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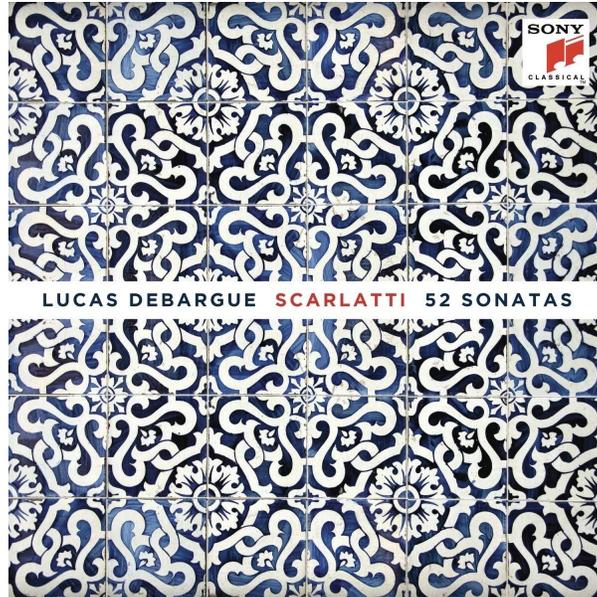
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Sony Classical Releases

Lucas Debargue

Scarlatti | 52 Sonatas | 4 CDs



Release date: October 4, 2019

Upcoming North American Performances:

January 16: Toronto, ON, Canada - Koerner Hall, TELUS Centre, Royal Conservatory

January 19: Montreal, QC, Canada - Maison symphonique, Place des Arts

January 22: Brooklyn, NY - Scarlatti Sonatas at National Sawdust

January 31: American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall

February 20-23: Boston Philharmonic at Jordan Hall

[Lucas Debargue](#) breathes new life into the harpsichord sonatas of Domenico Scarlatti and presents works outside the standard piano repertoire. The Parisian pianist has already climbed the pinnacle of piano artistry with Beethoven, Liszt and Ravel and unleashed full-blown romantic thunderstorms with Schubert's A-minor Piano Sonata no. 14 and the madcap finale of Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit*.

Now, on his new album, Debargue devotes himself completely to Domenico Scarlatti. He already played four of this Italian master's sonatas on his highly acclaimed debut album. Germany's *Der Spiegel* waxed ecstatic: "Debargue's Scarlatti recalls his mighty predecessors. He displays the subtle touch and feeling once bestowed on these miniatures by Vladimir Horowitz and imparts new sound to Scarlatti's keyboard music. ... Debargue touches the outer limits of expression between joylessness and rapture: one may find it overwrought, but it's never less than gripping. And then there's the gentle Glenn Gould touch."

Debargue is excited at his new project: "Scarlatti is inspiring. He's the centre of my musical thought as regards music for keyboard instruments." He goes on: "I took it as a sort of personal mission to finally do something with him."

Though Scarlatti generally lacks a firm place in the repertoire – he’s not heard very often and is almost never the mainstay of a recital – he’s one of those milestones that every pianist must turn to. He was born in Naples in 1685, the same year as Johann Sebastian Bach. But unlike his versatile German colleague he was primarily a harpsichordist, a man of soft but very precise nuances. The 555 harpsichord sonatas form the core of his compositional output.

“Lucas Debargue is an exception among today’s rarefied piano virtuosos.” (*Der Spiegel*) He’s also known for his open-mindedness: he left conservatory at the age of 15 and played electric bass in a rock band. Then he studied literature. But again and again he felt drawn back to the classical piano. In 2015 he caused an international sensation at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, playing Medtner and Ravel. Though he didn’t win, the jury squabbled over this very fact, and he was allowed to play at the prize-winners concert. It was his springboard to fame. Since then he’s been under contract to Sony Classical. The Scarlatti retrospective on four CDs is now his fourth release.

It has turned out bright and gleaming. Debargue completed the recording in Berlin in a mere five days, playing in the Church of Jesus Christ at the Free University in Dahlem – the same studio where Karajan once recorded. Debargue speaks of “perfect conditions”.

“In Scarlatti we hear influences from southern Spain, from Andalusia, but also from the Baroque,” Debargue explains. “Often there’s something crazy as well, this urge to probe what keyboard instruments are capable of saying at all. I’m fascinated by the balance in this music.” To fetch Scarlatti into the modern age, Debargue played on a Bösendorfer 280. He performed completely without pedal – against the instrument’s grain, so to speak – and found a *jeu perlé* as bright as sunlight. We hear the formal riches of Scarlatti in a new way. The insistent octaves of Sonata K.14 take on an amazing resemblance to Beethoven.

Debargue’s plan was to rescue the Italian master from early music. True, there exist fabulous recordings, he confides, but modern ears can hardly listen to them any more. “I hear more harpsichord in them than Scarlatti,” he explains. “The instrument is always in the foreground. We rarely perceive the structure and form of these often highly complex and intelligent sonatas.”

Now all this has changed. Moreover, Debargue has sought out a cross-section of Scarlatti’s oeuvre. Here, too, the Parisian pianist exposes listeners to new sonic experiences, presenting works well outside normal concert fare. His repertoire ranges from the deeply baroque F-major Sonata K 6, where the left hand functions like a thoroughbass, to K 526, an explosion of colours whose deftly interwoven *legato* passages already presage the sound of romanticism.

About Lucas Debargue

The uncommon talent of Lucas Debargue was revealed by his performances at the Tchaikovsky International Competition in Moscow in 2015. Though placed fourth at the final round, he was the only contestant across all disciplines to receive the coveted Moscow Music Critic’s Prize as a pianist “whose incredible gift, artistic vision and creative freedom have impressed the critics as well as the audience”.

Following this breakthrough, Lucas was invited to play solo and with leading orchestras in the most prestigious venues: Theatre des Champs Elysées and Philharmonie in Paris; London’s Wigmore Hall and Royal Festival Hall; Berlin Philharmonic and Prinzregententheater in Munich; Stockholm’s Konzerthuset; the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; the Milan Conservatory; Carnegie Hall; Chicago Symphony Hall Kennedy Center in Washington; Maison de la Musique in Montreal, the Royal Conservatory of Toronto; the concert halls of Mexico City, Tokyo, Beijing, Shanghai, Taipei, Seoul; and of course the legendary Grand Hall of Tchaikovsky Conservatory and the Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, the Mariinsky Concert Hall and the Shostakovich Philharmonic Hall in St. Petersburg.

Lucas Debargue regularly collaborates with Valery Gergiev, Mikhail Pletnev, Vladimir Jurowski, Andrey Boreyko, Yutaka Sado, Tugan Sokhiev, Vladimir Fedoseev, Bertrand de Billy, and Mirga Gražinytė-Tyla. His chamber music partners include Gidon Kremer, Janine Jansen, and Martin Frost.

In the 2019-20 season, Mr. Debargue will make his mainstage Carnegie Hall debut with the American Symphony Orchestra and Leon Botstein. He will also perform in Boston, Toronto and Montreal. A tour with the Russian National Orchestra and Maestro Pletnev will take him to the Middle East and Switzerland, while Berlin will welcome him back to the Konzerthaus with Shostakovich First Concerto and music by a living Russian composer, Leonid Desyatnikov.

Born in 1990, Mr. Debargue forged a highly unconventional path to success. He began to study music when he was 11, but soon switched to literature and graduated from Paris Diderot 7 University as a Bachelor of Arts. In his teens, he continued to explore piano repertoire on his own.

At the age of 20 Mr. Debargue decided to re-dedicate himself to the piano and started his professional training at the Paris Cortot Music School under the guidance of the celebrated piano teacher Rena Shereshevskaya. It was her vision and support that helped him make a commitment to music for life. In 2014, Mr. Debargue won the First Prize at the Gaillard International Piano Competition (France), which gave him the confidence to participate and, eventually, to become one of the prize winners in the Tchaikovsky Competition.

A performer of fierce integrity and dazzling communicative power, Lucas Debargue draws inspiration for his playing from literature, painting, cinema, jazz, and develops very personal interpretation of a carefully selected repertoire. Though the core piano repertoire is central to his career, he is also keen to present works by lesser-known composers like Nikolai Medtner, Nikolai Roslavets, or Milosz Magin.

He also composes and performs his own music. *Orpheo di camera* concertino for piano, drums and string orchestra was premiered with Kremerata Baltica in Latvia in 2017. A Piano Trio was created later that year under the auspices of the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris.

A Sony recording artist, Lucas Debargue has released three solo albums with music of Scarlatti, Bach, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Liszt, Ravel, Medtner and Szymanowski. He collaborated with Janine Jansen, Martin Fröst, and Torleif Thedéen on a recording of Messian's *Quatuor pour la fin du Temps*. The coming season will be marked by the release of Mr. Debargue's monumental four-volume tribute to Scarlatti, containing 52 of his sonatas.

In 2017 Lucas Debargue was awarded a prestigious German prize "ECHO Klassik". In the same year, a documentary following the pianist right after his Tchaikovsky Competition break-through was released by Bel-Air Productions.