

**MORIZ ROSENTHAL: THE COMPLETE HMV RECORDINGS.** Archive Piano Recordings APR 7002 (Two discs, mono only)

**Chopin: Etude in G Flat, Op. 10, No. 5 "Black Key"** (Recorded March 31, 1935; previously unreleased); **Etude in F, Op. 25, No. 2 and Nouvelle etude No. 2 in A Flat** (Recorded March 31, 1935; previously unreleased); **Mazurka in A Flat, Op. 24, No. 3** (Recorded October 22, 1937; previously unreleased); **Mazurka in D, Op. 33, No. 2** (Recorded October 22, 1937; previously unreleased); **Mazurka in D, Op. 33, No. 2** (Recorded October 22, 1937; previously unreleased in the U.K.; USA Victor 1951); **Mazurka in B Minor, Op. 33, No. 4** (Recorded November 23, 1935; from DB 2836); **Mazurka in A Flat, Op. 50, No. 2** (Three versions, the first recorded March 31, 1935, previously unreleased; the second recorded November 21, 1935, previously unreleased in the UK; and a third recorded May 25, 1936; from DB 2773); **Mazurka in G Major, Op. 67, No. 1** (Two versions, one recorded November 21, 1935, previously unreleased in the UK; a second recorded October 22, 1937, previously unreleased); **Nocturne in E Flat, Op. 9, No. 2** (Two versions, one recorded March 29, 1935, previously unreleased; a second recorded May 22, 1936, previously unreleased in the UK; USA Victor 14297); **Nocturne in D Flat, Op. 27, No. 2** (Recorded May 22, 1936, previously unreleased in the UK; USA Victor 14297); **Preludes in B Minor, G and A, Op. 28, Nos. 6, 3, and 7** (Recorded November 21, 1935; from DB 2772); **Prelude in F sharp, Op. 28, No. 13** (Recorded October 23, 1937; previously unreleased); **Walse in A Flat, Op. 42** (Two versions, one recorded February 9, 1934, previously unreleased; the second recorded November 21, 1935; from DB 2772)

**Chopin-Liszt-Rosenthal: Chant polonais No. 1 in G** (Two versions, one recorded February 9, 1934, previously unreleased; a second recorded May 22, 1936, previously unreleased in the UK; USA Victor 14300)

**Rosenthal: Papillons** (Recorded October 23, 1937; previously unreleased)

**Schubert: Moment musical No. 3 in F Minor, D. 780** (Recorded October 22, 1937; previously unreleased)

**Schubert-Liszt: Soiree de Vienne No. 6. Valse-caprice in A** (Recorded May 25, 1936; previously unreleased in the UK; USA Victor 1854)

**Strauss-Rosenthal: New Carnival de Vienne** (Two versions, one recorded February 9, 1934, previously unreleased; a second recorded November 23, 1935; from DB 2836)

With "Dear Mr. Rosenthal ...." "Dear Mr. Gaisberg ..." by Brian Crimp. 95 pp. Available from Archive Piano Recordings, P.O. Box 57, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 7YZ, England.

Pupil of Liszt, Mikuli, Joseffy and Anton Rubinstein, Moriz Rosenthal (1862-1948) enjoyed one of the greatest and longest careers of any pianist in history. Unfortunately, he made comparatively few recordings, and those were done after 1928, when some, but only some, of his legendary technical prowess had deteriorated. After making a few sides for several smaller companies, including a staggering performance of the First Chopin Etude (currently available on Opal 824-5), the pianist began recording for HMV in 1934. Over the next three years Rosenthal participated in eleven sessions and over eighty sides were cut. Of these only six were issued in the UK, and an additional eight were released in the USA. The current album under review, an obvious labor of love from Brian Crimp and APR, contains those previously published fourteen sides plus eleven additional sides never before released. The prospect of hearing this much new material by an artist of Rosenthal's stature is indeed tantalizing, but it seems fair to say that, for the most part, the best items included here are those that were previously released.

As is painfully evident from APR's accompanying chronicle of the Rosenthal/HMV relationship "Dear Mr. Rosenthal ..." "Dear Mr. Gaisberg ...", Rosenthal could be charitably be described as eccentric. The book traces and comments on the correspondence and relationship between the pianist and the almost legendary HMV executive. One can only marvel at Gaisberg's tact, patience and fortitude in dealing with the pianist's demands and whims. On the other hand, one can sympathize with the pianist's frustration on learning that several sides he approved were damaged during the complicated mastering process. Also, the final letters, written when Rosenthal has been forced to leave Austria and is facing a desperate financial situation, are very touching and not a little disconcerting.

Rosenthal was a noted Chopin interpreter, and his study with Mikuli, a pupil of Chopin, gives his readings an added interest. At his best his Chopin is delightful with a magical sense of color and wonderful rhythmic lilt especially in the dance pieces. The pianist clearly identified with the elegant side of the composer's personality, a very successful approach for most of the works in this collection. However, he seems to largely eschew the underlying sense of struggle and pain (neurosis, if you will) that others, such as Cortot, have brought to this music. In one piece included here of real emotional depth, the D-Flat Major Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2, his performance seems merely dreamy, lovely, yet somehow unconsumated.