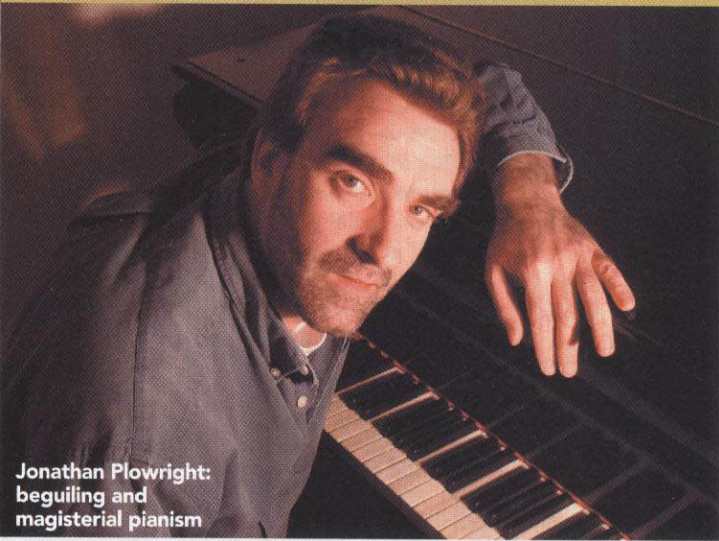
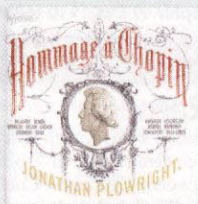


**EDITOR'S CHOICE**

 A photograph of Jonathan Plowright, a man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a dark jacket over a collared shirt. He is leaning over a piano keyboard, looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His right hand is resting on the keys.
 

**Jonathan Plowright:**  
beguiling and  
magisterial pianism



A novel celebration  
for Chopin Year with  
thrilling playing from  
Jonathan Plowright

### 'Hommage à Chopin'

**Balakirev** Impromptu on the Themes of Two Preludes by Chopin **Bendel** Hommage à Chopin, Op 111 No 1

**L Berkeley** Three Mazurkas, Op 32 No 1 **Busoni** Variations

on a Prelude of Chopin **B Godard** Hommage à Chopin,

Op 66 No 2 **Godowsky** Walzermasken No 7, 'Profil (Chopin)' **Grieg** Studie,

'Hommage à Chopin', Op 73 No 5 **Honegger** Souvenir de Chopin **Leschetizky**

Hommage à Chopin, Op 46 No 9 **Mompou** Variations sur un thème de Chopin

**Nápravník** Notturmo, 'La réminiscence de Chopin', Op 48 No 1 **Tchaikovsky** Un

poco di Chopin, Op 72 No 15 **Villa-Lobos** Hommage à Chopin

Jonathan Plowright *pf*

Hyperion © CDA67803 (80' • DDD)



Chopin's contemporaries were wary of paying him tribute, fearing his waspish tongue and sensing their inadequacy before such unnerving genius. Liszt in particular only offered his own adulation (his *Funérailles*, Ballades, Polonaises, *Berceuse* and *La leggerezza* Etude) safely after Chopin's early death. Fortunately, later generations have been less cautious and here on this magnificent and richly enterprising disc you can hear Chopin's idiom refracted, as it were, through the prism of several richly diverse personalities. Balakirev audaciously links two contrasted Preludes, making the winsome B major (No 11) and storming E flat minor (No 14) somehow coalesce. Bendel turns for inspiration to the "embalmed darkness" of the Nocturnes, and Grieg, while never less than true to his Nordic roots, captures his Polish master's Slavic tension and unease. Honegger and Chopin may seem an unlikely conjunction yet it is made with a special empathy and restraint, while Lennox Berkeley turns more to Szymanowski's Mazurkas than to Chopin's.

The most substantial offerings are from Mompou whose extended Variations reflect much of an inimitable magic later memorably verbalised by Wilfrid Mellers in his book *La jardin retrouvé*, while the sobriety of Chopin's C minor Prelude lends itself ideally to elaboration through Busoni's austere genius.

All of these multifaceted offerings (jewels as well as gemstones) show Jonathan Plowright as beguiling in intimacy (try Variation 8 from the Mompou) as he is magisterial in virtuosity (the Balakirev). Such quality will leave lesser pianists bemused, and as on Plowright's earlier superb Hyperion recordings he has been immaculately recorded. **Bryce Morrison**