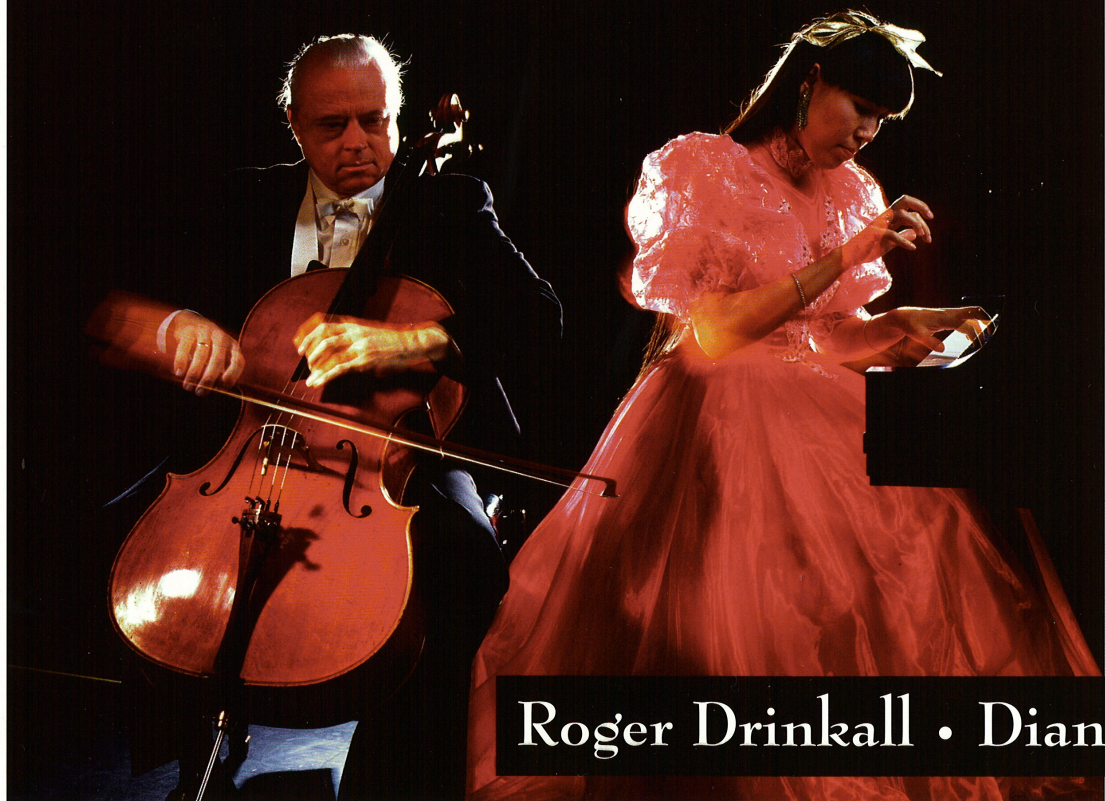




WILSON
AUDIOPHILE
Definitive Recording

20TH Century
Masterpieces
for Piano & Cello



Roger Drinkall • Dian Baker Duo

W-9230

20TH Century Masterpieces for Piano & Cello

1. Pampeana # 2 (Ginastera) (9:25)
2. Sonata in D (Debussy)
 - I. Prologue (4:30)
 - II. Serenade (3:40)
 - III. Finale (3:55)
 (Total 20:50)
3. Vocalise op. 34 # 14 (Rachmaninoff) (5:58)
4. Sonata op. 6 (Barber)
 - I. Allegro ma non troppo (7:58)
 - II. Adagio-Presto-di nuovo Adagio (4:16)
 - III. Allegro appassionato (5:48)
 (Total 23:20)
5. Six Studies in English Folk-Song (Vaughan Williams)
 - I. (1:32)
 - II. (1:21)
 - III. (1:27)
 - IV. (1:33)
 - V. (1:27)
 - VI. (1:09)
 (Total 7:49)

DRINKALL-BAKER DUO

Roger Drinkall and Dian Baker have emerged as one of America's leading duos. With an extensive repertoire that stretches from Beethoven, Chopin and Saint-Saens to Kodaly and Weill, they render chamber music and orchestral concert with equal eloquence and artistry. They have played hundreds of concerts worldwide including performances in Europe, Central and South America, Asia, the Middle East and the Far East as well as many cities in the United States.

The duo's performances are characterized by a unique and exquisite blending of two gifted solo artists that result in a communion of spirit and highest artistic interpretation. Their entire repertoire is played from memory. This cultivated familiarity facilitates a movement beyond technical security and allows them to render their pieces with added intimacy, elegance and emotion. *The New Straits Times of Malaysia* noted, "They played with an intensity and passion that one rarely sees in classical musicians," and "At times, both piano and cello seemed to merge to become a single entity."

Both members of the duo have also established international reputations of their own. Violoncellist Roger Drinkall has graced the world's concert stages for nearly three decades performing hundreds of concerts as soloist and recitalist in over thirty countries. He has recorded extensively for several European and Asian networks including a television special for China. Dian Baker has quickly established herself as an unusually versatile and consummate artist. By age fifteen, she had captured national awards, given the premiere of the Malcolm Arnold Violin Concerto, and made her solo piano debut with the Utah Symphony. As a pianist she has performed in both solo and chamber concert settings around the world.

As evidence of their growing reputation a number of works have been written expressly for the duo. In addition, they recently represented the United States in an International Arts Festival in Venezuela, sponsored by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and USIA. The Drinkall-Baker Duo has performed for numerous radio and TV stations, most recently for NHK Japan. They have recorded a number of compact discs on the Klavier, Pyramid and Wilson Audio labels.

They first performed together when Baker substituted for one of her instructors who had been scheduled to play with Drinkall. The meeting was serendipitous and not long afterwards the two added marriage to their musical collaboration. They currently combine their concertizing with teaching as faculty artists at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

THE MASTERPIECES

Ginastera (1916-1983) began private music lessons at age seven, and at the age of twelve attended the Williams Conservatory of Buenos Aires. In 1936 he entered the National Conservatory of Music, graduating two years later with highest honors in composition and a professor's diploma. Ginastera composed a number of large works during his years at the Conservatory, which he later destroyed. His first acknowledged compositions were the *Danzas Argentinas* for piano, and the ballet *Panambi*, based on a legend of the Guarany Indians of Northern Argentina, both composed in 1937. These first works reflect the nationalistic character of much of Ginastera's oeuvre.

In 1947, Ginastera composed the first of a group of three pieces under the generic title *Pampeana*. *Pampeana No. 1*, a Rhapsody for violin and piano (1947), *Pampeana No. 2*, a Rhapsody for cello and piano (1950), and *Pampeana No. 3*, "Symphonic Pastoral in three movements" (1953) were all written to convey Ginastera's love for the pampa (Argentine countryside). In *Pampeana No. 2*, one can hear the immensity of the pampa in the dark, dense chordal sections, and the wild, lawless life of the gauchos (cowboys) in the dashing virtuosity of the cello cadenzas. These sections are juxtaposed with the mysterious and somber tranquility of the slow sections. The cello is used soloistically in the *Pampeana*, while the piano serves a percussively rhythmic and somewhat accompanimental role throughout.

Debussy's *Sonata in D* for Cello and Piano (1915) was one of the last pieces he wrote before his death from cancer in 1918. As Debussy was fighting for his life, the rest of Paris was under siege by the Germans in World War I. Early in 1915, after a year of latency due in part to the atrocities of war, Debussy again began to compose: "I have come to the conclusion that, all things considered, it would be cowardice on my part to join the ranks of the disabled, and spend my time dwelling on the atrocities that have been committed, without reacting against them by creating, to the best of my ability, a little of that beauty which the enemy is attacking with such fury." (Claude Debussy, in a letter to Robert Godet, cited in *Claude Debussy: His Life and Works*, 1933, Leon Vallas, page 255.) This same year Debussy began the project of writing six sonatas for various instruments, his first venture into the realm of chamber music since his First String Quartet in 1893.

The first sonata of this group of six was the *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1915). Debussy wrote the second *Sonata* for flute, viola and harp (1915), and the third *Sonata* for violin and piano in 1917, the last completed work before his death. Debussy had planned a fourth sonata for oboe, horn, and clarinet, but unfortunately he never finished the project. Debussy's Cello Sonata partakes of both a classical and a distinctly French heritage. Debussy said he liked "its proportions and its form, which is almost classical in the true sense of the word." The sonata reflects Debussy's fascination with the Oriental pentatonic scale, the whole tone scale, and the use of ancient and medieval modal harmony.

Debussy contemplated calling the cello sonata "Pierrot Fache" avec la lune," partially to evoke the character of old Italian comedy. The Serenade, in particular, revives the Harlequin spirit found in some of Debussy's earlier works. The banter of almost continuous pizzicati from the cello sounds at times like a plucked guitar, at times like a shimmering tambourine. The Prologue, with its more solemn character, is reminiscent of Debussy's earlier work for piano.

It is difficult to describe the beauty and poignancy of Rachmaninoff's *Vocalise* in words. Perhaps that is why the composer himself left the work textless, even though it was included in a cycle of fourteen songs, thirteen of which have texts. The emotions evoked by this song come from a place deeper than words, from the very depths of one's being.

Rachmaninoff's *Vocalise* was composed in 1915, as the last song in his cycle of Fourteen Songs, Op. 34, for voice and piano. The *Vocalise* reflects Rachmaninoff's gift for broad, rhapsodic sweeping melodic lines, expansive sonorities, and resonant harmonies. The *Vocalise* was premiered by its dedicatee, Antonine Nezhdanova, with Rachmaninoff at the piano, on the sixth Koussevitsky Symphony concert, January 24, 1916. The premiere of the *Vocalise* was such a success that Rachmaninoff arranged it for orchestra. The orchestra version was premiered in 1920 at a New York music festival. As a witness to the ever-growing popularity of the *Vocalise*, it has since been arranged for almost every instrumental combination imaginable: for soprano and orchestra, by the composer; as "A Song without Words" orchestrated by Sir Henry Wood; for soprano and orchestra, by Dubensky; for violin and orchestra; for string orchestra by Dubensky; transcribed for violin and piano by Michel Press; transcribed twice for cello and piano by both Leonard Rose and A. Brandoukoff; transcribed for violin, cello, and for piano by Jules Conus; piano solo transcribed by Alan Richardson.

Samuel Barber's Cello *Sonata Op. 6* was begun in the summer of 1932 and completed in December of 1932. Dedicated to Rosario Scalero, Barber's teacher and mentor at the Curtis Institute of Music, the sonata was Barber's last work completed under Scalero's tutelage. The work officially premiered at a League of Composers Concert on March 5, 1933, with Orlando Cole, cello, and Barber at the piano.

The dramatic intensity of *Sonata Op. 6* is reminiscent of Brahms' Cello Sonata in F major Op. 99 and reflects Barber's penchant for Neo-Romanticism. The second movement combines the inner slow and scherzo movement into one, juxtaposing the beautiful, elegiac melody of the Adagio with a rapid-fire Presto composed predominately of triplets, eventually returning to the Adagio. The third movement begins with a Chopinesque piano solo, whose left-hand arpeggios create a lush backdrop for the passionate first theme. The entire movement is composed as a set of continually developing variations on a theme, with more capricious material.

In contrast to Stravinsky's neo-classicism and the "Gebruchsmusik" of Hindemith, Barber always wrote for himself, to express his feelings: "Skyscrapers, subways, and train lights play no part in the music I write. Neither am I at all concerned with the musical values inherent in geometric celebrations. My aim is to write good music that will be comprehensible to as many people as possible, instead of music heard only by small, snobbish musical societies in large cities. Radio makes this aim entirely possible of achievement. The universal basis of artistic spiritual communication by means of art is through the emotions." (Samuel Barber, cited in *Samuel Barber: The Composer and His Music*, 1992, by Barbara Heyman, page 130).

The first performance of *Six Studies in English Folk-Song* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, was given in 1926 at the Scala Theater's English Folk Dance Society Festival, with May Mukle, cello, and Ann Mukle, piano. According to Michael Kennedy, in *The Works of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, Vaughan Williams based the six short pieces on the following six folk songs, respectively: Springtime of the Year, Spurn Point, VanDieman's Land, She Borrowed Some of Her Mother's Gold, The Lady and the Dragon, and As I Walked over London Bridge.

Vaughan Williams received his classical music education at Trinity College in Cambridge, and at the Royal Conservatory of Music in London. He also studied composition with Max Bruch in Berlin for two years. Vaughan Williams' unique style evolved from his love for English folk songs. He joined the Folk Song Society in 1904, and three years later composed his Norfolk Rhapsody for orchestra, based on several folk songs which he had collected. This work, along with Gustav Holst's *Somerset Rhapsody* (1934) established a renaissance of nationalistic English music in the twentieth century.

The *Six Studies in English Folk-Song* represent the style and the majority of Vaughan Williams' work, which is not an exact transcription of folk songs; instead, Vaughan Williams maintains the integrity of the original melody, surrounding it with new accompanimental figures and harmonies to produce a new work. The *Six Studies* are haunting in their simplicity, although cello and piano take turns presenting the melody, there is not the complex interplay between parts that one finds in a duo sonata. Frequently, the piano takes a more accompanimental role. Vaughan Williams' *Six Studies* reflects the seemingly incongruous nature of folk songs, a blend of tradition and improvisation. With the *Six Studies in English Folk-Song*, Vaughan Williams weaves cello and piano together in a new and colorful tapestry which speaks of times long ago, when singers became the voice of the people, expressing their fears and hopes in songs passed on from generation to generation.

—Natassja Olsen

TECHNICAL NOTES

This recording took place in December 1992 at Maurice Abravanel Hall in Salt Lake City, Utah. The hall is noted for its clean acoustics, linear reverberation, and mid-range focus. As in most other Wilson Audio chamber and solo piano recordings, the perspective is close . . . as though the instruments are performing in your listening room.

The piano is a nine-foot Falcone — an instrument of unusual beauty in its harmonic richness as well as its left hand power. A spaced pair of omni-directional Schoeps microphones were used. This configuration yields a superbly accurate presentation of harmonics, timbres, and dynamics. The cello is an example of the Italian Luthier Pressenda, crafted in 1830, in Tyro. The cello bows are the work of William Salchow of New York.

When listening to this recording, the cello is positioned in front of the piano. The cello is to the right of center, facing diagonally across the soundstage. The image of the cello is rather large, and moves in the soundstage as the cellist plays the instrument. This is a normal consequence of the spaced omni configuration, as is the recording's naturally rich harmonic structure. The microphone preamps, designed and built by John Curl, are sophisticated, fully class A, direct-coupled units.

The master tape was recorded on the Ultramaster™, Wilson Audio's exclusive 30 ips analog recorder. This instrument, designed and built by John Curl, is fully direct-coupled, and exhibits a record/playback frequency bandwidth of over 45 KHz. 3M 996 mastering tape was used. Location monitoring was on Wilson WATT III/Puppy II precision loudspeakers powered by a Spectral DMA-80 amplifier. At Wilson Audio, master tapes, and reference ladders were evaluated on both the WATT/Puppy and on the WAMM series VII, powered by a variety of amplifiers including Mark Levinson, Audio Research, Krell, Spectral, Jadis, Rowland and Audio Note. Excellent compatibility was realized with all of these designs.

This recording was made and mastered using the multi-patented CVT (Constant Velocity Transmission) technologies provided under license to Wilson Audio Specialties by MIT. The use of these technologies preserves details in the recording and mastering process that result in a record or CD with increased clarity and transparency. This ensures a more natural and lifelike representation of the original event. CVT and MIT are registered trademarks of Music Interface Technologies of Auburn, California. Both analog and digital mastering were performed at Wilson Audio's mastering facilities in Provo, Utah.

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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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