

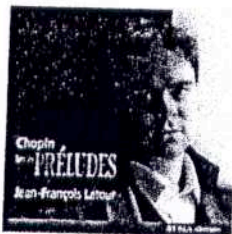
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CLASSICAL AND BEYOND

Chopin - Les 24 Preludes
Jean-Francois Latour
ATMA ACD2 2560

I have a ritual when I listen to a CD for the first time for which I am intending to write a review: I put the disc on my stereo in my office, and relax on my futon and breathe in the music. Listening to



Jean-François Latour's rendering of the complete set of Chopin Preludes, my mind couldn't help but conjure images of dance – not surprisingly, as Latour collaborates with choreographer Marie Chouinard. I was also transported back to a very special personal space – the moment I first knew music was undeniably the key to the soul. When I was fifteen, my family traveled to Oregon for the International Society of Music Educators conference (my mother being a music educator at the time). My sister and I traipsed around by day from recital to recital, and by evening we attended concerts as a family unit. One such evening the program was Chopin's Preludes – from start to finish, no applause, no intermission. The pianist was Eastern European. I remember he had a goatee, and he wore a black cape with scarlet red silk lining. For me, time not only stood still, it disappeared. When the last note had been played and the audience was on their feet in appreciation, I literally couldn't move. I was overcome with emotion, and simply broke down in tears.

This is Jean-François Latour's first recording. It is a stunningly mature interpretation from this young Canadian who studied with Leon Fleischer at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore. The value added material includes a set of Mazurkas, and the lovingly classic Nocturnes in E flat and G minor. Buckle your seat belts; this career is already in the fast lane.

Heidi McKenzie