



C. Saint-Saëns: Complete Piano Concertos

aud 91.650

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www.SA-CD.net (John Smyth - 2004.11.06)

So soon to have complete Saint Saens Piano concerti on the Audite label with Anna Malikova on the piano accompanied by T. Sanderling and the WDR Orchestra, Koln. The 2nd and 4th concerti, (vol. 1), need no intro, but if you don't know the 3rd and esp. the 5th, they are gems. Some beautiful poetic writing worthy of Chopin in the 5th. Malikova plays these moments a little more feverishly than Collard, (with Previn on EMI), but she's entirely persuasive for my tastes. Otherwise soloist, conductor and orchestra provide all the "bubble" one could want. The first concerto is almost completely disposable, (kidding--well, not really), the piece just doesn't have that "it" factor that permeates Concerti 2 through 5.) Interesting almost neo-baroque slow mov't though, must be one of the first examples. The first mov't of the 4th Concerto has Malikova and Sanderling engaged in some really gorgeous dialog, and the extended, quiet coda of the mov't is beautiful as ever, though slightly fast for my tastes. I've listened to this recording in surround only, (it's 5.0 channels), and it's a very lush but front-weighted picture much like the Pentatone house sound.