

STEPHEN KOVACEVICH

Piano

"It had music greater than any one performance can be. Yet Kovacevich's performances were so self-effacing and faithful to the music that you came away believing you had heard its essence, not just another interpretation.

This also was a rare encounter with an artist in maturity who recently had surpassed himself in the work that had made his reputation as a youth. So in several ways the recital was unusual, moving, memorable."

Chicago Tribune February 2010

The Tower Building
11 York Road
London
SE1 7NX

T +44 (0)20 7902 0520
F +44 (0)20 7902 0530

info@vanwalsum.com
www.vanwalsum.com

Stephen Kovacevich is one of the most searching interpreters. As a pianist he has won unsurpassed admiration for his playing of Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart and Schubert. In addition to his long and distinguished career as a soloist he has conducted for many years, winning warm praise for his work with orchestras throughout the world in repertoire from the 18th and 19th centuries.

Born in Los Angeles, Stephen Kovacevich made his concert debut as a pianist at the age of 11. When he was 18 he moved to England to study with Dame Myra Hess. His international reputation has been built both on his concert appearances, renowned for their thoughtfulness and re-creative intensity, and on the highly acclaimed recordings he has made throughout his career.

Kovacevich has enjoyed two long-term relationships with recording companies, first Philips and then EMI. His concerto recordings for Philips, including Beethoven, Schumann and Bartók, have long been staples of the catalogue. As an exclusive EMI artist, he recorded both Brahms Piano Concertos with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Sawallisch; No 1 was Grammy-nominated and won the 1993 Gramophone Award and the Stereo Review Record of the Year, while No 2 won the Diapason D'Or. The other great projects of his work with EMI were a compelling series of Schubert Sonatas and a set of the 32 Beethoven Sonatas completed in 2003, hailed as one of the most authoritative ever recorded. One critic described *The Hammerklavier* as: 'an unflinching, sometimes combative view of a titanic masterpiece, and a version to be spoken of in the same breath as those of Brendel, Gilels and Pollini... Kovacevich announces the music's potency from the first bar.' His disc of Chopin and Ravel (EMI) has won prizes in Choc du Monde de la Musique and Recompense Classica / Repertoire.

Kovacevich has recently released to unanimous critical praise Beethoven's Diabelli Variations for Onyx Classics, exactly 40 years after his first recording of the work for Philips in 1968. The Financial Times wrote, ... *a temperamental, almost explosive approach that resonates with rhythmic and nervous energy but also leaves room for elegance, wit and introspection. Kovacevich's journey is always engrossing and never less than Beethovenian.* This recording won the 2009 Classic FM Gramophone Editor's Choice Award.

Stephen Kovacevich has appeared with orchestras worldwide. Recent and forthcoming highlights include concerto appearances with Rotterdam Philharmonic under Yannick-Nézét-Séguin, Montreal Symphony Orchestra under Kent Nagano, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, and recitals in London, Tanglewood, Chicago, Houston, Melbourne, Sydney, Beijing and Shanghai.

Since making his conducting debut in 1984 with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, Kovacevich conducted many of the world's finest orchestras focussing on the symphonies of Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky and a memorable Sibelius Symphony No 4.

Stephen Kovacevich is a committed chamber music player whose partners include Steven Isserlis, Gautier Capuçon, Renaud Capuçon, Kyung-Wha Chung, Truls Mørk, Emmanuel Pahud and Anna Larsson. He has lived in London for many years.