



C. Saint-Saëns: Complete Piano Concertos

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Saint-Saëns' five piano concertos are wonderful pieces, brilliant for the soloist, orchestrally imaginative (the first concerto opens with a series of horn calls), and filled with ingratiating melodies. Audite's SACD is volume one of the composer's works for piano and orchestra — a total winner in every way. Anna Malikova is a pianist new to me although she has made a number of recordings, primarily on budget labels, mostly music of Chopin and Schubert. She graduated from Tchaikovsky Conservatory in 1991 and has won a number of competitions since then. Malikova is a stylish performer with a solid technique, tossing off Saint-Saëns' masses of notes with the greatest of ease. The Cologne German Radio Orchestra is first-rate, with the distinguished conductor Thomas Sanderling (son of Kurt Sanderling) not missing a bit of the music's coruscating energy or humor. The surround sound is superb, the rich piano sound always clear and nicely balanced with the orchestra. Rear channels provide ambient sound effectively. Andreas Beutner produced this recording with Mark Hohn as engineer; they did their work very well indeed. I look forward to Volume II.