The real gem is the Thalben-Ball *Elegy*. He was organist of the famous Temple Church in London for nearly 60 years and was renowned as a virtuoso, having given the English premiere of the Rachmaninoff Third Piano Concerto while still a student at Oxford. The nobility of this five-minute work encapsulates the musical essence of the period.

DELCAMP

Ballades
Brahms, Chopin, Fauré
Jean-Francois Antonioli, p
Kanglogo 1408—75 minutes

Born in Lausanne, Switzerland in 1959, Antonioli studied at the conservatories in Lausanne and Paris and with Bruno Seidhofer in Vienna and Carlo Zecchi in Rome. While he has about 20 recordings to his credit, he is a conductor in many of them.

Brahms and Chopin's ballades are well represented in the catalog. I was not expecting these to be fully competitive with the best, but careful listening proved me wrong. Antonioli has both the technique and the temperament to not only surmount their difficulties, but also to bring to this music a natural flow that avoids having to make adjustments in order to cope with control difficulties. This, especially with the Chopin, is often the case with artists of less than sterling ability.

Antonioli's playing will have the greatest appeal to people who value the romantic tradition and are not turned off by heart-on-sleeve emotion. Especially appealing is the warmth of sound from Victoria Hall in Geneva, Switzerland.

Fauré's ever lovely ballade is difficult to resist when presented with such beauty and grace as we have here.

Again the notes consist of an interview with the artist. These are no better or worse than many others, but the practice has become annoying.

BECKER

Dmitri Bashkirov
HAYDN: *Sonata in E-flat;* SCHUBERT: *Sonata in A minor;* BRAHMS: *Sonata 2;* LISZT: *Valse Oubliee; Consolation;* GRIEG: *Nocturne;* DEBUSSY: *Preludes, sel;* SCRIABIN: *6 Preludes; Mazurka; Waltz;* RACHMANINOFF: *Moments Musicaux sel;* PROKOFIEFF: *Visions Fugitives, sel; March;* SHCHEDRIN: *Sonata 1*
Melodiya 2288 [2CD] 145 minutes

Bashkirov's often unusual, highly imaginative interpretations make an exciting program. He excels at virtuosic, romantic-period works, such as 'Valse Oubliee', deploying lightness of touch and brilliant technique. The Lyric Pieces are beautifully played. His Schubert is unusually free in both rhythm and tempo, but full of life and energy. He plays with great fire.

The high point here is the under-programmed Shchedrin sonata, an exploration (and sometimes, expansion) of the dynamic range of the piano. The Toccata is a tour de force.

Even classical works are tinged with his romantic interpretation, with refreshing results. Though his Haydn has too much force and has a couple of notes missing in the melody, his expansive treatment of phrasing and pedaling brings out long lines and expressive gestures. Delightful.

KANG

Joachim Carr
SCHUMANN: *Davidsbundlertanze;* BRAHMS: *Original Variations;* BERG: *Sonata;* LISZT: *Liebeslied; Widmung*—Claves 1416—69 minutes

Carr's first recording shows a knack for lyricism. The Variations on an Original Theme is phrased fluidly, with not a harsh tone in sight. The *Davidsbundlertanze* has long lines, with a great balance of melody and harmony, tender and heartfelt without exaggeration. In No. 4, he is able to create a coherent melody with cascading octaves. No. 6 has great polish and fire. All of the slow movements are played with great care and thoughtfulness. The Berg sonata is very well played, opening with a quiet intensity. His playing is incredibly polished and refined.

KANG

Opera Session
Giacomo di Tollo, p
Andromeda 9126—44 minutes

It took a few moments to decipher that the pianist has assembled a program of Italian opera transcriptions. All of these selections (save one—*Madama Butterfly*) date from the 19th Century, and most of the arrangements were made in that century as well. The selections are taken from Bellini, Donizetti, Rossini, Verdi, Mascagni, and Puccini.

Di Tollo was born in Italy in 1981 and earned both his Bachelor and Master Degree cum laude in Computer Science Economics at University G. D'Annunzio. He has also written