

## RECORDING OF THE MONTH

### Franz SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

#### **Winterreise** Op. 89, D. 911 (1827)

1. *Gute Nacht* [5:38]
2. *Die Wetterfahne* [1:47]
3. *Gefrorne Tränen* [2:38]
4. *Erstarrung* [3:01]
5. *Der Lindenbaum* [4:51]
6. *Wasserflut* [4:26]
7. *Auf dem Flusse* [3:59]
8. *Rückblick* [2:28]
9. *Irrlicht* [3:00]
10. *Rast* [3:44]
11. *Frühlingstraum* [4:15]
12. *Einsamkeit* [3:01]
13. *Die Post* [2:18]
14. *Der greise Kopf* [2:54]
15. *Die Krähe* [1:58]
16. *Letzte Hoffnung* [2:03]
17. *Im Dorfe* [3:34]
18. *Der stürmische Morgen* [0:57]
19. *Täuschung* [1:27]
20. *Der Wegweiser* [4:30]
21. *Das Wirtshaus* [4:42]
22. *Mut!* [1:31]
23. *Die Nebensonnen* [2:54]
24. *Der Leiermann* [4:00]

Johan Reuter (bass-baritone), Copenhagen String Quartet (transcription for string quartet by Richard Krug)

Rec 14-17 June 2014 at Operaen, Copenhagen, Denmark

Sung texts enclosed

**DANACORD DACOCD 759** [76:00]

Yet another *Winterreise*! Is there room for one more on the market? Can this one compete with the legendary greats? YES! There is room for it! It is competitive! Firstly: *Winterreise* is such a marvellous cycle that you always return to it with pleasure. Secondly: I have more than thirty recordings of it and not one is bad. And I have heard it in live performances many times and not one was bad. It seems that this work inspires singers to bring out the best of themselves. Of course it is possible to have one recording of *Winterreise* and be fully satisfied with that. It took many years before I added another to my first Fischer-Dieskau, but when I did I realized that different singers find different things in the songs—and that also enriches my experience of them.

Regarding this latest addition, it stands out from all the others in one specific respect: it is the first where the piano is replaced by a string quartet. And this makes a difference. It is the same as watching a photo of a beautiful scenery in black and white and then see it on a colour photo. A good pianist with a good piano can conjure forth fifty shades of grey, yes, even more, but the string quartet brings forth other nuances as well. And not even the most masterly pianist can produce a seamless legato to challenge what a string group can do. Take the opening of *Winterreise*. The intro to *Gute Nacht* is always a bit bumpy in the piano version, while the strings level the bumps. Whether this is good or bad is another question, but it makes a difference and it makes you sit up and listen. It is a new perspective. In this case Johan Reuter draws the consequences of the different approach and sings *Fremd bin ich eingezogen, Fremd zieh' ich wieder aus* with a smooth soft legato. Right or

wrong? In the next song, *Die Wetterfahne*, the wind plays with the weathervane and the tremolo strings illustrate this graphically. In the third song, *Gefror'ne Tränen*—frozen drops are falling down from my cheeks—we hear the frozen tears falling in the string accompaniment. “At the well by the gate there stands a linden tree, I dreamed in its shadow many a sweet dream”. Müller’s idyll becomes even more wrapped up in a rosy shimmer with the help of the strings in the first stanza of *Der Lindenbaum* and Reuter’s legato singing is extremely beautiful.

I could go on and point to many instances of expressive word-painting or dramatic underlining of situations, but let me just highlight two more situations. *Frühlingstraum* gets in this version a ländler-like Viennese lilt. One can almost imagine a Schrammelquartett in the background, although this of course is an anachronism. And in the last song, *Der Leiermann*, the fateful atmosphere is enhanced by the strings imitating the hurdy-gurdy.

The sum of all this is a fascinating journey in a wintry landscape where the grayscale is complemented by shades of, let us say, blue and brown and in the retrospective songs—*Der Lindenbaum*, *Frühlingstraum*—lighter colours. I am sure some listeners will react negatively to this modernisation, while others, like myself, will feel that this is an attempt to regard the songs from a somewhat different perspective but with full respect for Schubert’s intentions.

So much for the accompaniment. The singing is of course even more important. Johan Reuter is a serious artist who would not dream of making something gimmicky of *Die Winterreise*. He is Danish, and has been a soloist at the Royal Danish Opera since 1996 in a large repertoire. But today he is in demand all over the world, in particular as a Wagner singer. Just a few months ago I heard him as a magnificent Holländer in Helsinki. From the first song in the present recording I was reminded of another great Wagnerian who also was a masterly Lieder singer: Hans Hotter. Reuter has the same timbre and the same darkness of tone, and like his legendary predecessor he can scale down his big instrument to chamber size. I have already mentioned his superb legato singing, and time and again during my listening sitting I jotted down on my pad “restraint”, “careful and expressive”, “touching”, “deeply gripping”. The last notation concerned his marvellous reading of *Die Nebensonnen*, the penultimate song of the cycle, where death approaches. In Celia Sgroi’s prose translation it reads:

I saw three suns in the sky,  
Stared at them hard for a long time;  
And they stayed there so stubbornly  
That it seemed they didn't want to leave me.  
Ah, you are not my suns!  
Go, look into someone else's face!  
Yes, recently I, too, had three  
But now the best two have gone down.  
If only the third would also set!  
I will feel better in the dark.

But as a Wagnerian Reuter can also wring the last drop of drama out of the texts—and the last desperate joy in *Die Post*. But he soon realizes: “The post does not bring a letter for you”. To my ears he never puts a foot wrong. I was at first a bit dubious about his tempo in *Wasserflut*. But I checked the timings of the song on some 28 recordings and Reuter at 4:26 is far from extreme. The fastest was Lotte Lehmann (3:25) followed by Brigitte Fassbaender (3:47). The slowest by some margin was Siegfried Lorenz (5:19)! Reuter is somewhat below the average but not much, and I believe it was his marvellous legato singing that fooled me to believe it was too slow.

So here we are with a very special recording of *Die Winterreise*, worthy to rub shoulders with Hüscher, Hotter, Fischer-Dieskau, Bär and Goerne. I repeat that the string quartet accompaniment may not be to everyone’s taste, but the playing of the eminent Copenhagen String Quartet is beyond criticism,

and the arrangement by the quartet's cellist Richard Krug is skilled, inventive and does in no way violate Schubert's intentions. I urge every Schubert enthusiast to give this disc a listen. You will not regret it!

***Göran Forsling***

**Maryla Jonas (piano)**

**Volume 1**

**The 78 RPM Recordings**

rec. 1946-1949

Complete tracklisting below

Mono

**ST-LAURENT STUDIO YSL 78-219** [47:35 + 53:34]

**Maryla Jonas (piano)**

**Volume 2**

**The LP Records**

rec. 1947-1951

Complete tracklisting below

Mono

**ST-LAURENT STUDIO YSL 78-223** [56:01 +37:38]

Maryla Jonas recordings have generally been given short shrift by the historical reissue labels, with the exception of a single CD by Pearl, long since deleted, of a selection of her 78s in transfers by Roger Beardsley. Chopin Mazurkas and Schumann's *Kinderszenen* make up the lion's share of that compilation. Apart from this, there's a single track devoted to the pianist, featuring the Handel Passacaglia, on a historical Naxos CD entitled *Women at the Piano Volume 1* ([review](#)). It is laudable that the Canadian-based historical label, St. Laurent Studio has released the pianist's complete recorded legacy on four CDs. These are divided into two volumes of two discs each. Volume 1 is titled The 78 RPM Recordings, and Volume 2 is dedicated to The LP Records. The volume's titles refer to the recording's source material. Christopher Howell's [recent comprehensive article on Jonas](#) for MusicWeb International has rekindled my interest in the pianist. I have long admired the Chopin Mazurkas on a Columbia LP (RL 6624).

As the above article gives a detailed biographical account, I shall just sketch a few salient details. She was born in Warsaw in 1911. Piano lessons began early with Włodzimierz Oberfelt. In 1922 she entered Józef Turczyński's class at the Warsaw Conservatory, followed by later studies with Ignacy Jan Paderewski and Emil von Sauer. Life changed with the German invasion of Poland in 1939, when she lost several members of her family. After a period of incarceration by the Gestapo, she eventually made her way to Brazil, and with the encouragement of Arthur Rubinstein gradually resumed a concert career in America. The return was only short-lived, however, and after several years of poor health, she died in New York in 1959, aged only forty-eight.

The main bulk of the Jonas discography is devoted to solo piano works by Chopin, and more than half of this is assigned to the mazurkas; she recorded twenty-two in all, in four sessions between 1946 and 1949. The selection covers a broad emotional range and she explores and reveals the individual character of each of these miniature jewels. Op. 17, no. 2 is imbued with world weariness and likewise Op 68, no. 4 in F minor is wistful. Op. 17, No 4 speaks of nostalgia and regret, whilst Op. 63, No. 3 in C sharp minor is delivered with elegant refinement. The Mazurka in B flat Op. Posth is subtly articulated, and the G major Op. Posth is more upbeat and genial.

Aside from the mazurkas, Jonas set down several other Chopin solo works. A group of nocturnes is included and I love the way she etches the ornate melodies, emphasizing their vocal qualities. These are some of Chopin's most intimate endeavours, and Jonas's approach is reflective and expressive. The Berceuse in D flat major has a charming simplicity and to each variation she brings delicate filigree. The Impromptu in A flat, Op. 29 is free-flowing and improvisatory. The Polonaise in B flat Op. 71, No. 2 is showy and virtuosic, and impressively despatched. The only disappointment in the Étude in E flat minor, Op.10, No. 6 which sounds routine and lacklustre.

Robert Schumann's *Kinderszenen* is outstanding and stands shoulder to shoulder with some of the finest versions by Lupu, Haskil, Cortot and Horowitz. Jonas effectively contrasts the more introspective pieces with the more exuberant ones. Each of these miniatures has its own tale to tell, and everything is approached with a child-like simplicity. Her pellucid tonal palette, instinctive phrasing and rapt sensitivity are wondrous. *Ritter vom Steckenpferd* and *Glückes genug* have an infectious geniality. In *Am Kamin* she evokes the fire flickering. *Träumerei* and *Der Dichter spricht* are both introspective and reflective.

The two Mendelssohn Songs without Words are especially notable for the poetic quality with which she invests them. Her *cantabile* playing and subtly of pedalling is highly reminiscent of Horowitz. She achieves a diaphanous bell-like sonority in the Nicholas (Villa Lobos) *Music Box*. The Schubert/Liszt Serenade is eloquently phrased, and is all the more effective for its telling introspection. When it comes to Schubert's beautiful Impromptu Op. 90, No. 3, she plays it in Haslinger's version transposed from G flat major to G major, with that tasteless change of harmony. She wasn't the only famous pianist to adopt this dreadful trend. She also makes a cut from bars 43-46 inclusive, but maybe that was to accommodate the time limitations of 78s. Each of the volumes has a version of the Handel G minor Passacaglia. Surprisingly the dates of the two recordings indicate that they were set down within a week of each other, on 23 and 29 September 1947. Despite the fact that the LP transfer is quieter and more bright than the that of the 78, when I played the two versions side by side, the performances sounded identical in every last detail. Are they the same recording? The jury remains out on this one.

These highly desirable and valuable recorded documents have been expertly transferred. Yves St Laurent has a non-interventionist policy, where there is no filtering and the natural surface noise is preserved. The transfers are similar to those of Opus Kura. The recordings emerge fresh, warm and vibrant. He has had access to well-preserved source material. There were just two tracks on Volume 1 which appeared sonically inferior: Chopin's Mazurka in E minor, Op. 41, No. 2 and Mazurka in C minor, Op. 30, No. 1. I would urge anyone with an interest in historical pianists to investigate this compelling legacy and, as no documentation is provided with these volumes, I would point the reader in the direction of Christopher Howell's excellent article.

***Stephen Greenbank***

#### **Complete tracklist:**

##### **Volume 1**

##### **CD 1**

##### **Frédéric CHOPIN (1810-1849)**

Nocturne in C Sharp minor, Op. Posth.

Mazurka in B flat major, Op. Posth.

Mazurka in F minor, Op. 68, No. 4

Nocturne in E minor, Op. 72, No. 1

Mazurka in G minor, Op. 67, No. 2

Mazurka in B minor, Op. 30, No. 2

Waltz in G-flat major, Op. 70, No. 1

Waltz in D-flat major, Op. 70, No. 3

Polonaise in B-flat major, op. 71, no. 2

rec. 19 April 1946

Mazurka in E minor, Op. 41. No. 2

Mazurka in A-flat major, Op. 41, No. 4

Mazurka in C minor, Op. 30, No. 1

Mazurka in A-flat major, Op. 24, No. 3

Mazurka in A minor, Op. Posth. 'Notre Temps'

Mazurka in C minor, Op. 56, No. 3  
Mazurka in C-sharp minor, Op. 30, No. 4  
Mazurka in F major, Op. 68, No. 3  
Mazurka in G major, Op. Posth.  
rec. 29 September 1947

## **CD 2**

Mazurka in E minor, Op. 17, No. 2  
Mazurka in G minor, Op. 24, No. 1  
Mazurka in A-flat major, Op. 17, No. 3  
Mazurka in G-sharp minor, Op. 33, No. 1  
Mazurka in A minor, Op. 67, No. 4  
rec. 19 September 1949  
Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4  
Mazurka in A minor, Op. 59, No. 1  
Mazurka in C-sharp minor, Op. 63, No. 3  
Mazurka in C major, Op. 7, No. 5  
rec. 20 September 1949

### **Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)**

*Kinderszenen*, Op. 15

rec. 30 September 1947

### **Franz Peter SCHUBERT (1797-1828)**

Impromptu in G flat major, Op. 90, No. 3  
Valses (Selection)

rec. 19 April 1946

### **Salomone ROSSI (1570-1630)**

Andantino in C minor

rec. 30 September 1947

### **Georg Friederich HANDEL (1685-1759)**

Passacaglia in G minor, suite No. 7

rec. 29 September 1947

## **Volume 2**

### **CD1**

### **Frédéric CHOPIN**

Nocturne in E flat major, Op. 9, No. 2  
Nocturne in B major, Op. 32, No. 1  
Nocturne in G minor, Op. 14, No. 3  
Nocturne in B flat minor, Op. 9, No. 1  
Nocturne in F minor, Op. 55, No. 1  
rec. 21 & 22 February 1950  
Polonaise in C-sharp minor, op. 26, no. 1  
Étude in E-flat minor, op. 10, no. 6  
Waltz in B minor, op. 69, no. 2  
Berceuse in D-flat major, op. 57  
rec. 1 June 1951  
Étude in F minor, op. 25, no. 2  
Impromptu in A flat major, Op. 29  
Waltz in C-sharp minor, op. 64, no. 2  
rec. 16 June 1951

**CD 2**

**Wilhelm Friedemann BACH (1710-1784)**

Capriccio

**Georg Friederich HAENDEL**

Passacaglia in G minor, suite No. 7

rec. 23 September 1947

**Jan Ladislav DUSSEK (1760-1812)**

Consolation, Op. 62

**Felix MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)**

Two songs without words

Op.62, no. 1

Op.102, no. 4

**Wolfgang Amadeus MOZART**

Turkish march

**NICHOLAS (actually VILLA-LOBOS)**

Music Box in G major

Rec. May 9 1951

**Alfredo CASELLA (1883-1947)**

Bolero et gallop

**Franz SCHUBERT/Franz LISZT (1811-1886)**

Serenade

rec. 17 May 1951

**Virgil THOMSON (1896-1989)**

Music Box, lullaby

rec. 15 June, 1951

## RECORDING OF THE MONTH

### **Franz SCHUBERT (1797 - 1828)**

String Quartet No. 15 in G major, D887 (1826) [50:17]

### **Joseph HAYDN (1732-1809)**

String Quartet in G minor Op. 20 No.3 [24:59]

Tetzlaff Quartet

Christian Tetzlaff (violin); Elisabeth Kufferath (violin); Hanna Weinmeister (viola); Tanja Tetzlaff (cello)  
rec. 19-21 September, 2015, Sendesaal, Bremen

**ONDINE ODE 1293-2** [73:51]

Is there, I wonder, a greater string quartet than Schubert's D.887, Beethoven's notwithstanding? Certainly it is one of the most profound, moving and indeed disturbing works in that genre, rivalled only by the same composer's string quintet and characterised by an eternal paradox in its typically Schubertian endless melodic stream and its equally typical sense of impending death, doom and destruction. The finale must emerge as a Dance of Death, a startlingly brutal musical depiction of dissolution almost two hundred years before Stravinsky utilised that trope in "The Rite of Spring", a brave and desperate defiance of the inevitable masked by enforced jollity - and the Tetzlaff Quartet really nail the mood.

Their playing is swift and invariably tightly focused, never "prettified", sometimes raw, with sparing use of vibrato, and technically flawless execution of the frequent tremolos. The recorded sound is very detailed and more intimate than, say, the Alban Berg or Allegri Quartets; their broader acoustics match their grander, more overt manner, but where the Tetzlaff really excels is in its scrupulous and invariably unanimous application of dynamics, which greatly enhances the intensity of its playing. That attention to nuance is reinforced by their observation in the booklet notes regarding how the dynamic markings go "from triple piano with diminuendo to triple forte with crescendo". Those notes provide little factual information on the music itself, being a transcription of a conversation about its emotional hinterland and impact of this constantly questioning music. Mahler's wry aphorism comes to mind: "If a composer could say what he had to say in words he would not bother to say it in music" – although perhaps a review should be wary of smugly borrowing his bon mot given that the same principle could apply to reviewing.

The first movement is chilling and gripping, its grotesqueries fully realised. The Andante contains some of the most beautiful and unsettling music ever written, exhibiting wonderful control of pianissimi and concluding in almost serene and consolatory mode. The Scherzo is featherlight and delicate in the Mendelssohnian manner, the waltz-time Trio ideally elegant.

If Schubert's quartet represents some kind of apex in the form then there is an evident logic in including in the programme here a work which was seminal in its inception and establishment. However, there is also the programmatic rationale of establishing a thematic link between these two quartets. If Goethe's dictum is correct, that the string quartet is "a conversation between four intelligent people", then in the case of these two works all the participants are to some degree disordered, yet we undoubtedly hear four equal voices, each claiming conversational ascendancy in turn, such is the virtuosity and equilibrium of the Tetzlaffs' playing. Haydn's work is disturbing in a manner similar to that of Schubert's, in that the music evinces a frequent and shocking undercurrent of dissatisfaction and even anger, although it hardly achieves the same scorched emotiveness as Schubert's masterwork. This is wild, erratic and fragmented music by early Classical period standards; even the supposedly courtly Menuet is more melancholy and unsettled than "galant" and three of the movements conclude by simply tailing off in a piano muttering in a manner most unconventional and even unsatisfactory by the measure of the age. The Trio of the Scherzo is incongruously cheerful as if it hardly belongs in the quartet at all while the Adagio, exquisitely played here, provides another such interlude of unexpected serenity in an otherwise fitful and capricious work whose restlessness



goes a long way towards justifying its kinship with D887. A final irony is that there is no evidence that this or any other string quartets were ever performed in Esterházy; it seems that Haydn wrote them out of an inner compulsion to exorcise his demons while marooned in that civilised but remote gilded cage.

Comparison with the esteemed Buchberger Quartet in the Haydn reveals that the Buchberger is more assertive and plays in a more overtly “con spirito” manner than the Tetzlaff, who are perhaps occasionally almost too refined but thereby bring out the subtleties of this extraordinary music; I would not let that count as a demerit, especially when the pairing here succeeds so triumphantly.

***Ralph Moore***

**Richard BLACKFORD** (b. 1954)

*Violin Concerto* (2007) [23.24]

Maria Gajdosova (violin), Brno Philharmonic Orchestra/Richard Blackford  
rec. Besední dům, Brno, 26 September 2008

*Clarinet Quintet* (2009) [19.03]

David Campbell (clarinet and bass clarinet), Solstice String Quartet  
rec. Manoukian Music Centre, Westminster School, 15 October 2011

*The better angels of our nature* (2013) [14.54]

Emily Pailthorpe (oboe), BBC Symphony Orchestra/Martyn Brabbins  
rec. BBC Maida Vale Studios, London, 15-16 October 2015

*Goodfellow* (2015) [10.00]

Daniel Pailthorpe (flute), Emily Pailthorpe (oboe), Julian Milford (piano)  
rec. Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, 10-11 November 2015

**NIMBUS ALLIANCE NI 6338** [67.21]

This recording of Richard Blackford's *Violin Concerto* was made in the aftermath of its 2007 first performance in Brno with the same soloist (then conducted by Leoš Svárovský), but it does not appear to have seen the light of day before now. Unfortunately, I have to observe that the ten-year delay might well have been occasioned by the music itself. I have much enjoyed many of Blackford's scores over the years, but the opening of the first movement sounds very much like a combination of Stravinsky's *Petrushka* and Grace Williams' *Penillion* over which the solo violin plays a theme which closely echoes the melody of the ballad from Britten's *Owen Wingrave*. Later, when the music becomes more sheerly lyrical, there are intimations of Pärt's *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*; and throughout there is an impression of heaviness in the orchestral scoring which in a live performance must inevitably leave the soloist desperately trying to be heard over the over-elaborate accompanying textures. Here, with the clear assistance of microphones, we can hear every note, but the sense of strenuous effort remains. Blackford acknowledges in his booklet notes that his music in the concerto "plunders material from an incomplete Violin Sonata written when I was eighteen" and unfortunately it appears that the five-week period during which the concerto was written was insufficient to allow him thoroughly to rework his teenage inspiration. The use of a Russian chant in the slow second movement brings a greater sense of repose, but otherwise the neo-classical busyness of the outer movements only intermittently engaged my sympathies. The playing of Maria Gajdosova, leader of the Brno Philharmonic, is excellent, however, dramatic and involved by turns.

In his note the composer describes his *Clarinet Quintet* as "darkly chromatic" but here the slow second movement, with its setting of the Welsh hymn tune *Cyffamod*, is much more humanly arresting than anything to be found in the concerto. The quintet has an acknowledged programme which derives from Caradog Pritchard's Welsh-language autobiographical novel *Full moon*, originally intended by its author to be a 'radio play for voices' on the model of Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* but with a very much darker and more sinister undertow. David Campbell is asked to double clarinet and bass clarinet, and the furious opening of the last movement on the deeper instrument is arresting in the extreme especially when the programme – outlined in helpful detail in the booklet, with an excellent translation of Pritchard's text by Philip Mitchell – is taken into consideration (it culminates in murder). The composer's reference to various themes by descriptive titles (in the manner of Wagnerian *leitmotifs*) might imply that he may have been thinking of a full dramatic setting of the 'play'; it would be interesting to hear this if it ever materialised.

The phrase "The better angels of our Nature" comes from the inaugural address of Abraham Lincoln in 1861, but the music here is effectively a concerto for oboe and orchestra in two movements, much fresher in both inspiration and material than the violin concerto written six years earlier. It is interesting to note, as in the *Clarinet Quintet*, the use of descriptive titles to identify various themes. The work is very beautiful indeed, especially in the modal melody of what the composer describes as the 'better angels' theme. This opens with the solo oboe and builds to an impassioned statement on

the full strings in octaves. Emily Pailthorpe is superbly controlled both in her extended *cantilena* passages and in the more vigorously excited sections, and Martyn Brabbins obtains a rich response from the string orchestra.

*Goodfellow* is of course the Shakespearean nickname for Puck, established in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and the music here is puckish indeed. The very opening again is momentarily Stravinskian in style – now echoing the passage describing the capture of *The Firebird* – but what follows is much more in Blackford's own voice. In the section describing how Puck enchants the Athenian lovers the composer manages to skirt completely the obvious temptation to echo Britten's opera, with the flute and oboe interweaving their lines over a restful piano accompaniment. All three players are superb and bring out all the character present in the music, bringing the disc to a bubbling and joyful conclusion.

Although the four recordings assembled on this disc comes from widely different sources, with different acoustics and producers, the sound throughout is excellent and the twelve-page booklet supplies us with all the information we need to appreciate Blackford's music. The composer himself is an excellent communicator, and his six pages of analysis are a model of what such things should be. This issue is a worthy companion to the catalogue of Blackford's output on the Nimbus label. Might we hope in due course for a reissue of the old Argo LP recording of his *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, which never seems to have appeared on CD? In the meantime, those like me who relish Blackford's music will welcome this addition to his growing representation on disc.

***Paul Corfield Godfrey***

**Friedrich Wilhelm RUST (1739-1796)**

***Der Clavierpoet***

Sonata in G minor\* [17:12]

Sonata in D major (1794) [22:06]

XII Variazioni in A# sopra la Canzonetta: *Blühe liebes Veilchen* (1794) [11:04]

Sonata in C major\* [25:36]

Jermaine Sprosse (clavichord\* and fortepiano)

Rec. 5-8 April 2016, Radiostudio SRF Zurich

**DEUTSCHE HARMONIA MUNDI 88985369272** [75:58]

Friedrich Wilhelm Rust was a pupil of C.P.E. Bach. Detmar Huchting's booklet note tells us how intertwined with the Bach family Rust and his elder brother were, the latter having played as a violinist under J.S. Bach's direction. Friedrich Wilhelm's earlier teacher was Wilhelm Friedemann Bach. He was later to study under both C.P.E. Bach and Franz Benda, and he spent some educational time in Italy.

Rust was both a keyboard virtuoso (and an equally fine violinist). This programme takes us from an early *Sonata in G minor* to the *Sonata in D minor*, his last work in the genre. Jermaine Sprosse plays the particularly fine *Sonata in G minor* and the *Sonata in C major* on a gorgeous-sounding clavichord. It was built by Thomas Steiner based on a 1772 instrument by Christian Gottlob Hubert. Clavichords are quiet instruments. Sprosse takes the subtlety of dynamic down to a whisper at times, though the spectacular opening shows how much of a musical storm can be whipped up by playing "through" the strings and with a surprising amount of gusto. While expressive charm and bags of contrast and surprise characterise this early sonata, the *Sonata in C major* is clearly written specifically for the clavichord; "Bebung" or vibrato markings are a decisive indicator. The influence of C.P.E. Bach can be felt here as it can be elsewhere, but Rust's skill and originality are the strongest impression created from these works. Rust clearly had a flamboyant side, and you can imagine the powdered ladies being delighted and royally entertained by the musical sparks flying from this politest of instruments.

Sprosse plays the *Sonata in D major* on a fortepiano from 1792 by J.A Stein, one of the leading makers of his day. The instrument is thankfully tuned to match the clavichord. It has a nice tone and plenty of flexibility, though with that particular pungency of attack that is very much part of its nature. There is a music-box charm to some of this music, heightening the contrasts of dynamic, rhapsodic freedom and drama when they occur. You can see with the duration of these works that there is no shortage of content. Rust's atmospheric introductions and extended development sections can compete with Haydn and foreshadow Beethoven.

The 12 variations on the canzonetta "Blühe liebes Veilchen" by J.P.A. Schulz are suggested as perhaps having been intended for Rust's pupils. There can be little doubt that they would have relished being allowed to enjoy some playing in the popular style of the day, with witty inflections and a wide variety of moods in these colourful variations.

It is a superbly recorded release. My only point of criticism is that the photo of the fortepiano appears next to text about the clavichord and vice versa, but this is a small point and one perhaps dictated by layout issues. We are dutifully pointed towards a rarely-heard composer from that somewhat obscure period between the more easily defined peaks of the Baroque and Classical. We discover that Friedrich Wilhelm Rust's music is genuinely brilliant and richly deserving of our full attention. The photogenic Jermaine Sprosse is an ideal champion of this composer of remarkable flair. It would appear there is much more to be brought to light, including songs, choral works and chamber music. Let the cry go out, "we want more Rust...!"

***Dominy Clements***

**Gabriel FAURÉ (1845-1924)**

Requiem, Op.48 (ed. Rutter)\* [35:22]

Ave verum corpus, Op.65, No.1 [3:43]

Messe Basse [10:06]

Tantum ergo, Op.65, No.2 [2:36]

Cantique de Jean Racine, Op.11 (ed. Rutter) [6:20]

Richard Pittsinger (treble); David Pittsinger (bass-baritone); \*Frederick Teado & Kevin Kwan (organ);  
Orchestra of St Luke's; Saint Thomas Choir of Men & Boys, Fifth Avenue, New York/John Scott  
rec. Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York

Latin & French texts and English translations included

**RESONUS CLASSICS RES10174** [58:13]

The untimely death of John Scott in 2015 occurred not long after the announcement of an arrangement for Resonus Classics to issue recordings made by him and his choir at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue. Happily, it seems that the choir already had some recordings 'in the can' so although we've been deprived of new recordings we can at least hear examples of the fine work Scott had done with the choir of which he had been director since 2004. This excellent disc of music by Fauré shows the choir off to excellent advantage.

The main interest lies in the Requiem for which John Rutter's excellent edition is used. The choir has an uncommonly large treble section on this occasion. No less than 35 boys are listed and there's no indication that they're not all involved. By comparison, I've been listening also to a recording that the choir made in 2008 of the Rachmaninov *All-Night Vigil* and there 10 fewer trebles involved there. The remainder of the choir on this Fauré disc comprises six male altos and five each of tenors and basses. The large number of trebles does impart quite a degree of brightness to the overall sound but this is by no means overdone; the boys sing very well and in a fresh, disciplined fashion and I enjoyed the sound of the choir very much.

Two soloists are used in the Requiem. Richard Pittsinger, the treble, is a member of the choir. David Pittsinger (his father?) is a guest. Richard does very well indeed in the Pie Jesu. I'm less sure about David Pittsinger. He has a big voice and the sound that he makes is too full and large for my taste in this work – other listeners may disagree. He almost sounds operatic, especially in the 'Libera me', and his singing is a little bit out of scale for the performance. To be truthful I think he'd be better suited to a full-orchestra performance of the work rather than this more intimate version.

The choir sings extremely well. The alto and tenor sections are excellent in the opening section of the Offertoire and the two lines are perfectly balanced, which isn't always the case. Also I'm pleased to say that there's no trace at all of 'hootiness' in the altos' sound. Later in this movement, after the solo has finished, the full choir makes a lovely sound in the closing section, the singing supple and beautifully calibrated. The Sanctus is enriched by a lovely solo violin line and in the Agnus Dei the tenors clearly relish their opening melody, as well they might. 'In Paradisum' is delectable, the trebles sounding suitably angelic. All in all this is a fine performance of Fauré's cherishable masterpiece and I enjoyed it very much.

The lovely *Cantique de Jean Racine* is given a beautiful and committed performance but I wish John Scott had moved the music on just a little more: his tempo is just too leisurely.

The remainder of the programme uses the treble voices only, accompanied by organ. The two miniatures that form Op 65 are both very nicely done. *Ave verum corpus* is an elegant, unpretentious little piece. The choir sings either in unison or two parts and the boys make a fine sound, singing with absolute unanimity, the tuning spot-on. *Tantum ergo* has parts for a trio of treble soloists, who do very well, in addition to the main choir. The Messe Basse is a modest creation but charming. Its brevity is explained in part by the omission of not only the Credo but also the Gloria. The Kyrie and

Benedictus each have an important part for a solo treble - Richard Pittsinger and Jack Townsend Keller respectively. Both soloists are excellent. The choral writing is either in unison or two parts and the St Thomas' boys make a fine showing.

I'm not surprised that John Scott's very sudden passing was so much mourned at Saint Thomas, Fifth Avenue for this disc makes very clear that he'd done a wonderful job as Director of Music, building on the work of his equally distinguished predecessor, Gerre Hancock. The singing on this disc is distinguished and I hope that anyone who acquires it will enjoy it as much as I did.

In addition to the quality of the music making the release is graced by an excellent set of notes by Dr Martin Ennis. No recording date given but I see that the recordings bear the copyright date 2012 so I presume the sessions took place around that time. The engineering by John C Baker and Paul Vazquez strikes me as very successful. The choir is expertly reported and is very well balanced against the accompanying instruments. Furthermore the listener gets a nice sense of the ambience of the church.

This is a most desirable release.

***John Quinn***

### ***Fairy Tales***

**Franz LISZT (1811-1886)**

Concerto pathétique, S.258 [20:32]

**Modest MUSSORGSKY (1839-1881)**

Pictures at an Exhibition [32:24]

**Pyotr Ilyich TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)**

Sleeping Beauty Suite, Op.66a [10:39]

Katherine Nikitine (piano and organ), Véra Nikitine (organ)

rec. 8 July and 19 December 2016, Auditorium de Lyon, France

**HORTUS 554** [67:37]

There is some original repertory for organ and piano – think Flor Peeters and Marcel Dupré – for harmonium and piano – think Karg-Elert and Franck – as well as original organ duets – think Wesley and Leighton - but none of that is on this disc. Instead the Nikitine Sisters have done their own transcriptions of Liszt's largest two-piano work, Mussorgsky's most famous instrumental piece and a Tchaikovsky orchestral classic. Despite a recording which has clearly been tweaked sufficiently to negate the usual balance issues, it has done nothing to resolve the fundamental problem of combining organ with piano. And that is the issue of tuning. There is doubtless some complex issue of physics which results in the two instruments never sounding comfortably in tune with each other across the range, and to enjoy this disc you will need to suspend any ideas you may have about intonation and pitch conformity.

The Nikitine Sisters (whose name, we are told in the booklet notes, is a tongue-in-cheek reference to the Marx Brothers) are French sisters who both studied organ and piano, Véra in Paris with Jean Guillou, Eric Lebrun and Marie-Louise Langlais, and Katherine in Paris and Lyon with Brigitte Bouthinon-Dumas, François-René Duchable and Denis Pascal. They have been doing their organ and piano double act since 2009, and this appears to be their debut recording. One thing which is obvious throughout is their shared sense of involvement in the music and their excellent coordination.

The choice of instruments is interesting, and certainly will entice some to this new release. The organ is a Cavaillé-Coll with 6500 pipes and 82 stops (although the booklet does not go into detail as to what those stops actually are) originally built for the 1878 Exposition in Paris and installed in the Trocadéro. It was subsequently moved to the Chaillot Palace and, since 1977, has been in the Auditorium de Lyon where, in 2013, it was overhauled and restored by the Aubertin Company. The piano was designed and built by Stephen Paulello and, in addition to boasting 102 keys, has parallel nickel-wound strings. Neither instrument, I regret to say, is served particularly well by this recording which, if anything, rather stifles the sound of the piano and puts the organ in some kind of dead sound chamber. However, there is no doubt that the extra and rather more clangorous depth of the piano and the unusually broad tonal palette of the organ contribute significantly to the impressive effect of the *Pictures of an Exhibition* – you only need listen to “Bydlo” or “Ballet of Chicks in their Shells” to realise that this is no ordinary piano or conventional church organ.

Liszt's *Concerto pathétique* evolved over the course of some 35 years during which he revised and rewrote it, transforming it from a solo piano piece to one for two pianos. If he ever thought about turning it into one for organ and piano, he obviously thought better of it. And for very good reasons. For while this performance certainly makes clear the difference between the two original keyboard parts, both parts are too distinctly pianistic to sound quite right outside their original context. As a result while Katherine Nikitine exudes charm, grace and virtuosity, her sister seems to lumber in on the act with almost elephantine weight and solidity. Even the more gentle and delicate organ passages have none of the delicacy of the piano, and there is that continual, nagging annoyance of the tuning issue, which really does not go away, even when the music reaches its most absorbing.

*Pictures at an Exhibition* is one of those works which seems to survive infinitely flexible arrangements, and while this is the first time I can recall hearing it arranged for organ and piano, it seems more naturally at ease in this new garb than did the Liszt. The organ sets us off each time with the “Promenade” before making way for the piano, and the two indulge in some pleasing conversational gambits (which would work better if the two instruments were singing from the same pitch hymn-sheet). The transcription is by Véra Nikitine and, I have to say works extremely well, with the piano generally offering up the musical substance while the organ adds colour and effect. This is particularly effective in both “The Old Castle” and “Bydlo” where the piano’s percussive bass gives a real sense of shape to the music while the organ looms in the background with atmospheric grandeur in the first, and lumbers along with bovine swagger in the latter. “Tuileries” is also particularly effective in this arrangement with the organ’s high mutations adding a delightfully playful touch, and certainly the unusually thin and stringy reeds give a suitably whining quality to “Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle”.

For the Tchaikovsky Suite, the sisters share the organ console. The sound is often big and brash and the quieter passages full of sparkling effects. But one can never escape the atmosphere of fairground which permeates this – the organ effects are more sonic than musical – and it seems a million miles away from the subtle delicacies of Tchaikovsky’s original.

**Marc Rochester**



**Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)**

Symphony No. 2 [33:21]

Overtures:

*Die Ruinen von Athen* [4:34]

*Zur Namensfeier* [6:29]

*Die Geschöpfe des Prometheus* [5:10]

*Coriolan* [8:35]

*Egmont* [8:17]

Beethoven Orchester Bonn/Stefan Blunier (conductor)

Recorded Beethovenhalle, Bonn, Jan & March 2016

Hybrid SACD

**MDG 937 1977-6** [66:29]

I haven't been following the unfolding Bonn Beethoven cycle, but I enjoyed this CD a lot, and I'll be looking out for future instalments. Theirs is a four-square, solid approach to Beethoven, one that feels big-boned without being heavy. They have clearly learnt lessons from the period brigade, but they're not a slave to them and they still see this music as *symphonic* rather than inflated chamber music.

It's certainly exciting! The first movement of Symphony No. 2 rips along with a cracking pace once you get through the introduction (which is a proper Adagio). The cellos' main theme is set against a violin accompaniment that flickers excitingly, and the brass and timps make a wonderfully beefy contribution. The slow movement is, then, really lovely with an old-school approach to the tempo but, nevertheless, something of an edge to the string sound that makes it more interesting to listen to. The Scherzo is exciting, with a pleasingly rustic sounding trio, and the scampering, quicksilver finale rounds off the performance very satisfyingly. It's refreshing to see that some orchestras still embrace the 20<sup>th</sup> century tradition of Beethoven playing, and these players claim it boldly for themselves, to which I say: well done!

The overtures that make up the couplings all sound very good, too. A beautifully judged oboe solo leads into a scurrying yet serious *Ruins of Athens* overture. *Zur Namensfeier* has the most arresting beginning of anything on the disc, and there is fantastic energy to the main allegro section. *Prometheus* has an opening pregnant with expectation, and you get the pay-off in a main section of impressive precision.

After this, however, *Coriolan* is surprisingly (and disappointingly) lumpen and lacking in energy. *Egmont* makes a satisfying conclusion, however, with crackling fortissimos in the main section and a daringly fast coda which delivers the hymn of victory with all guns firing.

So I'd put this disc into the "pleasant surprise" category. Any Beethoven disc is competing in a very crowded market, of course, and there's an argument that they're insufficiently distinctive from the competition. That didn't stop me enjoying it, though.

**Simon Thompson**

**Richard STRAUSS** (1864-1949)

*Eine Alpensinfonie* Op.64 [51:03]

Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra/Kent Nagano

rec. November 2014, Gothenburg Konzerthaus

**FARAO CLASSICS B108091** [51:03]

*Eine Alpensinfonie*, Strauss's cinematic climb up a mountain and back down again, is rarely performed but quite often recorded, usually with spectacular results. It requires a massive orchestra with parts for a thunder machine, wind machine, cow bells and organ plus - as featured on this CD - 20 French horns. The orchestral personnel on this new recording numbers 120 players.

The Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra has quite a pedigree when it comes to Richard Strauss. The orchestra performed *Don Juan* in its inaugural season in 1905-1906 and *Eine Alpensinfonie*, the last of Strauss's large orchestral pieces, entered the orchestra's repertoire with Otmar Suitner in 1975. Although the orchestral forces are huge, the kitchen sink elements are only used as and when they are required to tell a story - for example in the storm section. Indeed, there are very few pages of bombast and some of the finer passages are to be heard in the score's more intimate moments.

This new version doesn't possess the spectacular glamour of the old Decca/Mehta recording, but in terms of orchestral playing and natural recording it is streets ahead of its Los Angeles rival. The Gothenburg brass section doesn't quite have the bite and tone of the Bavarians under Solti but that is not to imply that the brass playing, on the whole, is in any way understated. It isn't. The key here is that Nagano keeps his brass under control and allows other sections of the orchestra to be heard through the texture, often with incredible clarity. The engineers have captured details that simply aren't present in other recordings.

Nagano's approach is to stress the lyrical moments rather than the garish climaxes. The Gothenburg string section is exceptional and their beautiful sound steals the show from the rest of the admittedly very fine orchestra. The opening of the work is mysterious and foreboding, followed by a vigorous ascent. The off stage horns are nicely balanced and - unlike Mehta and the LAPO - manage to stay in time with the orchestra. The conductor's sensitive handling of the Alpine forests and meadows catches the breath and it's in these lyrical passages that the reading is at its best. The cow bells are somewhat timid compared with those used by Kempe in his marvellous RCA version with the Royal Philharmonic. The magnificent *Zarathustra* climax is frankly a bit of a damp squib. The bass trombone doesn't cut through and for me there isn't the expected hair raising effect usually associated with this enthralling moment. The storm is also slightly underpowered. In Nagano's favour, he manages to keep the piece moving forward in a continuous flow rather than allowing it to become a series of unconnected events. The final pages and the descent into darkness are superbly handled.

In short, this is a well-engineered disc with immaculate orchestral playing and a tasteful concept of the work as a whole. I would recommend it as a second version for its lyrical qualities and clarity of detail. In other words, it's a refreshing change. Unfortunately as an overall spectacle it falls just short of the very best. The playing time is also miserly.

**John Whitmore**

See [previous review](#) by Stephen Greenbank

## ***Strauss in St Petersburg***

Track list at end of review

Estonian National Symphony Orchestra/Neeme Järvi

rec. 1 May 2012 & 29 June-2 July 2015, Estonia Concert Hall, Tallinn, Estonia

Reviewed as a Studio Master download (24/48) from [Chandos.net](http://Chandos.net)

Pdf booklet included

**CHANDOS CHAN10937** [82:49]

Having built his reputation on the heavy stuff – Richard Strauss, Sergei Prokofiev and Dmitri Shostakovich – the conductor Neeme Järvi is now focusing on lighter fare. I've reviewed his recordings of music by Chabrier, Offenbach, Raff, Saint-Saëns and Suppé, and while there's much to admire there the performances aren't always as supple or spontaneous as I'd like. Ironically, I found the youngest Järvi, Kristjan, rather more engaging in his recent Sousa collection with the RSNO. Now *that's* how this repertoire should be played, with flair and a sense of fun.

Those who love Strauss will have their favourite conductors, Willi Boskovsky, Carlos Kleiber and Herbert von Karajan high among them, and there's no denying that Viennese orchestras have a special way with this music. I was reminded of that when I [reviewed](#) Jakob Kreizberg's selection of waltzes, with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra at their most idiomatic and elegant. I feel they play much better for him than they do for Manfred Honeck, whose VSO/Strauss recordings sound a little too efficient for my taste.

As for Järvi's hometown band, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, they've certainly impressed me in the past – their recording of Shostakovich's [Song of the Forests](#), with his other son, Paavo, comes to mind – but I did wonder at the choice of ensemble in this instance. Also, I've had misgivings about some recent Chandos releases, which have been spoilt by too many 'hi-fi moments'. But rather than speculate further I started to listen, turning to Peter Kemp's very detailed liner-notes for details of Strauss's links with Russia.

Strangely enough it all started with a railway – from St Petersburg to Pavlovsk – and the owners' desire to attract more passengers. To that end they set up Vauxhall Pavilion, a music and entertainments venue, in Pavlovsk Park. The company first engaged Strauss for a series of concerts there in 1856, and such was the success of this venture that it lasted for eleven seasons. However, not all the pieces played here have a connection with Russia in general or St Petersburg in particular.

First impressions? Very mixed, I'm afraid. As I suspected Järvi is not only swift he's also brusque, and while the orchestra play well enough they lack the ease and idiom required for this music. That's particularly noticeable in the well-known pieces – the *Pizzicato Polka* and *Wine, Women and Song!* for example – which are much too routine to engage the ear or invite affection. As for the rest, much of it is obscure and/or sub-par, which does nothing to enhance the appeal of this album. Take the *Neva* and *Olga* polkas for instance; I can only find alternative recordings of these two pieces on the 52-CD Strauss set from Naxos (8.505226).

Add to that the fact that there's so little joy in these performances, and you'll begin to understand why I found this collection so dispiriting. At least the Estonian National Male Choir bring some much-needed lift to the proceedings with their splendid contribution to the *Peasants' Polka*. Alas, I'm much less enthusiastic about the soprano Olga Zeitseva's account of *First Love*, by the Russian composer Olga Smirnitskaya, with whom Strauss had a fling in 1858. It's quite attractive, but scarcely worth a second hearing, especially in this less-than-subtle outing.

That pretty much encapsulates my feelings about this album as a whole: second-rate Strauss played by a conductor and orchestra who seem ill at ease with this repertoire.

Factor in dry, airless sound and the whole enterprise begins to look like a serious misjudgement. Regrettably, it does nothing to enhance Järvi's once formidable reputation.

Swift, almost cursory performances of second-rate Strauss; one to avoid.

### **Dan Morgan**

#### **Track list**

##### **Johann STRAUSS II (1825-1899)**

*Neva-Polka* (Neva Polka), Op. 288 (1864) [3:48]

*Persischer Marsch* (Persian March), Op. 289 [1:43]

*Russischer Marsch* (Russian March), Op. 426 (1886) [2:43]

*Großfürstin Alexandra-Walzer* (Grand Duchess Alexandra Waltz), Op. 181 (1856) [6:32]

*Olga-Polka*, Op. 196 (1857) [2:49]

*Alexandrinen-Polka*, Op. 198 (1857) [4:27]

*Abschied von St Petersburg* (Farewell to St Petersburg), Op. 210 (1858) [7:58]

*Bauern-Polka* (Peasants' Polka), Op. 276 (1863) [2:47]

##### **Johann STRAUSS II/Josef STRAUSS (1827-1870)**

*Pizzicato-Polka* (1869) [2:31]

##### **Johann STRAUSS II**

*Großfürsten-Marsch* (Grand Dukes' March), Op. 107 (1852) [2:05]

##### **Olga SMIRNITSKAYA (1837-1920)**

*Erste Liebe* (First Love), Op. 14 (1877-1878, orch. Michael Rot)\* [2:42]

##### **Johann STRAUSS II**

*Vergnügungszug* (Pleasure Train), Op. 281 (1864) [2:45]

*Wein, Weib und Gesang!* (Wine, Woman and Song!), Op. 333 (1869) [11:09]

*Krönungs-Marsch* (Coronation March), Op. 183 (1856) [2:16]

*Hofball-Quadrille* (Court Ball Quadrille), Op. 116 (1852) [4:42]

*An der Wolga* (By the Volga), Op. 425 (1886) [4:21]

*St Petersburg*, Op. 255 (1861) [4:59]

*Auf zum Tanza!* (Let's Dance!), Op. 436 (1888) [2:50]

*Russische Marsch-Fantasie* (Russian March Fantasy), Op. 353 (1872) [3:37]

*Alexander-Quadrille*, Op. 33 (1847) [4:31]

Estonian National Male Choir (Peasants' Polka)

Olga Zeitseva (soprano) (First Love)

**Nacio Herb Brown**

***Singin' In The Rain: His 27 Finest***

rec. 1927-1951

**RETROSPECTIVE RTR4299 [78:19]**

Nacio Herb Brown was born in Deming, New Mexico in 1896. He grew up in the Los Angeles, California area where he learned to play the piano. After short stints working in the tailoring industry and the real estate business, Nacio became a full-time composer in Hollywood, where he wrote film scores for MGM.

*Singin' In The Rain* was his biggest hit song, and the tune is featured twice in this collection. Cliff Edwards' version was recorded in May 1929 in Los Angeles for Columbia records, featuring Cliff playing ukulele and singing along with an unidentified orchestra. The song appeared in the film *Hollywood Revue of 1929*. Gene Kelly sings his version with Lennie Hayton & The MGM Studio Orchestra for a June 1951 for MGM, which appears in the film *Singin' In The Rain*, starring Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor, and Debbie Reynolds. *The Wedding of the Painted Doll* features the talented singing duo of Turner Layton and Clarence Johnstone. The gentlemen harmonize the jolly tune accompanied by Turner on piano and by Rudy Starita performing on the dulcitone, a keyboard instrument originally designed in 1860, similar to a piano but using tuning forks to produce tones.

Mistinguett (born Jeanne Florentine Bourgeois) was a popular French singer and actress, and was at one time the highest paid female entertainer in the world. Beautiful and captivating, she insured her legs in 1919 for half a million francs. Here she sings an off-key, care-free French version of *I'm Feeling Like A Million (Je Cherche Un Millionaire)*, with Leo Kok, accompanied by Marcel Pagnoul & L'Orchestre du Casino de Paris. The song was recorded for Columbia in January 1938 in Paris. *Good Morning* appeared in the 1939 film *Babes In Arms* and features cornetist Bobby Hackett performing with Horace Heidt and his Musical Knights, along with the mixed vocal group The Heidt-Lights. The song was originally recorded in September 1939 for Columbia Records. Henry Russell also performs on this number playing the incredible Novachord, the world's first polyphonic synthesizer.

Carroll Gibbons was an American bandleader, pianist and composer who lived and worked primarily in England, notably as bandleader for the New Mayfair Orchestra. He was also leader of the Savoy Hotel Orpheans, and they perform *I've Got A Feelin' You're Foolin'*, with vocalists Brian Lawrence and Anne Lenner singing a lovely duet. Nathaniel Shilkret was a prolific composer, musician and conductor and made thousands of recordings during his career. Nat conducts the Victor Orchestra performing *You Were Meant For Me*, *Chant Of The Jungle*, and the charming *The Doll Dance*, featuring pianists Jack Shilkret and Milt Rettenberg, recorded in March 1927 for the Victor recording label.

Nacio Herb Brown was a unique and talented composer, and these songs represent the many sides to his musical ingenuity. A 12-page booklet is included with the disc. The music was compiled by Ray Crick, who also supplied liner notes and comments. Martin Haskell performed the audio restoration. The sound quality is good, although some original background noise and static was carried over and appears on several songs.

**Bruce McCollum**

## **Contents**

Singin' In The Rain- *Cliff "Ukelele Ike" Edwards* (1929)  
When Buddha Smiles- *Benny Goodman*  
The Doll Dance- *Nat Shilkret*  
The Broadway Melody- *Charles King*  
You Were Meant for Me- *Nat Shilkret*  
The Wedding of the Painted Doll- *Layton & Johnstone*  
Pagan Love Song- *James Melton*  
Chant of The Jungle- *Nat Shilkret*  
Paradise- *Russ Colombo*  
Eadie Was A Lady- *Sam Browne*  
After Sundown- *Bing Crosby*  
Temptation- *Bing Crosby*  
All I Do Is Dream Of You- *Connee Boswell*  
Broadway Rhythm- *Richard Himber*  
You Are My Lucky Star- *Frances Langford*  
I've Got A Feelin' You're Foolin'- *Carroll Gibbons*  
Alone- *Allan Jones*  
Would You?- *Gracie Fields*  
Smoke Dreams- *Mildred Bailey*  
Everybody Sing- *Judy Garland*  
Je Cherche Un Millionaire- *Mistinguett*  
Good Morning- *Bobby Hackett*  
You Stepped Out Of A Dream- *Tony Martin*  
The Moon Is Low- *Benny Carter*  
Love Is Where You Find It- *Kathryn Grayson*  
Should I?- *Frank Sinatra*  
Singin' In The Rain- *Gene Kelly* (1951)

**Gabriel FAURÉ (1845-1924)**

Après un rêve [2:56]

**Ernest BLOCH (1880-1959)**

Abodah [2:52]

**Leonard COHEN (1934-2016)**

Hallelujah [3:25]

Sheku Kanneh-Mason (cello)

No recording details given

**DECCA Promotional** [9:18]

I was thrilled to learn that Sheku Kanneh-Mason's first disc was being released as I was hugely impressed by his performances in last year's BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition. However, this is not it. This promotional disc has no details given on the sleeve either of the recording venue and date, the music itself nor who was accompanying him on the piano in the Fauré, though I suspect it is his sister as it was in the competition, nor whether he was playing alongside another cellist in the Leonard Cohen or if he was doubling up alongside a pre-recorded accompaniment.

I hope it does him good as it deserves to since he is an excellent cellist for one so young; he has bags of talent plus an amazing ability for imparting passion, pathos and raw emotion of the kind that makes the hairs on the back of your head stand up and he's yet to enter the Royal Academy of Music so imagine how much better he'll be when he graduates from there. He plays the Fauré in such an insightful way with just the right amount of wistful nostalgia while his interpretation of the Bloch piece is imbued with a good measure of palpably sad reflection. The Leonard Cohen is very moving and made me want to own some more of the unique Canadian singer's work.

In the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition he won with his performance of the Shostakovich Cello Concerto No.1 and I understand that that will be his proper debut disc recording for Decca who he is signed up with. All I can say is roll on! Not for nothing has Sheku Kanneh-Mason been described as 'a young Jacqueline du Pré'; be assured this little 'sampler' is part of history in the making so Yo-Yo Ma and co you'd better watch your backs!

**Steve Arloff**

*This little 'sampler' is part of history in the making.*