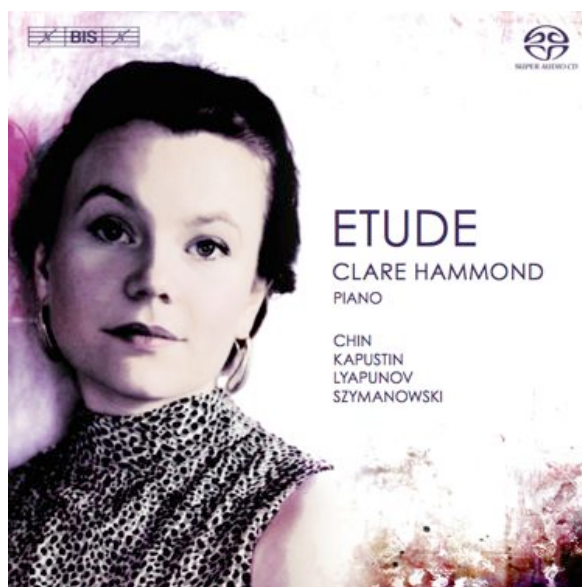


‘Etude’

20th and 21st-century etudes by Unsuk Chin, Nikolai Kapustin, Sergei Lyapunov and Karol Szymanowski.

Clare Hammond for BIS Records

Released Feb 2015



SERGEI LYAPUNOV

3 *Études d'Exécution Transcendante* (1897-1900)
'Térek', 'Nuit d'été', 'Tempête'

UNSUKE CHIN

Études, Nos. 1-6 (1995-2003)

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI

12 *Études*, Op. 33 (1916)

NIKOLAI KAPUSTIN

5 *Études in Different Intervals*, Op. 68 (1992)

Press release and links to online retailers at:

www.clarehammond.com/etude.html

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Disc Featured on BBC Radio 3's 'CD
Review' and 'In Tune'



PRESS REVIEWS

Gramophone Magazine UK, Bryce Morrison, "*unfaltering bravura and conviction*"

Simply entitled 'Etude', Clare Hammond's recital is gloriously deceptive. For here is no familiar programme of Chopin and Liszt but an enterprising and enthralling challenge for both pianist and listener. Opening with Nos 4, 5 and 6 from Lyapunov's 12 *Transcendental Etudes* - a very Russian tribute to Liszt, Hammond then abruptly changes course with Unsuk Chin's six Piano Etudes (1995-2003) and a world that is 'abstract and remote' yet 'addressing the emotions and communicating joy and warmth'. Then follow Szymanowski's 12 Op 33 Etudes (already a far cry from the Chopin-inspired earlier set of Op 4) and, finally, Kapustin's *Five Etudes in Different Intervals*.

All this could set even the most intrepid virtuoso explorer (Marc-André Hamelin?) by the ears, yet Hammond's musical intention is always paramount. She storms Lyapunov's 'Térek' and 'Tempête' with full-blooded romanticism and finds all the sultry and romantic atmosphere of 'Nuit d'été'. If Chin's Etudes betray the influence of her teacher Ligeti, they are also highly individual and distinguished, their often playful quality ironically surfacing through a formidable intricacy. Memories of earlier work (the monstrous Second Sonata) flicker through Szymanowski's Etudes as well as other composers' (Scriabin's double-note Study, Op. 8 No 11), while Kapustin recalls Debussy ('Pour les octaves' and 'Pour les notes répétées'). More to the point, Hammond plays with unfaltering bravura and conviction, and she has been superbly recorded.

BBC Music Magazine, Jessica Duchén, "*this array of wizardry is not for the faint hearted*"

Here is a dazzling programme of 20th- and 21st-century Etudes from the young British pianist Clare Hammond, who would deserve many plaudits just for getting through this many notes. With its whirling kaleidoscopes of pianistic effects, this array of wizardry is not for the faint-hearted.

Part of its fascination is hearing the perspective added by the unusual progressions of repertoire; Unsuk Chin's vividly imagined creations sound closer to the sensual coloration of Szymanowski than one might expect, while the many-layered voicing and driving rhythms of Kapustin's irresistibly jazzy offerings find plenty of counterparts in the textural patterns of those more elusive soundworlds. The Chin work is especially welcome: the composer studied with Ligeti

and seems to have followed him in creating a set of challenging studies that push the instrument's capacities to the utmost.

It is a gloriously creative programme and Hammond pulls it off without succumbing to any temptations of overt 'flashiness' or bombastic technical showing off; instead she favours precision, clarity and seriousness of purpose. Yet I found myself wishing for the character of each composer to be even more strongly defined: we hear the similarities between them perhaps more strongly than the differences - for instance, Kapustin's rhythms could dig deeper and feel more visceral. Voicing throughout could occasionally be more vividly set in perspective, since at times the focusing threads can seem subsumed into busy textures. Still, it is a terrific achievement and the repertoire is fresh and fantastic.

The Observer, "*style and substance*", Fiona Maddocks

The young British pianist Clare Hammond is fast building a reputation as a stylish interpreter of the new or less familiar. Until Chopin showed us otherwise, études tended to prompt thoughts of dreary studies designed to advance technique. Hammond challenges the assumption with this intriguing showcase. The Russian Sergei Lyapunov (1859-1924) took inspiration from Liszt in his *Études d'exécution transcendante*. Szymanowski (1882-1937) conjures tonalities and delicate colours closer to Debussy than to his fellow Pole, Chopin. The real interest is the set of six *Études* by Unsuk Chin (b1961), witty, angular, pointillistic, and the *Five Études in Different Intervals*, punchy and jazzy, by Nikolai Kapustin (b1937). Hammond brings precision and clarity to all.

The Sunday Times, "*imagination and bravura*", Paul Driver

Hammond explores the continuing concept of the piano étude with imagination and bravura. The 19th-century embodiment of the study, not just as technical training, but expressive daring, remained an inspiration for composers. She begins with three examples from Sergei Lyapunov, richly Romantic in figuration, dextrously unfolded here. Then comes the startling contrast of the thin treble attack of Chin's post-tonal *Six Études*, the textural imagination as fascinating as the digital experiments are fiendish. Szymanowski's *12 Studies* are a return to sumptuousness; Kapustin's *Five Études in Different Intervals* open the transcendental study to jazz.

Classical Music Magazine UK, "*definition of bravura over barnstorming*" CRITIC's CHOICE, February 2015

A remarkably well-chosen selection of études that is the very definition of bravura over barnstorming. Lyapunov is revealed here as the missing link between Chopin and Scriabin; full justice is given to Unsuk Chin's set, in performances that earn the composer's grateful praise. If Kapustin's pastiches slightly let the side down, this recital is testament to a thoughtful musician with a noteworthy technique.

Klassik Heute, "*... a pronounced virtuoso*", Dr Hartmut Lück

The British pianist Clare Hammond, still unknown in Germany, proves herself on her second CD to be a pronounced virtuoso (the first disc, on the same label, comprises the works of Andrzej Panufnik and his daughter Roxanna Panufnik). This already alludes to the title 'Étude', although she does not present earlier, compositionally rather primitive études, but some works from the later history of this genre, which combine pianistic and technical problems with compositional and expressive demands. Here the late-romantic Russian composer Sergey Lyapunov clearly walks in the footsteps of Franz Liszt, not only with the titles of his études, but also in their sonic effect. These dark-toned studies, to which Clare Hammond adds rhythmic drive, nevertheless prove to be absolutely delightful.

The previously recorded six *Études* (from a planned 12-part cycle) by the Korean Unsuk Chin, living in Berlin, are technically intricate challenges with varying poetic and narrative characteristics. While in the first recording of the work, by the Korean Mei Yi Foo (Odradek Records 1700302), the poetic and coloristic components were more to the fore, Clare Hammond chooses a decidedly sporty virtuosic approach. The performance is usually somewhat faster, while she slightly decreases the tension in the more subdued passages. In contrast to the interpreter, who wrote the sleeve notes herself, it must be stressed that the parallel with Chin's teacher György Ligeti does not get one very far: while Ligeti consistently develops predominantly mathematical ideas in his piano studies, it is the exploration of the expressive potential of sound and registral changes which is preeminent in Unsuk Chin's.

Clare Hammond also proves to be a superior technician in the late-impressionist studies by Karol Szymanowski and the jazzy pieces by Nikolai Kapustin, yet she is also able to unfold a tremendous breadth of tone in this context. An interesting compilation which is well worth hearing, rolled out from the piano paths.

Diapason, "*exceptional finesse of articulation, eloquent vitality and force of conviction*", Bertrand Boissard

After a disc dedicated to the works of Panufnik, father and daughter ('Reflections' catalogue No. 626), Clare Hammond presents an anthology of études with the hundred-year old scores of Liapounov and Szymanowski alongside works written between 1992 and 2003.

As their title indicates, the Transcendental Etudes by Liapounov follow the path outlined by Liszt. Moreover, 'Summer Night' - which the pianist endows with a beautiful finesse - is reminiscent of Liszt's 'Harmonies du soir'. The pianist copes well with the high level of virtuosity required. Yet one could find the strepitosos of Terek a little timid, and Tempête, this monstrous child of Chopin and Balakirev, less tumultuous than under the fingers of Scherbakov (Marco Polo). Well tailored, at times sharp or diaphanous, the Twelve Etudes op. 33 of Szymanowski often evoke late Scriabin, such as the Etude Op. 65 No. 1, a second echo of the Russian composer. If Clare Hammond sometimes lacks ease (Opus 33 No. 6) and must defer to the clarity and the resolve of Martin Roscoe (Naxos), one must acknowledge her subtlety and magnificent sonority.

We then change gear with works by living composers, where the British pianist seems this time perfectly at ease. The remarkable études of Unsuk Chin (born in 1961), akin to traversing a frozen mirror (1) or assuming the costume of a diabolic toccata (5), remind one of Ligeti - of whom Chin was a pupil - in their asymmetrical rhythms. The exceptional finesse of articulation, eloquent vitality and the force of Clare Hammond's conviction - which outclasses the version by Yejin Gil (Solstice) - do justice to the intricacy of the South-Korean musician's work.

Sparkling and playful, jazzy or evoking an accelerated silent film, the works of Nikolai Kapustin (born in 1937), are always worthwhile for an instrumentalist who knows how to master its pitfalls. This pianist scrutinises the text and brings a warmth which is absent from the rapid and virtuosic recording by Marc-André Hamelin (Hyperion). Despite slight reservations, this is a reinvigorating disc.

Parutions, Jean-Jacques Millo, "*energy, conviction and fervour*"

After a remarkable recording dedicated to the solo piano works of Andrzej and Roxanna Panufnik, the pianist Clare Hammond turns to the "pianistic etude" as a musical genre, with an original programme comprising four works by four different composers.

First of all, Sergei Lyapunov (1859-1924) with three pieces taken from his *12 Transcendental Etudes*, then Unsuk Chin (born in 1961) and her études for piano, which were composed between 1995 and 2003. Next we find the Ukrainian composer Karol Szymanowski (1882-1937) and his *12 Etudes*, Op. 33, then, to finish this attractive sequence, Nikolai Kapustin (born in 1937) and his *Five Studies in Different Intervals*, Op. 68.

It is with energy, conviction and fervour that Clare Hammond presents these works in a musical torrent of the utmost inspiration. Virtuosity here is at the service of the music and only acts to reinforce the rigorous dedication of a diligent artist. An SACD of superlative quality.

The Classical Reviewer, "*playing that is, by any standards, phenomenally good*", Bruce Reader

Clare Hammond opens her recital with three of Sergei Lyapunov's (1859-1924) *12 Études d'exécution transcendante*, Op. 11. With No. 4, Terek Allegro impetuoso (1900), Clare Hammond immediately holds the attention as she builds the music from the depths, revealing a clarity despite Lyapunov's dense textures. When the little, very Russian theme emerges each time, it is a lovely moment. She provides some especially fine playing as the étude develops. She brings expansive, languid, beautifully limpid delicate phrases and a fine touch to No. 5. Nuit d'été Lento ma non Troppo (1900) in a lovely performance, finely paced, allowing the music to rise naturally before a beautifully realised coda. Rippling volatility arrives in No. 6. Tempête Allegro agitato molto (1897) with lovely phrasing that enhances this pianist's fine sense of individual line with a fine strength in the more dynamic passages.

Next Hammond gives us South Korean composer, Unsuk Chin's (b.1961) *Piano Études* (1995-2003). Piano Étude No. 1, 'In C' reveals a composer who has taken the influences of modernist composers such as Ligeti with whom she studied, and formed a style that brings spectacularly fine structures, at times dissonantly melodic, yet always surprising to the ear. Messiaen also loosely comes to mind, yet this is wholly engaging, individual music brilliantly played.

Piano Étude No. 2, 'Sequenzen' rises up from the lower keyboard, gaining in tempo and dynamics until breaking out into an energetic, rhythmically complex passage. There is a more thoughtful passage before the energy returns with playing that is, by any standards, phenomenally good.

Piano Étude No. 3, 'Scherzo ad libitum' runs around in little phrases that at first appear fragmented but soon the ear catches a cohesion and structure. The music is playful in nature, something which this pianist picks up on, building to some terrific overlaying of lines before gently skipping to a conclusion.

Intricate little scales and motifs rush around in the Piano Étude No. 4, 'Scalen' with Hammond bringing an intoxicatingly fine, delicate touch to a brilliantly executed coda. With the Piano Étude No. 5, 'Toccata' little bouncing phrases slowly overlay each other leading the toccata forward before rising to a very fine coda. A terrific study, brilliantly played.

A certain fragmentation of motifs opens the Piano Étude No. 6, 'Grains', however, Chin cleverly develops the motifs, almost imperceptibly. Hammond's fine ability to hold an overall structure allows this music to reveal the subtle forward movement, the little surges that overall give a propulsion as well as an arch like structure as it falls to the coda.

For those that listen with an open ear this is eminently approachable music. It is good that BIS have taken care over the times between tracks so that the right amount of silence is allowed.

Karol Szymanowski's (1882-1937) *12 Studies*, Op. 33 (1916) follow with No. 1. Presto moving off quickly with a subtle melody emerging out of the textures and some very fine terrific playing indeed. The exotic, scented harmonies of No. 2. Andantino soave are beautifully realised with beautifully coloured textures.

The brief No. 3. Vivace assai quickly builds to a fine coda before No. 4. Presto where Hammond's fine delicacy is apparent, beautifully phrased, subtly coloured. There is an exquisitely wrought No. 5. Andante espressivo, full of nostalgia with rich broad phrases and a direct, forthright No. 6. Vivace.

No. 7. Allegro molto, with its little leaps and rhythmic changes is surprisingly modern in feel, relating somewhat to Unsuk Chin's creations. A languid No. 8 Lento assai mesto follows, atmospheric and thoughtful with Hammond bringing a lovely gentle, rhythmic lift to the music. No. 9. Animato brings more little rhythmic motifs before a rather brooding passage, Hammond revealing the fleeting character of the piece.

The turbulent No. 10. Presto has a subtle rubato and fine forward momentum before No. 11. Andante soave where again Szymanowski's languid harmonies are finely brought out, the loose structure held perfectly. Finally No. 12. Presto, densely textured as the presto moves quickly forward, with this pianist maintaining a very fine clarity, subtly rising in stages to a fine coda.

The Russian composer Nikolai Kapustin (b.1937) brings jazz influences to his *Five Études in different intervals*, Op.68 (1992). No. 1. Allegro: Étude in minor seconds is terrific with a rollicking theme that has jazz, even rag time elements, brilliantly played and terrific fun.

No. 2. Allegro: Étude in fourths and fifths retains a similar feel but with a more serious vein. Clare Hammond holds the structure together brilliantly as the music varies in rhythm and tempi with overlaid musical lines. No. 3. Animato: Étude in thirds and sixths is another terrific piece with difficult rhythms and a lovely broad theme that momentarily appears out of the texture, not to mention a slight Latin feel.

Some terrific dissonances arrive with No. 4. Vivace: Étude in major seconds as the music hurtles ahead with sudden rhythm and tempo changes, Hammond picking up on the subtle rhythms brilliantly before leading to a more jazzy feel towards the end.

No. 5. Animato: Étude in octaves has a broader, freer feel with many different rhythms and flourishes wonderfully realised by Hammond who gives a phenomenally fine performance, bringing a fine breadth, flow and panache as the music leads to its almost Gershwin-esque coda.

This is a first rate imaginative recital with some remarkable playing from Clare Hammond. She is very well recorded at Potton Hall, Suffolk, England.

There are excellent booklet notes by the pianist.

Cross-Eyed Pianist, "precision and wit", Frances Wilson

The piano study or 'Étude' has long engaged and challenged pianists, and the practice of writing etudes to provide practice material for perfecting a particular musical skill or technique developed in the early 19th century alongside the growing popularity of the piano. Many of us will remember working on studies by the likes of Clementi and Czerny as young piano students. But it was Fryderyk Chopin who elevated the student study into a work of great artistry and beauty, turning humble exercises into glittering concert pieces, and his Opp. 10 and 25 Études remain amongst the most popular works written for piano. Other notable composers of Études were Liszt, Alkan, Rachmaninoff, and Debussy, and the practice of writing piano etudes has continued into the modern area with composers such as Ligeti, Cage and Kapustin.

On her new disc for BIS, British pianist Clare Hammond explores the Étude in works by Lyapunov, Szymanowski, Kapustin and Chin, a truly international line up of composers (Russia, Poland and South Korea). The imaginative programme combines some of the most electrifying and adventurous piano works of the 20th and 21st centuries, ranging from the impassioned late-Romanticism of Sergei Lyapunov to the jazz-inspired rhythms of Nicolai Kapustin and the mercurial, post-Debussy soundworld of Unsuk Chin. For Clare Hammond the choice of works on this disc represents some of the most innovative, invigorating and imaginative writing for piano and the opportunity to explore what the piano is truly capable of. All the Études on the disc fulfil the traditional criteria of the Étude (in the

Chopinesque sense) of a piece which combines the excitement of technical and virtuosic display with expression, colour and compositional inventiveness.

This disc is not only a showcase for the variety and ingenuity of these composers, but also a fine vehicle for Clare Hammond to demonstrate a sparkling technical sure-footedness, clarity of touch and musical sensitivity (particularly in the Études by Chin, which are, by Clare's own admission, extremely difficult). The works by Chin are more closely aligned to Clare's particular interest in lesser-known and contemporary piano repertoire, for which she has received much praise, and these virtuosic and playful études skip and dance across the keyboard with wit, colour and vitality.

Clare brings a richness to the works by Lyapunov with which the disc begins. They recall the soundworld of Rachmaninoff in their scale and textures, and are modelled directly on Liszt's set of the same title (*Études d'exécution transcendante*).

Karol Szymanowski's *Twelve Etudes*, Op 33 share Chin's interest in pianistic colour, and are more closely related the Études of Debussy rather than his fellow countryman Chopin. Fleet and mercurial, Clare deftly captures their transitory moods and luminous colours, dancing rhythms and haunting sonorities, while handling their technical demands with aplomb.

Finally, *Five Études in Different Intervals* complete this fascinating survey of the enduring appeal of the piano etude. Composed by Nikolai Kapustin, they are characteristic of his output, fusing formal classical structures with idioms drawn from jazz, which Kapustin studied from the age of 16. Clare pulls them off with precision and wit, and an evident relish for this kind of writing for the piano.

All Music, “consistently energetic and brilliant”, Blair Sanderson

Clare Hammond's second audiophile release on BIS is simply titled *Étude*, though her program is a bit unexpected and quite exciting for its fresh material. Instead of playing the most familiar études in the piano repertoire, such as the sets by Chopin, Liszt, and Rachmaninov, Hammond explores the keyboard studies of Sergey Lyapunov, Unsuk Chin, Karol Szymanowski, and Nikolai Kapustin, which make fascinating listening for anyone venturing beyond the standard fare. While études are usually focused on the development of specific keyboard techniques, composers since the Romantic era have also infused them with strong moods and dramatic gestures, often treating them as character pieces or short tone poems. The three études from Lyapunov's set of *12 Études d'exécution transcendante* are lush and atmospheric, and rather reminiscent of early Rachmaninov in their intense surges and rhythmic dynamism. By way of contrast, Chin's piano études are elaborate structures built on angular lines, short gestures, and pan-chromatic harmonies, employing the most complex of modern piano techniques. Szymanowski's set of *12 Studies* bridges the divide between Romantic and modern styles, yet shares a certain similarity to the études of another great pianist-composer on the stylistic cusp, Alexander Scriabin. Kapustin's jazzy *Five Études in Different Intervals* tackles the problem of executing parallel intervals, though the studies on minor seconds, major seconds, and fourths reflect their common use in modern harmony. Hammond's playing is consistently energetic and brilliant, and through it, she convincingly demonstrates that this body of work should be much better known.

Classical Notes, “a fearless pianist”, Nick Boston

Clare Hammond is a fearless pianist, specialising in virtuosic repertoire from the 20th and 21st centuries, often championing the work of contemporary composers and premiering their work. She performed in a stunning lunchtime recital at the 2013 Brighton Festival. Her latest CD is *Étude*. It includes 26 études, a form which began as study exercises for pianists to develop a particular aspect of technique, but largely through the efforts of Chopin and other pianist-composers after him, has become an art form in itself, with composers exploring the outer limits of technique and pushing the pianist to new extremes of virtuosity. The disc begins with three from a set of twelve '*Études d'exécution transcendante*' by Russian composer Sergei Lyapunov (1859-1924). This set was dedicated to Liszt, and completed the cycle which Liszt had begun of studies in all the 24 major & minor keys. Though whilst Liszt was clearly a major influence, this is undoubtedly music from the late Romantic Russian nationalistic school. With surging rivers ('*Térek*'), an atmospheric '*Nuit d'été*' and an full-on raging '*Tempête*', the three chosen here give Hammond a perfect opportunity to set the scene for some barnstorming playing. The six Piano Études which follow are from South Korean composer Unsuk Chin (b.1961). Often thinner in texture, yet no doubt more technically demanding, these pieces manage to convey remarkable energy and imagination within the potentially restrictive demands of studies based on repetition or scales, and are probably the most pianistically challenging works on the disc. Hammond seems to relish the challenges set, yet also manages to find a sensitive touch in the delicate moments amid the fireworks. Polish composer Karol Szymanowski's (1882-1937) set of *12 Studies* live in the same soundworld in many ways as Debussy's études, composed just one year earlier than Szymanowski's (in 1915). These are short pieces, all under two minutes long, and Szymanowski does well to create a specific mood in such a short space of time, although there is perhaps less variety across the different études here, with the consistently bitonal harmonies creating an other-worldly feel throughout. The disc ends with Ukrainian pianist/composer, Nikolai Kapustin's (b.1937) *Five Études in Different Intervals*, providing the perfect closing sequence for this astonishing disc. Kapustin combines classical and jazz styles in

a unique way, and here he takes a seemingly restrictive concept, a specific interval for each study, as a starting point for five exuberant and joyous confections, once again fiendishly challenging.

Planet Hugill, "*it is difficult to believe that all this is created by just one pianist*", Robert Hugill

The Etude (study) is particularly used by pianist composers to explore extended technique. The form has its origins in studies written to focus on a particular technique for students, but composers like Chopin and Liszt have provided a model for later generations showing how flexible and challenging the form can be.

On this new disc from pianist Clare Hammond on the BIS label, she takes the Etude into the 20th and 21st centuries, with studies by the Russian composer Sergei Lyapunov (1859 - 1924), Polish composer Karol Szymanowski (1882 - 1937), Russian composer Nicolai Kapustin (born 1937) and Korean composer Unsuk Chin (born 1961). It goes without saying that these pieces challenge the pianist's technique and in her article in the CD booklet Hammond talks of how the etude combines the visceral excitement of technical display with expressive, colouristic and compositional ingenuity.

She starts with three studies from Lyapunov's 12 Etudes d'execution transcendent. They are modelled on Liszt's transcendental studies but Lyapunov mixes in highly Russian colours influenced by his collecting of Russian folksongs. Etude IV: Terek (written in 1900) is named after a river which flows from Georgia into Russia. It is an impulsive piece, with cascades of notes and both delicate and bravura moments. Etude V: Nuit d'ete (written in 1900) is more lyrical and elaborate, but Lyapunov provides big romantic development. With Etude VI: Tempete (written 1897) we are back in bravura territory with robust yet romantic cascades of notes.

Unsuk Chin studied with Ligeti in Hamburg and her Piano Etudes (written 1995-2003) are successors to those by Ligeti. Unlike the other composers on the disc, though a proficient pianist Unsuk Chin does not compose at the keyboard. This means part of the challenge of her Etudes is the way they push the pianists technique. Inspired by electronic music, Unsuk Chin uses layers of repeated patterns. In fact, on first listening to the pieces I was struck by their familial link to the player piano studies of Conlon Nancarrow, though Nancarrow was writing for an automatic piano rather than a human player.

Etude I: in C introduces us to Unsuk Chin's sound world with open textures and a wide range, extending over the whole keyboard. The study is transparent, but quirky and though clearly fiendishly difficult, Hammond responds with clarity and bright textures. Etude II: Seenzen starts with a low rumbling and gets faster and higher, creating an impulsive toccata-like structure which ranges over the whole piano. Etude III: Scherzo ad libitum darts and skitters about with Hammond creating pointillistic moments of colour. Etude IV: Scalen is full of light running figures, with Hammond producing a lovely crystalline textures. Frankly, it is difficult to believe that all this is created by just one pianist. Etude V: Toccata starts with a single sporadic line, which gathers fellows and the whole piece is full of repeated motifs which culminates wonderful climax. Etude VI: Grains is again pointillistic with random jabs and twinkles of sound.

With 12 Studies by Karel Szymanowski (written in 1916) we return to more traditional territory. He seems to have been influenced by Debussy's etudes which were written in 1915, and Szymanowski's main concerns are colour and light. Each etude develops a particular figuration, rather than focussing on a specific technical issue, and many are bitonal. The results are a wonderfully haunting and skittish sequence of short pieces. Each one a particular colour, with a general sense of a romantic, chromatic wash pervading the movements. Melodies are often quite expressionistic in style, and the use of bitonality creates a lovely aura of harmonic uncertainty. The group finishes with Etude 12: Presto which sees the hands chasing each other about the keyboard in madcap fashion.

Finally Hammond plays the Five Etudes in Different Intervals, Op.68 by Nikolai Kapustin (written in 1992). Kapustin trained as a pianist, but his style fuses classical and jazz elements. Though not a jazz composer, his technically challenging etudes include startlingly jazz-like elements. Each etude focusses on a particular interval so in Etude 1: Allegro the right hand plays almost exclusively in minor seconds (or the inversion, the major seventh). It is fast and

atic, again with a Nancarrowish feel to the regularity of the structures, but with jazz rhythms. The British Society of Music, li Korean wi Societyent oogi the Kapus it com LOVE MUSIC HELP MUSICIANSUK burths ar ns; this is de 4:V in octaves, the use of the octave in the right hand giving the piece a more open texture with Kapustin combining this with scalic figures. I enjoyed the Kapustin etudes very much, as he combines fiendish technique with a lovely exuberance and wit.

This is a stunning disc on many levels. Clare Hammond dazzles with the extended techniques which the various pieces demand, but she also creates highly musical structures. And the programme itself is a fascinating exploration of the way composers have used the etude to extend both pianistic and compositional techniques.

Clare is grateful for the support of the following organisations:

