

PHCD

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Alexander Scriabin

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30 **Poem, Op.32, No.1** 2:42

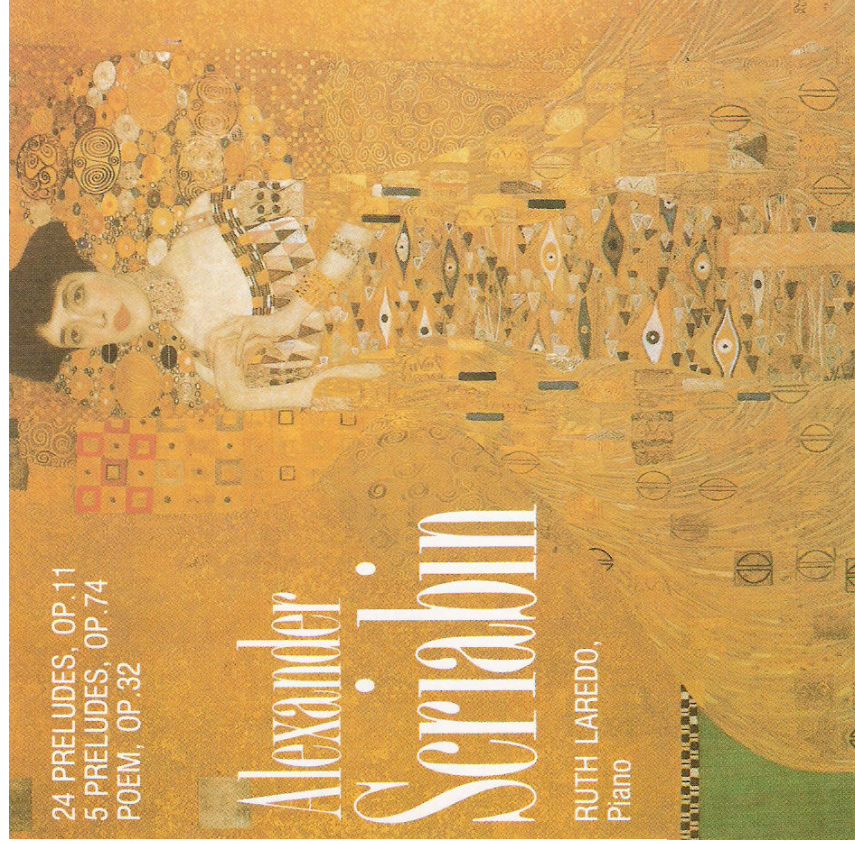
Ruth Laredo, piano

A A D



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24 PRELUDES, OP.11
5 PRELUDES, OP.74
POEM, OP.32

Alexander Scriabin

RUTH LAREDO,
Piano



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ALEXANDER SCRIBABIN

There is no doubt that Alexander Scriabin holds a unique place in the entire history of music. He was born in Moscow in 1871 and educated at the Moscow Conservatory. Like Chopin, he was a great pianist who wrote a great deal of music eminently suited to the piano. His earliest compositions are reminiscent in mood and spirit of Chopin. Even some of the titles are identical: Nocturnes, Etudes, Preludes, Waltzes.

The 24 Preludes Opus 11 are among the best of Scriabin's early works. They resemble Chopin's 24 Preludes in number, length, and in key relationships. Both Scriabin and Chopin begin in C Major and progress to the relative minor keys through the circle of fifths until the 24th Prelude in D Minor.

But the similarities end here and the distinct genius of Scriabin is revealed. He had a totally distinct musical language with a complete mastery of form and musical logic. He could write a melody like no one else, and his rhythmic inventiveness and harmonic originality are absolutely unique. His place in the history of music would have been assured with his early keyboard works alone. But the growth and change of his thinking, from the early Opus 11 Preludes to the last Prelude, Opus 74, show an astonishing musical evolution.

The contrast between the two sets of preludes is so great as to make one believe that two different composers had written them. How amazing that the lyrical, romantic, Chopinesque Opus 11 Preludes could have been created by the same man who wrote the sparse, bleak, almost atonal Schoenbergian Preludes Opus 74.

By the time he had written his last keyboard works in 1914, Scriabin was striking out in new paths of harmony, theories of mysticism, of the relationships of color and light and sound, of a whole new world which we find contemporary in the psychedelic Seventies. Perhaps that is the fascination of Scriabin — He was a man ahead of his time, but the times have finally caught up with him.

Poem Opus 32 No. 1 is a lush, sensual composition full of cross rhythms and the exotic harmonies which characterize Scriabin's middle creative years.

RUTH LAREDO



RUTH LAREDO

Pianist

Hailed as "America's first lady of the piano" (N. Y. Daily News), Ruth Laredo has a distinguished worldwide reputation as a leading soloist, recitalist and recording artist. While she is particularly renowned as an interpreter of Russian and French music and, lately, for her performances of works by Spanish composers, her broad repertoire ranges from Beethoven to Barber.

She has appeared at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Library of Congress and the White House, and with such prestigious orchestras as The New York Philharmonic, The Philadelphia Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra, The Boston Symphony and The St. Louis Symphony. She has also performed with The Detroit Symphony, The National Symphony, The American Symphony and the principal orchestras of Baltimore, Indianapolis, Houston and Buffalo.

Ruth Laredo has received numerous honors for her extraordinary achievements, including a *Ladies Home Journal* "Woman of the Year" nomination. Guest speaker at the Second Annual Harvard/Radcliffe Women's Leadership Conference in September 1989 at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. She has also been the subject of an extensive profile on the Bravo TV cable network, and has appeared on NBC's "Today" show. In April 1989 she was honored by the MTNA for "Distinguished Service to Music in America."

Born in Detroit and now residing in New York City, the artist has been playing the piano since early childhood. She studied under Rudolf Serkin at The Curtis Institute and made her New York Philharmonic debut in 1974 under Pierre Boulez. Her New York orchestral debut took place at Carnegie Hall under Leopold Stokowski, and in 1984 she was selected as the special guest soloist at the gala Carnegie Hall American Symphony Orchestra concert marking the centennial of Stokowski's birth. She also has the honor of being one of only five pianists chosen by Carnegie Hall to perform in a concert as part of its 90th anniversary celebration.