

The logo for SOMM RECORDINGS, featuring the word "SOMM" in a large, bold, serif font above the word "RECORDINGS" in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a circular emblem containing a stylized, dark silhouette of a tree or plant.

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The background of the entire cover is a textured, painterly illustration. It depicts a gnarled, ancient-looking tree with dark, twisted branches and dense green foliage, leaning slightly to the right. The tree stands on a rocky, uneven ground. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains under a vast, dramatic sky with warm, golden, and orange hues, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall style is reminiscent of a classical oil painting.

Legends of Cyprus: Othello

Borenstein
Coleridge-Taylor
Dvořák
Schubert

*Cyprus
Symphony
Orchestra*

Nimrod Borenstein

Personal Reflections from Nimrod Borenstein

It has been a great pleasure to select the works featured on this album inspired by Cyprus and the legend of Othello and subsequently to record them with the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra. This album was conceived very much as a “concert programme”. Indeed, the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra and I performed the programme in concert only a few days after completing our recording sessions.

I selected these works because I admire both the music and the composers, and I felt that the pieces would complement one another beautifully. Whilst being very different in style, they all share an important feature: they are works by composers with a gift for writing beautiful melodies.

I particularly enjoyed exploring two works – Coleridge-Taylor’s *Othello* Suite and Dvořák’s *Othello* Overture – inspired by Shakespeare, a subject I hold especially dear, having composed and subsequently recorded, just a year earlier, my own *Shakespeare Songs* for soprano and orchestra. On this album, one can discover Dvořák’s exploration of *Othello* in a single, complex and compelling movement, alongside Coleridge-Taylor’s five little theatrical gems.

Schubert, meanwhile, is, as always, magical in his extraordinary gift for contrast and otherworldly melodies. The three pieces chosen from the incidental music to *Rosamunde*, *Princess of Cyprus* follow a classic fast–slow–fast design, together almost forming a miniature symphonic structure. The opening Overture is broad and imposing, almost like the first movement of a symphony. By contrast, the Entr’acte No.3 is deeply lyrical and poetic, with melodies that seem to flow with effortless naturalness. Finally, Ballet No.2 is full of charm and vitality, sending the listener away smiling.

My own piece, and my own tribute to the culture of Cyprus – *Legends of Cyprus* – is one of many single-movement works I have written over the years. These may be for solo instruments, for chamber ensemble, for choir, or for orchestra, as here, and they usually range from five to ten minutes in duration. However, I never treat them as “small” or “short” pieces. For me, the stature of these works is akin perhaps to dimension in visual art, where the power of a painting does not depend on its size, or similar perhaps to length in literature: they are what the short story is to the novel.

Nimrod Borenstein © 2026

Legends of Cyprus: Othello

Cyprus is the third largest and most easterly of the half-dozen or so large islands in the Mediterranean Sea. The country's location and historic juxtaposition of cultures have provided the background for long-standing enmities and warring factions – fictional and factual – for centuries. The island's influence on such works as Shakespeare's *Othello* or Helmina von Chézy's (1783–1856) play *Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus* has been profound, bringing forth in turn such musical masterpieces as Verdi's penultimate opera *Otello* (1887), Dvořák's *Othello* Overture (1892) and Franz Schubert's incidental music to Chézy's drama.

Our programme of musical legends of Cyprus begins with another, lesser-known work directly connected to Shakespeare's tragedy, the *Othello* Suite by the outstandingly gifted British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Born in London in 1875 to a father from Sierra Leone (who never knew his son) and an English mother, the young Coleridge-Taylor showed a marked gift for music and entered the Royal College of Music aged just 17 as a composition student of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (who much admired his exceptional pupil).

Coleridge-Taylor enjoyed spectacular international success (notably in the United States), principally through his cantata *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, which was written and premiered in 1898, and followed a few years later by two further cantatas based on Longfellow's epic poem, alongside other celebrated songs and chamber and orchestral music.

Coleridge-Taylor visited the United States three times in the early 1900s and was known to Americans as the "Black Mahler". (His popularity in America was such that he received a rare audience with President Theodore Roosevelt in 1904.) Coleridge-Taylor's *Othello* Suite, composed in 1909, was commissioned by the great actor-manager Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree for a production of Shakespeare's play at His Majesty's Theatre in London's West End.

This incidental music is the work of a highly individual and gifted composer. Immediate in its appealing scene-setting, the score has truly memorable themes, alluring dances and the independently popular "Children's Intermezzo", evocative of youthful spirits of calm and innocence. Mention should also be made of the genuinely felt "Funeral March" and the contrasted "Willow Song", for – as with all the movements in this suite – the direct individual utterance of the music admirably reveals Coleridge-Taylor's singular and exceptional gifts. Coleridge-Taylor's life was sadly cut short in 1912 when he succumbed to pneumonia at the age of 37.

With Nimrod Borenstein's *Legends of Cyprus* we move forward one hundred years in terms of musical creation while still taking inspiration from stories from the Cypriot past. As the composer has explained:

I wrote *Legends of Cyprus* for the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra during 2025. From the outset, the piece was conceived as part of both a live concert and a recording

celebrating Cyprus. The other works on the programme, by Franz Schubert, Antonín Dvořák and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, celebrate Cyprus through specific stories and dramatic subjects such as *Othello* or *Rosamunde*. For my part, I chose a less literal approach and, in *Legends of Cyprus*, sought instead to evoke an entire world of feelings, atmospheres and magical stories.

The music moves from moments of extreme intensity and drama to passages of ethereal beauty and peacefulness, with high melodies floating above. I love creating multiple melodies running concurrently and enriching one another. This attraction to “multi-melodic” writing lies at the heart of my personal use of complex polyrhythms. The ability to create depth and drama, but also lightness and humour, is something I deeply admire. I believe contrast is an essential part of music – and of life itself.

Although I have written chamber music throughout my life and continue to do so, *Legends of Cyprus* also forms part of a particularly fruitful orchestral period for me. It closely followed a series of orchestral works composed in quick succession: Concerto for mandolin and orchestra, Op.97; *Danses d'eau et de feu*, Op.98 for violin and string orchestra; Concerto for oboe and orchestra, Op.99; Symphony No.1, Op.100; and Shakespeare Songs, Op. 101 for soprano and orchestra. In many ways, *Legends of Cyprus* continues this exploration of richly contrasted orchestral colours and emotional worlds, but within a more concentrated single-movement form.

As a composer, I do not really separate inspiration from technique. The rhythmic flexibility, shifting metres and layered textures all arise naturally from the emotional flow of the music itself. For me, these elements are not intellectual devices, but part of trying to make the music breathe and move as organically as possible.

I hope that *Legends of Cyprus* will lead listeners towards new kinds of beauty and leave them with the feeling of having been told a magical story.

In 1892, Antonín Dvořák arrived in New York to take up the post of Director of the city's National Conservatory of Music, which had been founded seven years earlier by the wealthy music-loving philanthropist Jeannette Thurber. Dvořák's acceptance of the post was a considerable coup for her; the great composer also brought with him a new cycle of three concert overtures under the generic title *Nature, Life and Love*, the third of which is *Othello*, B.174 (Op.93), composed earlier that year. The first two parts of the trilogy are *In Nature's Realm*, B.168 (Op.91) and the *Carnival Overture*, B.169 (Op.92). It was the success of the American premiere of *Othello* – conducted by Dvořák himself at New York's recently opened Carnegie Hall – that directly led to the commissioning of his "New World" Symphony (the Ninth – his last).

Othello stands out as the most overtly symphonic of Dvořák's three overtures: after the initial exposition of the material, he effectively turns the work into a symphonic poem through themes depicting Desdemona and other events from Shakespeare's tragedy but does so with such mastery that the initial concept of concert overture remains, perhaps in length and structure owing something to Tchaikovsky's Shakespearean examples.

In 1823 Schubert composed incidental music to the play *Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus*, written by his friend Helmina von Chézy, whose libretto to Carl Maria von Weber's 1823 opera *Euryanthe* had been the subject of some criticism. The reception of *Rosamunde* was little better, the play surviving only two performances. Schubert's music, however, secured

artistic immortality, although it was not until the discovery of the original manuscript of the incidental music by Arthur Sullivan and George Grove in a small cupboard in Vienna in 1867 that the true extent of Schubert's contribution became known.

The overture that Schubert provided for *Rosamunde* had not specifically been written for Chézy's play; at the composer's suggestion she had used the introduction and coda of the overture to his unperformed 1822 opera *Alfonso und Estrella* instead. However, when the complete music for *Rosamunde* was first published in 1891, it did not include the *Alfonso und Estrella* Overture but an even earlier overture that Schubert had composed in 1820 for Georg Ernst von Hofmann's play *Die Zauberharfe* (The Magic Harp). It is this music that has come down to us as the *Rosamunde* Overture, and the result is one of Schubert's finest orchestral scores, full of his unmistakable individuality and demonstrating his generous and warm-hearted nature through a natural command of characteristic good humour in a masterly use of the orchestra. Such notable qualities are found throughout the nine numbers that comprise Schubert's incidental music for the play. Two of these in particular have taken their place amongst the most memorable of all short orchestral masterpieces. The "Entr'acte No.3" in B flat major (marked Andantino and designed for the interval after the play's third act) is one of the most well-loved pieces in the score; a virtually identical theme may be heard in the second movement of the String Quartet in A minor, D.804, often referred to as the "Rosamunde" Quartet. The concluding Ballet No.2 is an equally warm-hearted and endearing Andantino, this time in G major – the essence of Schubert's individual melodic genius.

Robert Matthew-Walker © 2026

The **Cyprus Symphony Orchestra** (CySO) was established in 1987 as the Cyprus State Chamber Orchestra by decision of the Council of Ministers. Since 2007 it has operated under the management of the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra Foundation.

As the only professional symphony orchestra in Cyprus, the CySO has evolved rapidly in the new millennium into a modern, dynamic orchestra with a strong presence in the musical life of the island. More than that, it is also a national symbol that represents Cyprus in Europe and beyond.

Constantly striving for artistic excellence and involvement with the community, the CySO puts on innovative artistic programmes, hosts artists of international standing, promotes Cypriot artists and the creation of Cypriot music, and collaborates with state and private institutions. The orchestra has toured numerous times abroad (Greece, Germany, Denmark, Bulgaria, France, Malta, the UK and Serbia) and further fosters its international profile by organising international competitions and master classes. The CySO is itself a living symbol of multiculturalism, with its 39 members coming from 15 different countries.

An orchestra for all Cypriots, the CySO performs 25 to 30 different programmes at around 60 concerts annually across the whole of Cyprus, where its loyal and constantly expanding audiences are able to enjoy a variety of musical genres from classical and contemporary symphonic repertoire and opera to musicals, crossover, popular genres and many more.

As of January 2026, the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra is Myron Michailidis.



CYPRUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Artistic Director Myron Michailidis

VIOLINS I

Wolfgang Schröder
(Concertmaster)

Janna Dimont

Sorin Alexandru Horlea

Anna Wrobel

Antonis Bargilly

Ayşe Karaoğlu

Charis Stylianou

Constantinos Anastasiades

VIOLINS II

Kypros Christodoulides

Nikos Pittas

Iraklis Mitellas

Constantin Papageorgio

Varvara Merzlova-Peneva

Hasmik Sargsyan

Marios Ioannou

Savvas Lagou

VIOLAS

Kumiko Okutomi

Vladimir Tkachenko

Amanda Constantinou

Krzysztof Wrobel

Estelle Sossa

CELLOS

Jakub Otčenášek

Miranda Papaneocleous

Rita Serghides

Stavros Petropoulos

DOUBLE BASSES

Nicos Ioannou

Yiannos Ioannou Skender

FLUTES

Virginie Bove
Anna Pavlou *
Eleni Kappa *
(Piccolo)

OBOES

Simeon Spasov
Laura Rodgers

CORS ANGLAIS

Angelos Charalambous *

CLARINETS

Dusko Žarković
Angelos Angelidis

BASSOONS

Giovanni Galetti
Giovanni Magni

HORNS

Kelly Alijani
Catherine Heaver
Annita Skoutella *
Kina Despotis *

TRUMPETS

Gareth Griffiths
Andreas Giannakouras

TROMBONES

Kleitos Pavlou *
Savvas Athanasiou *
Anastasia Kikel *

TUBA

Nicole Christodoulou *

TIMPANI

Marios Nicolaou

PERCUSSION

Natasa Hadjiandreou *
Ioulios Georgakopoulos *

HARP

Lilia Esipova *

* Musicians invited for the present programme



The past few years have seen a great number of **Nimrod Borenstein's** works being commissioned, recorded and premiered at some of the most prestigious venues and festivals across the globe, from the Royal Festival Hall and the Royal Opera House in London to the Salle Gaveau in Paris, Carnegie Hall in New York, and Hong Kong City Hall.

Among his high-profile champions, Vladimir Ashkenazy has conducted several of Borenstein's compositions, culminating in the recording of an album of his orchestral works for Chandos (*BBC*

Music Magazine "Choice"). Other leading artists to have performed Borenstein's music include: Pascal Rogé, Roberto Prosseda, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, the Quartetto di Cremona, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the Oxford Philharmonic, the Israel Camerata Jerusalem, the Belgrade Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the English Chamber Orchestra.

Nimrod Borenstein is a Laureate of the Cziffra Foundation and an Associate of London's Royal Academy of Music. His substantial catalogue currently numbers more than 100 works including orchestral and chamber music as well as vocal and solo instrumental pieces. He also composed the score for a ballet, *Suspended*, which has received more than 250 performances around the world. In recent years, he has been commissioned to write the obligatory performance pieces for the Hong Kong International Piano Competition (2019) and the International Jeunesses Musicales Competition for violoncello (2020).

Increasingly in demand on the podium, he has recently performed in many countries, including the UK, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Finland and Cyprus. During the past 12 months alone, he has recorded three albums for SOMM as conductor: an album with the English Chamber Orchestra featuring his Mandolin Concerto, Shakespeare Songs and Oboe Concerto; the present recording with the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra; and a recording with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (which includes his own Cello Concerto No.2). The latter follows his first collaboration with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra on another album for SOMM, released in 2023, which featured his Piano Concerto.

Commenting on two of his albums, *Gramophone* magazine described Borenstein as “amongst the most recorded of contemporary composers in the UK” and noted that he “is no mean conductor, and the English Chamber Orchestra have a long history of excellence,” while *Opus Klassiek* hailed him as “an inspired composer but also an inspiring conductor”.
nimrod-borenstein.com



*SOMM would like to thank
the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra Foundation
for their artistic, technical and financial support.*

**More music by Nimrod Borenstein
on SOMM Recordings**

SOMMCD 281

Nimrod Borenstein:
Piano Concerto
Shirim
Light and Darkness
Clélia Iruzun · I Musicanti
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
Nimrod Borenstein



SOMMCD 0719

Nimrod Borenstein:
Shakespeare Songs
Mandolin Concerto
Oboe Concerto
Sarah Fox · Alon Sarel · Sanja Romić
English Chamber Orchestra
Nimrod Borenstein



SOMMCD 0733

Legends of Cyprus: Othello

Cyprus Symphony Orchestra

Nimrod Borenstein conductor

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912)

Othello, Op.79 Suite

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|------|
| ① | I. Dance | 3:05 |
| ② | II. Children's Intermezzo | 4:10 |
| ③ | III. Funeral March | 4:36 |
| ④ | IV. The Willow Song | 2:34 |
| ⑤ | V. Military March | 2:33 |

Nimrod Borenstein (b.1969)

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|------|
| ⑥ | Legends of Cyprus, Op.102 | 8:41 |
| | <i>first recording</i> | |

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|-------|
| ⑦ | Othello, B.174 Overture | 16:14 |
|---|--------------------------------|-------|

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| ⑧ | Rosamunde, Princess of Cyprus
Overture (to <i>Die Zauberharfe, D.644</i>) | 11:25 |
|---|--|-------|

Incidental Music, D.797

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|
| ⑨ | No.5 Entr'acte No.3 | 8:47 |
| ⑩ | No.9 Ballet No.2 | 8:00 |

Total Duration **70:09**

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for their artistic, technical and financial support.



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Editor: Nimrod Borenstein

Recording Engineer: Adaq Khan

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