



Phillip **RAMEY**

Piano Music Volume Four: 1959-2011

**Piano Sonatas Nos. 3 and 7
Lament for Richard III
Epigrams, Book Two
Three Early Preludes
Cossack Variations
Incantations**

Stephen Gosling, piano

FIRST RECORDINGS

PHILLIP RAMEY PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR: 1959–2011

by Benjamin Folkman

Although the American composer Phillip Ramey has produced an appreciable body of orchestral and chamber music – including a horn concerto premiered by Philip Myers with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Leonard Slatkin – the piano has been his favoured medium throughout his career. Eight sonatas, the substantial *Piano Fantasy* and numerous multi-movement sets are highlights of a solo-piano catalogue of some fifty scores – about half of his musical output. The piano also figures prominently in Ramey's symphonic efforts, featured in three concertos, the *Concert Suite for Piano and Orchestra* and the *Color Etudes for Piano and Orchestra*.

The three previous albums in Toccata Classics' survey of Ramey's piano music, played by Stephen Gosling (TOCC 0029, TOCC 0114) and Mirian Conti (TOCC 0077), included his Sonatas Nos. 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6, the *Piano Fantasy* and several sets (among them, *Diversions*, *Epigrams*, *Book One* and the solo-piano version of the *Color Etudes*), along with numerous shorter works, some composed as late as 2010. The present Volume Four spans more than half-a-century of creativity, ranging from the *Three Early Preludes* of 1959 to the Piano Sonata No. 7, completed in 2011. It complements the previous releases, offering the Piano Sonata No. 3, the second book of *Epigrams*, and completing Ramey's set of *Two Political Preludes* with the *Lament for Richard III*. Also included is the virtuosic *Cossack Variations*, the recorded performance of which on this album is a premiere, as are those of Sonatas Nos. 3 and 7.

Born in Elmhurst, Illinois on 12 September 1939, Ramey began piano lessons at age seven. His teachers gave him solid grounding in keyboard technique, at the same time fostering the traditionalist notions of musical culture that prevailed in the American heartland. This early orientation coloured Ramey's first compositions – would-be Rachmaninovian effusions produced at age seventeen.

Crucial for Ramey's development was his period of study, from 1959 to 1962, with the

Russian-born composer Alexander Tcherepnin (1899–1977), first at the International Academy of Music in Nice, France, then at DePaul University in Chicago. Tcherepnin described Ramey as ‘one of the most gifted composers I have had the pleasure of teaching,’ noting that ‘his music is not only well-made but it has a great deal of personality. Especially impressive to me is his sure sense of dynamics: not everyone has this to the degree he does.’¹ Tcherepnin’s tutelage played an important role in all of Ramey’s early music; in fact, Ramey’s style changed little if at all during his later composition studies at Columbia University with Jack Beeson (1962–65).

An association with Aaron Copland, which began in 1967, prompted Ramey to experiment with atonality and serial manipulation, while exploring pianistic colour-effects and tone-clusters. He assimilated these researches in his highly individual *Piano Fantasy* (1969–72), where the synthesis of many stylistic elements resulted in a newly profuse style of keyboard writing. This score prompted Copland to write: ‘Phillip Ramey is a composer of real individuality with a flair for dramatic gesture.’²

Often devising sonorities of extraordinary thrust and weight, Ramey ‘orchestrates’ the piano through widely disparate register contrasts and combinations that require perfect control of chordal voice-leading and can involve perilous leaps for the hands. He also demands extreme digital fluency for an abundance of scintillating ornament. As Ramey has observed, ‘for me, the piano, not the organ, is the King of Instruments.’³ His high-octane keyboard style, which challenges the piano to go beyond its normal limitations, reminded Copland of Franz Liszt.⁴

Eventually, Ramey reintroduced triadic gestures to articulate points of tonal arrival, bringing long-lined lyricism to such works as *Canzona for Piano* (1982), the aforementioned Horn Concerto (1987), Piano Sonata No. 5 (For the Left Hand) (1989), the *Sonata-Ballade* for Two Horns and Piano (1997) and the Piano Sonata No. 7 (2011).

¹ Testimony for Ramey, written in 1962.

² Quoted in the sleeve-notes to the first recording of Ramey’s *Piano Fantasy*, by John Atkins, Opus 1 Records, No. 37, 1978.

³ Where no published source is given, Ramey’s comments were made in conversation with the writer, or are taken from his autobiography, currently in preparation.

⁴ *Loc. cit.*, note 2.

His most recent major compositions are *J.F.K.: Oration for Speaker and Orchestra* (text from speeches of President Kennedy) (2007), *Simon Songs: Suite for Baritone and Orchestra* (poems by John Simon) (2009), Piano Sonatas Nos. 7 and 8 (2012) and a *Concerto for Trombone and String Orchestra, Harp and Percussion* (2012).

Ramey is also a well-known writer on music: the author of hundreds of sleeve and booklet notes for recordings and an exhaustive trove of programme notes produced during his sixteen-year tenure (1977–93) as Program Editor for the New York Philharmonic. In 2006 he received the ASCAP Deems Taylor/Nicholas Slonimsky Award for Outstanding Musical Biography for his book *Irving Fine: An American Composer in His Time*, published by Pendragon Press in association with the US Library of Congress. (A fuller account of Ramey's life and achievements is found in the booklet notes for the first Toccata Classics album of his piano works.)

Incantations

'*Incantations* for piano,' Ramey notes, 'was my initial venture into polytonality and dissonance, written in a single afternoon in July 1960.' The score, a set of 'three moderately dissonant bagatelles that employ free, non-developmental forms and make no demand on virtuosity,' was premiered by the composer at DePaul University on 18 November 1960. On 12 April 1961, in what Ramey identifies as 'the first professional performance of my music,' *Incantations* was played by Florence Henline at an International Society for Contemporary Music concert in Chicago. Ramey slightly revised the score in August 1982 and premiered that version himself at Bowdoin College on 13 November 1983.

The outer pieces are, according to the composer, 'harsh and declamatory, although in rather different ways.' The initial *Allegro* [1] presents the rumble of an unchanging *ostinato* over which a motif of repeated notes thickens into repeated tone-clusters. After a subdued *Andante* [2] marked by what Ramey terms 'stark, somber lyricism,' a finale (*Con moto*) [3] presents scalic harp-like swirls sustained by pedal from which declamatory melodic gestures emerge (Ramey would revisit this keyboard coloration many years later in his Fourth Piano Sonata).

Cossack Variations

One souvenir Ramey brought back from a trip to Russia in 1970 was a postcard he found in Moscow with a Cossack melody printed upon it (Ex. 1):

Ex. 1



Eleven years later, the composer showed the melody to a pianist friend who remarked that it would make a good subject for variation. After producing several variations on the theme, Ramey put the project aside, returning to it in only desultory fashion until 1985, when he made a sustained effort to revise and complete the *Cossack Variations* – his only work in the form. This inventive score is dedicated to his friend and long-time assistant Kenneth Lisenbee.

Ramey notes that, ‘although the first two variations treat the theme in a direct manner, the work subsequently evolves more subtly, with much thematic fragmentation.’ After the theme (*Moderato*) is presented as a single low-register line [4], a left-hand jolt summons Variation 1 (the first of thirteen) [5], which begins by subjecting the melody to octave displacement and continues with richer textures. The tempo quickens in Variation 2 [6], in which the melody line twice descends from high registers into middle regions. Following a climax, a *decrescendo* brings a glum, austere D minor cadence. Duple metres have prevailed thus far, but at the opening of Variation 3 [7] triple metre appears and establishes itself; only later will it intermix fluidly with two-beat patterns. Individual lines, rather than chords, dominate the texture of this variation, which displays elements of an invention that begins in two parts and then ventures into three-part writing. Variation 4 [8] is in animated 6/8 rhythm. Octaves in both hands soon yield to denser sonorities. After a *crescendo* climaxing in spiky *sforzandi*, the variation concludes with *staccati* in *diminuendo*. The *scherzando* Variation 5 follows [9]: replete

with mischievous grace-notes and a panoply of virtuoso ornament – scalic outbursts, hammered octave arrays, and so forth – it climaxes in an imposing sequence of rapid chordal triplets. Variation 6 is a wistful, introverted *adagio* [10], and restraint is also the watchword in Variation 7, built largely as a flowing Bach-like invention in two, three and four voices [11]. Eruptive, low-register downward swoops launch the witty Variation 8 [12], in which an unusual accelerating barrage of descending chords followed by a virtuoso octave-fusillade is then outdone by jarring tone-clusters and a flurry of small details ricocheting through various registers. Variation 9 [13] cleverly combines a toccata treatment of the theme with an independent thematic variation in left-hand octaves. An unexpected calm begins Variation 10 [14], in which a sustained lyric discussion evolves. A climax on this material culminates in more toccata music for Variation 11 [15], where the theme soon appears in bass against major-second flurries and then rises to the middle register. This variation ends with a hammered cadenza-like passage. The slow chordal Variation 12 [16] in *diminuendo*, based on the melody's first strain cast in the minor mode, is curtailed, clearly a bridge to Variation 13 – an *Andante maestoso* chorale [17]. Midway through this summary finale, the texture clears for an allusion to the original simple statement of the theme, after which the chorale resumes, now invested with increased ardour as it marches toward a resounding close.

Three Early Preludes

These preludes originated in a group of five pieces written in autumn 1959 shortly after Ramey's twentieth birthday. He subsequently discarded two of those works as hopeless juvenilia. The remaining three, though, are fresh and appealing efforts by a young composer beginning to find his voice. Ramey has no record of the premiere, which he believes he gave at the beginning of 1960 at DePaul University; his earliest documented performance took place at DePaul on 28 November 1961. Revising the set in June 1996 in Tangier, Morocco, and entitling it *Three Early Preludes*, Ramey dedicated it to his friend Ivan Tcherepnin (1943–98), composer-son of Alexander. All three pieces are in simple tripartite form. The first, marked *Andante lugubrioso* [18], is a chromatic lament suggesting Slavic melancholy

occasionally tinged with Gershwin-esque harmony. Poker-faced *staccati* intrude on the nominal sobriety of the ensuing *Adagio enigmatic* [19]. After an angry trilled climax, the piece ends quietly. Prokofiev's 'bad boy' manner is clearly an inspiration for the witty C major *Allegro giocoso* [20], evident in the white-note main theme, the wrong-note tone-clusters that garnish it and the sparkle of the keyboard writing.

Piano Sonata No. 3

During the late 1960s, Aaron Copland repeatedly urged Ramey to widen his horizons beyond his Tchernepnin-Prokofiev-Bartók axis. One result was a landmark score for the composer, the *Epigrams, Book One*, completed in late 1967. In that set of eleven brief piano pieces Ramey decided 'to try my hand at deliberative twelve-tone writing for the first time.' Pleased with his quasi-serial miniatures, in mid-1968 he explored this experimental idiom exhaustively in a work of much larger scale, the Sonata No. 3. Of this score, the most ambitious piano piece he had yet attempted, Ramey writes:

Piano Sonata No. 3 was written from July to September 1968, in Chicago and Ann Arbor, Michigan. It is a willfully discordant, anti-melodic composition in three movements: the first twelve-tonish, featuring octave displacement; the second atonal and obsessive; the third a barbaric toccata. The Sonata was intended for a young New York pianist who had requested a major work. When I delivered the score, he said he had expected something in the neo-Prokofiev style of my Second Sonata of 1966 and refused to perform the new piece. Subsequently, despite Aaron Copland's enthusiasm for the Third Sonata, I put the score away and never showed it to another pianist. It thus became the 'black sheep' of my sonata series. Decades later, in October 2010, with the present recording in mind, I revised the work, primarily by making cuts, some substantial, in all three movements. This final version is dedicated to my Moroccan friend Abdelmouhsine Ellaouzi.

Ramey's hesitancy about promoting this work and his eventual decision to abridge it reveals his suspicion that, in giving free rein here to audacity, he had somewhat overindulged himself, producing a score that did not sufficiently reflect the ideal he later described as 'a composer's scrupulousness in stating what he has to state in as concise

and straightforward a manner as possible – and then shutting up⁵ Indeed, in his next major effort, the breakthrough *Piano Fantasy* (which germinated for three years), he would achieve something that eluded him in the Sonata: an unfailing structural rigor in the service of dramatic logic. By contrast, Sonata No. 3, particularly in its first two movements, is looser in formal organisation, and, moreover, more heterogeneous in style, sometimes venturing into modernistic idioms that would later be excluded from Ramey's music. Nevertheless, nowhere else in his output is his invention so profuse and freewheeling. Nor does stylistic experimentation ever compromise expressive urgency. And by any standards, the third movement is successful, and characteristic throughout.

The opening *Moderato austero* [21] shows a decided kinship with the post-Webern style cultivated by many composers in the 1960s. Initially, fragmented, wide-leaping thematic materials couched in oft-spasmodic and complex, highly irregular rhythms create an overall impression of kaleidoscopically shifting colours. After a climax, a second theme appears, in which stern middle-register chords underpin a theme playfully ornamented by omnipresent grace-notes. Having presented something like a sonata exposition, Ramey now proceeds to new material that, gesturally, exemplifies his most extravagant Romantic urges, while, in its dissonance, remaining consistent with the modernism of the preceding pages (Ex. 2):

Ex. 2

The musical score for Ex. 2 is in 4/4 time and marked [Moderato]. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The right hand begins with a 7-measure phrase starting on G4, followed by a 3-measure phrase starting on A4, and then a 6-measure phrase starting on B4. The left hand has a 3-measure phrase starting on G2, followed by a 6-measure phrase starting on F2, and then a 3-measure phrase starting on E2. The score includes dynamic markings (f) and articulation (accents, slurs). The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Rising-scale eruptions soon punctuate this discussion, and a reiterated pedal-point

⁵ Interview with Benjamin Folkman for the New York Philharmonic programme note to Ramey's Horn Concerto, April 1992

prepares a climax. A recession brings the movement to a close that provides final reminiscences of the grace-note theme.

The slow movement (*Andante meditativo*) [22] begins with ethereally evocative music, built on self-repeating melodic patterns in the top registers of the piano. This material alternates with striding ascents to repeated-note assertions on the highest key ('woodpecker music', says the composer). Later, the initial subject expands, gradually sinking to the lowest register of the instrument in a *crescendo* of mounting menace. The striding ascents now recur, but are soon reconciled with the initial material as the repeated-note gesture becomes the principle of a new, quiet theme. Full-throated lyricism subsequently appears at a few points, only to retreat into the prevailing introversion.

The toccata-like Bartók-Prokofiev manner of Ramey's earlier music resurfaces in the rondo finale [23], enlivened by his newly harsh and bracing harmonic palette. The principal subject (*Allegro demonico*) consists of low-rumbling introductory rhythmic gestures, followed by a spiky tune built on octave displacement (Ex. 3) that contains all twelve chromatic tones, flouting Arnold Schoenberg's golden rule by repeating one note (E natural).

Ex. 3



An episode follows in which wide leaps punctuate major-second and tone-cluster pulsation. The second subject begins with a slower *cantando* version of the introductory gesture, destined to recur several times, and continues with an almost impressionistic reinvention of the spiky tune. The introductory gesture then returns in its original form to commence an episode featuring wide-sweeping *arpeggios* echoed by half-tempo tone-cluster *arpeggios*. A massive dissonant climax follows, whereupon an array of tone-cluster chords effects a rapid descent into chaos, the flailing anarchic fury of which quickly subsides into low-register murmurs. From these, a tender restatement of the central episode of the first movement (Ex. 2) emerges. The wide leaps from tone-cluster pulsation

then intrude, commencing a kind of compressed reprise in which various episodes are evoked in abbreviated form. After the introductory gesture dies away for the last time, a grandiose, discordant B flat major/minor peroration provides an emphatic, even triumphant, conclusion.

Epigrams, Book Two

As noted above, Ramey's *Epigrams, Book One*, written in 1967, marked a stylistic watershed, leading to modernistic experimentation in more ambitious forms. Ramey revisited their aphoristic vein some two decades later, composing a second set of epigrams between February and April 1986. This collection received its premiere on 22 March 1987 at the 92nd Street Y in New York City, performed by Bennett Lerner. Ramey writes:

The nine pieces of *Epigrams, Book Two* are intended as a sequel to the eleven pieces of *Book One*. Four of them – Nos. 1, 4, 6, 8 – employ materials from the earlier set. With the exception of No. 4, the fully developed lyric centerpiece, all are concise.

In the initial epigram, marked 'Calm' [24], a gentle descending *glissando* begins an introverted, even ethereal meditation over an unchanging major tenth in the bass (C–E). In II ('Melancholy') [25], lyric impulses are continually undercut by disruptive *staccato* punctuations, wide melodic leaps and sudden ornamental skirls. III ('Scornful') [26] presents a hail of *staccato* sevenths and sixths in fast 5/8 metre, leading to an angry array of *arpeggio* outbursts. The pelting chords resume before a thunderous end. No. IV ('Desolate') [27], by far the most extended piece in the set, begins as an interior lament. The expression grows more intense as the texture becomes richer, and a new theme lightens the mood. But the initial material returns, building in turn to two sombre yet restrained climaxes before a quiet close. Another 5/8 hailstorm follows (No. V, marked 'Demonic', characterised by the composer as 'a kind of devil-dance') [28], even more determined and relentless in character than its predecessor. After a moment of central calm, scale-eruptions (first downward, then upward) cover virtually the full range of the keyboard and the deluge is resumed with heightened ferocity.

A bleak succession of long-held dissonant chords presented in slow, asymmetric rhythm initiates No. VI ('Solemn') [29]. Gossamer musings then begin at the threshold of audibility, eventually leading to chant-like repeated-note orations, and, after an evocation of the opening, the piece ends in uneasy tranquility. No. VII ('Grandiose') [30] is a *fortissimo* etude in the vein of Chopin's Etude Op. 10, No 1, with sweeping, wide-leaping up-and-down arpeggiation underpinned by sturdy bass octaves to create an atmosphere as enraged as Chopin's was imperious. No. VIII ('Lyrical') [31], by contrast, abounds in *pianissimo* high-register meditation, before a sepulchral close. The finale of the set (No. IX, 'Angry') [32] juxtaposes sonorous arrays of eruptive rising figuration with stinging arpeggiated chords and repeated-note oratory.

Lament for Richard III

In late 2000, fascinated by Ian McKellen's modern-dress film version of Shakespeare's *Richard III*, Ramey re-read Shakespeare's play, then immersed himself in various revisionist accounts of the monarch's doings and proceeded to write the turbulent *Lament for Richard III* [33]. Three years later, he composed a lyric pendant to the *Lament*, his



Photo: Cheryl Nutting

Phillip Ramey with two of the dedicatees of works in this recording:
(l.) Kenneth Lisenbee (Cossack Variations), (r.) Abdelmouhsine Ellaoui
(Piano Sonata No. 3) – Tangier, Morocco, October 2012.

Ode for F.D.R., the result being a diptych, *Two Political Preludes*, that pairs one of history's notable villains with one of its heroes. Of the *Lament* Ramey writes:

My piano piece is meant to be a brief character study of a controversial historical figure who, whether or not a villain, continues to intrigue. Set in rondo form, beginning and concluding with a lyrical lament, it contains programmatic elements, including ranting octaves that express frustration and rage, scampering music of strife, a meditative interlude, bars of grandiose romanticism and a violent climax representing Richard's heroic end at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485.

It amuses me to think that music inspired by a fifteenth-century personage should be the product of two eras: the twentieth century (began December 2000) and the twenty-first (completed January 2001).

Dedicated to the American composer Ned Rorem, *Lament for Richard III* was first performed in Doncaster, England, on 30 May 2001, by Alan Cuckston.

Piano Sonata No. 7

Ramey's Piano Sonata No. 7 – finished in a preliminary version in late 2010 in New York City and slightly revised shortly before this recording in early 2011 – shows him returning to the quasi-traditional three-movement-sonata lay-out he had not used since his Piano Sonata No. 3 of 1968. The extravagant gestures of hyperbolic neo-Romanticism found in his Sonatas Nos. 3, 4 and 6 are seldom present in this work; although No. 7 is no less deeply expressive, the watchwords in this score are poise, balance and a deft handling of materials that always highlights their salient expressive qualities and allows them full scope to expand. Ramey has provided the following commentary:

The opening movement, a kind of sonata-manqué structure, has, I think, the atmosphere of a traditional sonata's first movement despite the absence of a development section, this due to the presence of two contrasting principal themes. The slow movement, entirely lyrical and cast in A-B-A form, is the expressive heart of the work. Its chordal, chromatic middle part will reappear in the finale. The third movement, a modified rondo bolstered by references to materials from the preceding movements, features percussive fast music

with quirky rhythms and offbeat accents.

My Seventh Piano Sonata bears a dedication to the distinguished musicologist Benjamin Folkman.

There are grounds, in fact, for disagreeing with Ramey's modest description of the first movement [34]: it could be argued that he immediately follows the exposition with a kind of development in the form of a recapitulation which satisfies the criteria of sonata narration.

Much of the material of Ramey's Sonata derives from the intervals (the perfect fourth, the tritone and the major seventh that they bisect) of the declamatory four-note motto heard at the outset. Grand and severe in its continuation, the opening episode leads to a melancholy lyric melody accompanied by highly symmetrical triplet *arpeggios*. Scalic *scherzando* outbursts now appear, punctuated by wide leaps from throbbing tone-clusters (reminiscent of the finale of Sonata No. 3); here the clusters evolve into a piquantly grotesque march. The motto returns and soon leads to a counterstatement of the lyric melody, which contends with the scherzo material and, later, the march. Ultimately, the motto thunders out in the bass, initiating a sombre coda, and the movement closes with a final meditation elaborated from the motto.

The slow movement, marked *Andante lirico* [35], presents a stream of restrained melody. Its plaintive opening section is best seen as a single outpouring in which the motives, in their echoes, continually evolve into new material before reaching a conclusion in bass-register musing for left hand alone. After a pause, one of Ramey's most compelling lyric passages begins the brief middle section. The continuation basks in romanticism, but then drama creeps into the expression and emerges full-blown at a climax. The initial theme returns, considerably varied, and is soon heard in a new, more extroverted lament in a faster tempo, which ultimately dissolves into quiet left-hand recitation. Cryptic chordal material commences a coda that concludes with a hushed transformation of the initial theme.

A stern proclamation built from the four-note motto begins the *Andante* introduction to the finale [36]. Recitations culminating in repeated notes follow, and the proclamation

resumes, providing a grim cadence. A lively *Presto* theme now arises, starting with the fourths characteristic of the Sonata in duplet rhythm, only to collapse in descending triplets. Eccentric deadpan humour results from elaborations of this theme which alternate unpredictably with emphatic repeated chords in irregular rhythms and which feature rapid-fire repeated notes and surging parodies of the recitations of the introduction. A quiet return of the introductory proclamation leads to a reminiscence of the slow movement, but it is continually interrupted by the repeated-note exclamations; and the *Presto* theme soon commandeers the proceedings in a new colloquy with the repeated-chord material. Suddenly, a series of *arpeggios* sweeping up and down the full range of the keyboard intervenes, and, just as suddenly, long-held quiet chords waft upward ('Little Orphan Annie goes to heaven', the composer quips) – only to be mocked when the *Presto* theme breaks in, now faster and even more impudent than earlier. As the other themes join the mix, the tempo accelerates further. Eventually, the romantic slow movement theme appears in a compressed peroration that reaches lyric resolution. Then comes an exuberant broken-octave rush to the close.

Benjamin Folkman © 2013

Benjamin Folkman is president of The Tcherepnin Society and the author of the entry on Phillip Ramey in The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.

Stephen Gosling's playing has been hailed as 'electric, luminous and poised' (*The New York Times*), projected with 'utter clarity and conviction' (*Washington Post*) through 'extraordinary virtuosity' (*Houston Chronicle*).

A native of Sheffield, England, Stephen Gosling studied with Oxana Yablonskaya at the Juilliard School in New York City, where he earned his Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees. At Juilliard, he was awarded the Mennin Prize for Outstanding Excellence and Leadership in Music and the Sony Elevated Standards Fellowship. Energetically committed to the music of our time, he is a member of the New York New Music Ensemble, Ensemble Sospeso and Sinfonietta Moderna of Columbia University. He appears frequently as guest artist with such groups as Orpheus, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Continuum, the Orchestra of St Luke's, Speculum Musicae and DaCapo Chamber Players. He has recorded for the New World, Bridge,

CRI, Innova, Albany and Centaur labels, among others. For Toccata Classics he recorded the first and third volumes (TOCC 0029 and TOCC 0114) in this series of the piano music of Phillip Ramey.

Recorded at Patrych Sound Studios, Bronx, New York, under the supervision of the composer: 7, 8, and 10 May 2010 (*Incantations, Cossack Variations, Lament for Richard III*); 24, 25 and 26 January 2011 (*Three Early Preludes; Epigrams, Book Two; Piano Sonatas Nos. 3 and 7*).

Producer: Joseph Patrych

Engineering, editing and mastering: Joseph Patrych

Piano: Hamburg Steinway D

Artistic advisor and co-producer: Benjamin Folkman

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Booklet notes: Benjamin Folkman

Cover photograph of Phillip Ramey (New York, March 2012): Kenneth Lisenbee

Photograph of Stephen Gosling and Phillip Ramey (New York, January 2011): Joseph Patrych

Rear-inlay photograph: Phillip Ramey in front of the Cathedral of St Basil, Red Square, Moscow, May 1970; photo: Valery Cherny

Design: Peter Handley, Imergent Images, Kidderminster

Executive producer: Martin Anderson

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PHILLIP RAMEY Piano Music, Volume Four: 1959–2011

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| | | | |
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| 4 Theme (<i>Moderato</i>) | 0:34 | 24 I Calm | 1:08 |
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| 9 Variation 5 (<i>Moderato</i>) | 1:04 | 29 VI Solemn | 2:36 |
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| 12 Variation 8 (<i>Allegro con spirito</i>) | 0:48 | 32 IX Angry | 1:19 |
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| 15 Variation 11 (<i>Vivace</i>) | 0:51 | | |
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| 17 Variation 13 (<i>Andante maestoso</i>) | 1:37 | 34 I <i>Adagio con moto; Scherzando;</i> <i>Alla marcia; Tempo I</i> | 5:24 |
| | | 35 II <i>Adagio lirico</i> | 6:00 |
| <i>Three Early Preludes</i> (1959; rev. 1996) | 5:30 | 36 III <i>Andante; Presto;</i> <i>Allegro moderato; Presto</i> | 5:23 |
| 18 I <i>Andante lugubrioso</i> | 2:40 | | |
| 19 II <i>Adagio enigmatico</i> | 1:30 | | |
| 20 III <i>Allegro giocoso</i> | 1:20 | | |

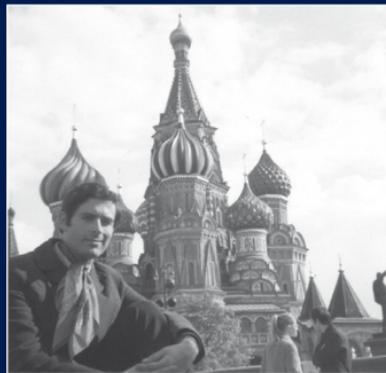
TT 79:18

Stephen Gosling, piano

The piano music of the American composer Phillip Ramey (born in 1939) is rooted in the motoric athleticism of Prokofiev and Bartók, tempered with sober lyricism, spicy modernist dissonance and a fresh approach to the grand Romantic gesture. This fourth Toccat Classics album includes the virtuosic *Cossack Variations*, the mercurial *Epigrams, Book Two* and *Lament for Richard III*, a dramatic character-study of a famous historical villain. Two sonatas add further substance to a varied programme: No. 3, serially inflected and culminating in a barbaric finale; and No. 7, infused with declamatory rhetoric, quirky rhythm and engaging melody.

PHILLIP RAMEY Piano Music, Volume Four: 1959–2011

| | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | <i>Incantations</i> (1960; rev. 1982) | 4:12 |
| 4 | <i>Cossack Variations</i> (1981/85) | 14:50 |
| 18 | <i>Three Early Preludes</i> (1959; rev. 1996) | 5:30 |
| 21 | <i>Piano Sonata No. 3</i> (1968; rev. 2010) | 16:07 |
| 24 | <i>Epigrams, Book Two</i> (1986) | 15:57 |
| 33 | <i>Lament for Richard III</i> (2001) | 5:36 |
| 34 | <i>Piano Sonata No. 7</i> (2010–11) | 16:47 |
| | | TT 79:18 |



Stephen Gosling, piano

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TOCCATA CLASSICS

16 Dalkeith Court
Vincent Street
London SW1P 4HH, UK

Tel: +44/0 207 821 5020
E-mail: info@toccatoclassics.com

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