

Szymanowski, Ligeti, Ives & Wirth: Études & Studies

Stefan Wirth offers a dual threat: he's both a virtuosic pianist and a composer with much to say. He offers a relatively varied program of etudes, including some of his own; these works were written, he said, in order to develop his own technique still further—they exhibit dissonant harmonies and contrapuntally rich textures. Perhaps next most interesting to me are the Op. 33 etudes of Szymanowski; composed in 1916, they offer an unusual stylistic breadth that, as Wirth correctly observes, makes more sense in today's pluralistic musical climate than they probably did then. He performs them with love and authority, savoring every new texture with a seemingly limitless reservoir of tonal variety. The sound is fine, but the concert-like acoustic makes it harder to hear the fine detail that many of the pieces require. © 2015 American Record Guide

Rob Haskins

GEN 15342

American Record Guide

9/11/2015