

Moritz
MOSZKOWSKI

Works for Violin and Piano

Five Spanish Dances • Four Pieces • Suite for Two Violins

Nazrin Rashidova, Violin • Daniel Grimwood, Piano



Moritz Moszkowski (1854-1925)

Works for Violin and Piano

In April 1925, the pianist Francesco Berger wrote in the *Monthly Musical Record*: 'Moszkowski dead! So painful an announcement has not stricken the entire musical world since the deaths of Chopin, Rubinstein, and Liszt, of whom he was the worthy successor.' Whilst Moszkowski's fame today, a century later, rests almost entirely on a single opus – the *Spanish Dances, Op. 12* – he enjoyed a considerable international reputation as a composer and pianist during his lifetime. This disc draws together some of his best-loved works, often in transcription by noted violinists, along with his own original compositions for the instrument.

Born in Breslau (now Wrocław) in 1854, Moszkowski came from a wealthy Jewish family of Polish descent, and studied in both Dresden and in Berlin. He joined the staff of Theodore Kullak's Neue Akademie der Tonkunst in Berlin (where he had studied himself with Kullak) when he was just seventeen years old, and taught there for over twenty-five years. Following a very successful debut concert in 1873, he was soon held in high regard as a virtuoso, particularly as an interpreter of Chopin – earning high praise from Franz Liszt, amongst others. He was also a good violinist, sometimes playing with the Akademie's orchestra. However, in the 1880s, Moszkowski began to suffer from a nervous condition which brought an end to his career as a performer, and he directed his energies at composition instead. His earliest pieces had been published in the mid-1870s; and these were now followed by a substantial number of works, mostly for chamber performance. Among a handful of larger-scale works is an opera, *Boabdil*, a *Violin Concerto*, and the symphonic poem *Jeanne d'Arc*, which was enthusiastically received across Europe.

The majority of the compositions featured on this disc were published between 1876 and 1890, and it is a mark of the success of Moszkowski's music that it was arranged for countless different ensembles and solo instruments, in order to make it available to as many keen amateurs as possible. However, in some cases, leading players of the day also made transcriptions as virtuosic showpieces –

and this was most certainly the intention of French violinist Emile Sauret (1852-1920) in his arrangement of the *Spanish Dances, Op. 12*. These lively, good-natured piano duets are given a complete overhaul by Sauret, a friend of the composer, who added all manner of impressive elaborations: double and triple stopping, leaps up and down the instrument, pizzicato and harmonic effects, and whizzing passagework to embellish the melodies, particularly in the first dance. Whilst Sauret also respects the rather more restrained, lyrical nature of the second and third dances, the final two are adjusted to suit his highly accomplished, flamboyant style.

The *Ballade* and *Bolero* constitute *Zwei Concertstücke, Op. 16* for piano and violin, published in 1878; and each piece bears a dedication to one of Moszkowski's colleagues. The *Ballade* is dedicated to Gustav Hille, a violinist and composer who enjoyed particular success in America; the *Bolero* to Marianne Stresow, a talented violinist and wife of Philipp Scharwenka, who had been one of Moszkowski's fellow students during his study with Kullak in Berlin. There is a sense in both pieces that Moszkowski regarded the violin primarily as a lyrical instrument – indeed, in the *Bolero* the principal melody is sufficiently low and rich in tone that it almost seems more suited to a viola. Yet the composer's employment of harmonics, triple stopping and bouncing *spiccato* bowing is surely indicative of his own practical experience as a player.

The *Concertstücke* are the earliest of three original works for duo given here, along with the *Quatre Morceaux, Op. 82* and a *Suite for two violins, Op. 71*, both completed in the first decade of the twentieth century. The *Suite* is a highly dramatic work, with greater connectivity between movements than the title might imply (for example, the severe, chordal opening of the first movement is recalled directly in the second). The balance between players is particularly fascinating, with Moszkowski employing the violinists sometimes in the manner of a string quartet in passages laden with double

stops; and at other points, more in the manner of a piano trio. The keyboard writing bears no small resemblance to Mendelssohn, with rippling arpeggios and impassioned chordal outbursts in the first movement, long-breathed melodies in the third, and bouncing staccato quavers in the fourth. The *Quatre Morceaux*, by contrast, seem quite distinct from each other, and since each bears a dedication to a different violinist, it is tempting to think that Moszkowski tailored each number to its intended recipient (perhaps poking a little fun along the way!). *Les Nymphes*, for the French player Pierre Sechiari, alternates an unsettled lyrical melody in F minor with playful, tripping 'Capriccioso' passages. The *Caprice* begins for violin alone in a clear imitation of Bach, allowing for some rather more romantic developments before returning to a piano-accompanied Baroque pastiche – this was for the Swiss violinist Alberto Bachmann, the music not only allowing for a sly pun on Bachmann's name, but perhaps also referring to his scholarly proclivities, since he published a detailed encyclopedia, *Le Violon*, in 1906. The charmingly lyrical *Mélodie* was dedicated to Israel Mendels, whilst the folk-influenced, rhythmically charged *Humoresque* was for the Romanian violinist, teacher, conductor and composer, George Enescu.

We conclude with three further arrangements, each based upon a single piano number from a larger collection: *Etincelles, Op. 36, No. 6* (1886), *Guitare, Op. 45, No. 2* (1888) and *Serenata, Op. 15, No. 1* (c.1877). Jascha Heifetz (1901-1987) transforms the relatively lengthy 'Sparks' for solo piano into a more compact, brilliantly light and twinkling showpiece, in which the violin and piano take it in turns to scamper up and down the scale, leaping around the stave and snapping through staccato quaver passages. Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908) published his arrangement of *Guitare* just two years after Moszkowski had issued the piano original, and he assigns the singing melody of this piece to the violin whilst the piano strums away below it, occasionally with the violinist's help. Finally,

Fabian Rehfeld (1842-1920), a highly-regarded Berlin-based violinist, provides a faithful arrangement of the piano *Serenata*, a work he also prepared in versions for cello and piano, string quartet, and even orchestra. This is a gentle, melodic piece, another of Moszkowski's fine, lyrical melodies spun over a simple accompaniment.

In 1897, following notable honorary appointments and awards from England and Berlin, Moszkowski moved to Paris, having married the sister of composer Cécile Chaminade. He was much in demand as a teacher – his pupils included Wanda Landowska, Joaquín Turina and Thomas Beecham – and made a considerable fortune from his hugely popular salon compositions. However, as musical tastes changed, and Moszkowski's popularity waned, his financial security also suffered. He lost the remainder of his money in the First World War and his health was in decline. It is a mark of the high esteem in which Moszkowski was held by fellow musicians that, in 1919, when his circumstances became known to the musical community at large, an appeal for funds yielded not only private donations and a collection by the magazine *Musical America*, but also a benefit concert in Carnegie Hall featuring fifteen of the most prominent pianists of the day, including Wilhelm Backhaus, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Percy Grainger, Harold Bauer, Alfredo Casella, and Walter Damrosch. These efforts raised \$20,000 for Moszkowski.

By the time the composer died in 1925, much of his music was beginning to fade from the memories of those who had once played it so enthusiastically. Yet Berger's impassioned eulogy was not an exaggeration: at the turn of the twentieth century, Moszkowski was considered 'the most successful salon composer of the present day', and feted as the natural successor to Chopin. Through arrangements, at least, his music continues to inspire, impress, and entertain.

Katy Hamilton

Nazrin Rashidova



Photo: Omur Black

The Azerbaijani-born British violin virtuoso, soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and orchestral director, made her solo début at the age of three in Baku and was awarded a Gold Medal by the Cairo Opera House for an exceptional violin recital three years later. Establishing FeMusa in 2008, Britain's first female chamber orchestra in sixty years, is merely the latest in a series of achievements. She entered the Royal Academy of Music in London at the age of fifteen, where she had the privilege to play on a rare collection of violins by Antonio Stradivari. She studied with Erich Gruenberg, Felix Andrievsky and Lydia Mordkovitch. A prizewinner in several international competitions, she has appeared on international television and radio, played for royalty and other dignitaries, and has also performed in the United States,

Japan, Europe and the Middle East. Her début recording for Naxos of Godowsky's music for violin and piano (8.573058) was released in 2013 and acclaimed by *The Strad* and *Gramophone* magazines. She plays the 1737 'Turkish' violin by Guarneri del Gesù, kindly loaned to her by Beare Violins Ltd., and a violin after G.B. Guadagnini, Milan, 1753 'Nazrin' by David Rattray.

www.nazrin.co.uk

Daniel Grimwood

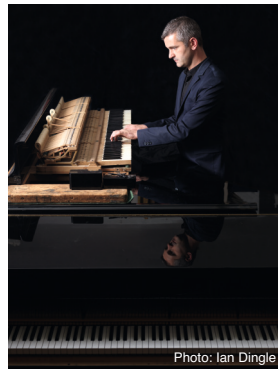


Photo: Ian Dingle

With a repertoire ranging from Elizabethan Virginal music to composers of the modern day, Daniel Grimwood is internationally renowned for his versatility and exceptional talent. His musical interest started as a three-year-old playing the neighbour's piano and from the age of seven he was performing in front of audiences. He was taught by Graham Fitch, Vladimir Ovchinnikov and Peter Feuchtwanger. His career has taken him across the globe, performing in many of the world's most prestigious venues and at major festivals. Although primarily a pianist, he is frequently to be found performing on the harpsichord, organ, viola, or composing at his desk. His discs of Liszt and Chopin, performed on an 1851 Erard piano, received a unanimous chorus of praise from the press: the Liszt album was *Daily Telegraph* CD of the week and Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine. He is the first artist to record on the new Edition Peters Sounds label, whose recently released complete Fauré *Nocturnes* had an excellent reception in *The Sunday Times*.

www.danielgrimwood.co.uk

Moritz Moszkowski enjoyed a considerable international reputation as a composer and pianist and was fêted as the natural successor to Chopin. It is a mark of his music's success that it was arranged for countless ensembles and solo instruments. French violinist Émile Sauret transformed the popular *Spanish Dances* into virtuoso showpieces filled with all manner of impressive elaborations, Jascha Heifetz similarly turning *Etincelles* or 'Sparks' into something brilliantly light and twinkling. The interaction of two violins makes the *Suite* highly dramatic, contrasting with the fine lyrical melody of Moszkowski's *Serenata*.

Moritz MOSZKOWSKI

(1854-1925)

Five Spanish Dances (arr. Émile Sauret) (c.1876/79)

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|-----------------------------|------|
| ❶ No. 1 Allegro brioso | 2:17 |
| ❷ No. 2 Moderato | 4:06 |
| ❸ No. 3 Con moto | 3:03 |
| ❹ No. 4 Allegro comodo | 3:16 |
| ❺ No. 5 Bolero: Con spirito | 2:59 |

Four Pieces, Op. 82 (1909) 18:29

- | | |
|---|------|
| ❻ No. 1 Les Nymphes: Allegro leggiero | 4:57 |
| ❼ No. 2 Caprice: Allegretto | 3:10 |
| ❽ No. 3 Mélodie: Moderato | 5:32 |
| ❾ No. 4 Humoresque: Allegro con spirito | 4:50 |

Zwei Concertstücke, Op. 16 (1878) 19:19

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| ❿ Ballade: Andante con moto | 11:59 |
| ⓫ Bolero: Allegro spiritoso | 7:20 |

Suite for two violins, Op. 71 (1903) 17:47

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|------------------------|------|
| ❿ I. Allegro energico | 4:49 |
| ⓫ II. Allegro moderato | 4:33 |
| ⓫ III. Lento assai | 3:49 |
| ⓫ IV. Molto vivace | 4:36 |

❿ Etincelles, Op. 36, No. 6 (transcr. Jascha Heifetz): Allegro scherzando (1886/?) 1:33

⓫ Guitarre, Op. 45, No. 2 (transcr. Pablo de Sarasate): Allegro comodo (1888/90) 3:26

⓫ Serenata (arr. Fabian Rehfeld): Andante grazioso (c.1877/83) 2:13

Nazrin Rashidova, Violins • Daniel Grimwood, Piano

Recorded in Wyastone Concert Hall, Monmouth, UK, on 24th and 25th October, 2014, and on 20th January, 2015

Producer and editor: Andrew Walton (K&A Productions Ltd.) • Engineer: Mike Clements

Publishers: Carl Simon (tracks 1-5); Edition Peters (tracks 6-9, 12-15, 17); unknown (tracks 10, 11, 18);

Carl Fischer (track 16) • Booklet notes: Katy Hamilton • Cover photo: Mark Whitehouse