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Classical CD of the week: WOLFL Piano sonatas Op. 25 & 33

Jon Nakamatsu (pianist) (Harmonia Mundi HMU 907324)

Anthony Holden
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In his day, around eighteenth-century Austria and beyond, Joseph Wölfl commanded a reputation to rival that of Beethoven as both keyboard virtuoso and composer. A pupil of Leopold Mozart and Michael Haydn, he wound up sharing their obscurity (as compared to their celebrated namesakes). Now the Californian-born pianist Jon Nakamatsu, winner of the 1997 Van Cliburn international competition, has unearthed Wölfl's unjustly neglected piano sonatas and performs them with relish enough to show why he earned (Wolfgang) Mozart's admiration and comparison with C.P.E. Bach. Nakamatsu brings to these charming works all the elegance, lightness of touch and poetic lyricism they so richly deserve.

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