

'Homage to Paderewski'

Bartók Three Hungarian Folk-Tunes, Sz66
A Benjamin Elegiac Mazurka **Blumenfeld** Suite
 polonaise No 2, Op 31 – Kujawiak; Obertas
Britten Mazurka elegiaca, Op 23 No 2^a
Castelnuovo-Tedesco Hommage à Paderewski
Chaminade Etude symphonique, Op 28 **Chanler**
 Aftermath **Goossens** Homage **R Hammond** Dance
Labunski Threnody **Martinů** Mazurka, H284
Milhaud Choral **Nin-Culmell** In memoriam
 Paderewski **Rathaus** Kujawiak **Rieti** Allegro
 danzante **Schelling** Nocturne (Ragusa). Con
 tenerezza **Stojowski** Cradle Song **Weinberger**
 Etude **Whithorne** Hommage, Op 58 No 2
Wieniawski Etude, Op 44 No 22 **Zarzycki** Chant du
 printemps, Op 34 No 1
Jonathan Plowright, ^a**Aaron Shorr** *pf*
 Hyperion © CDA67903 (76' • DDD)



Plowright salutes the phenomenon Paderewski

'A star who fell from heaven' (the *Detroit News*), Paderewski as statesman, fierce nationalist and above all pianist swept all before him. No pianist excepting Liszt and, in our own time, Van Cliburn has ever been accorded such extravagant celebrity. And here, in this intriguing programme, he is seen through the eyes of many composers (some familiar, many obscure), anxious to pay tribute to a legend. To be candid, not all the 24 items on offer on this disc are diamonds rather than paste. The ghost of Chopin hangs heavily over several contributions, with the Mazurka, most ethnic of Polish dances, seen through modernist, distorting-mirror eyes.

The genuine jewels include Ernest Schelling's sultry and ambitious Nocturne, a real find, and, better known, Britten's poignant *Mazurka elegiaca* (where Plowright is joined by Aaron Shorr). But Richard Hammond's *Dance*, a percussive relative of Ginastera's, is forgettable and there is little beyond a faded picture-postcard charm to Zarzycki's *Chant du printemps*. What is not forgettable are performances of a superlative technique and musicianship. Pianism and sheer musical quality of this order are rare at any time, and Hyperion's recordings from Pottton Hall and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama are exemplary.

Bryce Morrison