



Jorge Bolet: The RIAS recordings, Vol. II

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My first encounter with Cuban-born pianist Bolet was in lower Manhattan when I wandered into a recital. He quickly captured my admiration as he made light of passages I had struggled with for some time.

This handsomely produced recording takes us from Liszt's two piano concertos (1971 & 1982) superbly caught in concert, to 1973 studio recordings of the three Petrarch Sonnets and Tannhauser Overture Paraphrase. All are in good quality stereo, and well worth owning.

The piano concertos, particularly the first, are emotionally indulgent (but never distorted) and quickly convince us as to Bolet's manner and approach. Although he achieved some fame by providing the soundtrack for the 1960 Hollywood biography of Franz Liszt, "Song Without End" starring Dirk Bogarde, his own style—virtuosic, yet sophisticated—emerged in his recordings and performances. 11 years separate the two concerto recordings, and Concerto 2 is about as fine as you can get. The piano is slightly closer, with more detail emerging. I have no problems with the orchestra, now known as German Symphony Berlin.

The Petrarch pieces are brilliant in sound and execution, and the Tannhauser, designed to impress, does just that. True Liszt interpreters have that special ability to rise from the rhetoric while others fall prey to it. Bolet has the rare ability to leave us with our jaws open while caressing the phrases with gentle poetry.

A handsome photograph of the young Bolet looking much like the actor Zachary Scott adorns the cover. Several additional photographs accompany Wolfgang Rathert's always interesting notes.

LISZT: Piano Concertos; Annes de Pelerinage excerpts; Tannhauser Overture
 Jorge Bolet, RSO Berlin / Lawrence Foster, Edo de Waart
 Audite 97738—79 minutes

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