

CHANDOS

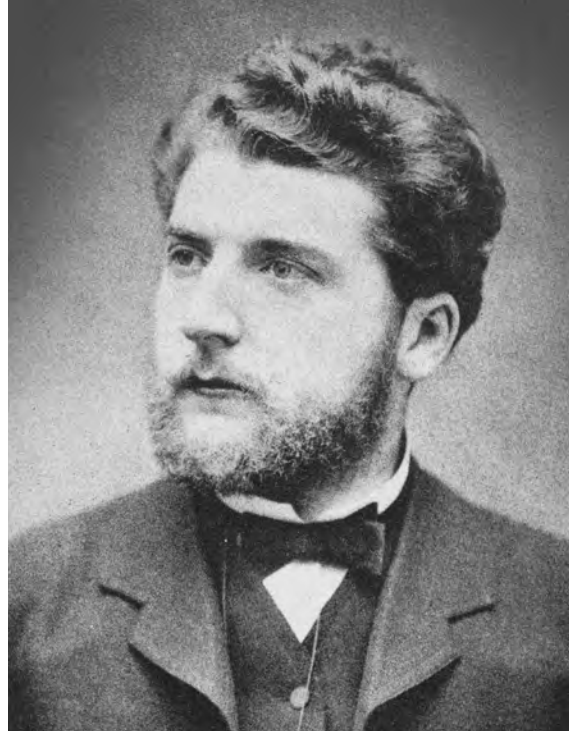
FRENCH

ORCHESTRAL FAVOURITES

THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE • DANSE MACABRE
JOYEUSE MARCHE • UNE BARQUE SUR L'OcéAN
CLAIR DE LUNE • CARMEN SUITES



SINFONIA OF LONDON JOHN WILSON



Portrait by unknown photographer, now at the Philharmonie de Paris /
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Georges Bizet, 1870

French Orchestral Favourites

Paul Dukas (1865 – 1935)

- 1 **L'Apprenti sorcier** (1896 – 97) 10:35
in F minor • in f-Moll • en fa mineur
Scherzo d'après un ballade de Goethe
(The Sorcerer's Apprentice
Scherzo after a Ballad by Goethe)
Assez lent – Vif – Premier Mouvement – Vif –
Vif – Poco animando – Più animando – Au mouvement –
Poco stringendo – A tempo – Stringendo – A tempo –
Serrez un peu le mouvement – Plus animé – Toujours plus animé –
Très vif – Retenu – Plus retenu – Revenez au mouvement initial –
A tempo – En animant un peu – Toujours plus animé –
Très légèrement retenu – A tempo – Sans presser –
En serrant – Plus animé – En animant toujours –
Assez lent (Mouvement de l'introduction) – En retenant un peu –
Vif

Achille-Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)

- 2 **Clair de lune** (c. 1890, revised 1905) **4:31**
from *Suite bergamasque*
Orchestrated 1994 by John Wilson
Andante très expressif – Tempo rubato –
Peu à peu crescendo et animé –
Un poco mosso – En animant – Calmato –
Tempo I – Morendo jusqu' à la fin

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841 – 1894)

- 3 **Joyeuse Marche** (1883, orchestrated 1888) **3:58**
(*Marche française*)
Orchestration by the composer of Rondo for piano four hands
(1883, revised 1885)
À Vincent d'Indy
Tempo di marcia, molto risoluto e giocoso – Sans presser –
Sans presser

Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937)

- 4 **Une Barque sur l'océan, M 43 / 3** (1904 – 05) **6:54**
No. 3 from *Miroirs*
À Paul Sordes
Orchestrated 1906 by the composer
Très souple de rythme

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921)

- 5 **Danse macabre, Op. 40** (1874)* **6:35**
Poème symphonique
d'après une poésie de Henri Cazalis
(Symphonic Poem
after a piece of poetry by Henri Cazalis)
based on material from the orchestral song of the same name (1872)
John Mills violin
Mouvement modéré de Valse – Poco stringendo – Animato – Tempo I

Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875)

Suites from 'Carmen' (c. 1885)* 35:39

Excerpts originally arranged by Ernest Guiraud (1837 – 1892)
Edited (c. 1905) by Fritz Hoffmann based on Bizet's orchestration of the
original operatic score (1873 – 74)
Presented complete in an order chosen by John Wilson

- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 6 | Les Toréadors (theme from Prelude to Act I and Procession of the Toreadors, Act IV, 'Les voici! voici la quadrille des Toreros!').
Allegro giocoso – | 2:06 |
| 7 | Prélude (motive from Prelude to Act I). Andante moderato | 1:30 |
| 8 | Aragonaise (Entr'acte before Act IV). Allegro vivo | 2:11 |
| 9 | Les Dragons d'Alcala (Entr'acte before Act II). Allegro moderato | 1:51 |
| 10 | Habanera (Carmen's aria, Act I, 'L'amour est un oiseau rebelle').
Allegretto quasi Andantino | 2:00 |
| 11 | La Garde montante (Children's chorus, Act I, 'Avec la garde montante, nous arrivons, nous voilà!'). Allegro. Mouvement de Marche –
Même mouvement | 3:49 |
| 12 | Intermezzo (Entr'acte before Act III). Andantino quasi
Allegretto | 2:20 |

13	Marche des Contrebandiers (Opening chorus, Act III, 'Écoute, écoute, compagnon!'). [] – Allegro moderato	4:29
14	Séguedille (Carmen's aria, Act I, 'Près des remparts de Séville'). Allegretto	1:48
15	Chanson du Toréador (Escamillo's introduction and aria, Act II, 'Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre... Toréador, en garde!'). Allegro molto moderato	2:36
16	Nocturne (Micaëla's aria, Act III, 'Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante'). Andante molto – Allegro molto moderato – Tempo I John Mills violin	5:11
17	Danse bohème (Gypsy Dance, Act II, 'Les tringles des sistres tintaient'). Andantino quasi Allegretto – A Tempo animato – Più mosso – Presto	5:05
		TT 68:35

Sinfonia of London

Charlie Lovell-Jones · John Mills* leaders

John Wilson

French Orchestral Favourites

Dukas: *L'Apprenti sorcier*

Forgetting Disney's *Fantasia* (and Mickey Mouse) for a moment, we should pause to put the celebrated *L'Apprenti sorcier* (The Sorcerer's Apprentice) by Paul Dukas (1865 – 1935) into its place in 1890s France. It fitted well into the craze for symphonic poems at that time, which was at its height: among others, Liszt, Saint-Saëns, and Franck were his precursors. Less interested in symphonies, French composers delighted in connections between music and literature. Dukas, however, was unhappy with both these trends, having great respect for what he called 'the normal conditions of the Symphony'. He claimed that French composers were turning away from 'symphonic poems' and moving towards the symphony. Was he right? I do not think so! A now-forgotten music critic put it nicely: 'Aux Allemandes la symphonie, aux Français la poésie!' (Leave symphonies to the Germans, leave poetry to the French!).

As a composer, Dukas left a slim output but it included an impressive Piano Sonata, a substantial set of Variations on a theme of Rameau, an opera (*Ariane et Barbe-*

bleu [Ariane and Blue-Beard]), as well as a Symphony and a ballet, *La Péri*. Debussy, who can hardly have shared his adulation of German music, especially sets of variations, preferred the music of his friend Dukas 'without Rameau'.

On the other hand, Dukas was one of the most thoughtful, philosophical, and perceptive critics of the turn of century, rivalling such figures as Eduard Hanslick in Germany in taking a French stand on contemporary issues. He did not believe, as Hanslick did, that untexted, 'pure' music was the supreme form of the art. Neither did he consider programme music to be necessarily inferior to the 'pure music' which Hanslick believed was supreme. On this subject he wrote extensively, suggesting that symphonic poems should not be a meandering parade of reactions to a poem: it should be in a clear form. No *poème symphonique* demonstrates his belief more than his own *L'Apprenti sorcier*.

The piece follows another enthusiasm among its composer's: a fascination with the works of Goethe, in this case a relatively short

poem, *Der Zauberlehrling*, which presents a simple narrative. Another enthusiasm of Dukas's was the way in which music could be humorous: certainly, the story of a broom with a mind of its own and a power to reproduce itself at will satisfied this taste. The piece verges on the new century's fascination with the absurd, rather than the romantic literary themes of the late nineteenth century.

An apprentice has been left to his own devices for a day without his master. He casts a spell on a broom. The broom escapes his control and runs wild. The apprentice is not experienced enough to summon up sufficient supernatural powers to control it, so he resorts to smashing it up. But each segment sprouts a new magic broom, chaotically overwhelming the apprentice. Miraculously, the Master Sorcerer appears and rescues the situation.

Goethe's poem is well suited to Dukas's ideal of the symphonic poem: the story is straightforward and Dukas portrays it with a slow emergence of the principal gigue-like theme (the French labelled it the 'broom theme'), and its decay. To frame the work, Dukas employed his beloved Germanic symphonic principle of presentation and recapitulation, ensuring the all-important 'Unity' of the piece. Thus, the form of the work is crystal clear.

Dukas also valued a virtuosic use of instrumentation, a quality which he found lacking in German music. On the whole, the strings invoke the magic and the eerie atmosphere. Wind and brass are foregrounded, portraying the antics of the broom, its splitting, and the return of the Master wizard. Harp harmonics prick both strings and the wind gestures. Dukas manifests a skill as an orchestrator that is beyond reproach in this, deservedly his most popular piece.

Debussy: Clair de lune

'Clair de lune' (c. 1890) must be the most popular of all the early pieces of Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918), and justifiably. Along with his First Arabesque (also c. 1890) it has somehow struck a chord with us all, along with a few early songs (his setting of Mallarmé's 'Apparition' [1884] comes to mind). Of his later pieces, 'La Fille aux cheveux de lin' (The Girl with the Flaxen Hair, 1910) is perhaps the direct offspring of this early style, even though its surrounding Preludes in Book I are much more advanced in their harmony. In his harmonic language Debussy had by the time these pieces were composed (early in the new century) embraced all kinds of new scales, principally

modal, which had become an important element in his later music.

His way with more traditional harmony had been remarked on by his two Conservatoire teachers, after he gave up on his aspirations to become a virtuoso pianist. His first Professor was a harmony specialist, Émile Durand, who had a respected treatise to his name. Although Debussy's fellow student Maurice Emmanuel claimed that Durand was 'neither interested in Music nor his pupils', the exercises which Debussy completed for him were excellently and thoroughly done. But they were too original and did not conform to the rules! His subsequent Professor of Composition, Ernest Guiraud, was of a similar view: that Debussy had ingenious solutions to composition exercises and much flair; but Conservatoire professors had to steer the challenging course of getting the young composers through exams while encouraging their innovations and talent.

We should perhaps forget his mature style when listening to his earlier compositions, remembering that his earliest popular pieces date from the time when Debussy was still a student. As far as we can see, the *Suite bergamasque*, including 'Clair de lune' as its third movement, was composed in the 1890s, sometime after he left the Conservatoire. Its style, however, rather suggests that it was

conceived somewhat earlier, even perhaps during the time that Debussy spent in Russia, as pianist for Mme von Meck, most celebrated for her correspondence with Tchaikovsky: its middle idea seems decidedly Russian in character.

Most usually detached from its place in the Suite, it has been arranged for all kinds of instruments. The present orchestration, by the conductor of this recording, seems to bring out orchestral textures already suggested by the original piano version. Perhaps there was originally a literary association, the most obvious being Verlaine's poem of the same title (though moonlight was a pretty ubiquitous theme in late-nineteenth-century French poetry). Verlaine's poem is worth quoting as it is certainly relevant to the Masques and Bergamasques of the Commedia dell'arte, who are the subject of Verlaine's poem:

Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et
bergamasques
Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi
Tristes sous leurs déguisements
fantasques.

[Your soul is a chosen landscape
Where charming masked and
bergamasked go,

Playing the lute and dancing, almost
Sad beneath their fanciful disguises.]

Chabrier: Joyeuse Marche

Little wonder that one of the first books on Emmanuel Chabrier (1841 – 1894) was written by none other than Francis Poulenc; they were both country boys at heart. Chabrier was remembered as a stocky fellow from the Auvergne (*un gars Auvergnat*). Poulenc, though born in Paris, was the son of an Aveyronais, and was drawn towards the music of the provinces, buying a property near Vouvray, in the Loire (the wine of its productive vineyard is still on sale). ‘Do I have the nose of a water-drinker?’ he once remarked.

The *Joyeuse Marche* is surely a piece related to Chabrier’s country roots in the Auvergne: a region whose people were renowned for their love of dancing, particularly the *bourrée*. Although Chabrier was largely an auto-didact, one of his talents was to bring open-air music into the concert hall, demonstrating a virtuosic use of the modern orchestra. The lavish illustration on the cover of the 1890 edition of the score represents people dancing and enjoying themselves, at a fairground, circus, or dance-hall perhaps. Its big tune, blurted out on the trombones, is just the kind

of memorable number that you might hear from a circus band, all set with virtuosic and kaleidoscopic orchestration.

In some ways Chabrier deserves the appellation of a ‘Musical Impressionist’ more than is customary in the use of the term, which is to describe the pointillist rippling of the music of both Debussy and Ravel. After all, Chabrier was active in Paris during the heyday of the impressionist painters. He was a friend of the artists Renoir and Édouard Manet (who painted two portraits of him) and amassed an enviable collection of works by several impressionists. One side of Chabrier concurred with the procedures of the impressionists: he was a ‘plein-airiste’ – working in the open-air and depicting outdoor scenes. For his most famous piece, *España*, he noted down themes and rhythms while watching performances in Andalusia, manuscript notebook in hand, and formed them into an evocative Spanish work – which he simply called ‘a piece in F’.

His collection of impressionist paintings included Manet’s unforgettable gem *Un Bar aux Folies Bergère*, portraying a barmaid selling champagne and absinthe to the clients. That painting (now in the Courtauld Institute, in London) somehow epitomised a sea change in the arts pinpointed by

Wagner's wife, Cosima, who had heard some of Chabrier's music and hated it with a passion. For her it represented music in total contrast to Wagner's own, and to Germanic 'high art' in general. She saw the admission of such music as the *Joyeuse Marche* as an unwelcome importation of realism, stemming from popular music and the world of the Café-Concert, the Parisian Cabarets, and the low-life of that city. Such art she saw as totally antipathetic to the world of myth and imagination which German romanticism had explored. For her it represented 'a whole world which makes you shudder' and she could not understand why Chabrier was visiting Wagner in Bayreuth.

But that was the other side of Chabrier. Like Poulenc, he confessed that he may have appeared humorous and a lover of life but in reality he felt things very deeply. This side of him seems to have been at the root of his deep love of the music of Wagner, and in particular of *Tristan und Isolde*. Vincent d'Indy recounted sitting next to him at a performance of that opera in Bayreuth: sobbing profoundly as the music began, he whispered 'for ten years I've been waiting to hear that A on the cellos'!

Chabrier defended himself, and French music in general, in a letter to one of his

publishers, Georges Costallat. Particularly in relation to Berlioz, he wrote,

They say it lacks unity. I reply 'Merde!'
If being unified means being boring, I'd prefer to be 2, 3, 4, 10, or 20 and to have ten colours on my palette and to mix up their different tones.

Ravel: Une Barque sur l'océan

In an autobiographical sketch dating from 1928, Maurice Ravel (1875 – 1937) looked back on *Miroirs*, remembering that the advance in the harmonic complexity shown in these pieces distressed some people who were previously admirers of his music. Certainly, the harmonies of 'Une Barque sur l'océan' are breathtaking. This is no gentle afternoon boating piece, in the manner of Debussy's piano duet 'En bateau' (1886 – 89). This boat, although it begins calmly, is riding a very unpredictable ocean the rhythmic undercurrents of which are captured in surging pairs of chords. In the piano version they are enveloped in an atmosphere – sea spray and gusty winds perhaps – reminiscent of Liszt while in the orchestral version the undertow is stronger and the piece altogether darker, as low brass and wind carry what, in the piano version, is only sustained by the pedal.



Alex Ingram

John Wilson

Composed in 1904 – 05, *Miroirs* was premièred the following year by the Catalan pianist Ricardo Viñes who had perfected the subtle pedalling, and the use of different touches, to bring out the separate layers required by so much of the piano music of both Debussy and Ravel. Later that year Ravel set about the orchestral version, staying with his father in Hermance, beside Lake Geneva. In 1907 its première was given at a Concert Colonne under the baton of Gabriel Pierné. Unlike 'Alborada del gracioso' which is often heard in its orchestral version, 'Une Barque' was not a success with the critics in this guise. Ravel agreed, at once banning its publication and becoming angry when anyone suggested reviving it, as Albert Wolff attempted to do in 1927. There was talk of Ravel re-orchestrating it, but that project did not ever materialise and it was not until 1950, long after Ravel's death, that the orchestral score was finally published.

To modern ears, used to the original piano version, the piece emerges as quite different, darker, mysterious, sometimes threatening and frightening. Somehow the three-note descending melodic motive which pianists can bring out with a more *marcato* touch, gets lost in the orchestral transcription. Listeners must compare the versions and decide which

they prefer. They will derive a good deal of pleasure by doing so.

What did the title *Miroirs* mean, I wonder? All his life fascinated by toys, perhaps Ravel envisaged a magic mirror which could convert images into musical ideas. But that is pure unfounded speculation!

Saint-Saëns: Danse macabre, Op. 40

Everyone knows the Devil has all the best tunes and that he plays the violin. Although the nineteenth century delighted in all kinds of Gothic horrors – especially in France – no other composer distilled death's malevolent antics quite so appealingly as Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921), first in a *mélodie* of 1873, and then in the orchestral piece of the same title, *Danse macabre*, the following year, which he called a Symphonic Poem.

The song sets a complete poem by Henri Cazalis of which selected lines prefaced the orchestral score, describing the Devil tapping his violin bow on the tombstones, dancing while he plays. Skeletons rise from their tombs: you can hear their bones creaking as they run around and dance. At daybreak the cock crows and the macabre vision evaporates. The song was seldom performed on account of its difficulty, though Augusta Holmès gave a memorable rendition of it in

Paris. It was often performed as a piano duet or on two pianos and it was in this way that it was first introduced in London where at first it attracted little attention. It achieved particular success in transcriptions for brass or military bands.

First appearing in the piano accompaniment to the song, the satanic scraping of the violin readily transferred to the double-stopped solo violin, highlighting the age-old 'devil's interval', the tritone, or augmented fourth. To accomplish this, Saint-Saëns employs the unusual technique of retuning the violin strings, known as *scordatura* – literally, 'mistuned' – neatly turning the instrument into the devil's violin. It is the top string – the E – which comes down a semitone to turn the top two strings into the devil's interval, particularly penetrating on the open strings. His other masterstrokes are the evocation of the skeletons by adding a xylophone to the mix, and the striking of midnight, on the harp, to open the night's proceedings. Writing to a would-be performer of the work, he insisted on the inclusion of the xylophone: an effective instrument to portray the dancing skeletons!

For the Devil's best tune, enter Saint-Saëns, master tunesmith! The waltz-melody which pervades the piece is one of the many

winners he penned and its developments are clever in the extreme. Let the words of Cazalis's poem introduce us to Saint-Saëns's diabolic vision; it was, after all, the composer's first inspiration for the piece. Here are the lines he chose to preface the score:

Zig et zig et zig, la mort cri en cadence
Frappant une tombe avec son talon,
La mort à minuit joue un air de danse,
Zig et zig et zag, sur son violon.

Le vent d'hiver souffle, et la nuit est
sombre,
Des gémissements sortent des tilleuls;
Les squelettes blancs vont à travers
l'ombre
Courant et sautant sous leurs grands
linceuls,

Zig et zig et zig, chacun se trémousse,
On entend claquer les os des danseurs,
...

Mais psit! tout à coup on quitte la ronde,
On se pousse, on fuit, le coq a chanté...

[Zig, zig, zig, Death is on the increase,
Striking a tomb with his heel,
Death at midnight plays a dance-tune,
Zig, zig, zag, on his violin.

The winter wind blows, and the night
is dark,
Moans are heard in the linden trees;
White skeletons pass through the gloom,
Running and leaping under their vast
shrouds,

Zig, zig, zig, they're all frisking,
You can hear the cracking of the dancers'
bones,

...

But psst! All of a sudden the circle
breaks,
Pushing one another, they flee, the cock
has crowed...]

Bizet: Suites from 'Carmen'

When he died, rather unexpectedly, during the thirty-third performance of *Carmen* at the Opéra-Comique, Georges Bizet (1838 – 1875) could not have imagined that it would become the most-performed opera ever composed. Many untruths circulated about his death. First of all, he did not die of a broken heart because the critics deemed the opera a failure, and he certainly did not commit suicide for that reason, as a representative of Choudens, his publisher, thought. Exactly what he died of remains

a mystery in modern-day medical terms, but it was not helped by severe underlying conditions exacerbated by his passion for cold-water swimming in which he had indulged the day before his death. Onstage that night, Mme Galli-Marié, singing the role of Carmen, had a premonition that something terrible was going to happen, arriving at the Opéra-Comique in tears. She cancelled the next day's performance.

The reporter of this event was Ernest Guiraud, an intimate friend of Bizet's. He played a hugely important role in the history of *Carmen* after the first run. Another untruth circulating after its première was that it was a total failure; after all, it ran to a handsome number of forty-eight performances. While it is true that there were countless negative criticisms, the most perceptive critics, including Théodore de Banville, judged it to have been a powerful work mounted too soon for the audiences of the Opéra-Comique, a venue often used as a marriage bureau for chaperoned young ladies, and certainly unaccustomed to onstage femicide, not to mention smoking, alcohol abuse, and occasional prostitution.

Its success came partly from abroad, and partly from the Opéra-Comique's advancing from a saccharine repertoire into more

serious operas. Recall that, by 1902, it was mounting Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande*. We should remind ourselves, by the way, that the Opéra-Comique had nothing to do with comic opera, the word *comique* being a false friend of the English word 'comic' and instead deriving from the French word for an actor – a *comédien(ne)*. The statutes of the Opéra-Comique demanded that only works including spoken, acted, sections as well as musical 'numbers' could be performed there. The 1883 revival of *Carmen* put it back in the repertoire, in the Opéra-Comique version in which it has lasted ever since, alongside a fully operatic version.

Here is where Ernest Guiraud stepped in. Any composer whose *opéra-comique* was well enough received would convert it into an opera, not least for international performance as the spoken dialogue was lengthy and opera houses were unused to this tradition. Even though the music might be sung in French, passages of speech were often too difficult for foreign singers. So Guiraud undertook the task of converting *Carmen* into a through-sung opera. Choudens published it, produced orchestral parts and a full score, and in that form it was produced all over the world. That is how the majority of us will have encountered the opera. All one can say is that

if he had survived, Bizet would have added recitatives retaining the Spanish local colour.

He would probably also have made suites along the lines of Guiraud's and also done them differently. But Guiraud, who had several stage works performed in New Orleans, where he was born, was well qualified as both a composer and an orchestrator (in 1892 he published a much-respected treatise on orchestration). When he returned to France, he was appointed as a composition professor at the Paris Conservatoire where one of his first pupils was Debussy. A nice avuncular man, we learn: on the one hand he was quite a strict teacher but also used to play billiards and smoke cigarettes with Debussy and all his life was proud of being his teacher.

His suites in no way follow the trajectory of the opera. There is no death, no dénouement: could that be done without voices? Probably not. But the suites are a good reminder of Bizet's talent for characterisation – and writing memorable tunes. The German conductor Fritz Hoffmann (1873 – ?) reorchestrated Guiraud's suites around 1905, claiming to be more faithful to Bizet's original orchestration. Movements were played by bands all over the world and sung by crowds on the way to outdoor performances

in the South of France (sometimes with a live bullfight). Odd that Guiraud did not really highlight the melody of Carmen's 'Habanera'. John Wilson, taking a cue from Guiraud's orchestration of the 'Séguedille', appropriately gives it to a trumpet.

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Sinfonia of London brings together outstanding musicians for special projects, live and recorded, under its Artistic Director and conductor, John Wilson. Described in the press as 'one of the best ensembles anywhere' (*The Guardian*), the orchestra made its acclaimed live début in 2021 at the BBC Proms and has gone on to appear there every year since. In November 2025 it made its much-praised international début at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, and was named as an Artistic Partner of the Glasshouse, Gateshead. It gives regular concert tours across the UK, cementing its reputation for excellence with 'typically exhilarating performances' (*The Arts Desk*) and five-star reviews. Its much celebrated recording profile on Chandos Records covers a wide range of repertoire, including works by Korngold, Respighi, Ravel, Strauss, Rachmaninoff, Britten, Walton, Bliss, and Rodgers &

Hammerstein. The magazine *BBC Music* declared of the orchestra's recording of works by Respighi that 'Wilson and his hand-picked band of musicians continue to strike gold with almost anything they turn their hands to', while *The Mail on Sunday* found the album of English Music for Strings 'dazzling... some of the finest string playing ever put on disc by a British orchestra'. Their most recent recording is the second in the orchestra's series devoted to orchestral works by Sir William Walton, the first, centred round the Violin Concerto, having earned universal acclaim. Alongside outstanding reviews ('leaves music critics ready to die for joy', in the words of *iNews*), the orchestra has received five *BBC Music Magazine* Awards in five years and, in 2022, a *Gramophone* Award. In 2023, *The Sunday Times* stated that 'Sinfonia of London sets the gold standard – an orchestra of generals that takes the unfashionable, the obscure, the overlooked, and makes it unmissable'. www.sinfoniaoflondon.com

Born in Gateshead and since 2011 a Fellow of the Royal College of Music where he studied composition and conducting, **John Wilson** is now in demand at the highest level across the globe and has over the past thirty years conducted many of the world's finest

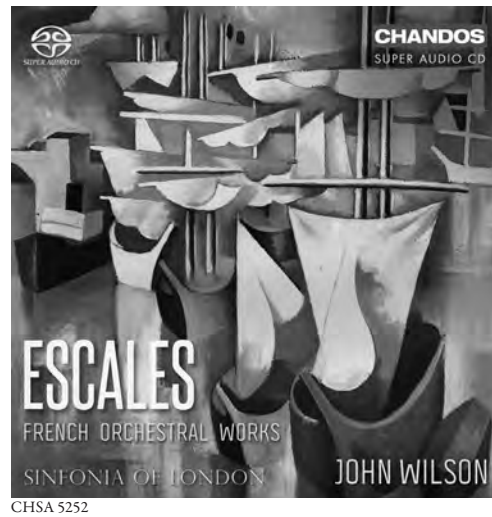
orchestras. In 2018 he relaunched Sinfonia of London, which *The Arts Desk* described as 'the most exciting thing currently happening on the British orchestral scene.' His much-anticipated BBC Proms début with this orchestra, in 2021, was praised by *The Guardian* as 'truly outstanding' and admired by *The Times* for its 'revelatory music-making.' They are now highly sought-after across the UK, regularly returning to the BBC Proms, Aldeburgh Festival, and London's Barbican Centre among other festivals. Their large and varied discography having received near universal critical acclaim, in the autumn of 2025 they released their twenty-ninth album since 2019. Their CDs have earned several awards, including numerous *BBC Music Magazine* Awards: for recordings of Korngold's Symphony in

F sharp (2020), Respighi's Roman Trilogy (2021), Dutilleux's *Le Loup* (2022), Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* (2023), and works by Vaughan Williams, Howells, Delius, and Elgar (2024), a disc which won the Orchestral Award and was chosen Recording of the Year. *The Observer* described the Respighi recording as 'Massive, audacious and vividly played' and *The Times* declared it one of the three 'truly outstanding accounts of this trilogy' of all time, alongside those by Toscanini (1949) and Muti (1984). In March 2019, John Wilson was awarded the prestigious Distinguished Musician Award of the Incorporated Society of Musicians for his services to music and in 2021 was appointed Henry Wood Chair of Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music.

John Wilson and Sinfonia of London, at Symphony Hall,
Birmingham, 26 November 2022



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Chandos 24-bit / 96 kHz recording

The Chandos policy of being at the forefront of technology is now further advanced by the use of 24-bit / 96 kHz recording. In order to reproduce the original waveform as closely as possible we use 24-bit, as it has a dynamic range that is up to 48 dB greater and up to 256 times the resolution of standard 16-bit recordings. Recording at the 44.1 kHz sample rate, the highest frequencies generated will be around 22 kHz. That is 2 kHz higher than can be heard by the typical human with excellent hearing. However, we use the 96 kHz sample rate, which will translate into the potentially highest frequency of 48 kHz. The theory is that, even though we do not hear it, audio energy exists, and it has an effect on the lower frequencies which we do hear, the higher sample rate thereby reproducing a better sound.

A Hybrid SA-CD is made up of two separate layers, one carries the normal CD information and the other carries the SA-CD information. This hybrid SA-CD can be played on standard CD players, but will only play normal stereo. It can also be played on an SA-CD player reproducing the stereo or multi-channel DSD layer as appropriate.

Microphones

Thuesson: CM 402 (main sound)

Schoeps: MK22 / MK4 / MK6

DPA: 4006 & 4011

Neumann: U89

CM 402 microphones are hand built by the designer, Jörgen Thuesson, in Sweden.

Recording producers Jonathan Cooper (November 2023) and Brian Pidgeon (other sessions)

Sound engineer Ralph Couzens

Assistant engineer Alexander James

Editor Alexander James

A & R administrator Karen Marchlik

Recording venue Church of St Augustine, Kilburn, London; 7 November 2023 (*Danse macabre*, *Carmen* Suite tracks 6, 7, 8, 12, 17), 12 January 2024 (*Clair de lune*), 30 July 2024 (*Joyeuse Marche*), 31 July 2024 (*L'Apprenti sorcier*, *Une Barque sur l'océan*), and 7 January 2025 (*Carmen* Suite tracks 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16)

Front cover *Une Barque sur l'océan* (1920), drawing in gouache by D. Arguyrelly, who took his inspiration from Ravel's work of that name

Back cover Photograph of John Wilson © Astrid Ackermann

Design and typesetting Cass Cassidy

Booklet editor Finn S. Gundersen

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Country of origin UK

CHANDOS DIGITAL

CHSA 5379

CHANDOS

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FRENCH ORCHESTRAL FAVOURITES

- | | | |
|------|--|-------------------|
| 1 | PAUL DUKAS (1865–1935)
<i>L'Apprenti sorcier</i> (1896–97) | 10:35 |
| 2 | ACHILLE-CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862–1918)
<i>Clair de lune</i> (c. 1890, revised 1905) | 4:31 |
| 3 | EMMANUEL CHABRIER (1841–1894)
<i>Joyeuse Marche</i> (1883, orchestrated 1888) | 3:58 |
| 4 | MAURICE RAVEL (1875–1937)
<i>Une Barque sur l'océan</i> , M 43 / 3 (1904–05) | 6:54 |
| 5 | CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS (1835–1921)
<i>Danse macabre</i> , Op. 40 (1874)* | 6:35 |
| 6-17 | GEORGES BIZET (1838–1875)
<i>Suites from 'Carmen'</i> (c. 1885)* | 35:39
TT 68:35 |

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Chandos Records Ltd,
Chandos House,
1 Commerce Park, Colchester,
Essex CO2 8HX, UK.
enquiries@chandos.net
Contact:
Naxos Deutschland Musik & Video
Vertriebs-GmbH, Gruber Str. 46b,
DE-85586 Poing, Germany.
info@naxos.de

Sinfonia of London / Wilson

FRENCH ORCHESTRAL FAVOURITES

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SINFONIA OF LONDON
CHARLIE LOVELL-JONES · JOHN MILLS* leaders
JOHN WILSON



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All tracks available
in stereo and
multi-channel

This Hybrid SA-CD
can be played on most
standard CD players.