

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Four Characteristic Waltzes

crd



Maya Magub violin
Matthew Schellhorn piano

Maya Magub writes...

When great music exists but has been unjustly neglected, it is almost a moral duty to bring it to life and ensure that it can be heard. It was a joy to discover these waltzes and record them as a set for the first time, but also a challenge that pianist Matthew Schellhorn and I took on with the acknowledgement of great responsibility.

The **Four Characteristic Waltzes**, in their arrangement by the composer, are not Coleridge-Taylor's most ambitious work. They are, however, perfect concert pieces for violin and piano, delightful to listen to and deceptive in their apparent simplicity. They masterfully explore every character the waltz can embody: from the Bohemian flavour of No. 1 (surely inspired by Dvořák) to the wistful simplicity of No. 2, the serenity of No. 3 and the fire of No. 4. And within each of these, Coleridge-Taylor finds even more variety, giving each waltz its own contrasting middle section.

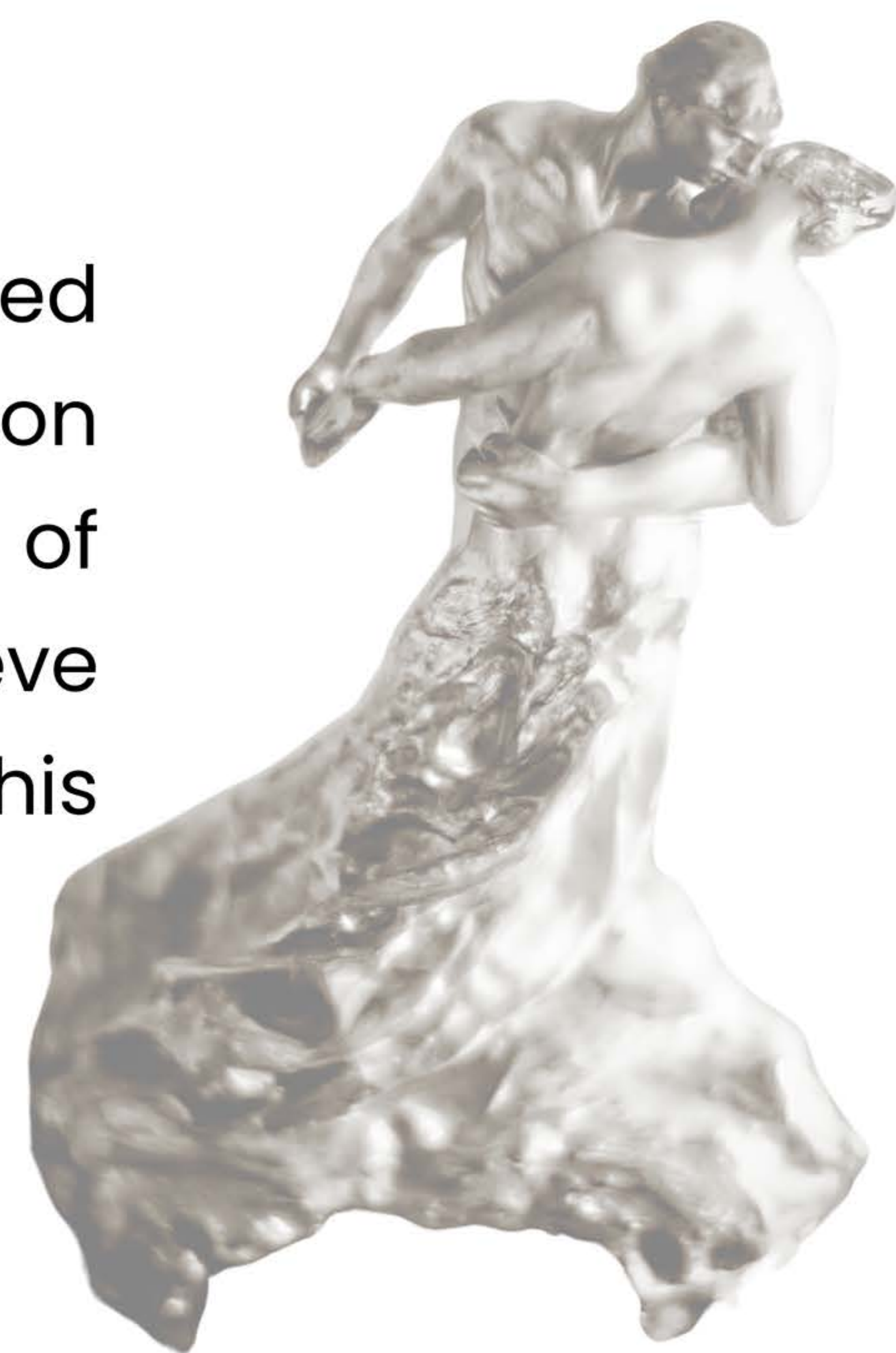
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was the illegitimate son of an African man and an English girl in Victorian England. He never met his father, who had returned to Sierra Leone before knowing he had a son. Miraculously for the time, Samuel's life, education and musical talents on the violin were fostered by his mother's father, and he flourished at the Royal College of Music where he soon turned to composition.



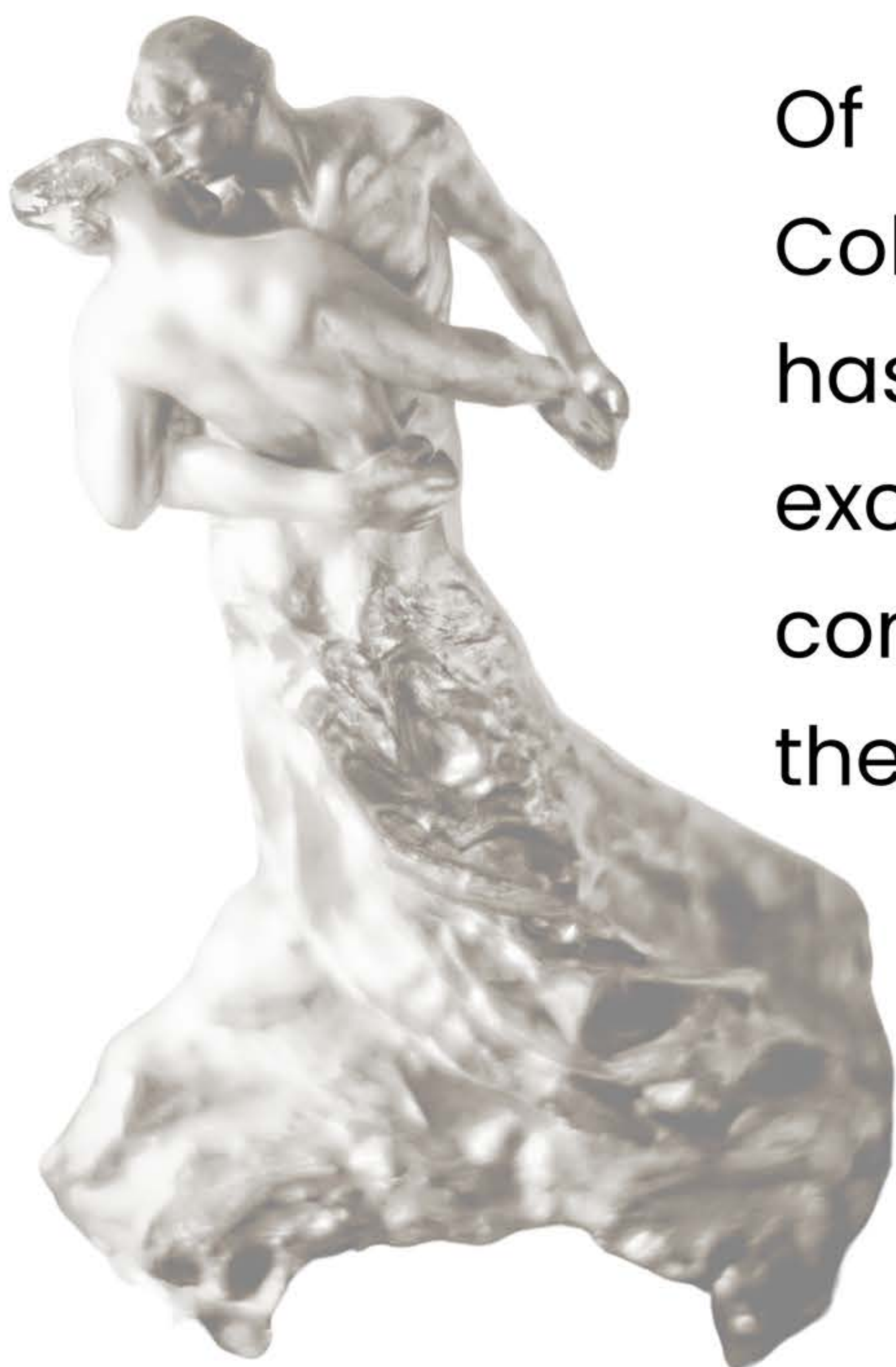
The Four Characteristic Waltzes were written in 1903. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor had already written his most famous work, the cantata trilogy *Hiawatha*, and, just a year later in 1904, would come his ground-breaking invitation to America. There, Coleridge-Taylor was received (including by the President himself at the White House) as a musical celebrity and important ambassador for racial equality and hope. Before this, however, he was already interested in exploring his African American slavery roots and infusing his musical language with the music of his ancestors. He expressed the desire to do for his music what Dvořák had done for Slavonic folk music.

Having been a musical celebrity in both Britain and America, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor saw shamefully little of the money his music had raised. He died of pneumonia in 1912 at the age of just 37, not helped by his financial struggles in a world before the discovery of antibiotics. With the exception of *Hiawatha*, Coleridge-Taylor's music was largely neglected after his death, with much of it only coming to light in the early 2000s and even today, left to be unearthed and performed.

Why has this music been neglected for so long? It's a complicated question with many probable answers. It is not simply a question of under-representation and suppression by the chroniclers of history. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor did, after all, somehow achieve the impossible and rise to huge success and fame within his lifetime. So, it is more subtle than that.



It is obvious to me from listening to his music, and from working in detail on the Characteristic Waltzes, that Coleridge-Taylor had a truly unique and distinctive musical voice. This is true of all great composers. However, his voice is a striking mix of his exceptionally unusual ancestry, geography and musical education. In rehearsing the Characteristic Waltzes with pianist Matthew Schellhorn, who is an expert in English music from that period, I was struck by how quintessentially English the music sounded. Matthew highlighted even small details like the use of crescendos within a phrase that were so reminiscent of Elgar, and had suggestions of performance practice to match. And yet, the music also could not be by Elgar. In a post-war, colonial Britain, perhaps it needed to be more stereotypically English to be remembered? There is simultaneously a rich African spiritual element interwoven within the very English musical language of Coleridge-Taylor. However, the subtlety of this would also not have made him an obvious figurehead during American segregation when Black voices were fighting to be heard.



Of course, it is this very uniqueness that makes Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's music so distinctive and important today. It has been lost to audiences for too long. But now is the time for exciting musical discovery, and, with the shame of past neglect, comes the joy of being able to hear something truly afresh for the very first time.

Los Angeles, 2024

It makes listening to this performance a really joyous experience... with Magub's endless inventiveness driving each tiny movement...
– Gramophone



Maya Magub is a British violinist now based in Los Angeles. Praised by Gramophone for her 'endless inventiveness' and by Strad Magazine for 'her aristocratic poise, her technical command' and 'powerful dynamic range', Maya Magub has performed in many of the world's greatest concert halls, and on numerous movies and records.

As soloist, Maya has performed concertos by Vivaldi, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Bruch and Tchaikovsky, the complete Brandenburg concertos in London's St Martin in the Fields, and Dvořák's *Romance* in the Royal Albert Hall. She has given solo performances for King Charles III and for Professor Stephen Hawking, and was invited to Buckingham Palace where she met Queen Elisabeth II. She has also enjoyed playing with numerous pop icons including Adele, Bono, and Paul McCartney.

Maya was awarded scholarships at the Purcell School and the Royal Academy of Music, graduating with a 1st class degree from Cambridge University. She also studied at the Vienna Hochschule, and as an ESU scholar at Aspen. Maya was a founder member of the Mainardi Trio, performing and broadcasting internationally for over ten years. She has played in chamber music festivals across the globe, guesting with the Calder Quartet, the Emperor Quartet, the London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

Maya has made four critically acclaimed recordings for the CRD label: the complete Mozart and Michael Haydn duos with violist Judith Busbridge, the Telemann *Solo Fantasias, Consolations* with pianist Hsin-I Huang and *Canons* with string players from across the globe.

www.mayamagub.com

Immaculately stylish, raptly concentrated and
memorably tender advocacy.
– Gramophone



Described as a pianist whose performances ‘fascinate and enliven the ear and mind’ (Fanfare), British musician **Matthew Schellhorn** has a distinctive profile displaying consistent artistic integrity and a commitment to bringing new music to a wider audience through recordings, performance, research and education.

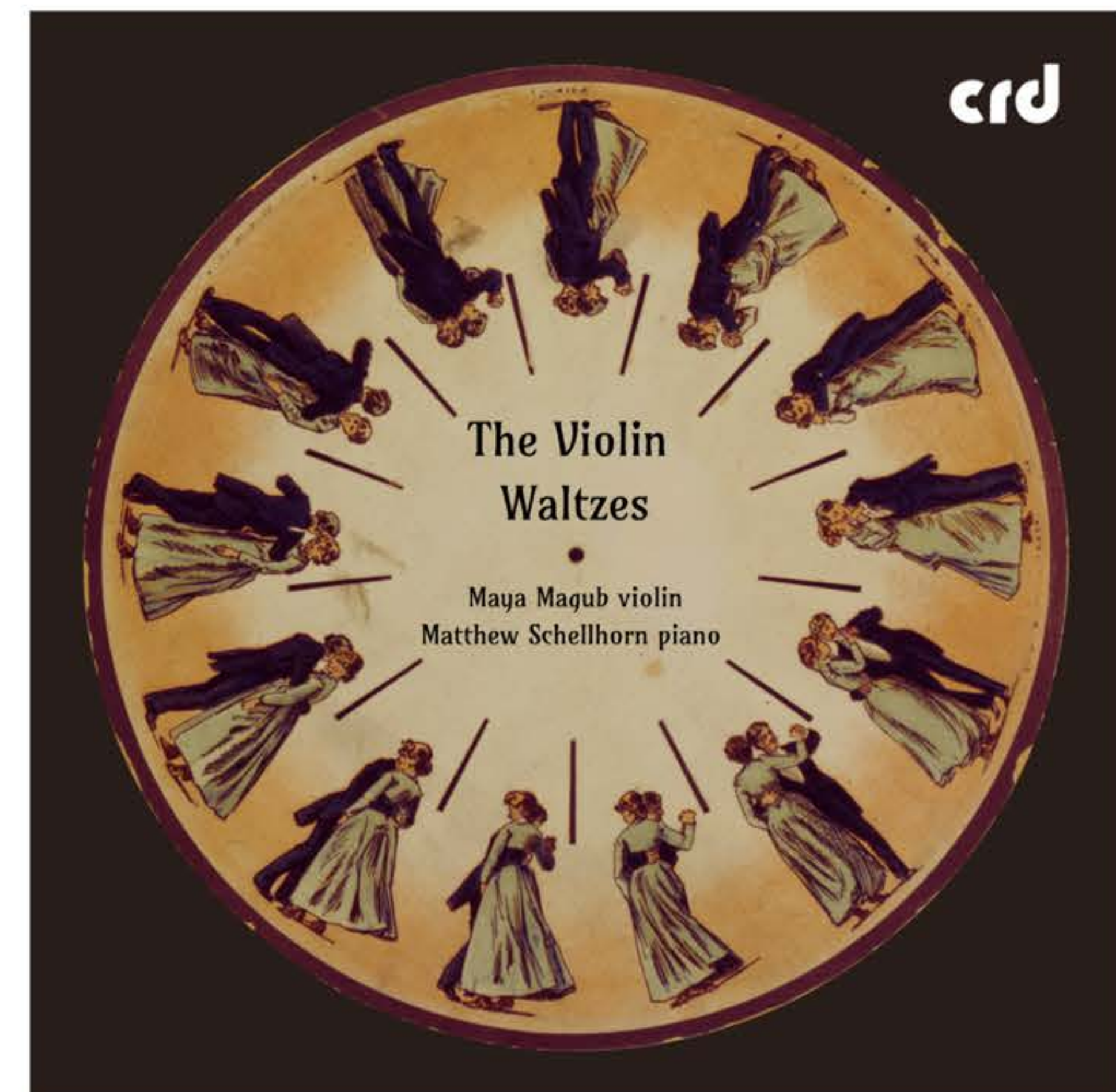
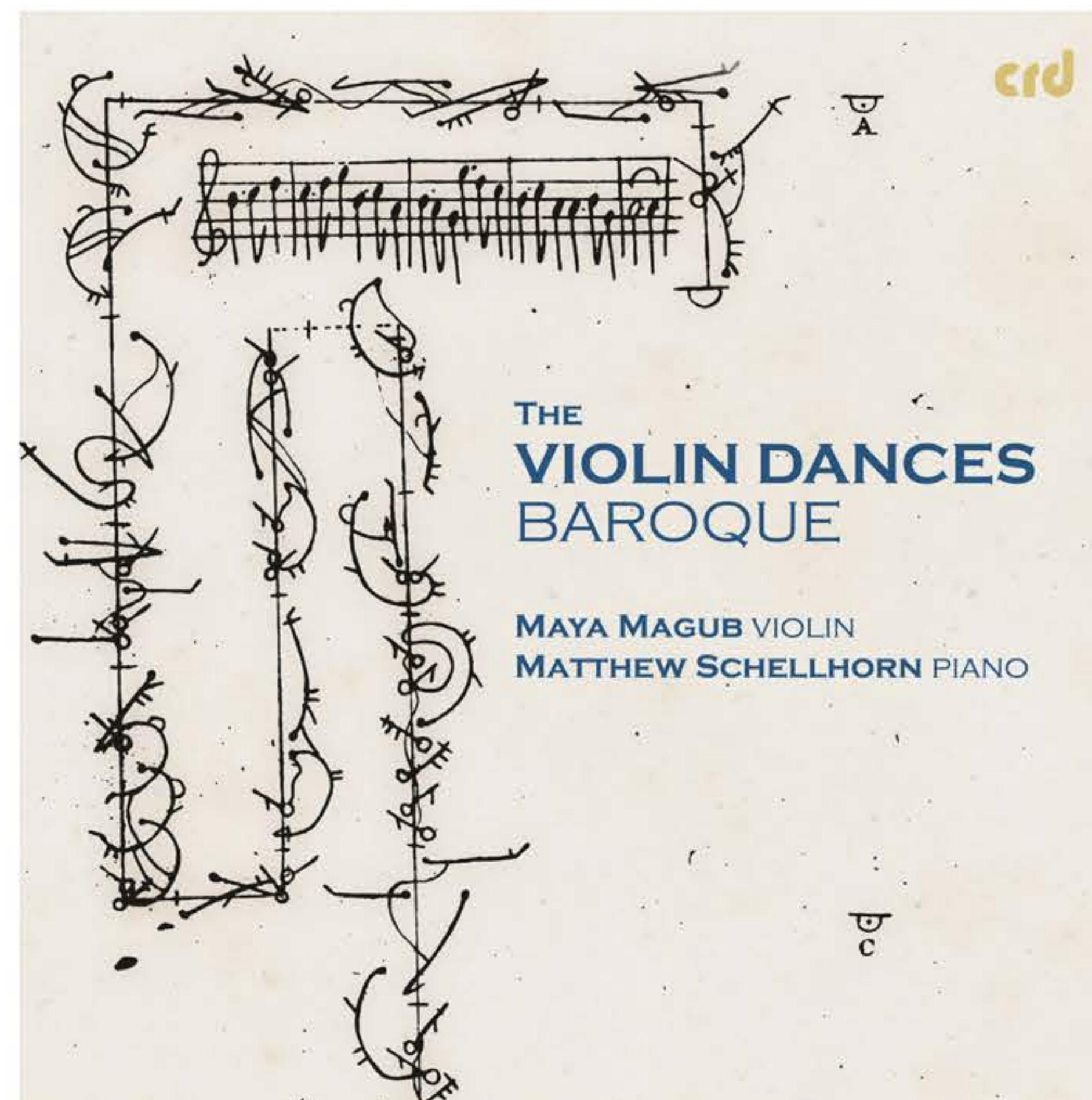
Following study in Manchester and Cambridge, Matthew’s growing discography has been met with warm critical acclaim. His debut album Messiaen: Chamber Works (Signum) was classed an AllMusic Classical Editors’ Favourite whilst, more recently, his album of Herbert Howells’s piano works (Naxos) has been praised by Gramophone as ‘superbly performed’ with ‘immaculately stylish, raptly concentrated and memorably tender advocacy’.

A prominent performer of new music, Matthew has given over one hundred and forty premieres, has commissioned many solo and chamber works and has featured as the dedicatee of several works, including Ian Wilson’s piano concerto Flags and Emblems, which he premiered live on BBC Radio 3.

In addition to prominent concerto performances, Matthew Schellhorn is a passionate educator and advocate for widening access to the arts. He is a member of the Faculty of Music at the University of Cambridge and serves on the International Advisory Board of Naxos Musicology International. In his role as Patron of the National Youth Arts Trust, he helps to support talented young people aged 12–25 from non-privileged backgrounds. Beyond his support of artistic activities in South Yorkshire, he is additionally a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and a member of The Royal Society of Musicians.

www.matthewschellhorn.com

Also from CRD, Maya Magub and Matthew Schellhorn



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Recorded at Menuhin Hall, Cobham, Surrey, 16 August, 2024

Executive Producers Emma Pauncefort, Tom Pauncefort

Engineer Ben Connellan

Producers Emma Pauncefort, Maisie Lewis, Maya Magub, Matthew Schellhorn

Mixed in The Tree House, Santa Monica, California

Musical preparation and additional engineering George Hutson Warren

Thanks to Alex Heffes

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Artwork

‘La Valse’ (The Waltzers)’ – Created by Camille Claudel, protégé, muse and mistress of Rodin. Conceived in 1889 and cast in 1905 with the Foundry Mark ‘Eugene Blot’

Photograph – Scott Lanphere – adapted

4 Characteristic Waltzes, Op.22:

No. 1 Valse Bohémienne	2:40
No. 2 Valse Rustique	3:59
No. 3 Valse de la Reine	4:52
No. 4 Valse Mauresque	3:10