

Welcome

For some it starts small; an LP here, a CD there. Following a few small labels, acquiring a limited edition. But for many, the line between 'collector' and 'completist' runs fine; very quickly the possibility of filling any gaps becomes intoxicating, and before you can say 'rare Richter record' you've fallen behind enemy lines. The Completist Syndrome seems to affect piano lovers in their droves. In many ways it is masochistic; a self-imposed project that subsequently invigorates your soul and zaps your bank account. But at the same time, the sense of preserving a slice of history is hugely rewarding, and context brings a whole new meaning to even well known works.

If the completist collector works hard, the recording completist works tirelessly. For these rare creatures it is not enough to simply record a few sonatas, with the odd concerto thrown in for good measure. No, these beings are consumed with an overwhelming hunger to create, to embrace historiographical debate.

French pianist Jean-Efflam Bavouzet is one such artist. He started relatively small, recording Ravel's complete piano works for a double CD release. But then he got the bug, joined Chandos, and has since recorded Debussy's complete piano works (spread across five CDs and essential listening for the anniversary year), and is currently working on complete Beethoven and Haydn sonata collections. He tells us why over on p18.

Some pianists, it seems, simply do not do things by halves. In this bumper issue we meet Anthony Hewitt, the soloist who has set himself an 'olympian' challenge to mark London 2012 (p28); find out how piano festivals are battling tough economic climes (p69) and explore the visionary world of Alexander Scriabin (p57).

Claire Jackson / Editor



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International Piano

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NUMBER 12

Front Cover Jean-Efflam Bavouzet
International Piano is published in January, March, May, July, September and November

Printed by Wyndeham Grange Ltd

Distributed by Comag Specialist Division
Tel: +44 (0)1895 433800

Produced by Rhinegold Publishing Ltd,
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Twitter: @IP_mag
Telephone calls may be monitored for training purposes

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