



Ferruccio Busoni



Martin Jones

Nimbus
Rediscovered Recordings

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Martin Jones (b.1940)

Ferruccio Busoni (1866-1924)

1	Zweite Ballet-Szene BV209 (1884)	5:13
	Stücke für Pianoforte BV241 (1895)	21:23
2	I Schwermuth (Melancholy)	3:54
3	II Frohsinn (Cheerfulness)	2:51
4	III Scherzino	2:04
5	IV Fantasia in modo antico	6:15
6	V Finnische Ballade	4:50
7	VI „Exeunt omnes“	1:28
	Indianisches Tagebuch, Erstes Buch BV267 (1915)	11:49
8	I Allegro affettuoso, un poco agitato	3:04
9	II Vivace	1:27
10	III Andante	4:16
11	IV Maestoso ma andando	3:02
12	Kammer-Fantasie über Bizet's 'Carmen' BV284 (1920)	7:39
	Drei Albumblätter BV289 (1921)	10:03
13	I Andantino sostenuto	3:04
14	II Andante	1:54
15	III In der Art eines Choralvorspiels. Sostenuto religioso	5:05
16	Zehn Variationen über ein Präludium von Chopin BV213 (1922)	11:45

Total playing time 68:00

Analogue recording
Recorded at Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, 22 March 1980
Engineer: Gerald Reynolds Producer: Adrian Farmer
Photography by Gerald Reynolds

The present release is part of a short series of recordings sitting on the shelves of the Nimbus archive that were 'rediscovered' during the 2020 COVID shutdowns. In those quiet days idle hands and minds posed the question: 'So, do we have anything unissued that we can use to construct a release programme?' This casual enquiry initiated a full investigation that has continued for five years and revealed more than fifty recording projects that, for one reason or another, never made it into the world. Some of these recordings go back to the founding of Nimbus in the late 1960s. There is no single reason to account for their neglect, and in every case we have found no justification for holding them back any longer. The original analogue tapes, typically one-inch, four track, 30ips, transferred to a digital medium with no problem. We decided to archive them at 192k, thus preserving them for next generation use. Early digital tapes, from 1981/82, using U-matic cassettes, sometimes required surgical intervention to repair passages of lost signal, but having been stored in the same warm, dark room for their entire lives also transferred reliably for the most part.

Adrian Farmer, 2026
Producer, Creative Director Nimbus Records

The following text is transcribed from a filmed conversation between Martin Jones and Nimbus Music Director Adrian Farmer in 2016, celebrating Martin's 75th birthday.

We were talking just now about student days. Did you go to the person around the corner to start?

I did, when I was a boy. At five I went to the local teacher in Witney. No. She was just a lady that taught. She was the daughter of a very wealthy seed and grain merchant. With two

brothers who made the money while she stayed home and looked after the parents. So to make her life bearable she taught piano after school. She just loved doing it. What I remember is I got a cake every time I went. By the time I was ten she had passed me on to her teacher, Miss Davis, who was not to be messed with. It was pretty formidable, but she was a good teacher. And by that time I was a choral scholar at Magdalen College, Oxford. So another change of teacher, a big change.

And by the age of ten have you decided to become a pianist, or are there other options?

Just music, not necessarily the piano. Just music. At sixteen I went off to the Royal Academy in London, and was about to realise how little I knew. The ladies had done quite well in taking me through the grades, but there was a poor patch when I was a scholar where I was taught by the organist, Philip Taylor. He was a terrific organist, but not a pianist. He just took me through all the Beethoven Sonatas, one after the other. I just ground my way through them while I was at school. Not training at all, really.

How would you describe your keyboard grasp at sixteen? It has been so strong throughout your career. Had it formed by the time you were sixteen?

No, I don't think so. When I got to the Academy I saw other people who were just terrific players. But I was also so interested in playing for all the instruments, the singers and conducting. I tended to play all day long, literally all day. Huge amounts of sight-reading, but I never practiced. I'd be with Eva Turner from 9 till 6 or with Fred Grinke in violin classes. I started to fail a few piano exams.

Was there a tutor at the Academy who got your technique to work. Or did you have to do that by yourself?

I think I did it mostly by myself. Guy Johnston was my first professor, and he was a very Edwardian gent, not the right sort of the chap for me. He was just too nice. He should have rapped me over the knuckles really and said stop messing about, get down to it. But he didn't. But when Gordon Greene came along, he said, if you want to play the piano you are up against people like Richter. If you want to be chosen over him, you have got to play.

You can't just sit around, you've got to get down and do it. He made me realise that some serious work had to be put in.

I suppose the other event that happened was that I failed my final exam. I can remember it was a very difficult exam. You had to play something pre-classical like Bach, some Beethoven, some Mozart, Chopin of some sort, something Romantic, something English and something new. You had to have this all ready. And you only learnt what you were going to play when the person before you went in. The examiner would come out and say 'In forty minutes time you're going to play this... The first time I took the exam I was told to play three Chopin studies, the B-flat minor sonata and Bach's Italian concerto. I went in and made such a pigs-ear of it. Guy Johnson got furious. I got furious. Everybody got furious. I went to see Thomas Armstrong, the principal. He said 'What am I going to do with you? I think the only answer, with you, is to start again. We'll pretend none of this happened. We'll have new professors, and you know what to do this time. So I did, I started all over again from the beginning. Four more years. My scholarships and grants had all run out. I began writing music, submitting pieces for the internal competitions at the Academy. If you could win one of those the prize would cover the College fees.

Did you learn what is possible at the piano from a regime of scales, arpeggios, and all of that? Or was it through listening to others, watching others.

A bit of technical work, but not much, it probably should have played more of a part, really. But a lot of listening. In those days tickets to concerts were free for students. You could go to the Wigmore Hall every single night for nothing and just watch. It's what you did. You could go to the Festival Hall festival, see what people do, and how they did it. That's how I learnt a lot of it. Yeah, and just worked it out for myself.

At what age did you leave the Academy? Did you have any tuition after that?

Twenty-four. I went to Guido Agosti (1901-1989). He must have been in his sixties. The most handsome Italian man, the most cultured. Just an amazing chap. I can remember he first day we were there. The room was full of people. And he got up and said 'I will conduct the classes in English. But I do speak six other languages in case anybody needs it'. He was an extraordinary chap. In these lessons, he would demonstrate things, let you see piano

playing that you just couldn't believe. It was fantastic. I'll never forget it. But he couldn't play in public. He had no nerve and could not do it. He had no concert career at all at that stage, and I think that made him rather a poisonous sort of man. He was very upset with all us young sparks coming along, not really realising what we were doing. And so every so often would let loose and give you the most horrendous lesson, have people in tears. I think we became very good friends in the end, but it did have its ups and downs. Once I played in the heat of the summer in Sienna, the 'Isle joyeuse'. I got to the end. There was a long pause, he said 'Mr Hones', he'd suddenly forgotten he spoke perfect English, 'Mr. Hones. I liked the last four bars, but it had too much pedal.' So I said, can you play it to me? I want to see how it should be done'. And he did, actually sat down, played it, and did everything opposite to the way I did it.

He gave me a prize, a diploma. And so we ended up good friends. But a most extraordinary way to teach. I had to do it by watching, the things he did with his hands, his fingers, and the pedal. I remember another time when Agosti was teaching the 'Waldstein', with all the chords at the end. Someone was beating these chords, and he said 'too loud, too loud, too loud'. So the chap played them quieter, 'no strength, this is no good at all'. He sat down at the piano and he just let his arms come down. The chords were like gunshot. He didn't do anything except with just his arm weight and the strength of his fingers. You think, I heard that, now how the hell did he do it.

Martin's early career followed a normal path of recitals and chamber music. He found regular work as pianist of the emerging Nash Ensemble founded in 1964. In 1968 he won the first Myra Hess Award. This propelled him onto the international scene, a concert in London at Queen Elizabeth Hall and Brahms' Piano Concerto No.2 at Carnegie Hall in New York. At the suggestion of his then manager Emmie Tillet, Martin came to Nimbus on 5 June 1972 He played a selection of pieces by Poulenc (released in this series on NI7117). Further visits occurred in October and December and continued in April, August and December 1973. During these sessions Martin recorded almost all the piano works of Mendelssohn. Then silence because Nimbus had as yet no organised plan to issue LPs. Unreleased recordings piled up.

In September 1972 the Professor of Music at Cardiff University, Alun Hoddinott, appointed Martin 'Pianist-in Residence'. Together with a quartet of string players they were responsible for instrumental teaching, and about twenty-five concerts a year. These concerts were given both at the University and for the benefit of Cardiff concert-goers. In addition Hoddinott struck a deal with Decca's Argo label, to record his players in a wide variety of music. The exposure in Cardiff and on record led to invitations from the BBC, who Martin describes as 'being very good to me'. Looking back, in 2025, Martin credits Cardiff with providing a uniquely valuable platform of music-making and constant opportunities to perform.

At Nimbus there was a dynamic change in 1974 when the entire operation moved from Birmingham to Monmouth, and there built a small LP factory. The first releases came out in 1977, among them Martin's 1973 recording of Rachmaninoff's Corelli Variations and Moments Musicaux Op. 16. Then another very long silence, until 1978/79 when Martin was invited back to complete the outstanding pieces of Mendelssohn. In 1980 he delivered this recital of Busoni pieces. Happily the relationship between Nimbus and Martin survived silences and disappointments. The long-awaited Mendelssohn project was finally issued on six CDs in 1988. By that time Martin had become one of the most regular visitors to the studio, as the large discography included here will testify.

Adrian Farmer 2025

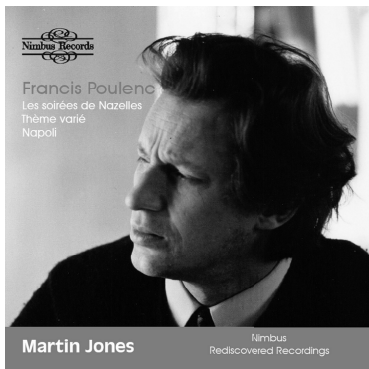
Martin Jones. A Discography

Albéniz Piano Music	4 CDs	NI1711
Albéniz & Granados Celebrated Piano Music	4 CDs	NI5595/8
Albéniz 'Iberia' & Granados 'Goyescas'	2 CDs	NI7718/9
Brahms Complete Piano Music	6 CDs	NI1788
Czerny Piano Sonatas Volume 1	CDs	NI5832/3
Czerny Piano Sonatas Volume 2	2 CDs	NI5863/4
Czerny Piano Sonatas Volume 3	2 CDs	NI5872/3
Debussy Complete Piano Music	5 CDs	NI1773
Debussy Piano Favourites	1 CD	NI7702
Óscar Esplá Piano Music	2 CDs	NI5889/90
Discover Manuel de Falla	1 CD	NI7731
Oscar Fernández Piano Music	1 CD	NI8115
Françaix Piano Music (Adrian Farmer)	3 CDs	NI5880/2
Discover Jean Françaix	1 CD	NI7732
Hahn, Tailleferre & Koehlin Music for two pianos (Adrian Farmer)	2 CDs	NI5953
Hans Gál Piano Music	2 CDs	NI5751/2
Radamés Gnattali Piano Music	1 CD	NI8114
Grainger Complete Piano Music	5 CDs	NI1767
Grainger Piano Favourites	1 CD	NI7703
Granados Complete Piano Music	6 CDs	NI1734
Discover Granados	1 CD	NI7729
Camargo Guarnieri Piano Music	1 CD	NI8119
Guastavino Complete Piano Music	3 CDs	NI5818/20
Discover Guastavino	1 CD	NI7728
Graham Hair Piano Music	1 CD	SRCD436
Ernesto Halffter Piano Music	1 CD	NI5849
Alun Hoddinott Piano Sonatas 1-10	2 CDs	NI5747/8
Daniel Jones Piano Music	4 CDs	SRCD2396

Discover Daniel Jones	1 CD	SRCD410
Korngold Complete Piano Music (Richard McMahon)	4 CDs	NI5705/8
Discover Korngold	1 CD	NI7743
Mendelssohn Complete Piano Music	6 CDs	NI1772
Mendelssohn Piano Favourites	1 CD	NI7704
Francisco Mignone Piano Music	1 CD	NI8113
Mompou Complete Piano Music Volume 1	4 CDs	NI5724/7
Mompou New Discoveries Piano Music Volume 2	3 CDs	NI5877/9
Joaquín Nin Piano Music	1 CD	NI5851
Rachmaninoff Corelli Variations & Moments Musicaux	1 CD	NI5292
Franz Reizentein Piano Music	3 CDs	SRCD2342
Alan Richardson Complete Piano Music (Adrian Farmer)	5 CDs	SRCD2373
Discover Alan Richardson	1 CD	SRCD381
Jean Roger-Ducasse Complete Piano Music	3 CDs	NI5927
Discover Jean Roger-Ducasse	1 CD	NI7744
Saint-Saëns Music for Duo & Duet Volume 1 (Adrian Farmer)	1 CD	NI5940
Saint-Saëns Music for Duo & Duet Volume 2 (Adrian Farmer)	1 CD	NI5941
Francis Shaw Piano Concertos (Slovak National SO/Shaw)	1 CD	SRCD356
Shostakovich Piano Concertos (ESO/Boughton)	1 CD	NI5308
Stravinsky Complete Piano Music	2 CDs	NI5519/20
Szymanowski Complete Piano Music	4 CDs	NI1750
Discover Szymanowski	1 CD	NI7730
Turina Piano Music	4 CDs	NI1710
Turina, Falla & Mompou Piano Music	5 CDs	NI5619/23
Virtuoso Piano Showpieces	1 CD	NI5326
Virtuoso arrangements by Earl Wild Volume 1 Gershwin	1 CD	NI5743
Virtuoso arrangements by Earl Wild Volume 2 Rachmaninoff	1 CD	NI5965
Martin Jones 75th Birthday Tribute	4 CDs	NI1718

For full track details and critical reviews visit wyastone.co.uk

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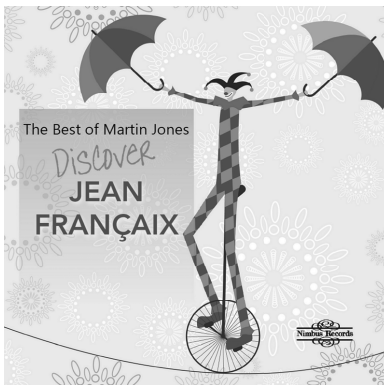
NI7117

This recording, made on 5 June 1972, was in reality an audition between Martin Jones and Nimbus, a 'let's see if we get on' day. It went well and this Poulenc recital can claim its place as their first recording session together. Only one day was allocated for this trial, and so quite beyond expectation that Martin would deliver a complete Poulenc recital with such breath-taking virtuosity. The master tapes were uncovered during the COVID pandemic when quiet time suggested a closer look into the archive. Here then is a joyful reminder of the remarkable youthful virtuosity of one of the UK's most highly regarded pianists.



NI 1718

A Tribute In Celebration of His 75th Birthday. A selection of 30 composers taken from The Nimbus recordings made between 1973 and 2014. This 4 CD set presents a well-planned programme of recordings from the early days of Nimbus to some of their most recent releases. While in some ways it is a 'sampler' of Martin Jones's remarkable work each disc is a very satisfying listen in its own right. At over 40 pages the booklet is also a highly worthwhile document, including plenty of background on each composer and their work, and a text full of affectionate anecdotes about the artist himself." *Dominy Clements, musicweb-international.com*



NI 7732

Celebrated British pianist Martin Jones recorded the complete piano music of Jean Françaix (1912-1997) in 2012 on 3 CDs. This is a compilation of his best music, in which wit, sophistication and extreme virtuosity combine in one of the twentieth century's instantly recognisable voices.



NI 7728

Guastavino's music remained firmly based in the language of the late 19th and early 20th century, maintaining that music should be based on singable melody and tonal harmony, and written for the here and now, not for discovery by future generations. He succeeded in creating a national music that was genuinely popular and he exercised a significant influence on a younger generation of composers who grew up in the 1960s and 70s. A talented pianist whose flamboyant playing style is reflected in his mode of writing for the instrument. *Calum MacDonald*

