



# Laureate Series • Piano



## JAEDEN IZIK-DZURKO

2022 Winner XX Paloma O'Shea  
Santander International Piano Competition

Piano Recital

SCRIABIN • RACHMANINOV



# Jaeden Izik-Dzurko

2022 Winner

## XX Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competition

### Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915)

1	Piano Sonata No. 5, Op. 53 (1907)	13:05
2	Nocturne in A flat major, WoO 3 (1884–86) (first version)	2:55
3	Scherzo in E flat major, WoO 4 (1886)	1:50
4	Scherzo in A flat major – Scherzo in D flat major, WoO 5 (1886)	2:20
5	Ballade in B flat minor, Anh. 14 (1887) (fragment)	4:18
6	Valse-Impromptu in E flat major, Anh. 13 (1887) (fragment)	0:40
7	Piano Piece in B flat minor, Anh. 16 (c. 1887)	1:32
8	Mazurka in B minor, WoO 14 (1889)	0:34
9	Étude in D flat major, Anh. 8 (1887) (fragment)	1:20
10	Étude in F sharp major, Anh. 9 (1887) (fragment)	1:30
11	Piano Sonata in C sharp minor, Anh. 11 (1887) (fragment)	2:18
12	Feuillet d'album ('Album Leaf'), Op. 58 (1909) (early version)	1:32
13	Étude in D sharp minor, WoO 22 (1894–95) (second version of Op. 8, No. 12)	2:29

### Sergey Rachmaninov (1873–1943)

	Piano Sonata No. 1 in D minor, Op. 28 (1906–08)	39:53
14	I. Allegro moderato	14:42
15	II. Lento	10:27
16	III. Allegro molto	14:44

## Jaeden Izik-Dzurko: Piano Recital

### Scriabin • Rachmaninov

Moscow-born Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) occupies a unique position in early 20th-century music. His work, situated at the twilight of Romanticism and the dawn of Modernism, reflects an epoch preoccupied with transcendence and the limits of expression. Building on the idioms of Chopin and Tchaikovsky, he extended harmony, texture and pianistic colour to unprecedented extremes while engaging with the philosophical, Symbolist and mystical currents of the Russian Silver Age. Within this dynamic cultural matrix, Scriabin emerged as a trailblazer, translating the spiritual and aesthetic aspirations of his time into a musical syntax that remains uniquely his own. Across little more than two decades, his output traces one of the most concentrated and radical stylistic evolutions in Western art music, moving from sophisticated salon miniatures to ecstatic and imaginative sonatas.

Scriabin himself was as enigmatic as his art, merging music, philosophy and esoteric speculation in texts that often obscure as much as they reveal. To engage with him is to navigate the shifting boundaries between composer, thinker and seer – a complex personality whose fascination endures. A formidable player despite a handspan of barely an octave – his right hand permanently injured as a student, reportedly from overreaching in pursuit of Rachmaninov – Scriabin performed almost exclusively his own works. This self-contained repertoire, paired with his visionary persona, fostered a mystique that has invited reverence, provoked doubt, and stimulated inquiry across generations. While his orchestral music has fluctuated in reception, it is through his keyboard writing that Scriabin's artistry remains most immediate and compelling.

Jaeden Izik-Dzurko surveys Scriabin's evolving language, dramatic scope and technical daring through a series of piano compositions from the late 1880s to the early 20th century. By juxtaposing fragments of his adolescence with two of Scriabin's most substantial mature offerings, it underscores the remarkable concentration of a creative life condensed into little more than two decades – a career that, though cut short at 43, reshaped the landscape of 20th-century pianism.

Standing at the summit of his creative trajectory, the *Piano Sonata No. 5, Op. 53* (1907) materialises as a densely wrought synthesis of Scriabin's poetics of sound, launching the programme with thrilling impact and galvanising vigour. Composed alongside *Le Poème de l'extase*, the sonata unfolds as a rhapsodic current of contrasting energies – sensual, volatile and sublime – loosely anchored in its nominal key of F sharp major. Harmonic fluidity, iridescent textures and virtuosic surges embody Scriabin's pursuit of soulful exaltation through sound, while the motto from his own poem – 'I call you to life, O mysterious forces!' – encapsulates the work's essence as a summons to creation and ecstasy. The opening *Allegro* toccata-like figuration and spiralling motivic energy generate a sense of perpetual ascent. The so-called 'mystic chord' or 'Prometheus chord' – Scriabin's hallmark of stacked fourths and altered intervals – appears in embryonic form, tinting the harmony with incandescent uncertainty. The sonata ends not in resolution but in a blaze of sound, personifying Scriabin's consideration of music as a transcendental act. His former teacher, Sergey Taneyev, puzzled by the reprise of the rising flourishes at the sonata's close, observed that the piece did not so much end as simply stop.

Echoes of this cyclical energy resonate throughout Scriabin's piano works from 1884 to 1889, revealing the young composer's fundamental dalliances with form and sonic character, while pondering time, transformation and the incessant renewal of artistic inspiration.

Written around the age of twelve, the *Nocturne in A flat major* (1884–86) presents Scriabin in dialogue with Chopin's musical prose. The melodic line is delicately ornamented, suspended over gently rocking left-hand figures creating a familiar, songful atmosphere, while fleeting chromatic nuances hint at his later adventurousness.

By contrast, the *Scherzo in E flat major* (1886) radiates rhythmic buoyancy and a taste for sparkling passagework. Though formally conventional in its *Scherzo–Trio–Scherzo* structure, the work celebrates youthful inventiveness, engagement with established forms, and an early investigation of the piano's communicative and virtuosic potential.

The twin scherzi, one in A flat major (which intriguingly resembles the original 'Friar's Theme' from Tchaikovsky's first version of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1869) and the other in D flat major from the same year, extend this examination, their cascading figurations and sudden contrasts of register demonstrating Scriabin's growing command of the keyboard as a theatrical medium.

Around 1887, Scriabin sketched a group of musical ideas that reveal both his searching imagination and the diversity of his early influences. The *Ballade in B flat minor*, though unfinished, aspires to a large-scale narrative form: its expansive theme and impassioned figuration evoke Chopin's lyricism, while its bold soundscape and rhetoric recall Balakirev's penchant for broad form and animated pianism. The *Valse-Impromptu in E flat major* moves in the opposite direction – light and ornamental, built around sweeping waltz patterns and embellished melody. The *Piano Piece in B flat minor* is more inward and harmonically tentative, with chromatic colouring that gently unsettles its tonal grounding, foretelling Scriabin's later interest in harmonic ambiguity.

The *Mazurka in B minor* (1889) continues his conversation with Chopin, exploring the dance's triple metre through displaced accents and subtle rhythmic shifts. Chromatic inner voices and occasional modal turns suggest early experiments with tonal shading, renovating a familiar form into a vehicle for personal articulation.

Returning to Scriabin's juvenilia of 1887, the partial *Études* in D flat major and F sharp major further demonstrate his developing sense of pianistic invention. Less concerned with technical display than with drawing affective intensity from figuration, these drafts herald the distilled drama and ingenuity of his later *Concert Études, Op. 8*.

More ambitious still is the projected *Sonata in C sharp minor*, surviving only as sketches; it hints at grand thematic gestures, stirring contrasts, and a drive toward sustained musical argument. Even in its incomplete state, the work prefigures Scriabin's deepening interrogation of the sonata as a vehicle for psychological depth, harmonic expansion, and formal innovation that would underpin his later piano writing.

Two decades later, his style had changed so profoundly that the early pieces seem almost the work of another composer. *Feuillet d'album* ('Album Leaf'), in its 1909 version, shows Scriabin's continuing affinity for the miniature. Its elegiac melody, elegantly poised over shifting harmonies, exemplifies his gift for compression – in under two minutes, Scriabin conjures a world of refined intimacy, free of overt metaphysical striving.

To appreciate how far he had travelled, one need only turn back to the mid-1890s. The *Étude in D sharp minor* (1894–95) – a second version of the celebrated *Op. 8, No. 12* – stands at this threshold: it retains the determined virtuosity and impassioned vocabulary of his early idiom, yet its denser harmony and heightened chromatic friction anticipate the distinctive timbre of his middle period.

Taken together, these works illuminate the remarkable evolution of Scriabin's musical language, inviting the listener to follow the imaginative leaps that transformed a precocious child into one of the most singular voices of 20th-century keyboard art.

Finally, as part of the album's circular narrative, Sergey Rachmaninov's *Piano Sonata No. 1 in D minor, Op. 28* (1906–08) provides a resonant counterpart to Scriabin's *Fifth Sonata*, composed in 1907. Rachmaninov began sketching his sonata in 1906, reworked it substantially throughout 1907, and issued the final abridged edition in March 1908 – the version performed here. Conceived on a grand symphonic scale, the work embodies the same late-Romantic intensity and metaphysical ambition that defined his friend-turned-rival's aesthetic world, yet channels it through a contrasting emotional register – brooding, tragic and unrestrained.

Inspired by Goethe's *Faust*, the work unfurls as a vast psychological drama whose three movements evoke struggle, transcendence and spiritual reckoning. Its harmonic opulence, contrapuntal erudition and pianistic grandeur situate it firmly within the Russian Silver Age ethos, while its monumental architecture reaffirms Rachmaninov's commitment to expressive clarity over Scriabin's ecstatic dissolution. The sonata completes a beguiling arc – from Scriabin's early experiments in form to the towering visions of two contemporaries who, in divergent ways, sought to translate the ineffable into sound.

**Emer Nestor**



Photo: Waldy Martens

## Jaeden Izik-Dzurko

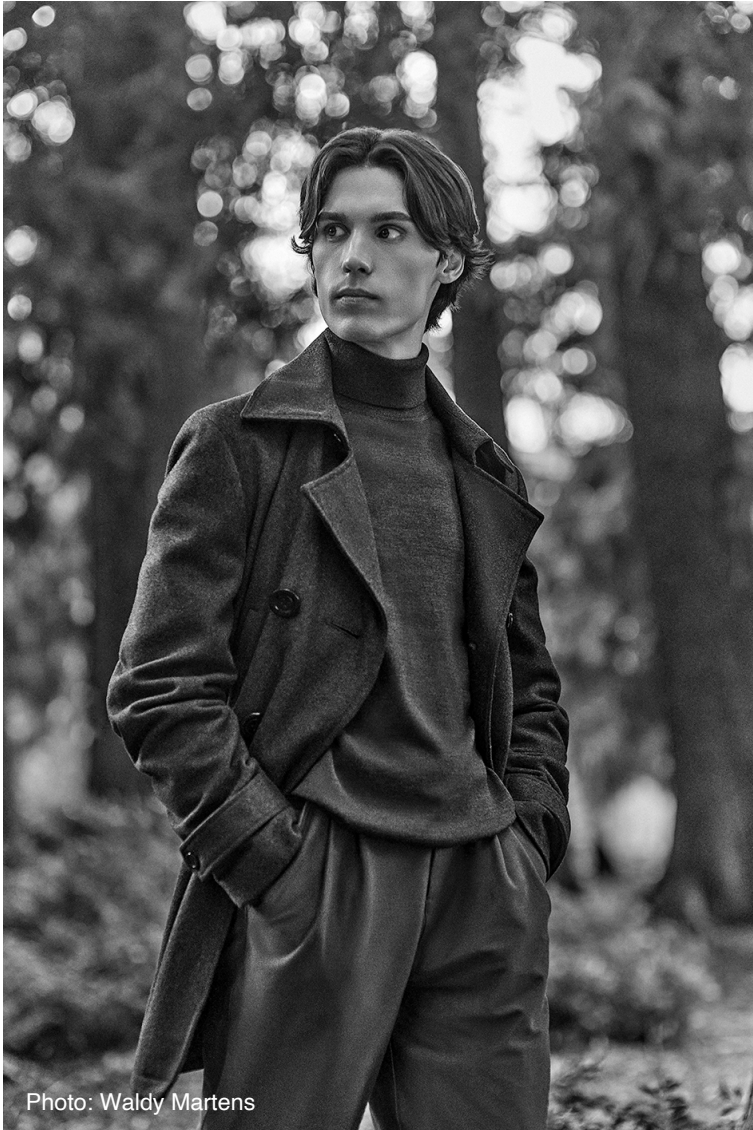


Photo: Waldy Martens

Canadian pianist Jaeden Izik-Dzurko is internationally recognised for the depth, sincerity and clarity of his artistry. A Gold Medallist at the 2024 Leeds International Piano Competition and a recipient of a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship, he made history as the first Canadian to win the Grand Prize at the Concours musical international de Montréal. He has performed in many of the world's leading concert halls, including Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in New York, Hamburg's Elbphilharmonie, Gewandhaus Leipzig, the Salle Cortot in Paris, Auditorio Nacional de Música in Madrid and London's Wigmore Hall. His orchestral partnerships include the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal, Bilbao Orkestra Sinfonikoa and the National Symphony Orchestra Ireland. He has also earned top prizes at the Hilton Head, Maria Canals and Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competitions. Born in British Columbia, Izik-Dzurko studied at the University of British Columbia and The Juilliard School, and is currently continuing his training in Europe with Jacob Leuschner and Benedetto Lupo.

[www.jaedenizikdzurko.com](http://www.jaedenizikdzurko.com)

In this recital, prize-winning Canadian pianist Jaeden Izik-Dzurko explores the evolving language, dramatic breadth and technical daring of Alexander Scriabin's piano works. The album charts the remarkable evolution of Scriabin's musical language from his earliest pieces, to the sensual, volatile *Piano Sonata No. 5*, which stands at the summit of Scriabin's creative trajectory. As a resonant counterpart, Izik-Dzurko plays Rachmaninov's brooding *Piano Sonata No. 1 in D minor*. A digital-only release of four early piano works by Scriabin is also available on 9.70408.

# JAEDEN IZIK-DZURKO

## Piano Recital

**Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915)**

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**Sergey Rachmaninov (1873–1943)**

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|--------------|--|--------------|
| <b>14–16</b> | <b>Piano Sonata No. 1 in D minor, Op. 28</b> | <b>39:53</b> |
|--------------|--|--------------|

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

Recorded: 1–4 April 2024 at Auditorio Sony, Madrid, Spain • Executive producer: Fundación Albéniz

Music production: Karla Martínez Rabanal, David Canfrán • Engineer and editor: David Canfrán

Publishers: Bärenreiter Verlag **1**, P. Jurgenson **2–11** **13**, from manuscript **12**, Gutheil **14–16**

Sponsored by the Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competition

Booklet notes: Emer Nestor • Cover photo by Waldy Martens

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