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MAY 2020
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José Antônio de
ALMEIDA PRADO
Piano Concerto No. 1
Aurora
Concerto Fribourgeois

Sonia Rubinsky, Piano
Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra
Fabio Mechetti

This Month’s Other Highlights

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José Antônio Resende de Almeida Prado (1943–2010)
Piano Concerto No. 1
Aurora
Concerto Fribourgeois
Sonia Rubinsky, Piano
Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra • Fabio Mechetti

At the time of his death in 2010, Almeida Prado was one of Brazil’s most internationally admired composers, one who created music of unique sonority and colour, rooted in his native country. In *Aurora* (‘Dawn’) he employs his newly developed ‘transtonality’ to radiant effect, while the *Concerto Fribourgeois* features a collage technique. In his *Piano Concerto No. 1* Almeida Prado explores a cogent structure in which the soloist opens up, rips apart or transforms the theme and variations, in a work that is both grandiose and luminous.

About Fabio Mechetti

Brazilian conductor, Fabio Mechetti, was appointed music director and principal conductor of the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra in 2008. He was the first Brazilian to become director of an Asian orchestra when he was appointed principal conductor of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra. Mechetti also led the Syracuse Symphony Orchestra for ten seasons and was subsequently named music director laureate. In addition to his Carnegie Hall debut with the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra in 1993, Mechetti has appeared as guest conductor with orchestras such as the Seattle, Rome and BBC Scottish Symphony orchestras, the Buffalo and Rochester Philharmonic orchestras, and various orchestras in Mexico, Spain, Brazil and Venezuela.

Key Features:

- One of the most prolific composers to emerge from Brazil, José Antônio Resende de Almeida Prado began as a cultivator of nationalism.
- This new release is the latest in our ‘Music of Brazil’ series, co-produced with the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in order to promote music by Brazilian composers dating back to the 18th century. The initial release in the series, Alberto Nepomuceno’s *Symphony in G minor, Série brasileira* and *Prelude to O Garatuja* (8.574067) recorded by the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra and Fabio Mechetti, was a *Gramophone* Choice: ‘The entire programme is played with panache... we have a lot to look forward to. Urgently recommended.’
- The Nepomuceno disc was also selected as one of ‘The Best Classical Recordings of 2019’ by *WQXR*: '[Nepomuceno’s] energetic melodies are met with matching exuberance by conductor Fabio Mechetti and the Minas Gerais Philharmonic Orchestra.'
- Succeeding instalments include sonatas for violin and piano by Leopoldo Miguez and Glauco Velásquez (8.574118), performed by Emmanuele Baldini and Karin Fernandes; and Heitor Villa-Lobos’ concertos for guitar and harmonica, as well as a couple of chamber works (8.574018), featuring world-renowned guitarist Manuel Barrueco and harmonica player José Staneck, with the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra under Giancarlo Guerrero.
- Brazilian pianist Sonia Rubinsky was awarded Best Recording of the Year in the Classical Category of the 2009 Latin GRAMMY Awards for the eighth volume of the complete piano works of Heitor Villa-Lobos, recorded for Naxos (8.570504). She recently recorded *Magna Sequentia I* (8.574026) and *II* (8.574027), her own compilation of dance movements by J.S. Bach arranged into large suites, in which she employed a historically-informed approach.
César FRANCK (1822–1890)

Psyché *

Les Éolides

Le Chasseur maudit

RCS Voices *

Royal Scottish National Orchestra

Jean-Luc Tingaud

César Franck was a childhood prodigy who gained later renown as an organist and teacher. His compositions received scant attention until the success of Le Chasseur maudit, a symphonic morality tale that vividly portrays the ‘accursed huntsman’ from his defiance of the Sabbath to a dramatic chase and a horrific fate. Les Éolides is infused with Wagnerian colours and depicts the mythological Aeolids as they reawaken nature with their song. Franck’s lushly orchestrated final symphonic poem Psyché expresses the power of love in dreams and a passionate union.

Key Features:

- César Franck is perhaps best known for his organ works and late masterpieces such as the Violin Sonata. His Symphony in D minor has also been widely recorded and is often coupled with Le Chasseur maudit, a work that ranks among his most popular and frequently performed orchestral works. Les Éolides and Psyché are more impressionistic in atmosphere, and much appreciated for their subtle orchestration and lyrical inventiveness.

- Jean-Luc Tingaud’s recordings for Naxos have always done very well, with Poulenc’s Les Biches (8.573739) given a 10/10 score by ClassicsToday.com, along with comments such as ‘Tingaud’s precise, clear-eyed direction is just what this music needs’. Vincent d’Indy’s Second Symphony (8.573522), also with the RSN, was given a rave review by Fanfare: ‘This recording [by] Tingaud and Royal Scottish National Orchestra should absolutely fire up new interest in a composer who has been unjustly neglected. Very strongly, if not urgently, recommended.’

Companion Titles – Jean-Luc Tingaud, Conductor
8.573739 | 8.573522 | 8.573344 | 8.573296

Ludwig van BEETHOVEN (1770–1827)

Folk Songs

Paula Sophie Bohnet, Soprano • Daniel Johannsen, Tenor

Georg Klimbacher, Baritone • Josef Herzer, Violin

Bertin Christelbauer, Cello • Bernadette Bartos, Piano

George Thomson of Edinburgh, a notable promoter of Scottish music, encouraged settings of his nation’s folk songs. In particular, he found a rich source of arrangements in Vienna, where he commissioned first Haydn and then Beethoven to set a large sequence of poems, including those of Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott. Thomson envisaged simple works, agreeable to amateurs, but Beethoven found it impossible to compose within such limitations and his settings, which include Irish and Welsh songs, with the accompaniment of strings and piano, have proved perennially popular.

Key Features:

- Pianist Bernadette Bartos is the featured pianist of the Beethoven Lieder series, Vol. 1 (8.574071). Her playing was described as ‘fairly lively and sensitive’ by The Art Music Lounge. Bartos has performed at venues across Europe, including the Wiener Musikerverein and the Wiener Konzerthaus. Her debut at Regent Hall, London gained her First Prize in the Beethoven Chamber Music Competition of the Beethoven Piano Society of Europe.

- German soprano Paula Sophie Bohnet made her operatic debut in 2013 with the role of Barbarina in Le nozze di Figaro. She was the recipient of the prestigious Giovanni Omodeo Scholarship and has been awarded several prizes from organisations such as the Österreichischen Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung for her Master’s degree.

- Austrian tenor Daniel Johannsen studied with Lieder specialists such as Robert Holl, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Christa Ludwig, and thus approaches art song performance with great affection. Along with the great Schubert and Schumann cycles, his repertoire includes more than 300 settings, which he has performed with pianists Graham Johnson, Charles Spences and Helmut Deutsch, among others.

Companion Titles – Ludwig van Beethoven, Composer
8.500250 | 8.574071 | 8.574131 | 8.574051
Alexander von ZEMLINSKY (1871–1942)
Der Zwerg ("The Dwarf")
Libretto by Georg C. Klaren
after the fairy tale The Birthday of the Infanta by Oscar Wilde

Arnold SCHOENBERG (1874–1951)
Begleitungsmusik zu einer Lichtspielscene, Op. 34
("Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene")
Elena Tsallagova and Emily Magee, Sopranos
David Butt Philip, Tenor • Mick Morris Mehnert, Actor
Orchestra and Chorus of the Deutsche Oper Berlin
Donald Runnicles, Conductor • Tobias Kratzer, Stage Director

Based on Oscar Wilde’s story The Birthday of the Infanta, Zemlinsky’s single-act opera Der Zwerg is the tragic tale of a dwarf who is presented at court, falls in love with the beautiful Donna Clara, but is ultimately forced to see himself as others see him and to die of a broken heart. Preceded by Schoenberg’s Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene, Op. 34, Zemlinsky’s Romantic score is full of psychological intrigue. Is Der Zwerg a critique of society’s superficiality? Is it the composer’s self-portrait in his doomed affair with Alma Schindler? Director Tobias Kratzer’s stunning, transparent production creates a space in which each character is thrown into sharp relief in this ‘fine, noble and melancholy work’ (Bachtrack.com).

The State Opera
(A film by Toni Schmid)
With
Anja Harteros, Soprano
Jonas Kaufmann, Tenor
Kirill Petrenko, Zubin Mehta and Ivor Bolton, Conductors
Nikolaus Bachler and Sir Peter Jonas, Directors
The State Opera is the first film ever made about the Bavarian State Opera, one of the world’s oldest, most prestigious and internationally esteemed companies. It charts the course of three operas – Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg, Les Indes galantes and Un ballo in maschera – as they come to life on the stage. We meet some of the great singers, such as Jonas Kaufmann and Anja Harteros, in performance and behind the scenes, as well as artistic directors past and present, and two of the music directors in Kirill Petrenko and his predecessor Zubin Mehta. As both a celebration and an exploration, this entertaining film is a declaration of love for the operatic form.
Johann Simon MAYR (1763–1845)
La due duchesse
Libretto by Felice Romani
Edited by Franz Hauk, Manfred Hößl and Diemut Hauk
Eun-Hye Choi, Tina Marie Herbert and Anna Feith, Sopranos
Young-Jun Ahn, Markus Schäfer, Jörn Lindemann and Harald Thum, Tenors
Samuel Hasselhorn, Baritone
Jaegyeong Jo, Niklas Mallmann and Andreas Mattersberger, Basses
Members of the Bavarian State Opera Chorus

As one of the leading operatic composers of his generation, Johann Simon Mayr nurtured a fascination with the chivalric stories of medieval England. La due duchesse, an opera semiseria with buffa elements, is set during the reign of the 10th-century King Edgar. Huntsmen's and Knights' choruses and troubadour-like songs give great vivacity to a score that is both lyrical and dramatic. Mayr's compound of Viennese Classicism and Italianate melodic beauty, allied to his ambitious writing and a skilful libretto, produced an important and influential opera couched in his own unmistakable idiom.

Eivind GROVEN (1901–1977)
Symphony No. 1 'Towards the Mountains'
Symphony No. 2 'The Midnight Hour'
Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra • Peter Szilvay

Many interwar Norwegian composers tried to create a new national music by combining elements of authentic folk music with new techniques. Eivind Groven was considered one of the most innovative composers in this quest, integrating the structure of folk dances from his rural upbringing into familiar formal principles. Both symphonies make use of techniques of so-called 'progressive transformation', which led fellow composer Arne Nordheim to declare: ‘While others made instrumentations of folk tunes, Groven created sounds, for example in his [two] symphonies which, in my opinion, are quite unique.’

Myroslav SKORYK (b. 1938)
Violin Concertos, Vol. 2
Nos. 5–9
Andrej Bielow, Violin
National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine • Volodymyr Sirenko

Myroslav Skoryk is one of Ukraine's leading composers and teachers, with a portfolio of works that include opera, a symphonic transcription of Paganini's Caprices, and a cycle of nine violin concertos written over a 45-year span (Volume 1 is on 8.574088). Concerto No. 5 utilises jazz elements and a vivid fugato, while Concerto No. 6 explores the use of sensual moods and provocative dance rhythms. Syncopation and lyricism suffice Concerto No. 7, while No. 9 is both touching and dramatic. Concerto No. 8 offers a representation of events in Chopin's life through quotations, in his opinion, with Skoryk's own distinctive musical voice.

Johann Simon MAYR (1763–1845)
La due duchesse
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Edited by Franz Hauk, Manfred Hößl and Diemut Hauk
Eun-Hye Choi, Tina Marie Herbert and Anna Feith, Sopranos
Young-Jun Ahn, Markus Schäfer, Jörn Lindemann and Harald Thum, Tenors
Samuel Hasselhorn, Baritone • Jaegyeong Jo, Niklas Mallmann and Andreas Mattersberger, Basses
Members of the Bavarian State Opera Chorus • Simon Mayr Chorus • Concerto de Bassus • Franz Hauk

As one of the leading operatic composers of his generation, Johann Simon Mayr nurtured a fascination with the chivalric stories of medieval England. La due duchesse, an opera semiseria with buffa elements, is set during the reign of the 10th-century King Edgar. Huntsmen’s and Knights’ choruses and troubadour-like songs give great vivacity to a score that is both lyrical and dramatic. Mayr’s compound of Viennese Classicism and Italianate melodic beauty, allied to his ambitious writing and a skilful libretto, produced an important and influential opera couched in his own unmistakable idiom.

Opéra–Comique Overtures
BOIELDIEU • DELIBES • GOUNOD • HALÉVY • HÉROLD
LECOCQ • MAILLART • MÉHUL • OFFENBACH
ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra
Michael Halász

Opéra-comique emerged in the 19th century as an intermediary between grand opera and burlesque operetta. This album charts its progression as a distinct genre, tracing the origins from Boieldieu and Méhul early in the century via the classic vitality of masters such as Hérold and Maillart into the operetta style of Offenbach and Lecocq. With innovative features, colourful orchestration, drama, wit and atmospheric writing, the operas proved very popular and these overtures encapsulate their immense vivacity and charm.
Michael DAUGHERTY (b. 1954)
This Land Sings
Inspired by the Life and Times of Woody Guthrie
Annika Socolofsky, Soprano • John Daugherty, Baritone
Dogs of Desire • David Alan Miller

In This Land Sings, GRAMMY Award-winning composer Michael Daugherty has created an original musical tribute to the singer-songwriter and political activist Woody Guthrie (1912–1967). Traveling the backroads of America from coast to coast with a guitar and harmonica, Woody Guthrie performed folk songs of love, wandering and social justice during the Great Depression and the Second World War. Daugherty has composed his own original songs and instrumental interludes that give haunting expression, ironic wit and contemporary relevance to political, social and environmental themes from Guthrie’s era. Under the baton of GRAMMY Award-winning conductor David Alan Miller, the Albany Symphony’s new music ensemble Dogs of Desire, joined by soprano Annika Socolofsky and baritone John Daugherty, give a poignant and rousing performance.

Click button to listen to an extract from
Graceland

Three American Violin Sonatas
HARBISON • SCHOENFELD • STUCKY

Bernstein: Canon for Aaron
Cho-Liang Lin, Violin • Jon Kimura Parker, Piano

The three sonatas on this recording were written at the behest of violinist Cho-Liang Lin, who worked closely with each composer at their premiere performance. Paul Schoenfeld’s Violin Sonata references literary influences and the composer’s past as well as his Jewish heritage in the work’s final Freilach or “joyous dance”. Steven Stucky acknowledged Debussy as the source of inspiration in his work, while the alchemy of John Harbison’s style creates music that is simultaneously abstract and narrative. Wryly introduced as “crazy modern music”, Bernstein’s brief Canon for Aaron was composed for Copland’s 70th birthday celebrations.

Click button to listen to an extract from
SCHOENFELD, P.: Violin Sonata: I. Vanishing Point

Roberto SIERRA (b. 1953)
Cantares ¹ • Triple Concierto ² • Loíza

Trio Arbós² • Cornell University Chorus and Glee Club³
Robert Isaacs, Music Director¹ • Xalapa Symphony Orchestra
Lanfranco Marcelletti

Roberto Sierra’s refined compositional voice is subtly combined with contemporary musical techniques and his Puerto Rican heritage in the three works recorded here. Cantares, commissioned by the Cornell University Chorus and Glee Club to celebrate the university’s sesquicentennial anniversary, evokes ancient Peruvian, Aztec and Afro Caribbean voices lost in time. The virtuoso Triple Concierto transforms the popular Caribbean rhythms of salsa, bolero and merengue into complex contemporary expressions, while the polyrhythmic layers of Loíza conjure a Puerto Rican town known for its strong African traditions.

Click button to listen to an extract from
Cantares: IV. Suerte lamentosa

French Piano Rarities
BOULEZ • DEBUSSY • MESSIAEN • RAVEL

Ralph van Raat, Piano

This album of French piano rarities features seldom-heard and recently discovered works by composers who had an influence on Pierre Boulez, as well as the premiere recording of Boulez’s Prélude, Toccata et Scherzo. This large-scale early work looks back on virtuosic Romantic music, while at the same time exploring the new compositional styles that Boulez would subsequently embrace. Among the rarities is a posthumously discovered piano study by Debussy, a reconstructed birdsong work by Messiaen, and a tiny masterpiece by Ravel found in a notebook.

Click button to listen to an extract from
MESSIAEN, O.: Des canyons aux étoiles... (‘From the Canyons to the Stars...’): IV. Le Cossyphe d’Heuglin (‘The White-browed Robin-Chat’)
Émile SAURET (1852–1920)
24 Études-Caprices, Op. 64
Vol. 4 – Nos. 20–24
Nazrin Rashidova, Violin

The final volume of the 24 Études-Caprices by the internationally renowned virtuoso Émile Sauret, crowns one of the most impressive but seldom performed bodies of solo violin writing in the entire canon. In the last five Études, once again played by Nazrin Rashidova on Sauret's own Stradivarius violin, the full range of his art can be heard, from double- and triple-stopping, to registral leaps, chordal and staccato techniques and exercises for absolute control of the bow. Of Volume 3 (8.573975) The Strad wrote: ‘Rashidova plays superbly’.

Click button to listen to an extract from
Étude-Caprice No. 22 in B minor

Kemal BELEVI (b. 1954)
Guitar Duos
Cyprian Rhapsodies Nos. 1–4 • Suite Chypre • Turkish Suite
Duo Tandem (Necati Emirzade, Mark Anderson, Guitars)

Kemal Belevi's music is steeped in the colours and atmosphere of the eastern Mediterranean, and his aim is ‘to create beautiful music’ based on melodies and rhythms that have been absorbed from the folk music of Greece, Turkey and the Middle East. Belevi's own arrangements of works such as the evocative Suite Chypre and the richly varied Cyprian Rhapsodies have significantly extended the repertoire for two guitars. The Duo Tandem are drawn towards this composer's skilful modernity and his celebration of traditional heritage reimagined within the sound world of the classical guitar.

Click button to listen to an extract from
Cyprian Rhapsody No. 2

Dmytro Choni Piano Laureate Recital
Winner, XIX Paloma O'Shea Santander International Piano Competition (2018)

Piano Recital
DEBUSSY • GINASTERA • LIGETI • PROKOFIEV

The Ukrainian pianist Dmytro Choni, winner of the 2018 Paloma O’Shea Santander International Piano Competition, has selected a programme that spans the 20th century. The first book of Debussy’s Images offers poetic evocation and virtuoso caprice, whereas Prokofiev’s Piano Sonata No. 6, completed in 1940, is the first of his ‘War Sonatas’, characteristically contrasting rhythmic vitality with rich lyricism. Ginastera, too, supplies vivid intensity in his Piano Sonata No. 1 suggesting the sound of the guitar, while Ligeti’s Étude is a Debussyan evocation of a rainbow.

Click button to listen to an extract from
Reflecting Shakespeare’s declaration that ‘all the world’s a stage’, Naxos is poised to significantly enhance its contribution to the platform for world music. Relaunched and breathing new life, the Naxos World label hits the ground running with recordings that represent both distinct cultures and adventures in fusion. Music lovers around the world can join in sharing the experience of contrasting sounds from unique cultures, aided by detailed and colourful introductory booklets that will inform both newcomers and aficionados alike.

Kenyan musician Fadhilee Itulya began his professional music career in 2008. He draws inspiration from a style of guitar music called Omutibo from the Luhya people of Western Kenya, which is driving, syncopated, and gets people to dance like nothing else. His music has elements of acoustic folk, pop/dance and world music – making for a melange of good time music that is grounded in culture, community and care for the environment. His debut album Kwetu (meaning ‘home’ in Swahili) features ten vibrant songs and also includes four traditional chants with Isukuti percussion, showcasing the roots percussion style of Western Kenya.

This album features folk songs from the Tajik and Russian ethnic minority groups living in the western and northwestern areas of Xinjiang, China. These folk songs have an earthy beauty that is theirs alone. Many of the Tajik songs featured here are accompanied by the Rewap – an ancient stringed instrument made from mulberry trunks. The sound is similar to that of an acoustic guitar, but the tone is brighter and more elastic. Many of the Russian songs feature the Bayan (a type of accordion) and the Balalaika.