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★★★★★ Three Left Hand Concertos and Three Superb Performances -

By [Dennis E. Ferrara](#) on July 14, 2016

Maxime Zecchini, French concert pianist, has now issued **an extremely interesting recording** as part of a five cd set issue on Ad Vitam of compositions written for the left hand. This recording deals with three of the left hand concertos as commissioned by Paul Wittgenstein - (1887-1961). The pianist commissioned several composers to write left-hand piano concertos for him including: Ravel, Britten, Hindemith, Tansman, Korngold, Prokofiev, Schmidt, Bortkiewicz and Strauss. It is interesting to note, however, that the Ravel is the only left hand concertos which have become a world famous composition.

The Program - Works for the Left Hand - IV - Maxime Zecchini - Cape Philharmonic Orchestra - Jan Mortiz Onken, conductor - Ad Vitam TT: 74:07 - Maurice Ravel - (1875-1937) - Concerto for the Left Hand in G major - (1930) - i. Lento - Andante - Allegro; Serge Prokofiev - (1891-1953) - Concerto No. 4 for the Left Hand, Op. 53 - (1930) - I. Vivace; ii. Andante; iii. Moderato; iv. Vivace; Benjamin Britten - (1913-1976) - (1940) - Diversions for the Left Hand, Op. 21 - Theme- Maestoso - I. Variations I - Recitative; ii. Romance; iii. March; iv. Arabesque; v. Chant; vi. Nocturne; vii. Burlesque; viii. Badinerie; ix-a. Toccata 1; ix-b. - Toccata; x. Adagio; xi. Finale – Tarantelle

It is rather interesting to note that Wittgenstein did not like the majority of the concertos which he had commissioned except the Britten. Here, however, one finds the excitement, drama, and color of these three totally different piano compositions. All of these compositions demand a various type of virtuosic approach for the success of performance. Needless to say, Maxime Zecchini certainly has the brilliant technique to make all three of these compositions exciting, colorful and with a flair for the dramatic. It is also obvious that his brilliant technique is always secondary in importance to the composer's intentions. As was said earlier, only the Ravel has become a staple in the piano concert repertoire. Furthermore, the Cape Philharmonic under the superb direction of Jan Mortiz Onken, is most certainly capable in performing the orchestral accompaniments to these very difficult compositions. The balance between soloist and orchestral is very fine indeed. The Prokofiev and the Britten are most certainly acquired tastes; yet, these fine musical performances offer interest to keep any listener attuned to these unique piano compositions.

Always, as may be found in Ad Vitam issues, excellent program notes in French and English are available here. It would be very interesting to hear the Tansman, Korngold, Schmidt, Bortkiewicz and Strauss works as well. This could be a very interesting addition to the Ad Vitam catalogue.