



BEZALY BRAUTIGAM

masterworks for flute and piano by
POULENC · MARTIN · REINECKE
MARTINŮ · MESSIAEN



SUPER AUDIO CD

POULENC, FRANCIS (1899–1963)

SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO (1956–57) *(Wilhelm Hansen)* 10'42

- 1 I. *Allegro malinconico* 4'06
- 2 II. *Cantilena. Assez lent* 3'20
- 3 III. *Presto giocoso* 3'08

MARTIN, FRANK (1890–1974)

4 BALLADE for flute and piano (1939) *(Universal Edition)* 7'11

REINECKE, CARL (1824–1910)

SONATA 'UNDINE' FOR FLUTE AND PIANO, Op. 167 (1882) 18'20

- 5 I. *Allegro* 6'00
- 6 II. *Intermezzo. Allegretto vivace* 3'14
- 7 III. *Andante tranquillo* 3'24
- 8 IV. *Finale. Allegro molto agitato ed appassionato, quasi Presto* 5'27

MARTINŮ, BOHUSLAV (1890–1959)

SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO (1945)

16'13

(Associated Music Publishers, Inc., New York)

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|----|-----------------------------------|------|
| 9 | I. <i>Allegro moderato</i> | 5'54 |
| 10 | II. <i>Adagio</i> | 5'28 |
| 11 | III. <i>Allegro poco moderato</i> | 4'41 |

MESSIAEN, OLIVIER (1908–92)

12 LE MERLE NOIR for flute and piano (1951) *(Alphonse Leduc)*

5'28

TT: 59'23

SHARON BEZALY *flute*

RONALD BRAUTIGAM *piano*

Francis Poulenc – a composer of sacred and absolute music? It will have been difficult for anyone who had experienced the ‘Sturm und Drang’-period works by this French composer (b. 1899) to understand this conversion from ‘Saul’ to ‘Paul’. The influences on Poulenc’s work as a composer did, after all, include Erik Satie (to whom he dedicated his *Rapsodie nègre* [1917], a work that attracted considerable attention) and Igor Stravinsky (who helped him to find a publisher); and it was not without reason that he became a member of the ‘Groupe des Six’ which, with Jean Cocteau as its mentor, had led the fight against academic traditions, late Romanticism and impressionism. But the fact that Poulenc turned increasingly to more ‘venerable’ forms, especially during the 1930s, did not mean that he adopted their conventions unquestioningly. He interpreted sonata form, for instance, wholly in the light of his own aesthetic beliefs – which meant that he opted to use a wide variety of structural elements and a melody-oriented style full of lightness, transparency and sonic refinement rather than organic sonata form with its web of motivic and thematic relationships. Poulenc composed his *Sonata for Flute and Piano* in Cannes between December 1956 and March 1957, the time of the première of his very successful opera *Les dialogues des Carmélites*. The sonata was written in response to a commission from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, who had passed away in 1953, was one of the most important patrons in the history of music, and it was to her memory that Poulenc (who had not known her personally) dedicated his sonata. In June 1957 the piece was premièred at the Strasbourg Festival by Jean-Pierre Rampal, with the composer himself at the piano.

The striking E minor main theme of the first movement – which, despite its *Allegro malinconico* designation is not overly melancholy – starts with a broken chord, which continues in a chromatically descending line. This forms the

beginning of a mercurial interplay of tonal ambivalences and abrupt contrasts, whilst weighty piano chords announce a pastoral D major intermezzo in 3/4-time. The magical second movement (*Assez lent*) focuses upon a wide-ranging B flat minor *cantilena*; and in the *Presto giocoso*, which opens with a *tutti* stroke, the flute has the chance to sparkle, glitter and whirl to its heart's delight above a motoric piano *staccato*; only briefly is the ultimately unwavering march of joy disturbed by a more intimate subsidiary theme and, all of a sudden, by a profound episode (*mélancolique*).

Poulenc systematically provided almost every instrument of the orchestra with a sonata and, similarly, **Frank Martin**, born near Geneva in 1890, produced a series of single-movement works for solo instrument(s) and accompaniment over the course of his career. He gave these the title 'Ballade', a conscious allusion to the formally unconstrained and highly Romantic poetry of Ossian. Admittedly, the occasion for which he wrote the *Ballade for Flute and Piano* was more prosaic: it was written in 1939 as a compulsory work at an international music competition in Geneva. As might be expected, it is a *tour de force* of skilful virtuosity – not just on the part of the performer but also from the composer. Chromatic lines and twelve-tone sequences, abrupt intervallic leaps and roaming melismas, sudden changes of mood, rhythms that disguise the metre, irrepressible triplet cascades, a virtuosic solo cadenza and thorough exploitation of the instrument's entire range (especially of the lower register, above *ostinato* piano chords): all of these are combined with a free, episodic structure that does the title 'Ballade' full justice and, together with the work's compelling sense of drama, account for a popularity that goes far beyond what its original purpose might lead one to imagine. It comes as no surprise that the work was soon to be found in alternative arrangements. In 1941 the composer arranged it for flute, strings and piano, although two years earlier, in 1939, Mar-

tin's friend and champion Ernest Ansermet had already made a version for flute and large orchestra.

Through his work as conductor and arranger **Carl Reinecke**, too, promoted a number of composers; nowadays we hardly remember that in his own time he himself was also a very popular composer. Born in Altona, then in Denmark, in 1824, he received tuition from his father, a music teacher, and was thus soon pointed in the direction of a musical career. In the case of the young Carl, in whom Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy in 1843 observed a 'quite definite talent for composition', this paternal encouragement fell on fertile soil. Concert tours soon took him throughout Europe; from 1846 until 1848 he was court pianist in Copenhagen. His piano playing was admired by Franz Liszt, no less; indeed Liszt entrusted Reinecke with teaching his daughters Blandine and Cosima the piano. As time went on he accumulated other distinguished pupils, among them Edvard Grieg, Christian Sinding and Hugo Riemann. From the middle of the century onwards, Reinecke became known above all as a conductor: for 35 years, from 1860 to 1895, he conducted the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts

Reinecke's compositions include a number of 'fairy-tale poems' for various instrumental combinations, some with texts by the composer. These include *Snow White*, *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Cinderella*. He shared a Romantic predilection for subjects from fairy-tales and sagas with Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Mendelssohn's pupils Niels W. Gade and William Sterndale Bennett, who had also treated maritime subjects (*Melusine*, *The Naiades*). Reinecke's '*Undine*' *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, Op. 167 (1882) belongs among these works as well as being a significant contribution to nineteenth-century chamber music for flute. It is based on a story of the same name by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué, published in 1811. The story – concerning a mermaid who marries a young knight and thereby acquires a human soul, but loses her heart as a conse-

quence of his infidelity and finally avenges herself by means of a kiss of death – has inspired a wide range of musical settings by numerous composers, from E. T. A. Hoffmann by way of Albert Lortzing all the way to Hans Werner Henze. (It was evidently with little success that Jean Cocteau urged in 1918: ‘Enough of clouds, waves, aquariums, water-sprites and nocturnal scents; what we need is music of the earth, everyday music.’)

The assumption that this is a piece of programme music is, however, only partly correct: Reinecke was enough of a Mendelssohnian to allow the creation of generalized mood images precedence over an overly conspicuous depiction of the story-line. And thus he proceeded a work which – not least owing to the incessant ‘flowing’ and ‘rippling’ motifs in the accompaniment – is clearly related to the story of Undine but is nevertheless convincing as a sonata in its own right. The first movement, *Allegro*, starts with cheeky, untroubled broken chords that are joined by a meditative second theme that moves within a narrow range. The main theme dominates the motivic working-out in the virtuosic development section; the shortened recapitulation presents the second theme in E major before immediately ending *pianissimo* in the E minor coda. Broken chords take the music onwards: they characterize the theme of the exuberant second movement, an intermezzo in the nimble manner of a Mendelssohn scherzo. It includes two trios: the first of these is for piano alone, whilst in the second a lyrical *misterioso* cantilena is heard above triplet figures in the accompaniment. The slurred seconds and intervals of a sixth in the main theme of the three-part *Andante tranquillo* allude to the second trio of the previous movement; magically, the thematic elements unfold and are stated with great nobility. In a *Molto vivace* middle section the piano’s triplets crystallize into an urgent murmuring. The finale begins with a ‘diabolical’ tritone from the flute, and this points to the direction this increasingly passionate rondo will take: it is all about

anxiety, rage and revenge; waves of piano notes beat wildly, furrowed by strained flute leaps; small islands of piercing lamentation are swept away by motifs thrown out *con tutta la forza*. In the end we seem actually to hear the deadly kiss – after which a *più lento* coda produces an astonishing release of tension. In light, thematic reminiscences the work dies away, its last earthly passions borne away by gentle waves.

Bohuslav Martinů, born in Bohemia in 1890, was a pupil of Josef Suk and Albert Roussel; his extensive œuvre displays a number of stylistic influences, among them the musical language of his Czech homeland and also Parisian modernism. In 1945 – four years after he had fled to America to escape the Nazis – he composed his *Sonata for Flute and Piano*, which is dedicated to Georges Laurent, long-time solo flautist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The first movement (*Allegro moderato*) is characterized by a main theme which begins as a rhythmically identical major-key variant of Dowland's famous *Flow my teares*. However coincidental this may be, it is nonetheless symptomatic: the exuberant, sometimes baroque-sounding motivic language has no place for tears but gives rise to an extremely vigorous sonata movement in which the piano plays a prominent role alongside the virtuosic writing for the flute – not least because the piano alone presents the main theme in the extensive introduction.

The *Adagio* begins in a contrapuntal tangle of flute melodies and an increasingly chordal piano part, after which it becomes more flowing – just like in a baroque diminution. Here, too, there is an extensive, agitated piano solo section before a passage which leads into a section with the character of a development. A taut dialogue between the two instruments prepares us for the recapitulation of the main theme. Martinů claimed that the inspiration for the main theme of the last movement (*Allegro poco moderato*) came from the cry of a

bird (a whip-poor-will [*Caprimulgus vociferus*]) that he had found injured. Once again introduced by the piano, this is a breathtaking, rhythmically turbulent hunt, ending lightly in the upper register – a metaphor for the heights that the bird, thanks to the Martinůs' care, could once more attain.

A bird and a flute – throughout history a suggestive liaison that probably found its most striking expression in Mozart's *Magic Flute*. (Moreover, since ancient times birdsong has been regarded as an ideal to be striven after by the human voice – which in turn was seen as the ideal for instrumental performance.) The composer who integrated birdsong into his work in the most substantial way was **Olivier Messiaen**, born in Avignon in 1908. For him, birds were 'the finest musicians on our planet'; their song a model for praising the Lord.

The first work in which Messiaen concentrated upon the song of a single bird was *Le merle noir* (*The Blackbird*; 1951) for flute and piano. Like Martin's *Ballade*, this piece was written for a competition, in this case at the Paris Conservatoire. Another similarity with Martin's *Ballade* is that it is far more than an 'occasional piece': it is the prototype of a series of works in which Messiaen extended his transcription technique – for example, he not only painstakingly noted down the complex song of the birds but also tried to imitate them instrumentally, but also drew upon the relevant topographical images. In *Le merle noir* this takes place in an expanded reprise form: a flute cadenza (*avec fantaisie*) is followed by a canon that thickens harmonically and ends with a trill passage; this is repeated in modified form and concludes brilliantly in a rhythmically agile final section which, as with Martinů, reaches for the sky.

Messiaen was aware that, despite all of its subtlety, this approximation to the 'singers of God' could only be a distant one: 'Rilke speaks divinely: "Music: breath of the statues, perhaps: silence of the pictures. O language where lan-

guages cease.” Birdsong exists on a plane even beyond that poet’s dream. It is certainly very far beyond the musician who tries to notate it. No matter!

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Described by The Times (UK) as ‘God’s gift to the flute’, **Sharon Bezaly** was chosen as ‘Instrumentalist of the Year’ by the prestigious *Klassik Echo* in Germany in 2002 and as ‘Young Artist of the Year’ at the Cannes Classical Awards in 2003. *Classics Today* has hailed her as a flautist ‘virtually without peer in the world today’ and *International Record Review* wrote: ‘Her recordings and concert appearances are typically more than simply triumphs: they are defining artistic events.’ One of the very rare ‘full-time’ international flute soloists, Sharon Bezaly has inspired renowned composers as diverse as Sofia Gubaidulina, Kalevi Aho and Sally Beamish to write for her. To date, she has seventeen dedicated concertos which she performs worldwide. A member of BBC Radio 3’s New Generation Artists’ Scheme during the period 2006–08, Sharon Bezaly was also the first wind player to be elected artist in residence (2007–08) by the Residentie Orchestra, The Hague. Other recent highlights include recitals at the Wigmore Hall, London and Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, concerts with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra as well as appearances at the Musikverein in Vienna, at the BBC Proms, and at Sydney Opera House as part of a tour with the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

Sharon Bezaly’s wide-ranging recordings on BIS have won her the highest accolades, including the Diapason d’or (*Diapason*), Choc de la Musique (*Monde de la Musique*), Editor’s Choice (*Gramophone*), Chamber Choice of the Month (*BBC Music Magazine*) and Stern des Monats (*Fono Forum*). She plays on a 24-carat gold flute, specially built for her by the Muramatsu team, Japan. Her

perfect control of circular breathing (taught by Aurèle Nicolet) liberates her from the limitations of the flute as a wind instrument and enables her to reach new peaks of musical interpretation, as testified by the comparison to David Oistrakh and Vladimir Horowitz made in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.
For further information please visit www.sharonbezaly.com

Ronald Brautigam, one of Holland's leading musicians, is remarkable not only for his virtuosity and musicality but also for the eclectic nature of his musical interests. He studied in Amsterdam, London and the USA – with Rudolf Serkin. In 1984 he was awarded the Nederlandse Muziekprijs, the highest Dutch musical award.

Ronald Brautigam performs regularly with leading European orchestras under distinguished conductors such as Riccardo Chailly, Charles Dutoit, Bernard Haitink, Frans Brüggen, Philippe Herreweghe, Christopher Hogwood, Andrew Parrott, Bruno Weil, Iván Fischer and Edo de Waart. In the field of chamber music he has maintained a musical partnership with the violinist Isabelle van Keulen for close to 20 years.

Besides his performances on modern instruments Ronald Brautigam has developed a great passion for the fortepiano, appearing with leading orchestras such as the Orchestra of the Eighteenth Century, Tafelmusik, the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Hanover Band, Freiburger Barockorchester, Concerto Copenhagen and l'Orchestre des Champs-Élysées.

In 1995 Ronald Brautigam began his association with BIS. Among the more than 30 titles released so far are Mendelssohn's piano concertos (with the Amsterdam Sinfonietta) and, on the fortepiano, the complete piano works of Mozart and Haydn. Also on the fortepiano, Brautigam is currently recording a complete series of the solo piano music by Beethoven, which has been described in the

American magazine *Fanfare* as 'a Beethoven piano-sonata cycle that challenges the very notion of playing this music on modern instruments, a stylistic paradigm shift.' His ongoing cycle of Beethoven's piano concertos, on modern piano, has likewise been warmly received, with instalments receiving both an Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* and, in 2010, a MIDEM Classical Award.
For further information please visit www.ronaldbrautigam.com

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INSTRUMENTARIUM

Flute: Muramatsu 24 carat gold with B foot joint

Grand Piano: Steinway D

RECORDING DATA

Recording: June 2008 at Nybrokajen 11 (the former Academy of Music), Stockholm, Sweden
Piano technician: Carl Wahren
Producer and sound engineer: Ingo Petry

Equipment: Neumann microphones; RME Octamic D microphone preamplifier and high resolution A/D converter; Sequoia Workstation; Pyramix DSD Workstation; B&W Nautilus 802 loudspeakers; STAX headphones

Post-production: Editing: Christian Starke
Mixing: Ingo Petry

Executive producer: Robert Suff

BOOKLET AND GRAPHIC DESIGN

Cover text: © Horst A. Scholz 2010
Translations: Andrew Barnett (English); Jean-Pascal Vachon (French)
Typesetting, lay-out: Andrew Barnett, Compact Design Ltd, Saltdean, Brighton, England

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MASTERWORKS FOR FLUTE AND PIANO II

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- BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ (1890–1959)
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- 12) Le merle noir 5'28

TT: 59'23

SHARON BEZALY *flute*
RONALD BRAUTIGAM *piano*

Recording producer and
sound engineer: Ingo Petry

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