

## André Laplante, pianist CD Review – The Wholenote

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### **Liszt - Années de Pelerinage Suisse**

Analekta AN 2 9980

The Wholenote

Written by Janos Gardonyi

André Laplante by now can be referred to as Canada's 'national treasure'. He is a well established artist especially in the Romantic repertoire and has a worldwide reputation with critics comparing him sometimes to Richter and Horowitz. This new recording for the Analekta label tackles Liszt in an ambitious, rarely recorded program of the first book of the 21 year old Liszt's romantic wanderings with Countess Marie d'Agoult.

Liszt met the Countess in 1832 in Paris, a married woman 6 years older, but this did not prevent one of the century's most famous and productive love affairs from developing. Three years later Marie left her family and ran off with Franz to Switzerland, later to Italy. There were 3 children born out of this union, among them Cosima who eventually married Richard Wagner.

As we listen, the pieces vary in character from invocations of natural beauty (Lac de Wallenstadt), literary associations with Byron, Schiller, Goethe, Senacour (Vallée d'Obermann), to force of nature (L'Orage), pastoral melodies (Pastorale, Eglogue) and homage to Swiss history (Chapelle de Guillaume Tell).

Many of the pieces even appear improvised. We can just see after a day of admiring the majestic Swiss countryside, Liszt composing on the piano and playing to his object of affection. Often the quiet, self searching beginnings develop into passion with great intensity.

To capture the many layered complexities of this set, Laplante is the ideal choice and this recording shows it. Being an unassuming, introspective personality, his performances have insightful sensitivity, but never overt emotionalism, dazzling power and virtuosity that never is meant to show off and rich imagination characteristic of a great artist.

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