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GABRIELLA IMREH

PIANIST



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Gabriella Imreh - Pianist BIOGRAPHY

Described by the *London Sunday Express* as "a fast rising Romanian born virtuoso" pianist Gabriela Imreh has captivated audiences throughout North and South America, Europe and the Far East. She has performed with many of the world's leading orchestras including the Vancouver Symphony, the National Russian Philharmonic, the London Mozart Players, the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Tivoli Festival Orchestra in Copenhagen, and the Buenos Aires Philharmonic at Teatro Colon, where she recently performed the Tchaikovsky Concerto No. 1 to a sold out house. She has appeared throughout the USA on a number of extensive tours with the Philadelphia Virtuosi Chamber Orchestra as well as two tours to Brazil, which included performances at several international festivals. She has performed in over 150 American cities from coast-to-coast and appeared at New York's Lincoln Center and Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall as well as a number of prestigious halls in Europe.

Her several recordings for Connoisseur Society Records have been warmly received by critics: *Clavier* commented on the "restrained Romantic sensitivity that is refreshing to hear in Bach performance" and the *American Record Guide* noted that "Her fingers are capable of negotiating the composer's polyphony with the utmost clarity at often breakneck tempos. She offers a sinewy strength balanced by a feminine delicacy and lightness of touch that dazzle the senses." Her recording of the complete *Soirées de Vienne* by Franz Liszt was praised by former *New York Times* critic Harold C. Schonberg, for her "delicious playing," and *Fanfare* described Gabriela as "a major talent," and the recording as "state of the art...(and) a delightfully ear opening release."

One of Gabriela's recent collaborations is a special project with New York choreographer and film director Doug Varone, where she performed on stage as an integral participant in the theatrical/dance presentation. This innovative work was presented for a week of performances at the 2003 Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Gabriela is also co-author of a ground breaking book *Practicing Perfection: Memory and Piano Performance*, the culmination of an eight year project. She has served on the faculty at several universities, including a prestigious 2003 appointment as Guest Professor at the University of Connecticut.

Born in Tirgu-Mures, Transylvania, Gabriela began studying when she was five years old. Her parents were engineers with no formal training in music; nonetheless they surrounded her very early with books, music, and art. Her mother especially, who had a great passion for classical music and grand opera, stimulated Gabriela's interest and helped guide her work. At age 8, under the urging of her teachers who recognized her great talent, Gabriela's parents arranged to move their home to Cluj-Napoca, where she could continue in the Performing Arts School and later attend the "Gheorge Dima" Academy of Music. There she graduated summa cum laude as the top conservatory student in Romania. Her studies with Harald Wagner were augmented by work with Nina Panieva and seminars in Hungary with Gyorgy Sebok and in East Germany with Peter Solymos and Rudolf Kehrer. Making her professional debut at age 16, she was a frequent performer with state philharmonic orchestras throughout Romania and on both Romanian and Hungarian national television and radio. Her engagement and subsequent secret marriage to American conductor Daniel Spalding in 1985 was eventually given state approval the following year under pressure from the American government. The couple was later allowed to travel to the United States and they currently reside in New Jersey with their dog, Daisy, who often accompanies them on their many tours.

RECORDINGS:

Liszt: Soirees de Vienne after Franz Schubert (complete) Connoisseur Society #4226

“Imreh is an interesting pianist. One of the first things to be noticed in her playing is her use of the pedal. She’s not afraid to pedal through harmonies, and she does it with such a sensitive ear that the textures never sound blurred or heavy. She also is something of a throwback to the old romantic style, with her constant but controlled tempo fluctuations. These allow the music to have variety in phrase. She uses her warm piano sound to good advantage, never sounding flurried even in heavily fortissimo passages. But basically she is a lyricist who sings her way through these lovely Liszt pieces with real personality. In short, this Romanian pianist is a surprise package, and the faithful recorded sound sets her delicious playing off to best advantage.”

Former New York Times critic **HAROLD C. SCHONBERG**, writing for **AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE**

“...her eventful interpretations give the *Soirees* just what it needs...her climaxes ring out firmly, her legato is sweet...because she commands such a wide variety of touch, especially at the quiet end of the spectrum, she manages to tint the music with constantly shifting colors...most of all, because she has such a flexible sense of rhythm, she manages to tease the music to a degree rarely attempted by contemporary pianists. To my ears she’s a major talent...All in all, a delightfully ear-opening release.”

FANFARE

“Gabriela Imreh is an elegant pianist with a lovely sense of pacing and a good feel for rubato. She also catches the balance between the Lisztian moments and the Schubertian extremely well; the more introverted passages are finely and thoughtfully shaded, but extrovert virtuosity is equally relished.”

BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE, UK

“This music, written for nimble and light fingers as much as for a carefree spirit, finds a loving and faithful interpreter in Gabriela Imreh...No. 6, the most famous and favoured by most pianists, receives a thoroughly commendable reading...The mood of No. 1, malincolico; of No. 5--con affetto; and others--con brio, spirtuoso and a capriccio; are all caught and conveyed to perfection.”

PIANO JOURNAL, UK

Liszt-Spalding: Hungarian Fantasy for Piano & Orchestra Connoisseur Society #4213
(1998 FINALIST FOR A GRAMMY NOMINATION)

“The piano playing is glittering, light-fingered, luminous and refined...and she is heard in the loveliest of sounds.”

PIANOFORTE MAGAZINE, UK

“This take on the Hungarian Fantasy is highly entertaining and exciting...Miss Imreh has more than enough of the panache and digital dexterity to prevent her avid percussion companions from overshadowing her. I’d certainly like to hear more from this pianist—in this repertory. If you thought this piece no longer holds any surprises for you, listen to this.”

AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

J.S. BACH: Chromatic Fantasy & Fugue, Partita No.1, Toccata in E minor, Italian Concerto, Chaconne in D minor (transcribed by Busoni) Connoisseur Society #4207

“Imreh captivates her audience with the spontaneity exhibited in the performances...a restrained Romantic sensitivity that is refreshing to hear in Bach performance.”

CLAVIER

"The young Romanian pianist Gabriela Imreh has chosen a selection of Bach keyboard war-horses for her recording debut, placing her against some formidable competition. She demonstrates technical command of the repertoire. Her fingers are capable of negotiating the composer's complicated polyphony with the utmost clarity at often breakneck tempos. She offers a sinewy strength balanced by a feminine delicacy and lightness of touch that dazzle the senses. Imreh also displays a youthful impetuosity that removes the marmoreal figure with the powdered peruke and replaces it with a living, breathing human being."

AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE

“The young Romanian pianist Gabriela Imreh seems to be totally at ease in the challenging programme of Bach masterpieces. Her musical intelligence, nimble fingers and dynamic control combine to produce 63 minutes of very enjoyable listening, stylish and committed.”

PIANO JOURNAL, UK

“Bach obviously holds no terror for her and she sails into his most difficult passages with aplomb. But there is respect in her approach too, this is not a showoff disc. The slower, less bravura segments are played with care and subtle attention to detail. Perhaps the quality which most impressed this listener in these performances, one that is essential to Bach, is its clarity. Every note, left hand and right, fast passages and slow, comes through with remarkable transparency. I would defy anyone who says he does not like Bach to listen to this recording and not come away with a new appreciation of his genius.”

TRENTON TIMES, NEW JERSEY

“Imreh plays the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue thoughtfully—one slow measured trill is especially impressive. She handles Busoni’s arrangement of the D-Minor solo violin Chaconne with some bravura, and the Saraband of the B flat-Major Partita is distinguished for fine control of touch, a winningly pensive atmosphere, and some well-considered embellishments in the repeats.”

FANFARE

“Gabriela Imreh’s approach to Bach may alienate purists. She plays a Yamaha CFIII and makes considerable use of the piano’s dynamic capabilities, thus distancing herself from the authentic approach. Yet works like the Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue and the Partita No. 1 in B-flat not only survive, but thrive under it.”

OTTAWA CITIZEN, CANADA

GABRIELA IMREH WITH ORCHESTRA:

“Gabriela Imreh...is not a name that anyone in the audience will forget. She possesses a brilliant technique with great clarity of sound and a wide range of tone colour. Her playing was filled with so many moments of exquisite beauty, that I was reminded of another great Romanian-born pianist, the legendary Dinu Lipatti.”

SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST, HONG KONG

Gabriella Imreh - Pianist

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"With a doe's shy and graceful charm the Romanian pianist Gabriela Imreh floated like a fairy in a dreamland onto the stage in Tivoli's Concert Hall and seated herself at the piano. In her white silk dress the decolletee beauty could compare with the Bambi models and the fashionable creations from the couture houses of Paris. This charming vision of clean and classical beauty, however, was not just surface and glitter for the eyes. The musician Gabriela Imreh turned out to be an excellent pianist with a delicate, light, and distinctive touch. She gave a beautiful, poetic, and singing tone to Rachmaninoff's 24 variations in a Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini. Contrary to other pianists addicted to vulgar affectations, empty rhetoric, and technical bravura, the Romanian pianist brought out the romantic essence with a plastic modeling of tempo, sensitive rubato and beautifully breathed ritardandi."

POLITIKEN, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

"Her playing was very expressive, her pianissimos among the most delicate this listener has ever heard...she played brilliantly, the cadenzas flawlessly, which is more than can be said for Rachmaninoff himself on his own recording of the concerto."

NEWARK STAR LEDGER, NEW JERSEY

PERFORMANCE SIMPLY SUPERB "The Rachmaninoff concerto featured perhaps the greatest guest pianist the symphony has performed with in several seasons—Gabriela Imreh. In fact, this was Imreh's second appearance with the symphony in two seasons. No complaints here if she comes back every two seasons after this. Imreh's performance was the kind that superlatives are made for, the definition of virtuosic playing. It was the performance of someone who had completely given herself over to the music, and that's an indescribably exciting feeling. Imreh, radiant in a glittery purple gown, was hypnotic while performing, throwing her whole body into each note. It was quite telling to see virtually every player in the symphony straining to watch Imreh play during the concerto's long cadenzas. They knew just how impressive the performance was, certainly."

AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS, TEXAS

"The second section had Piazzolla's Adios Nonino, inspired by the death of his father, and Hanson's severe, wintry, utterly mistitled Fantasy Variations on a Theme of Youth, showing different composers taking parallel routes to the same darkness. Any challenges posed by the music's lack of familiarity were easily overridden by the pieces' expressive urgency and scintillating playing by Romanian pianist Gabriela Imreh."

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, PENNSYLVANIA

"As Itzhak Perlman is prone to say, to be a successful artist, you have to have something more than brilliant virtuosity. You have to be a performer and sell yourself to the audience. Gabriela Imreh shows both these qualities and yet brings to the platform a charmingly modes style. She demonstrated her virtuosity with Rachmaninoff's '1st Piano Concerto' and one could only sit back and admire the power and clarity that Imreh infused into the massive and rapid double-octave passages that Rachmaninoff seems to demand repeatedly...the concerto is full of haunting themes, and Gabriela Imreh played them with a delicacy and sensitivity without succumbing to the temptation of maudlin romanticism."

PORTLAND PRESS HERALD, MAINE

"Gabriela Imreh, in her difficult role as a soloist, showed complete control, offering a display of mastery and passion that rendered long applause from the audience."

MIAMI HERALD

Gabriella Imreh - Pianist

"The excitement of this concert Saturday night was pianist Gabriela Imreh...She played with clarity and was in full command of the piece. Her touch was distinct, her emotion convincing. She was a kitten and she was a tiger."

LEWISTON JOURNAL, MAINE

"For the Concerto No.1 in F-Sharp major, there was a remarkably gifted young pianist in Gabriela Imreh, a native of Romania. Immediately she dug into the big chords of the piece and continued to underscore its lyrical and dramatic facets...Streaked with melancholy, the concerto required a vitality, which Imreh gave prodigally."

BANGOR DAILY NEWS, MAINE

"The piano part (Malediction) is fiendishly difficult and contains just about every technical device Liszt ever used. Imreh negotiated the piano part with apparent ease, without excess body motion. Her technique is phenomenal; it is fluid, powerful and lyric."

PALM BEACH DAILY NEWS, FLORIDA

"The highlight of the program was Romanian pianist Gabriela Imreh. Along with the ASO, Imreh poured herself into every note of Rachmaninoff's 'Concerto No. 1.' Imreh finessed her way through the dramatic work drawing several ovations from the audience. Her interpretation was skillful and moving."

THE LAFYETTE DAILY ADVERTISER, LOUISIANA

"Ms. Imreh delivered a phenomenal performance."

THE BERMUDA SUN

"As the petite pianist Gabriela Imreh leant across the huge grand piano, you could feel the 200 strong crowd pulled along with her out of their seats."

THE ROYAL GAZETTE, BERMUDA

"Imreh's performance, with deference to the great Liszt authority Jorge Bolet, must surely be definitive."

MONTANA STANDARD

"To crown the evening, pianist Gabriela Imreh astonished the audience with unbelievable acrobatics on the keyboard but never overlooking the interpretive aspects...we were treated to displays of the highest keyboard artistry."

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SUN, CALIFORNIA

"Never have I seen an artist given the response and attention you were given last Thursday. The warm ovation following the performance is evidence of the deep satisfaction of the audience."

KHCC FM Public Radio, KANSAS

"Imreh was amazing to watch as her fingers maniacally jumped across the keys. Any ice left on the roof of the Alberta Bair Theater had to be melted by that impressively charged performance. Imreh received a standing ovation before leaving the stage."

BILLINGS GAZETTE, MONTANA

Gabriella Imreh - Pianist

“It was led by the bravura performance of Gabriela Imreh, a Romanian born pianist and virtuoso whose sometimes florid reading of Liszt’s technically demanding music created the musical event for the evening...Her performance, strong, powerful, melodic and musically sound, didn’t hide any of Liszt’s stunning piano techniques and effects. She seemed instinctively to know what to give and to take from the compositions, asking the careful listener to hear with her and her piano as she bent the music to her will.”

THE BILLINGS OUTPOST, MONTANA

“From the moment piano soloist Gabriela Imreh took the stage she captivated her audience; her endearing explanations of her musical choices led to awe of her brilliant technique. She became one with her music.”

ANTIGO DAILY JOURNAL, WISCONSIN

“...Appearing as soloist with the Philadelphia Virtuosi, the Romanian born artist gave stunning renditions of three works by Bach...Imreh’s playing was warm and transparent...her mastery and understanding of the demanding scores was always apparent.”

TRENTON TIMES, NEW JERSEY

“Her reading of the [Shostokovich] concerto [No. 2] was by turns gentle and fierce, more than meeting the strenuous technical demands it places on the performer. She easily negotiated both the furious octave passages and runs in the first movement and the whirligig of the last, pulling it all off with feral grace. In the beautiful slow movement, in which the opening piano theme sounds almost like Rachmanioff, she played with a soulful, intimate expressiveness.”

READING EAGLE, PENNSYLVANIA

“Gabriela Imreh unleashed tremendous energy in a confident and accomplished overflowing performance of the difficult and majestic Tchaikovsky Concerto.”

ORADEA FAKLYA, ROMANIA

“The professional achievements of Gabriela Imreh reveal an accomplished, mature pianist, a fact proven by the number of concerts in Bucharest and other important musical centers of our country. In our city, Gabriela Imreh performed Beethoven’s Emperor with tremendous success. Between the dynamic and massive sonorities of the outer movements, the second movement appeared fascinatingly imposing in an emotionally introverted interpretation.”

SZATMARI HIRLAP, ROMANIA

“The living sensitive rubato, the natural expression and virtuoso technique that blends the qualities of a touch both gentle and lusty, the ability of a subtle grading of the sonorities not only by dynamics but also color, are the essential qualities revealed by the artistic personality of young pianist Gabriela Imreh in this concerto.”

MUZICA, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

GABRIELA IMREH IN RECITAL:

“During the next hour and a half the artist kept her spell on a fascinated and enchanted audience.”

JOURNAL DE SAINT MALO, FRANCE

“Appearing on the stage of the Romanian Atheneum, Gabriela Imreh displayed confidence and grace in an electrifying performance.”

SCINTEIA TINERETULUI, BUCHAREST, ROMANIA

Gabriella Imreh - Pianist

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ROMANIAN-BORN PIANIST GABRIELA IMREH DAZZLES AUDIENCE “Imreh showed herself to be a philosopher of the piano, capable of great sweep and musical projection of ideas. The audience, brought to its feet in appreciation for a stunning recital, was privileged to hear a virtuosic, expressively passionate, spiritual young performer.”

THE ALLIANCE REVIEW, OHIO

“The Romanian native took command of the audience with her virtuoso performance. Her display was of exceptional technical accomplishment, both powerful and rhythmically subtle, with astonishing evenness of touch.”

CLEBURNE COUNTY SUN-TIMES, ARKANSAS

“Gabriela Imreh, a Romanian pianist whose star is on the rise, played a challenging program at Fresno State University Tuesday evening...Imreh has the skill to make the work sound dramatic (and) presented a brilliant interpretation...It then continued with driving intensity, demanding amazing endurance and strength, which Imreh seemed to have in abundance.”

THE FRESNO BEE, CALIFORNIA

“In a program of Bach, Chopin, and Liszt, Imreh displayed impressive technical skills. She opened with Busoni’s arrangement of Bach’s Chaconne in D minor from the Sonata for Solo Violin, a formidable piece which she played with almost startling power. Cascades of notes poured from her slender hands and arms, her left hand as strong and resounding as her right. Her fingers flitted over the keys with breathtaking agility.”

TRENTON TIMES, NEW JERSEY

“Imreh is an interpreter of great strength and conviction. The playing was technically impeccable... The pianist continued with Gaspard de la Nuit by Ravel (and) Miss Imreh’s interpretation was beautifully poetic and wonderfully controlled...Overall, this recital was a memorable and inspirational experience.”

JOURNAL OF THE FINE ARTS SOCIETY OF TEXAS

“Imreh took the stage at Theatre Dublin Monday night...She played Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata with perfection. She created musical magic as well from the works of J.S. Bach and Franz Liszt.”

THE DUBLIN COURIER HERALD, GEORGIA

GABRIELA IMREH PERFORMED BRILLIANTLY IN DELTA CONCERT “Cascading waterfalls of melody created by effortlessly dancing fingers on keys held an appreciative audience spellbound... Imreh provides educational insight into the character of the composer, and the personality of the music. She then plays it impeccably, transporting the listener to higher realms of appreciation. Her style, technique, and personality are transforming.”

DELTA COUNTY INDEPENDENT, COLORADO

BEAUTY AND GRACE ABOUND DURING THURSDAY NIGHT CONCERT “Imreh performed the Bach selection with the brilliance and grace of the seasoned performer that she is...Imreh played with immense intensity, criss-crossing her hands over the keyboard so swiftly that they literally became a blurr.”

THE ELDORADO TIMES, KANSAS

“It has been a long time since I enjoyed a recital this much...Her technical skills simply sparkled on the Bach and Franck works. Many of us wondered at her fluid speed and seemingly effortless attacks that brought out a great range of dynamics.”

NORTH DAKOTA MUSIC TEACHERS ASSOCIATION NEWS

REPERTOIRE

Addinsell	Warsaw Concerto
Argento	Divertimento for piano & strings
Bach	Concerto No. 1 in D minor (BMV 1052) Concerto No. 5 in F major (BMV 1057)
Beethoven	Concerto No. 2 Concerto No. 5 (Emperor) Choral Fantasy
Chopin	Concerto No. 1
Gershwin	Rhapsody in Blue
Hanson	Fantasy Variations on a Theme of Youth for piano & strings
Haydn	Concerto in D major
Mozart	Concerto in D minor (K. 466) Concerto in C minor (K. 467)
Liszt	Totentanz for piano & orchestra Fantasy on Hungarian Folk Tunes Malédiction for piano & strings
Liszt/Spalding	Mephisto Waltz for solo piano, strings & percussion
Piazzolla/Bragato	Adios Nonino for piano & strings
Rachmaninoff	Concerto No. 1 Concerto No. 2 Concerto No. 3 Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini
Rósza	Spellbound Concerto
Saint-Saens	Carnival of the Animals (2 pianos) The Wedding Cake for piano & strings
Shostakovich	Concerto No. 2
Tchaikovsky	Concerto No. 1
Turina	Rapsodia Sinfonica for piano & strings