



WILSON  
AUDIOPHILE  
Definitive Recording

Moussorgsky  
**PICTURES *at* an EXHIBITION**

Ginastera  
**SONATA No.1, Op. 22**



Pianist  
**HYPERION KNIGHT**



# MOUSSORGSKY

## PICTURES AT AN EXHIBITION

# GINASTERA

## SONATA No. 1, Op. 22

### HYPERION KNIGHT

### PIANIST

#### Side One

##### Moussorgsky

- Promenade (1:25)
- Gnomus (2:29)
- Promenade (0:55)
- Il Vecchio Castello (4:25)
- Promenade (0:29)
- Tuilleries (1:05)
- Bydlo (2:40)
- Promenade (0:46)
- Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells (1:12)
- Two Polish Jews; One Rich, the Other Poor (2:10)
- Limoges, the Market Place (1:27)
- Catacombs, Sepulchrum Romanum (1:15)
- Con Mortuis in Lingua Morta (1:43)

#### Side Two

##### Moussorgsky

- The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga) (3:10)
- The Great Gate of Kiev (4:41)

##### Ginastera

- I- Allegro marcato (4:30)
- II- Presto misterioso (2:38)
- III- Adagio molto appassionato (4:10)
- IV- Ruvido ed ostinato (2:53)

#### MOUSSORGSKY: Pictures at an Exhibition

In the annals of music there are a few remarkable instances where the works of lesser artists have inspired the most profound creations. The songs of Schubert often transcended the poetry which spawned them. Beethoven's greatest set of variations was based on a humble waltz by Diabelli.

In Pictures at an Exhibition, Moussorgsky, found the inspiration for his greatest instrumental work in the now-forgotten art of his friend Victor Hartmann. Hartmann's career was cut short prematurely, he died suddenly in 1873 at the age of 39, and most of the original paintings upon which Moussorgsky based his "Pictures" have been lost. Their friendship was rooted in a common search for a nationalistic art, one which drew its strength from the legacy of Russian folk lore and Russian history. Although Hartmann's talents may never have been fully realized, it is his "creative spirit" which seems to have driven Moussorgsky's imagination more than the individual works.

More than a musical illustration of the paintings, Moussorgsky's "Pictures" seems to find the human mythological element in each portrait and magnifies it beyond its original scope, giving the piece its fantastical and sometimes nightmarish quality. Thus, after the Promenade theme which serves to reflect Moussorgsky's feelings about the various paintings as he walks through the exhibit, originally the sketch of a wooden nutcracker with a distorted, conical face, is magically brought to life as a misshapen dwarf, or Gnome.

Il Vecchio Castello and Tuilleries were paintings of architectural and landscape masterpieces which had incidental human figures added to indicate their scale. In Moussorgsky's hands, the human figures became paramount, with the music of the old castle actually being the serenade of a Troubadour with his lute outside of the castle, and Tuilleries being a group of children quarreling after playing in the famous Parisian gardens.

In Bydlo, the ox cart, the incessant march of the ox is heard through the song of its driver, a deep Russian bass. The Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells is based on a costume-plate in which the shells contained human, not avian, occupants.

Both the Two Polish Jews; One Rich, the Other Poor and Limoges, the Market Place are street scenes. What is remarkable about Moussorgsky's sketches is the intensity of the relationships depicted. The tense interplay between the seemingly haughty, wealthy Pole and the beggar, and similarly between the gossiping women of Limoges, is heightened to grotesque proportions.

The Catacombs brings the listener into the grief experienced by Moussorgsky at Hartmann's death. "Why should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and creatures like Hartmann die?...There can and must be no consolation..." The painting depicted Hartmann himself examining the catacombs of Paris. The movement which follows, Con Mortuis in Lingua Morta, bears the following footnote: "A Latin text: 'speaking with the dead in a dead language.' Well may it be latin! The creative spirit of the departed Hartmann leads me to the skulls, calls me close to them and the skulls glow softly from within." It seems that Moussorgsky felt the guiding hand of Hartmann throughout the creative process: "Hartmann is boiling inside me...I can hardly manage to scribble it all down on paper."

The final two movements are probably the most fully Russian in character. Hartmann's painting of the Hut on Fowl's Legs is brought vividly to life as the hut first lurches, then soars through the Russian night air while the witch Baba Yaga grinds human bones for fuel. The Great Gate of Kiev was an architectural design by Hartmann which was never realized. In its grandeur, Moussorgsky envisions the chanting of priests, a religious processional, and his own elation in the final glorious return of the Promenade theme.

#### GINASTERA: Sonata No. 1 Op. 22

The early nationalist movements in music among nineteenth century European composers led to a surge in nationalist sentiments among composers on virtually every continent in the twentieth century. Latin American composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos and Carlos Chavez introduced the folk culture, songs and dances of their continent to their most serious works. The music of Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) can be roughly divided into two categories. The first includes works up until the Second String Quartet (1958) in which Argentine characteristics are clearly present. After 1958, Ginastera adopted a more international style, devoid of obvious folk elements.

While many of Ginastera's earliest works possessed what he termed an "objective" nationalism, in which folk elements were apparent to most listeners, the works from 1948-1954 were more "subjective" in that the Argentine characteristics are perceived more by the composer than by the listener. It was during this second, more subtly nationalistic period that Ginastera wrote his Piano Sonata No. 1 (1952). While each of the four movements contains uniquely Latin American elements, they are not immediately obvious, and are woven into a more abstract texture.

The first movement, Allegro marcato, has the broad, expansive feeling of the Argentine Pampas. Modeled after standard Sonata-Allegro form, it has a lovely pastoral second theme. The second movement, Presto misterioso, is a piece of night music not unlike the Musiques nocturnes from Bartok's Out of Doors Suite. The sounds of buzzing insects are heard, as variously musical bands of strumming guitarists are heard entering into the scene, as well as chirping crickets.

The third movement, Adagio molto appassionato, again utilizes the effect of a guitar, only this time the guitar is tuning. The arpeggiated chord which forms the main theme is based on the tuning of a twelve string guitar. The final movement, Ruvido ed ostinato, is an Argentine dance,

the Malambo. The dance was typically the province of the cowboy, or gaucho, who used the syncopated rhythms in a tap-dancing contest to woo a woman.

Mr. Ginastera's music continues to enjoy wide popularity, a fitting tribute to his art and to his humanity.

HYPERION KNIGHT was born in Berkeley, California and began musical studies at the age of four. He made his performing debut at the age of 14, performing the Beethoven G Major concerto with the orchestra of College of Marin.

Mr. Knight's advanced musical training began at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studied piano with Paul Hersh and Nathan Schwartz, graduating at age 19. Further studies took him to the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he won the Arthur Loesser award upon graduation, receiving a Master's and Doctor of Musical Arts degree at the age of 22, under the instruction of Eunice Podis.

In 1986, Mr. Knight was a finalist in several major competitions, including the Dealy awards, Esther Wilbur Barnes, and Buffalo Philharmonic competitions. He was the winner of the Stravinsky prize at the 1986 International Stravinsky Awards. In 1987, he was also the winner of the Ohio State auditions of the National Federation of Music Clubs, and a finalist in the William C. Byrd competition. Mr. Knight recently was a finalist in 1989 Mu Phi Epsilon International Competition, and the Simone Belsky Awards competition.

An enthusiast for the great performers of the past, Mr. Knight has joined the critical staff of The Absolute Sound magazine, and writes a column devoted to historical recordings and the recognition of the great artists of this century. He has recorded works by Beethoven and Stravinsky on the Wilson Audio label.

Hyperion Knight appears regularly in concerto and recital appearances throughout the midwest. Recent appearances include performances with the Cleveland Heights and Suburban Symphony orchestras, as well as the Lakeside and Ashabula Symphony orchestras. He has been a guest artist for the Arts Alive program, and appeared in recital at the Cleveland Music School Settlement and the Cleveland Jewish Community Center, and in concerto with the Cleveland Philharmonic orchestra.

#### Technical / Listening Notes

The recorded perspective of the piano in this recording is close... As though the 9' Hamburg Steinway is being played for you in your living room. Of course the actual recording was not made in a living room! Instead, the great room at Lucasfilm's Skywalker Ranch, with its incredibly low noise floor and fully adjustable acoustics, was used. To capture a clean, dynamic and harmonically correct piano presentation, a pair of Sennheiser MKH-20 Omni microphones were employed. The microphones' signal were amplified by two superb pure class-A microphone preamps custom-built for Wilson Audio by John Curt. MIT cable carried the balanced line level signal to Wilson Audio's Ultramaster™ 30 ips analog recorder. Subsequent digital master tapes were made through the Pygmy A/D converter on a Panasonic SV-3700. Playback reference monitoring was performed on Wilson Audio WATT II Pupiles, driven by a Spectral DMA-50 amplifier through MIT CXT Terminator cables.

Executive Producer: Sheryl Lee Wilson  
Musical Producers: Bruce Leek  
Terry Budge

Editing: Bruce Leek  
Technical Direction: David A. Wilson  
Recording Engineering: David A. Wilson  
Studio Manager: Bob Edwards - Lucasfilm  
Cover Art: Robbi Wesson  
Photographs: Bishop Photographics  
Graphic Design: O'Toole Design Office  
Analog Mastering: The Mastering Lab  
Digital Mastering: Bruce Leek  
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## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

**PRODUCED BY:** Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC

**ORIGINAL RECORDING ENGINEER:** David A. Wilson

**PROJECT MANAGER:** Daryl C. Wilson

**ANALOG TO HIGH DEFINITION DIGITAL TRANSFER:**  
Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

**TRANSFER EDITING:** Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

**SONIC EVALUATION:** David A. Wilson, Sheryl Lee Wilson, Daryl C. Wilson

## **TECHNICAL NOTES:**

Description of equipment and processes used for Master Tape transfers in  
Dave Wilson's Music Room:

**BRUCE BROWN FLEW FROM SEATTLE TO PROVO TO WORK HAND-IN-HAND WITH DAVE AND DARYL WILSON. EACH MASTER TAPE WAS INSPECTED, CLEANED, AND TREATED WITH LAST #9 AND #10 PRESERVATIVES. ALL OF THE MASTER TAPES WERE BAKED TO REFORMULATE THE BINDING. THIS WAS DONE IN AN INCUBATOR AT 135 DEGREES AND THEN THEY WERE LEFT TO COOL BACK DOWN TO ROOM TEMPERATURE. ALL SPLICES WERE INSPECTED AND REPAIRED, IF NECESSARY.**

**EACH TRANSFER WAS EXECUTED ON THE ULTRAMASTER, A ONE-OF-A-KIND STUDER A80 DESIGNED AND BUILT BY JOHN CURL WITH CUSTOM ELECTRONICS.**

**EACH MASTER TAPE WAS STORED BY WILSON AUDIOPHILE "TAILS-OUT" IN WHICH PUGET SOUND STUDIOS DID A LIBRARY WIND TO THE TAKE-UP**

REEL. ALL LEVELS WERE SET ACCORDING TO INCLUDED EQ SHEETS AND EACH 1 KHZ TONE WAS FURTHER SET AT PRECISELY 1 KHZ, VIA A CUSTOM VARI-SPEED ADJUSTMENT. THIS PROVIDED THE EXACT SPEED THE MASTER TAPES WERE RECORDED AT.

A TOTAL OF FIVE DIFFERENT ANALOG-TO-DIGITAL CONVERTERS WERE USED TO PROVIDE SAMPLES FOR THE WILSONS TO EVALUATE. ULTIMATELY AN EMM LABS ADC-8 MK IV, CUSTOM MODIFIED BY ANDREAS KOCH, WAS CHOSEN BY DAVE AND DARYL WILSON FOR THE TRANSFERS FROM THE ULTRAMASTER USING THE ORIGINAL MASTER TAPES INTO A SONOMA DSD WORKSTATION FOR CAPTURE AND EDITING. MONITORING FROM THE SONOMA DSD WORKSTATION WAS ROUTED THROUGH A MODIFIED PLAYBACK DESIGNS MPS-5 VIA USB-X WITH LIGHT HARMONIC USB CABLE. ALL DSD FILES WERE TRANSFERRED INTO A MERGING TECHNOLOGIES PYRAMIX DSD/DXD MASSCORE WORKSTATION FOR SAMPLE RATE CONVERSION, FORMAT CONVERSION, AND META-DATA TAGGING. THE PYRAMIX HEPTA FILTER WAS USED FOR CONVERSION TO PCM. FILES WERE THEN LISTENED TO FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE.

Description of the Equipment used in the Provo, Utah "Wilson Music Room" that Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC put to use for Sonic Evaluation:

**SPEAKERS:** WILSON AUDIO ALEXANDRIA XLF, TWO THOR'S HAMMERS  
**ELECTRONICS:** APPLE MAC MINI, AMARRA & AUDIRVANA PLUS, WEISS  
INT 202, AUDIO RESEARCH DAC8, VTL 7.5 MK3 PRE-AMP, VTL  
SIEGFRIED MK2 AMPLIFIERS, 2 WILSON AUDIO W.A.T.C.H.  
CONTROLLERS

**CABLES:** AUDIOQUEST FIREWIRE, TRANSPARENT OPUS

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