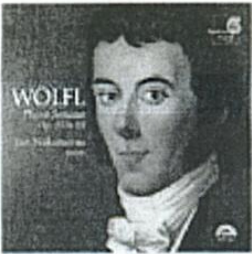


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# AUDIOPHILE AUDITION

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## Classical CD Reviews



**WOELFL: Piano Sonata in C Minor, Op. 25; 3 Sonatas, Op. 33 - Jon Nakamatsu, piano - Harmonia Mundi HMU 907324 69:49:**

Former Van Cliburn (1997) Competition Gold Medalist Jon Nakamatsu turns his formidable gifts to the neglected world of Joseph Woelfl (1773-1812), the Salzburg-born virtuoso and composer whose friendly rivalry with Beethoven is legend. The large work in this assemblage is the C Minor Sonata from 1805, a bravura showpiece in the Hummel or Mendelssohn emotional range, vibrant with flying filigree and even a daunting fugue.

In the manner of Clementi, Woelfl loves to show off running figures in thirds, a feat Mozart eschewed. The Op. 33 works are smaller in scale, sonatinas really; like their Op. 25 companion, there is a sense of incipient Romanticism, with echoes of grand gestures and sighs we hear in Weber. The E Major Sonata, Op. 33, No. 3, has a martial air that recollects Mozart's K. 576 "Trumpet" Sonata and the F Major Concerto, K. 459. Each of the Woelfl pieces has its own sparkle and its own charm. Nakamatsu avoids any trace of heaviness, sporting a light but ringing tone that only captivates the audiophile, courtesy of the splendid engineering work of Brad Michel. Rare and well-done, as Karl Haas would say.

--Gary Lemco