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Espressione ... From Bolzano to San Marino

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This release, entitled 'Espressione ... From Bolzano to San Marino', constitutes a travelogue, or perhaps a 'competition diary'. In August of 2016, Łukasz Krupiński qualified for this month's Busoni Competition in Bolzano with the Chopin *Polonaise-fantaisie* on his programme. Then, following a junket to Leipzig, he arrived at the International Competition in San Marino, where he opened his programme with the Scriabin *Sonata Fantasy* and, at a later stage, played the Haydn sonata and Chopin Barcarolle, eventually winning first prize.

It's almost impossible not to feel something akin to sympathy for Polish pianists, who are invariably typecast as Chopin specialists, regardless of temperamental aptitude. A 25-year-old Warsaw native, Krupiński seems to fulfil the role naturally. The desire for originality, rather than the physical dictates of dancing, seems to motivate some of the agogic choices in the E flat Waltz. On the other hand, a beautifully settled and thoughtful interpretation of the *Polonaise-fantaisie* is a highlight of the disc. The C sharp minor Nocturne is languidly poetic throughout, though the choice not to make more of the brief contrasting middle section seems a missed opportunity for contrast.

Krupiński fully inhabits the *Sonata Fantasy* in a passionate reading that gives Scriabin's interesting voice-leading its full due. The Haydn sonata is vividly characterised, though the rubato, both in the first movement's development and the *Adagio*, press the stylistic envelope. These quibbles aside, Krupiński's gifts are undeniable and I will watch their full flowering with interest.

Author: Patrick Rucker



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Barcarolle

Nocturne No. 20

Polonaise-Fantaisie

Waltzes, No. 1 in E flat, Op. 18

Sonata for Keyboard No. 31

Sonata for Piano No. 2, 'Sonata-fantasy'

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On this day in 1848, Chopin gave his final performance in London in aid of refugees from his native Poland. Watch the 2015 International Chopin