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Xiayin Wang

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MARCO WERMAN: The music we're listening to is a composition by the late 19th Century Russian composer Alexander Scriabin. It comes from a recording titled "Scriabin: Piano, Poems, Waltzes, Dances." The pianist is the immensely talented young Chinese virtuoso Xiayin Wang. Xiayin, first of all what are we listening to? What's the title of the piece?

XIAYIN WANG: This was a waltz that was Scriabin's very first composition. You can see actually it has a lot of Chopin influence, and no wonder because he was a great admirer of Chopin.

WERMAN: And what attracts you to the music of Scriabin?

WANG: First of all, in my personal favorite that I love music that's very colorful, involves lots of different mood. So I pick him because you will see he's short-lived only but throughout his life his music changed dramatically from beginning to the end. So on this whole CD I covered the very first composition to his very last composition to show you how a person can change, and the music changes with the person. And that's what I'm so attracted to it.

WERMAN: Right, I mean the colors as you mentioned really range from very coloratura to kind of dark and moody through the whole record. He had a very short life. He died maybe like just a little over 40 years old. Is it fair to say that he was over shadowed by other composers like Debussy and the young Igor Stravinsky?

WANG: Yes, actually because there were so many prominent composer at that time. For example, Ravel is another colorful French composer, but Scriabin was so much more played because his music was so outstandingly different from other people. He was very innovative at that time. So when he came out with a little bit of a difference, a little bit of fresh, something new, people might have taken their time to really accept the change. And that's why he was not acknowledged until much later. But his music is wonderful. I think every pianist should play it.

WERMAN: Xiayin, let's turn and talk about you for a moment. I mean, there are a lot of young and very talented musicians, pianists. In fact, in China today. I wonder if you feel a certain kinship with Scriabin because there are so many young talented performers. And it must be hard to stand out from the pack.

WANG: I have to say that I try my best and there is always the faith and the fate, and I'm just doing my best. And I think always trying to climb up higher if you can in a career. Of course, it's very competitive markets and things are changing, people are

changing, performers are changing, music, everything, the society. So I'm trying my best to really be involved with what's happening, and I enjoy doing this.

WERMAN: It sounds tough though because you're talking about trying hard and determination, but what is it about you that makes everybody kind of perk up and take notice. I mean, there are so many immensely talented players in China but it's you we're talking to today. Why?

WANG: I have some kind of problem talking good about myself, but now I'm going to let it out. Anyway, I think very importantly to really create one's own image, not just myself but any prominent living performers in the play you can see is very strong character of the person's own definition of the music and then how the person transforms it from the music of the composer through his own body, or her own body and own fingers into the keyboard or into whatever instrument that they are playing. And to make music language to the audience, make them understand and make them move, make them inspired. The whole process is magical but it takes some time to get really get to that stage. But as you have it, I think you have something there to stand out.

WERMAN: Twenty-eight-year-old pianist Xiayin Wang. Her latest CD is "Scriabin: Piano Music, Poems, Waltzes, Dance." From the Nan and Bill Harris studios at WGBH, I'm Marco Werman. Join us again tomorrow for another spin of The World.

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