannerisms that send you scuttling back to check the score. And when the big technical challenges hove into view (the final page of the Twelfth Rhapsody, the strettal/presto passage towards the end of the Sonata) you know that Farkas will deliver, and then some. The two Verdi paraphrases come off splendidly (the booklet reminds us that, despite Liszt's admiration of Verdi, the two of them never met even though on one occasion they were both in the same audience for the same performance of Massenet's Le Cid). Ogden in the Réminiscences de Boccanegra offers more dramatic contrasts in his classic account, but Farkas makes the ending more convincing and coherent.

Pathos comes in the form of the rarely heard Ave Maria (1862) before the fireworks of the Rhapsody and the mighty Sonata. This last is a reading that can hold its own with the best. Farkas thinks in big paragraphs. He has also found a way of binding its "four movements" into a single and compelling narrative. A name to watch."

Jeremy Nicholas

Music Web International

See this review by Michael Cookson in full at <http://www.musicweb-international.com>

"Where Franz Liszt's piano music is concerned it is always good to have an exciting new kid on the block and Gábor Farkas fits the bill with this new release. The uninspiring title given to the recital is to me more evocative of an evening of easy listening music from Katherine Jenkins or Mantovani. Born at Ózd, Hungary in 1981 the up and coming Farkas is a Ph.D. student at the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest; an institution with a tradition that can track a direct connection back to the great Liszt himself. Farkas earns his colours in the mighty Sonata with a performance of considerable stature. I was struck by how, right from the first theme, he develops the material with forceful and dramatic power. There are also episodes of remarkable fluency that contain an almost reverential quality such as at 4:06-5:15 and the quest for peace and tranquillity heard at 5:41-7:21. Impressive are the hammer blows of hell and damnation at 10:35-10:48. By contrast the rapt serenity conveyed from 12:05 has a sense of other worldliness. Especially striking is the development of dramatic and natural power (14:36-16:07) and the meditative section (16:19-19:24) is affectionately expressive. With assurance and proficiency the playing from 19:31 heralds a dark and disturbing mood that prepares the ground for the wild and stormy music to follow. At 24:35-25:49 the splendid Andante has a marked Beethovenian character. The conclusion communicates heavenly stillness. I enjoyed the interesting and reasonably informative booklet essay by Dr. András Batta, Rector of the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest.

The sound quality from the Phoenix Studio in Budapest is cool, clear and well balanced."

Michael Cookson