



Franz Liszt: A Faust Symphony, S. 108 – Mephisto Waltz No. 3, S. 216

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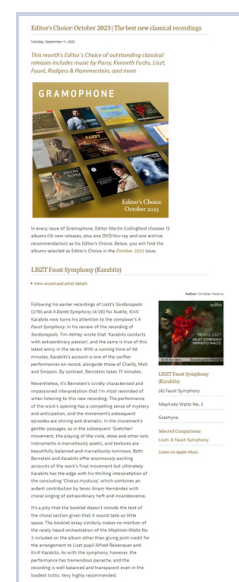


Editor's Choice: October 2023 | The best new classical recordings

Following his earlier recordings of Liszt's Sardanapalo (2/19) and A Dante Symphony (4/20) for Audite, Kirill Karabits now turns his attention to the composer's A Faust Symphony. In his review of the recording of Sardanapalo, Tim Ashley wrote that 'Karabits conducts with extraordinary passion', and the same is true of this latest entry in the series. With a running time of 68 minutes, Karabits's account is one of the swifter performances on record, alongside those of Chailly, Muti and Sinopoli. By contrast, Bernstein takes 77 minutes.

Nevertheless, it's Bernstein's vividly characterised and impassioned interpretation that I'm most reminded of when listening to this new recording. The performance of the work's opening has a compelling sense of mystery and anticipation, and the movement's subsequent episodes are stirring and dramatic. In the movement's gentler passages, as in the subsequent 'Gretchen' movement, the playing of the viola, oboe and other solo instruments is marvellously poetic, and textures are beautifully balanced and marvellously luminous. Both Bernstein and Karabits offer enormously exciting accounts of the work's final movement but ultimately Karabits has the edge with his thrilling interpretation of the concluding 'Chorus mysticus', which combines an ardent contribution by tenor Aíram Hernández with choral singing of extraordinary heft and incandescence.

It's a pity that the booklet doesn't include the text of the choral section given that it would take so little space. The booklet essay similarly makes no mention of the rarely heard orchestration of the Mephisto Waltz No 3 included on the album other than giving joint credit for the arrangement to Liszt pupil Alfred Reisenauer and Kirill Karabits. As with the symphony, however, the performance has tremendous panache, and the recording is well balanced and transparent even in the loudest tutti. Very highly recommended.



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Monday, September 11, 2023

This month's Editor's Choice of outstanding classical releases includes music by Parry, Kenneth Fuchs, Liszt, Fauré, Rodgers & Hammerstein, and more



In every issue of *Gramophone*, Editor Martin Cullingford chooses 12 albums (10 new releases, plus one DVD/blu-ray and one archive recommendation) as his Editor's Choice. Below, you will find the albums selected as Editor's Choice in the October 2023 issue,

LISZT Faust Symphony (Karabits)

► [View record and artist details](#)

Author: Christian Hoskins

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LISZT Faust Symphony (Karabits)

(A) Faust Symphony

Mephisto Waltz No. 3

Grazhyna

Selected Comparisons

Liszt: A Faust Symphony

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