

Phil's Classical Reviews

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“Inner Chambers: Royal Court Music of Louis XIV” Les Ordinaires (Naxos)

“Les Ordinaires” is composed of three U.S. baroque specialists: Leela Breithaupt on the flûte traversière (transverse flute); Erica Rubis on viola da gamba; and David Walker on theorbo. They take their name from the “Ordinaries to the King,” the trio of musicians who were assigned specifically to the bed chamber of King Louis XIV of France. “Inner Chambers,” seen in that light, has a double meaning of music for the retirement-to-bed ritual of a monarch as well as music that goes right to the other “inner chambers,” those of the heart.

The aristocrats of that time understood the dichotomy of inner turmoil versus a calm, poised outer façade. Accordingly, the French composers of the day used trills and other ornaments essentially for expressive, emotional purposes. They favored strong down beats, and played the down-bow notes longer than the weaker up-bow notes, a practice known as *notes inégales* (“unequal notes”), which imparts a smoothly swung, jazzy rhythm to passages where it occurs.

Subtlety of phrasing and expression is particularly important in pieces based on poetic texts. In the setting of “*Je sens naître en mon Coeur*” (I feel I am born again in my heart) by Michel Pignolet de Montéclair, for instance, trills suggest the emotions of a fluttering heart, while downward leaps describe the effect of a



Bach: the Six Cello Suites Revisited Toke Møldrup, cellist (Bridge Records)

The extraordinary Danish cellist Toke Møldrup gives us an exciting and intriguing take on the Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello by J.S. Bach. Inspired by a deep reverence for Bach and the tradition of which he was the culmination, Møldrup asks searching questions about what Bach’s intentions were in the six suites. And he has the pervasive technique to back up the answers!

Proportion is just one of the answers. Bach was the end-product of a theology-based tradition that saw the universe itself in terms of perfect harmonious proportions. For instance, why *six* suites? Well, the number 6 is a perfect number, divisible as it is by 1, 2, and 3, the sum of which is the number itself. And Bach’s abiding quest for ideal proportion doesn’t end here.

Performing a Baroque suite on a mere four strings requires a superior technique on an instrument that had only recently been freed from its traditional role in the basso continuo, the improvised bass line that supported the melody. Vivaldi had written concertos for the cello that made it the ostensible equal of the violin as a solo instrument. Bach went a step further in teaching the instrument how to dance and sing.

All the suites are set out in the same pattern: Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, a “*galanterie*” or complimentary dance and its



“American Premieres,” Music for Flute, Viola, Harp – Cosmos Trio (MSR Classics)

There’s a lot of attractive music on this program, as befits a genre that had roots in 18th Century France at a time when the avowed purpose of music was to refresh the spirits of performer and audience alike and the sound derived from the unique combination of instruments blown, bowed, and plucked or struck with keys was much admired. Claude Debussy’s 1915 Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp sought to recapture that ethos, but for many years it remained pretty much the sole item of its kind in the repertoire. Until just recently, that is, when the emergence of such groups as the Cosmos Trio led composers to rediscover the charms of the genre.

This trio, consisting of Katherine Borst Jones, flute; Mary E. M. Harris, viola; and Jeanne Norton, harp, have been quite active in commissioning new works from American composers. The six works on this program, apparently all recording premieres, bear witness to the genre’s enduring vitality.

Petite Suite (2007) by the late Stephen Paulus may evoke the memory of a similarly titled work by Debussy, but the lean, angular sound, the rhythms, and the lyricism are all Paulus, and all very much American. The 11-minute work is a marvel of condensed form, ending in an upsurge of joy in the finale that dispels the momentary gloom of the middle movement, titled “With an Air

command to a lover to avert her eyes from the speaker.

Several of the works presented here are in the form of the French suite of dances (also known as a *concert*) that is so familiar to us in the suites of J. S. Bach. The Premier Concert (1722) by Francois Couperin consists of a Prélude, Allemande, Sarabande, Gavotte, and Gigue, *un-typically* followed by a Menuet en Trio in the final position that was usually reserved for the livelier Gigue (“jig” to you). A less standard organization, especially in its choice of *galanteries*, or optional dances, is the Deuxième Concert (1720) by Montéclair that has the following movements: Prélude, Allemande, Courante, Rondeau tendrement, Plainte (lament), Sarabande, Rondeau, Le Rémouleur, and Air. “*Rémouleur*” evokes both the cry of the street vendor who made his living sharpening knives and scissors, and also the hissing and grinding of his wheel.

The instruments played by Les Ordinaires and pictured on the booklet cover, call for some description. The “traverso” or *flûte traversière* played by Breithaupt is tuned, as are the other instruments, to the low French baroque pitch of A=392, which gives this particular instrument a mellow tone that enables it to better harmonize with the others. The bass viol played by Rubis is the low voice of the viola da gamba family, here based on an English model of 1703. Walker’s theorbo after 17th century Italian models is a member of the lute family with a rich, authoritative sound. Its extremely long neck would seem to give it a range more in common with a harpsichord and to make it all the more difficult to finger.

The emphasis in the music on this album, as in the French baroque in general, is on style, fluidity, and character, elements Les Ordinaires are quite adept at providing.

“double” (Menuets in Suites 1-2, Bourées in 3-4, Gavottes in 5-6), and a concluding Gigue or “jig.” The difference in the way Bach treats these movements from one suite to the next has a lot to do with the essential nature of each work.

The way Bach characterizes these movements is often contrary to our expectations. He does this right from the beginning in the Prelude to Suite I, with the arpeggiated chords that give this music its distinctive character. It is followed by an Allemande that is more passionate than a stately old dance has a right to be. In Suite V, the Prelude is the most emotionally charged of the set, with a darkness that sets the tone for the entire suite. Its Courante seems bleaker than any gliding dance in quick triple meter should be, setting us up for the Sarabande, with its Passion-like pathos. For the Prelude of Suite VI, on the other hand, he gives us a tripping, light-hearted dance where we might expect a more serious utterance. Well, you get the idea....

The generally dark tone and the rhythmic vitality Møldrup cultivates in these suites helps put the dance movements over in a solid manner. One of the great surprises here comes at the very end of the program, and it gives meaning to the title “The Six Cello Suites Revisited.” Møldrup joins forces here with his colleagues, violinists Elizabeth Zeuthen Schneider and Kristine Zeuthen Schneider and chamber organist Viggo Mangor, who arranged the music. The object was to turn the score of Suite I into three separate layers – melody, chordal structure, and bass line – and then fill in the gaps in the interest of re-imagining the solo cello suite in terms of a trio sonata with a basso continuo.

Møldrup describes the process as similar to restoring an old building, “peeling off the decorative layers and rebuilding the hidden structural material in order to ensure a solid foundation.” I’m not sure I haven’t over-simplified the process, but the end result is undeniably attractive. Presumably, what Møldrup and his

of Melancholy,” giving all three players an opportunity to exult in an ending that seems to embody the spirit of a fresh daybreak.

“Beautiful, Sweet, Delicate” (2006) by Andrew Boysen, Jr. was admittedly so titled after the composer had given up searching for a phrase or word that would sum his original objective. Curiously, while listening to this harmonically rich, exotic work in a single movement, I was struck by its similarity in mood to the landscape paintings of the poet/painters of T’ang Dynasty China in which you sense a spirit, something unseen, between the rocks and trees and the surrounding mist.

Trio in Four Movements (2006) embodies the best qualities in Libby Larsen, including the spontaneity of her melodies, which are always well-supported to make their best impression. The last of the untitled movements gives the members of the Cosmos Trio their best opportunity to really strut their stuff, which includes sensational flutter-tonguing by the flute, large chords and harmonics from the harp, and bouncy spiccato by the viola,

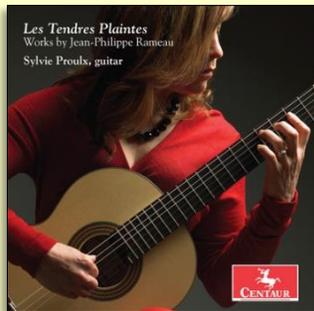
Letter from Home (2011, rev. 2013) by Donald Harris is a setting of a free-verse poem by Jeremy Glazier, expressing the ambivalent feelings someone has on receiving a letter that evokes experiences he would prefer to forget. I do not like the vocal setting for two sopranos in this work. It strikes me as very unattractive for its shrill tones and strained tessituras – things I often find unappealing in classically sung English verse. The poignancy comes across well enough in the instrumental passages, so that the work might have functioned better as purely instrumental, perhaps prefaced by spoken verse.

I’ve no such reservations about Dale Warland’s “Arise, my love” (2007), inspired by the well-known verses from The Song of Songs. The exquisite lyrical beauty of the slowly unfolding instrumental setting perfectly captures the mood, and even something of the near eastern setting, in “Arise, my love, my fair

Who are these guys?



Watch for my Spring Special 2018 column, coming soon, and find out who they are and why they're smiling!



"Les Tendres Plaintes," Music of Jean-Philippe Rameau
Sylvie Proulx, guitar (Centaur)

Sylvie Proulx, the talented young Canadian virtuosa whose warm guitar sound makes her a welcome presence on both the French and English broadcast networks as well as in live recitals, shows her ability in *Les Tendres Plaintes*, works by the great Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764). Like many other composers, Rameau did not write any original guitar works, and his reputation on that instrument is based solely on the many excellent transcriptions of his keyboard music made by guitarists over the years, beginning with Andres Segovia and continuing (on the present album) with Jean-Francois Delcamp, John Duarte, Venancio Garcia Velasco, Stéphane Nogrette, and Proulx herself.

Two types of pieces are heard in this program: dances, often with their "doubles," or variations, and deftly sketched character pieces. The latter, a specialty of Rameau as

friends do with Suite I could be applied to any of the other five suites.

One very curious thing about the recordings, which were produced and engineered by Mangor, is the presence of a light percussive sound in all the tracks. My best guess is that it results from the cellist pressing the strings against the fret board, a sound normally inaudible but captured here because of a close microphone placement. After a while, I learned to ignore it for the sake of the music, and I hope you will too.

one, and come away."

Stephen Main's Columbus Triptych (2006), like the wood panel paintings of medieval times, bases its immediate appeal on the interconnectedness of three contrasted and connected movements. The finale, marked Fugato with energy, allows all three instruments to show what they can do, with bright tones in the flute and vital rhythms in the viola, saving the harp glissandi for the very end, where they can make their best impression.



"Earthly Baroque" – Musicians of the Old Post Road
(Centaur)

Musicians of the Old Post Road take their name from America's first "highway," connecting Boston and New York as early as the 1670's. Performing at historical sites along the route and at various festivals, the Musicians do a great job connecting present-day listeners with our rich baroque past. Regular members are Susanne Stumpf, traverso; Sarah Darling, violin; Marcia Cassidy, viola; Daniel Ryan, cello; and Michael Bahmann, harpsichord. Joined here by guest artist Jesse Irons, violin, they show an obvious affinity for music of that era evoking the sounds of the natural world. Hence the title of the album, implying that the music of the baroque can be inspired by earthly as well as heavenly sources.

The program begins with Sonata in Imitation of Birds by William Williams, 1675-1701. (That's right, no typo!) Williams was an English contemporary of Henry Purcell,



"Fantasie," Music for Violin & Harp
The Aurora Duo play Donizetti, Hovhaness, Saint-Saëns (MSR)

Imagine my surprise to discover this new release was actually the debut album (©1998 4-Tay, Inc.) of the Aurora Duo, consisting of Donna Fairbanks, violin, and Lysa Rytting, harp, that I'd previously reviewed when MSR made it available in 2010. Well, the really good recordings are good forever, and this one proves no exception. Upon re-auditioning it, I decided I couldn't do better than repeat exactly what I said back then, which is just what follows below ==>

[Fairbanks and Rytting] perform a choice repertoire for a highly attractive but all-too seldom heard instrumental combo. They perform with style, a nice mutual rapport, and *plenty* of melodic beauty. Without demeaning them in the least, I would characterize their programs as very relaxing to listen to, which is almost the last thing you expect in concert life today.

Three of these recordings are world

it was with his contemporary François Couperin, include such delights as *La Triomphante* (The Triumphant), cast as a rondeau in double time with a reprise; *La Rappel des Oiseaux* (The Calling of the Birds) with its imitations of birdsongs, *Les Tourbillons* (The Whirlwinds), *L'Indifférente* (The Feckless, a character study in contrasts), and *La Boiteuse* (The Topsy One) with halting measures appropriate to its subject). *Les Tendres Plaintes* (Tender Lovers' Laments) captures the gentle pathos of its title.

Transcribing harpsichord pieces for the guitar takes skill and discretion. The range of the guitar and its ability to play a number of notes at a time are more limited than the harpsichord. In French baroque music, in particular, the many ornaments within the line are more difficult for the guitar and pose a special challenge for the guitarist to explore. Compromises, in the interest of preserving as much ornamentation as possible, have included weakening voice leading by having to change octaves and omitting notes in chordal passages. As Proulx observes, losses in some areas are amply compensated in others, particularly considering the guitar's greater expressive abilities that include vibrato and the ability to handle dynamic and textural contrasts. And what she says, she backs up in vibrant performances.

Proulx does a particularly fine job characterizing the various dance pieces, including the Rigaudon (a lightly running or hopping dance in 2/2 or 4/4 time), Gavotte (originally an energetic dance with much leaping), Sarabande (a slow dance of Spanish origin, often highly ornamented and frequently very moving), and the Menuet, "Queen of Dances," with its characteristic small steps, alternately advancing and retreating, and its graceful formal contours. Her performance in her own transcription of Gavotte avec les Doubles from *Nouvelles Suites de Pièces de Clavecin* (1726/1727) calls for special commendation.

whom he rivaled in *short-gevity*. He lived long enough to pen this exquisite work in which traverse flute and violin obviously relish the choice birdsong imitations.

The Austrian-Bohemian composer Heinrich Biber (1644-1704) is included here in a *Sonata Representativa* in which we hear imitations of the worlds of nature and man that include a Nightingale, a Cuckoo, a Hen, and a stirring March of Musketeers that Porthos, Athos and Aramis would not have found shabby!

Traverse flutist Suzanne Stumpf finds much felicity in Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto in D major, Op. 10, No. 3, the ever-popular "*il Gardellino*" (Goldfinch), particularly in the slow movement, *Cantabile*, in its evocation of the night's soft enchantment.

Gregor Joseph Werner (1693-1766) is best-known for his *Musicalischer Instrumental-Calendar* (1748), of which November is depicted here in falling octaves and sinuous figurations passed between the violins at the very opening, conveying a feeling of desolation. And, oh yes, there's a windy storm at sea in the 4th movement and the slow creaking of an old mill in the 6th.

The French are heard from in the haunting sound of a nightingale in love, conveyed by the traverso, in François Couperin's *Le Rossignol-en-amour* and the sounds evocative of a whole forest of songbirds in Jean-Philippe Rameau's *La Rappel des Oiseaux*. And Couperin's *Les Papillons* captures the fluttering imagery of butterflies in flight.

Lastly, the Cuckoo Concerto by England-based German composer John Frederick Lampe (1702-1751) continues the baroque's fascination with the diminutive songbird whose bold, clear call belies its physical size. It has come down to us only in a short score for harpsichord, encouraging the Musicians to reconstruct the handsome original version for flute, strings, and continuo that brings the present recital to a happy conclusion.

premieres. Sonata in D Minor by Adrian Shaposhnikov (1888-1967) is filled with delicate lyricism and, in its Menuetto movement, a nostalgia for happier, more pleasantly mannered times – just what we might expect of a student of Glazunov who lived through a time of war and revolution. *Poema del Pastor Coya* by Argentine composer Angel Lasala (1914-2000) is a real charmer that pays homage in its use of the pentatonic scale to the indigenous music of Latin America. The middle movement, *Queña*, with its evocation of the native flute, is haunting in its beauty. Five Movements from the Liturgical Dances by American composer Murray Boren (b.1950) are dances for the imagination that are intended as aids in prayer and meditation. One of them effectively combines harp with gentle violin pizzicati. Hypnotic, stark, serene and introspective, these mood pieces achieve their purpose.

The Sonata for Violin and Harp by Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) is memorable for its Larghetto, evoking the passion of a tragic heroine from one of the composer's operas. It is followed by a gay and all-too brief Allegro. Sonata by Alan Hovhaness (1911-2000) is in five movements: Prelude, Cantando, Dance, Lullaby, and Andante dolce. It clearly bears the composer's "thumbprint" in its lyrical directness and simplicity and its evocations of far eastern music. And finally, *Fantasie for Violin and Harp*, Op. 124 by Camille Saint-Saens (1835-1921) is a virtuosic work that brings the artistry of the Aurora Duo to the fore. It is filled with the most diverse melodies, especially when, about two-thirds of the way through, the violin decorates a repeated phrase in the harp with a long-breathed embroidery of sound, growing more intense until it reaches its climax. A good way to end a memorable recital.



Kodály: Concerto for Orchestra, Dances, Peacock Variations
JoAnn Falletta, Buffalo PO (Naxos)

Zoltán Kodály. If anything, the name today conjures up a dim image of Béla Bartók's colleague who was likewise absorbed in exploring the frontier country where folk music meets and profoundly influences the classical. Or you may remember him from the colorful Suite from *János Háry* (though not the opera itself, which unfortunately suffers from a language barrier outside his native Hungary.)

Now, JoAnn Falletta and the Buffalo Philharmonic give us four more pulse-quickening reasons to revere Kodály's name: the Concerto for Orchestra, the Galánta and the Marosszék Dances, and the Peacock Variations. All are works in which wickedly precise cueing by the conductor and demon execution by the orchestra are at a premium in music in which boldly characterized elements and changes in time signature succeed and illuminate one another with breathtaking rapidity. These are also very rich scores harmonically, in which every instrument in the orchestra gets a real workout.

That last-mentioned requirement is in fact one of the reasons driving Kodály's Concerto for Orchestra (1940), which, I feel, deserves equal stature with Bartók's similarly titled work of 1944. Its three sections are played without breaks, in a work that seems to replicate the form of the baroque concerto grosso in 20th century terms. The opening section, featuring high-stepping dance measures and a fanfare, is succeeded by the intimate Largo section in 3/2 time. This section



Dvorak, Tchaikovsky, Borodin:
String Quartets – Escher String
Quartet (Bis SACD)

The Escher Quartet, comprised of Adam Barnett-Hart and Aaron Boyd, violins; Pierre Lapointe, Viola; and Brook Speltz, cello, take their name from the Dutch graphic artist in whose work natural and geometrical forms morph into one another in ways that are both lyrical and mathematically precise. The Escher see this as a metaphor for what they aim to achieve musically by melding strongly individualized components together in order to achieve a satisfying, if sometimes surprising, whole. Their sound, as witnessed by the present Bis Records release, is brilliant, sinuously incisive, and sometimes surprisingly warm in spite of the typically cool ethic for which they consciously strive.

We find ample scope for all these preoccupations in a program of three of the most popular quartets in the repertoire, those of Dvořák, Borodin, and Tchaikovsky. Being Slavic composers, Bohemian and Russian, they all had a wealth of gorgeous folk material at their disposal, flowing into their ears and out the tips of their fingers. The temptation, which they all realized, was to trade on inherited indigenous traditions and not worry excessively about developing their materials. All three came to recognize that such an approach would not get them far in the string quartet, a genre in which sonata form with its balanced, harmonious proportions and painstaking thematic developments was at a premium. They dealt with this in different creative ways.

Dvořák's Quartet in F major, Op. 96,



Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue
József Balog, pianist
(Hungaroton)

József Balog is a musician of many interests. The Hungarian pianist, who has given or participated in more than a thousand concerts over the years, shows his zest for jazz-influenced pieces as well as the basic repertoire in an all-Gershwin program that will have listeners hummin' and tappin' along. It kicks off with the earliest piece, "Rialto Ripples," Gershwin's first published work which he wrote with Will Donaldson in 1917. Already, we have elements of his distinctive style with "stride" patterns in the left hand, ragtime syncopations, and lively rhythms. Not bad for one's calling card in the world of "serious" music!

Next, we have a moving account of "Summertime" from *Porgy and Bess*, in an arrangement that captures all the languor and vague discontent of the original song. The Songbook features Gershwin's sophisticated arrangements of seven of his own songs that everyone knows and loves: "I'll build a stairway to Paradise," "Who Cares?" "Nobody but You," "Do it again," "Swanee," 'S Wonderful," and "Strike up the Band." Three Preludes (1926) are believed to have been written in tribute to Chopin, Debussy, and Bach, with the jazzy improvisational elements that were a hallmark of Gershwin's own style.

That takes us to Rhapsody in Blue, in the original piano version, with its relaxed style in which jazzy syncopations often wander off into deftly handled "blue" moods. A number of classical artists have

attains the scope of a baroque passacaglia when an impromptu quartet comprised of a viola, two cellos and a double bass is later filled out by an additional viola and sole violin, enriching and completing a glowing harmony to which clarinet, flute, oboe and horn will make important contributions. Eventually, lush strings, brass, and a filigree of woodwinds and percussion help create a cathedral-like richness before the section ends quietly. The final section, *Allegro risoluto*, is a whirlwind of rapid movement, off-beat accents, and catch-as-can harmony, with a brief recollection of the *Largo* heard in passing.

The *Galánta Dances* (1933) were inspired by Kodály's recollections of the strolling Bohemian gypsy bands that used to perform in the fondly remembered hometown of his youth. The *Marosszék Dances* (1929) were similarly an evocation of the gypsy bands he encountered in the neighboring region of Romania bearing that name. With their considerable variety of scoring and treatment, both these sets of dances are more than mere local color. As Bartók had done in his *Romanian Dances* (1909-1910) he was accumulating elements of his own mature style.

The *Galánta Dances* are flashing, rose-in-teeth music, sometimes hot, madcap revelry, and at other times, quiet and smoldering. The sounds of oboe, piccolo and clarinet in the various dances (the last-named at one point evoking the song of a nightingale) add luster to Kodály's lush string writing. In the *Dances of Marosszék* the lithe, haunting theme appears in various guises, some in *parlando* phrasing and pastoral mood, and others in heightened tempo, ending in a hectic coda. At one point, we have a remarkable cross-wind effect between the brass and the higher woodwinds. Yet another enchanted nightingale is conjured up by the oboe, and there is a devil-may-care hora in one of the latter dances, adding spice with its quick-step measures.

The very best work on the program

the "American," breathes the spirit of Slavic melodies and dance rhythms in the context of what was his calling card from the New World to the Old. It is symphonic, rather than pure chamber music, in scope, a reflection of the fact that it was written in close proximity to the "New World" Symphony, Op. 95. Nearly all of its melodies are pentatonic, enhancing its earthy folk appeal. It opens with two bars' preparation before the main theme is introduced by the viola. Dvořák also adds a fugato to the mix, to establish his classical credentials.

The slow movement, *Lento*, is suffused with a gentle sadness, probably homesickness, over an undulating accompaniment. It is one of the most beautiful themes in the literature (though, as we shall see, Tchaikovsky and Borodin make claims of their own in this album). Exciting rhythms and teasing accents characterize the scherzo, *Molto Vivace*. The finale? Still more infectious rhythms, boisterous high spirits, and even a brief look back at earlier pensive material, all make for a satisfying close. Papa Haydn, it ain't, but what the hell?

Tchaikovsky's String Quartet No. 1 in F major, Op. 11 and Borodin's Quartet No. 2 in D major both have the dubious distinction of having been ransacked by American pop lyricists in the 1940's. The graceful, lilting *Andante Cantabile* of the Tchaikovsky was the basis for "It was June on the Isle of May," and the *Notturmo* of the Borodin was re-worked into the song "And This is My Beloved" in the musical *Kismet*. (The second movement of the Borodin, an everescent scherzo, furnished the melody for "Baubles, Bangles, and Beads" in the same Broadway hit.

Both composers were careful to infuse their compositions with enough learned techniques (without sacrificing vibrant "love" melodies) to rate considerably above the level of "easy listening." Tchaikovsky, for instance, deftly works some fugato into his developments, while Borodin's *Nocturne* has an agitated middle section contrasting with the

turned to it for inspiration in recent years, as it is more lighthearted and sexy than the overtly passionate and romantic version for piano and orchestra we've all been used to hearing. Balog invests his account of this perennial favorite with all the style and suave persuasiveness it deserves.

The program concludes with seven more pieces from the Gershwin songbook that Earl Wild arranged in 1976 as *Virtuoso Etudes on Popular Songs*: "Liza," "Somebody Loves Me," "Embraceable You," "Lady be Good," "Fascinatin' Rhythm," "The Man I Love," and "I Got Rhythm." Thrilling, pulse-raising, and sentimental, they are relics of an exciting moment in time in which the scintillation of popular music percolated its way into the classics. (But then, we need to ask, "Where did classical music come from the the first place?")

Postscript:

A word about "stride." This piano style is not easy to define, since there were as many types of stride as there were stylists who practiced it in its heyday. Typically, Stride involves having the left hand play a four-beat pulse with a single bass note, octave, seventh or tenth interval on the first and third beats, and a chord on the second and fourth beats. Occasionally, this is reversed (backwards stride) by placing chords on the beat and bass notes on the off-beats. However you play it, it imparts a terrific sense of movement to the music. Think of it in terms of a walking bass with an "oom-pah" (minus the cornfield connotation that unfortunate word implies) set in a very active left hand.

is undoubtedly Kodály's set of 16 Variations on a Hungarian folksong, *The Peacock* (1939). As with the better-known *János Háy Suite*, the composer shows himself to be an absolute master of color, harmony, and orchestral nuance in this work. Highlights, among many, include the poetic dialog between the English horn and the other woodwinds in Variation XI, the noble and moving Adagio in XII, punctuated with calls from horns, trombone, and other brass, and the unmistakable funeral march in XIV with distant bugles in honor of the deceased, followed by a gorgeous cadenza for solo flute that merges into a forest of bird calls. In XV-XVI, punchy brass, fast dance measures, and a Hollywood-style fanfare bring matters to a thrilling close.

enchantment of the theme, and he employs exercises in counterpoint, retrograde inversion, and question-and-answer rhetoric that belie his popular image as an inspired amateur.