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World Premiere Recording—LE JARDIN PARFUME—Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji. Michael Habermann, piano. Nocturne (Djami) (1928). Pastiche: Rimsky-Korsakoff Merchant's Songs (Sadko) (1922). La Jardin Parfume, Poem for Piano. Pastiche: Chopin's Valse, Opus 64, No. 1 (1922). MM 20019—Musicmasters. 14 Park Road, Tinton Falls, New Jersey 07724.

The music of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji is virtually unknown to the vast majority of performers and listeners. His name evokes a mystical quality in one's imagination, which is due in part to his own ban against performance of his work. Sorabji was born August 14, 1892, in Chingford, England, and resides today in the southern part of that country. The piano music is, to say the least, complex. Highly polyphonic writing is the norm, decorative figurations abound, rapid harmonic changes are present, polyrhythm is extensively used, and the score is frequently written on three staves. In short, the result is one of utmost difficulty.

Mr. Habermann is to be congratulated for bringing the music of Sorabji to the public. He is the first pianist to be honored by Sorabji to perform and record the music. On this recording, two major works are presented, the Nocturne and Le Jardin Parfume. Each of these is followed by a "pastiche" — Rimsky-Korsakoff's Hindu Merchant's Song (Sadko) and the Chopin's Valse, Opus 64, No. 1 (Minute Waltz). Mr. Habermann presents a beautiful reading of the four works, and this reviewer especially liked the presentation of La Jardin. The exotic and colorful qualities of the music are captured by the performer and well reproduced by fine recording technicians. This music is sensuous, seductive, and captivating in every manner. A totally unique quality is achieved by the composer. Certain characteristics in the music seem to stem from the multi-varied writing of Liszt and Reger. This is music that deserves wide recognition and performance. Before hearing the recording, this listener was familiar with only the arrangement of the Chopin Waltz. What a fine experience to hear music which captures one's imagination and creates a desire to hear more! Donald Garvelmann has written on the liner notes that "In man's unending search for knowledge, wisdom, and beauty, an important peak occasionally is obscured. Parsi composer Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji is a case in point." Let's hope that the series of recordings which are being prepared by Michael Habermann will bring Sorabji's work into proper perspective in music of the 20th century. It will be a major contribution when Sorabji's Opus Clavicembalisticum is available. This enormous work takes over two hours to perform and has been described by the composer as "the most important work for piano since The Art of Fugue." (Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire - Maurice Hinson). What an achievement for both composer and performer!

This recording of the music of Sorabji is to be highly recommended. This is unique and beautiful music, artistically performed by Michael Habermann, and one can only hope that other recordings will soon follow.

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