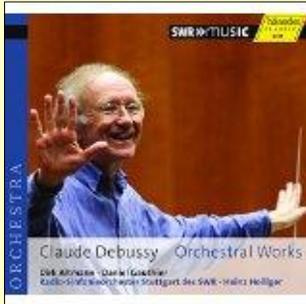


## Phil's Classical Reviews

Audio Video Club of Atlanta

December, 2014



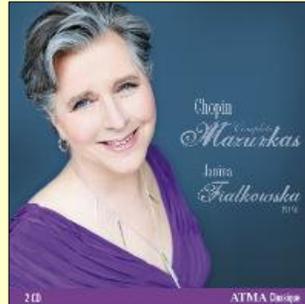
Debussy: Orchestral Works  
Heinz Holliger, Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra  
(Hänssler Classic)

Swiss oboist, composer and conductor Heinz Holliger celebrates his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday with a splendid program of symphonic works by Claude Debussy. At the podium of the Stuttgart Radio Symphony (Radio-Sinfonieorchester des SWR) he does a great job of exercising the utmost in discretion, proportion and control as he unveils the composer's paintings in tone color, sound, and light.

Debussy's orchestral music is not easy to perform as optimally as Holliger presents it here. As much as anything, it is a matter of style. His unusual harmony involves parallel chords, which have sometimes been described as chordal melodies, bitonality, and occasional use of pentatonic scales - all part of the Debussy mystique. Add to that his use of overlapping rhythms, or "polyrhythms," something other composers were slow to embrace until after the Second War, and you have obvious decisions concerning texture, proportion and dynamics for a conductor to resolve to his satisfaction. Holliger, drawing on his long experience as a performing artist and composer who has explored every idiom from Baroque to modern, does this to perfection, with the satisfying results you can hear in this beautifully engineered release from Hänssler Classic.

In his two rhapsodies for solo woodwinds and orchestra (Première Rhapsodie for Clarinet and Rhapsodie for Alto Saxophone), Holliger strikes a happy medium between too-diaphanous and too-opaque textures, allowing breathing room for the reed soloists – Dirk Altmann and Daniel Gauthier, respectively – to make their way through the orchestra for maximum effectiveness in two very "impressionistic" works (a word Debussy hated, by the way: he considered himself a "symbolist," though the difference in terminology has come to mean less with the passage of time). Tatjana Ruhland is also credited, justly, for her role in realizing the crucial flute part in the ever-popular Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun.

The only soloist not mentioned by name is the one who



Chopin: Mazurkas  
Janina Fialkowska, piano  
(ATMA Classique)

In perhaps her finest release yet on the Canadian label ATMA Classique, Montreal native Janina Fialkowska explores the world of the Chopin Mazurka with sensitivity and obvious delight that communicates to the listener. In her performances, 55 examples of this uniquely Polish genre come to life in all their color and rhythmic vitality.

What, pray tell, *is* a mazurka? That involves a brief discursion. Originally, the Mazurka was a Polish folk dance, usually in lively triple meter. It combined features of three older regional dances, the fast *oberek*, the slower *kujawiak*, and the highly nostalgic *mazur*, or *mazurek*, as much a vocal as it was a dance form. It made its way in time from the country to the city, changing its character slightly but still retaining its distinct national flavor and vivacity. The accent is typically on the second or third beat. There is generally a strong first beat, a hovering on the second, and sometimes, but not always, a full stop on the third. But variants of the pattern are so frequent that it is difficult to speak of a "standard" mazurka, certainly not in the cookie-cutter sense.

Therein lies the source of the appeal of this genre for Chopin: its seemingly limitless variety and ability to take on a range of moods from scintillating vivaciousness to profound sadness, in a distinctly beautiful sounding, self-contained form. No wonder Chopin wrote so many mazurkas, starting in his mid-teens and continuing to almost the very last day of his life. In his hands, they provided an ideal medium for what he had to say, whether his inspiration is deeply personal, nationalistic, experimental, or simply the enjoyment of a pithy little musical jewel for its own sake. (Fialkowska aptly terms the present program "55 opportunities to experience exquisite moments in paradise." And so they are.)

Fialkowska finds the well-loved mazurkas in the full fruition of Chopin's career – Op.50, No. 1, Op 56, Nos. 1 and 3, and all of Op. 59 – to be the most harmonically innovative. Op. 50, No. 3 in C sharp minor blends nobility

plays the oboe d'amore, an instrument whose golden mellow tone adds so much to the rollicking "English" atmosphere of the Gigue tableau from *Images pour Orchestra*. Is it Holliger himself, long recognized as a world-class performer on his instrument but here unaccountably camera-shy?

*Rondes de Printemps* (round dances of spring), another of the three *Images pour Orchestra*, is based thematically on several folk tunes known to every French nursery child. It is as luminous an evocation spring as there is in all the literature. *Ibéria*, best known of the *Images*, is in three sections: *By the Highways* and the *Byways*, *Perfumes of the Night*, and *The Morning of a Festival Day* (the last by far the longest and most vividly descriptive). The transition between the quietly mysterious *Parfums de la nuit* and the outburst of raw exuberance and color in *Le Matin d'un jour de fête* works as stunningly in the present performances as Debussy intended. And those overlapping rhythms and evocations of the sounds of guitars and castanets are glorious, too!



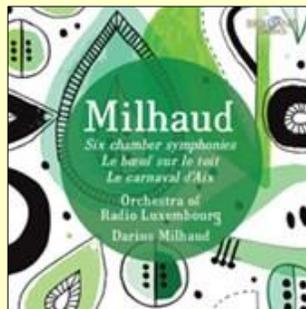
Schubert: Symphonies 1 and 2, Funeral March from *Adrast*, Rosamunde Overture  
Thomas Dausgaard, Swedish Chamber Orchestra  
(BIS Hybrid SACD)

Thomas Dausgaard here completes his survey of the symphonies of Franz Schubert. The precocious young composer penned both when he was still in his teen years (16 and 17-18, respectively), and they are undeniably derivative of the era of Mozart, Haydn, and the Beethoven of the Second Symphony and *Creatures of Prometheus*. Still, as Dausgaard shows us, they tell us interesting things about Schubert's preoccupations as a composer and the way he developed.

Symphony No. 1 in D major, D.82 is the more tightly organized of the two. Schubert evidently wrote it fluently and easily, with scarcely a sign of revision. He knew clearly what he was doing, even at so early an age. The second theme of the opening movement is reminiscent of the finale from Beethoven's "Eroica" (so don't say you weren't warned!) The quietly flowing Andante is seemingly effortless, in Schubert's best lyrical vein, and the spirited Haydnesque Menuet contains an equally spirited Trio with delicious woodwind accents. The finale, Allegro vivace, is rousing and uncomplicated, just what people expected of a classical symphony. Throughout, Dausgaard does a great job keeping the music in justly

with the keenly felt nostalgia of an exile from his native land. She admits a particular liking for Op. 33, No. 4 in B minor for its pure, evocative melody and Op. 30, Nos. 1 in C minor and 4 in C sharp minor for their haunting beauty. Others, such as Op. 41, Nos. 1 and 2, have drama and passion under the surface of a placid exterior.

Some recall the meter and pulse of other dance forms. In Op. 6, No. 2 we are reminded of the similarities between the mazurka and the waltz. Op. 41, No. 4 in A flat has a playful, waltz-like lilt, while the carillon-like effects in Op. 30, No. 3 in D flat make it seem like a polonaise intended for a coronation. Other mazurkas are darker and more pensive. The eerie harmonies in the coda of Op. 56, No. 3 in C minor give an otherworldly feeling to this longest and most expansive of Chopin's mazurkas. Op. 68, No. 4 in F minor, the latest of all the known mazurkas, was literally discovered at his deathbed. Improvisatory in style, slow, subdued, almost morbid, and highly chromatic, it sums up the career of a composer who never stopped exploring and innovating.



Milhaud: Orchestral and Instrumental works  
Orchestra of Radio Luxembourg under Darius Milhaud, Bernard Kontarsky and Louis de Froment, and assisting artists (Brilliant Classics)

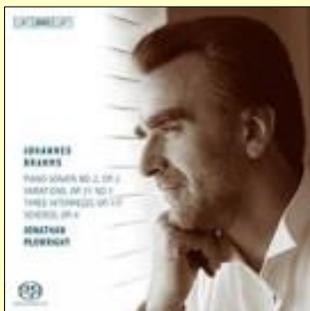
French composer Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) is represented by such a choice selection of his music in almost every genre that this 2-CD slimline set constitutes an ideal introduction to a composer the world still doesn't know as well as it should. That's because Milhaud's music is one of the irrepressibly good things in life, reflecting all of its piquancy, sadness, and joy. Missing in this album, as it is for the most part in Milhaud's oeuvre, is a tragic view of life, so that too often people are inclined to dismiss it as "lightweight," which is an absurdity. Just as it is easier in the modern world to wallow in misery (witness the five o'clock news), so it often takes more artistry to write truly happy, urbane, and affirmative music.

These recordings were made in 1968 and 1972 in the studios of Radio Luxembourg and were first released by Vox on LP in 1974 and the Moss Music Group on CD in 1994. The present licensed reissue by Brilliant Classics preserves all the wonderful freshness of appeal of its predecessors, including the sparkling vivacity, rhythmic alertness, and beautiful recorded sound. In a generous 150-minute offering we have the essence of a composer

appropriate motion with well-chosen tempi. Schubert wrote his trumpet parts in this work with really expanded tessituras, and in this performance they are balanced well in multiple doublings with the horns.

Symphony No. 2 in D major, D.125 is the more interesting, if less perfectly realized than its predecessor, if only for the way Schubert incorporates the first theme of Beethoven's Prometheus Overture into the Largo opening of his own first movement, marked Allegro vivace and filled with a lot of bustling energy and excitement. The slow movement, Andante, is a series of five variations on a surprisingly enchanting theme, which is mostly varied in terms of color and instrumentation. The very brief but robust Minuet is scored for the tutti and played fortissimo, with the exception of the Trio section which is more lightly scored for woodwinds, with a pizzicato bass. The finale, Presto vivace, is in the form of a Galop. This is normally a lightweight ending for a classical symphony, and it does overstay its welcome just a trifle. But in the end, we can't complain that we weren't well entertained. Need heroics? Schubert was to reserve them for his last two symphonies.

The other works on the program are the slow, solemn Funeral March from Schubert's otherwise forgotten opera *Adrast*, and the familiar Overture to Rosamunde D644. The last-named contains several melodies of uncommon charm, prefaced by a motto of weighty solemnity. It is one of music's great overtures, and Dausgaard paces it well, with the help of spirited playing by the ensemble.



Brahms: Piano Sonata No. 2 in F-sharp minor, Op. 2; Variations, Op.21/1; Intermezzi, Op.117; Scherzo, Op.4 Jonathan Plowright, piano (Bis hybrid SACD)

Yorkshire-born English pianist Jonathan Plowright shows us he has all the tools necessary to be an outstanding Brahmsian in the second in a series of Bis recordings highlighting the three sonatas, sins of the composer's youth that, closely observed, point out the future direction his career would take.

Poetry and passion are the hallmarks of the F-sharp minor Sonata, as Brahms indicates for us right from the beginning with the *ma energico* and *con espressione* markings that qualify the opening Allegro and Andante movements. There's a lot of material here, enough to easily furnish two sonatas, as Brahms, still in just his twentieth year, struggles with all the ardor and the élan of

who seems more and more with the passage of time to have been the best of "Les Six," as the French press termed the trend-setters of the post-WWI era. In such pungent, everescent and scintillating works as the Six Chamber Symphonies and *L'homme et son désir* (Man and his Desire), both directed by Milhaud himself, and Piano Concerto No. 2 (conducted by Kontarsky with Grant Johannesen as soloist), the composer made his unique personality felt in his music. *L'homme*, with impassioned writing for SATB vocalists, evokes love, death, and the vastness of the primeval Brazilian forest. *Suite cisalpine sur des airs populaires piémontais* with Thomas Bleas as cello soloist captures the color and luminescent atmosphere of the region of Italy adjacent to Milhaud's own native Provence.

*Le boeuf sur le toit* (literally, The Bull on the Roof) is the nonsense title of a popular Brazilian melody that occurs in many guises and episodes in a flowing extravaganza with piquant chromaticism and touches of polytonality thrown in. It is a glorious affirmation of life. Concerto for Percussion and Chamber Orchestra, written as an examination piece for a school for percussionists, has a fantastic array of sounds to be created by a sole performer (in the present recording, Faure Daniel). Viola Concerto No. 1, with Ulrich Koch as the soloist, encompasses all the wise, pithy and astringent things the instrument can utter. The piano suite *La muse ménagère* (The Household Muse) is Milhaud's own affectionate tribute to his wife Madeleine, to whom he owed much. As performed by pianist Johannesen, it is a touching series of vignettes in the daily life of its dedicatee. (My favorite was Lectures nocturnes, depicting Mme. Milhaud reading in bed late at night.) Finally, in *Le carnaval d'Aix* (The Carnival at Aix) Carl Seeman plays the piano and Milhaud conducts in another splashy tribute to the composer's native region. If you have no other CD of Darius Milhaud on your CD shelf, *get this one!*



"Ossia," Bach, Schumann, Fitzhagen Cello works Ben Capps, cello, with Tallis String Quartet (LP Classics)

Ben Capps, New York City native and young cellist extraordinaire, shows his penchant for exploring alternate ways of saying things in "Ossia." The title comes from a musical term that is used, especially in opera, to describe an alternate passage that may be played instead of the original. All of the works on this select program are arrangements in one sense or

youth to establish his own characteristic style. In the process, through its textures, its striking contrasts of poetic lyricism and passionate outbursts, and particularly in the way Brahms works out his musical ideas and carries them forward between movements, it gives us more of an impression of the future symphonist than it does the master of the keyboard.

With his limpid clarity and extremely well crafted phrasing, Plowright shapes Brahms' thoughts with consummate care in this early work, so that it impresses us by its sheer musical substance, imperfectly realized though it is. Plowright is also aided by his impressive command of pianissimo, which contains more degrees of dynamic shading than any I have yet heard by any other artist. And it is not merely for show, mind you, but always at the service of the expressive element in the music. And that's to say nothing of the demands imposed by the hammered octave writing one often finds in this work and the extraordinary effect created by the dissonant note-repetitions in the scherzo.

Jonathan Plowright brings his arsenal to bear in the other works in this program, which include the somewhat neglected Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 21, No. 1, in which the unusual beauty of the theme is matched by Brahms' skill in working out the variations inherent in its unusually rich harmony, and the early Scherzo in E-flat minor, Op. 4, in which the rhythmic intensity of the music is at times positively demonic.

Remarkable also are Plowright's interpretations of the three wonderful character pieces that constitute one of Brahms' late masterworks, the Intermezzi, Op. 117. This was, in fact, the composer's last utterance for the piano, the one that he described as "the lullaby of all my griefs." While the first Intermezzo is the best-loved of the three for its gently lilting melody within an octave span that has given it the name "Scottish Lullaby," the second, with its spiraling filigrees of arpeggio figurations, creates its own world of eerie twilit glints and half-lights. And the third is perhaps the darkest and most personal of all.

Keep your eye (and ear) out for this artist who is still on the ascendancy in his career. *Gramophone*, in a rare indulgence in hyperbole, famously described Plowright as "one of the finest living pianists." The British critics are at such a loss to find a parallel for him that they often go all the way back to the late Julius Katchen (1926-1969), an American who lived in Paris and frequently concertized in the U.K. Great praise indeed!

another, hence the fanciful name.

J.S. Bach's Solo Cello Suite No. 5 in C minor, BWV1011, for example, is heard in an arrangement by Laurence Lesser that incorporates unexpected harmonies and examples of ornamentation found in Bach's own autograph copy of the lute version of this work. For a mind like Capps' the challenge was irresistible: he accordingly uses the cello version as the first statement and the ornamented lute version as the reprise when he approaches the very complex Prelude, which sets the tone for the rest of the suite. (That's very much in keeping with standard Baroque era practice, by the way.)

It is a dark, emotionally charged Prelude, all business with no time out for play, and its mood infects the rest of the suite. That includes the Allemande, normally a stately old form that had come to be considered a "grandfather's dance" by Bach's day, and the Gigue, a lively dance in compound triple time that is usually more extroverted than the one we have here. The deep water mark of the suite is the Sarabande, heard here in the standard cello version, for which Capps displays a darkly rich tone and lots of personal involvement.

Robert Schumann's Cello Concerto in A minor, Op. 129 is a remarkably concise work, meant to be played, as here, without movement breaks. It is heard in an interesting arrangement by Anssi Karttunen that fulfills a wish by Schumann himself that the orchestra part be re-scored for string quartet, a project he himself did not enjoy the health and longevity to carry out. Inevitably, the Karttunen arrangement has more the feel of chamber music as the soloist interacts in interesting ways with the quartet, but, as Capps visualizes it, the cello is always a first among equals when it is not in the spotlight. The slow movement, *Langsam*, brief but of deeply expressive beauty, allows Capps to experience the intimacy of a work that "I have held close to my heart for many years."

Wilhelm Fitzhagen is known to history as the cellist to whom Tchaikovsky dedicated his Variations on a Rococo Theme, rather than for his own compositions. Ben Capps came across the manuscript of *Konzertwalzer*, Op. 31, was struck by the charm and variety of this suite of exquisite waltzes, and decided to arrange it himself for cello and piano (played here by LP Classics co-founder Vassily Primakov). It "seemed like a nice way to end" the present program, says Capps. And so it is.



“French Fantasy,” Music for One Piano, Four Hands  
Susan Merdinger and Stephen Greene  
(Sheridan Music Studio)

Performing on a 7-foot Steinway B ideally suited for the music at hand, the team of pianists Susan Merdinger and Steven Greene give us a sparkling recital of French music for the four hands repertoire. On the program are choice works by Camille Saint-Saëns, Gabriel Fauré, and Maurice Ravel that educators have frequently used for the music appreciation of children. The smoothly integrated performances by spouses Merdinger and Greene have a perfect balance and sense of timing. As engineered by Ed Ingold, the CD sounds *very* beautiful.

The program begins with Carnival of the Animals, which Saint-Saëns refused to have published during his lifetime, lest he be disregarded as a “serious” composer. But he was sufficiently fond of it that he suspended work on his “Organ” Symphony for the sake of this delicious display of musical whimsy (“*Mais c’est si amusant!*” he would explain as his only defense). And indeed it is amusing, with the sort of humor a bright child might more easily grasp than a dull adult. It also affords the pianists a splendid warming-up exercise for the entire program in *Marche Royal du Lion*. With its bold opening tremolo, scales moving in opposite directions, low octave runs, and the fortissimo at the end, the performers’ fingers are well-limbered by the end of this opening number.

*That*, mind you, is just the beginning. Thereafter, all the resources of the keyboard are brought into play as Saint-Saëns, who was himself a virtuoso pianist, displays his menagerie. Chickens peck, a rooster crows, a cuckoo sounds its two-note ostinato from the depths of the wood. The kangaroos are, *well*, rather jumpy, in patterns of hopping fifths. Glissando-like runs characterize the denizens of the aquarium, while the music replicates the “hee-haw” of donkeys in “Personages with Long Ears,” with the suggestion that Saint-Saëns is also sending up music critics, who characteristically bray at poor innocent composers. Spikey chords and octave jumps portray the fossils in the museum, proving there’s life in the old bones yet! The high point of the suite is “The Swan.” With its sublime theme heard over rippling sixteenths and rolled chords, it is one of music’s great moments.

The childhood whimsy continues in Fauré’s Dolly Suite, written for the daughter of his mistress Emma Bardac, known as “Dolly.” The six pieces conjure up images of



Saint-Saëns & Lalo: Cello Concertos + Fauré.: Elegy  
Kim Cook, cellist; with the Philharmonica Bulgarica under  
Valeri Vatchev and Grigor Palikarov  
(MSR Classics)

American cellist Kim Cook, rumored to be as nice a person in real life as she appears in her beaming portrait on the booklet cover, has travelled far as an International Artistic Ambassador for the U.S. State Department. She is now professor of cello at Penn State University, having earlier studied with some eminent teachers, including Aldo Parisot. That venerable figure, now 93 years old and still living and active as professor of music at Yale, must be very proud indeed of his former pupil, if we are to judge by the present trio of choice works by French composers.

Saint-Saëns, Lalo, and Fauré. They all pushed the world of the cello a little further out than they found it, in the interest of greater freedom and artistic expression. In these works impressive virtuosity is always employed towards ends greater than itself. Concerto No. 1 in A minor, Op. 33 by Saint-Saëns, one of the most demanding (and deeply satisfying) works in the repertoire, will serve to exemplify. At 20:56 in the present performance, it is skillfully organized in three tightly structured sections with interrelated ideas. There does not seem to be a superfluous note or gesture anywhere in a work where melodies and countermelodies seem to flow with utter spontaneity as cello and orchestra call and answer each other playfully. The middle movement, *Allegretto con moto*, begins and ends turbulently with a major surprise in the very center in the form of a highly original minuet (or is it a *ländler*?) of the greatest charm imaginable. The finale recaps material heard earlier, ending in another delicious surprise as the cello soars in a burst of exuberance. We could talk of such technical issues for the soloist as descending triplets and double-stopped passages, but to what purpose? As listeners, we are too busy being enchanted to care.

Fauré’s Elegy, originally for cello and piano, sounds equally compelling in its alternate version with orchestra. The outer sections are meditations, long-breathed and somber, the latter ending in a mood of calm resignation, if not consolation. In between, a passionate outburst, as if in rage for a keenly felt loss. These changing moods are beautifully managed in the present performance.

Finally, we have Edouard Lalo’s Concerto in D minor,

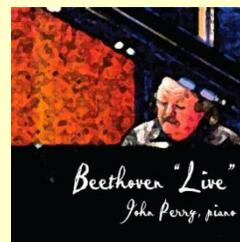
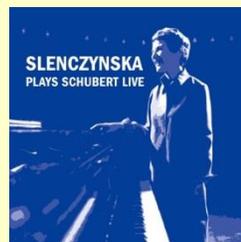
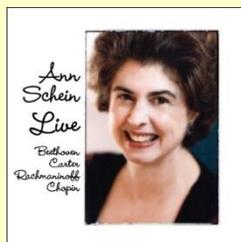
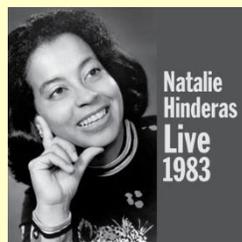
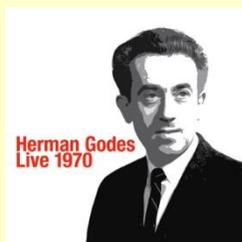
the pets, dolls, and occasions that brighten the life of a little girl. With the subtlest of touches, Fauré evokes the peacefully sleeping child (*Berceuse*) and the whirling movements of her pet dog, Kitty (*Kitty-Valse*). The suite concludes with a lively little Spanish dance (*Le pas espagnole*).

Finally, we have Ravel's ever-popular Mother Goose Suite in its original setting for piano duet. One can almost hear Ravel's future orchestration in the evocative atmosphere and color of the keyboard writing (I actually prefer the four-hand version). In five movements – Pavane of the Sleeping Beauty, Tom Thumb, Empress of the Pagodas, Conversation of Beauty and the Beast, and The Fairy Garden – the music conjures up the enchanted world of Charles Perrault and other authors of French fairy tales. My favorite piece is the third, with its lively animation and use of a pentatonic scale to create an appropriate oriental mood.

intense and highly virtuosic in a way that will recall the composer's famous *Symphonie Espagnole* for violin and orchestra. More discursive and episodic than the Saint-Saëns, it demands a lot from the performer in the way of fast, aggressive arpeggios and relentless sixteenth notes in the opening movement. In its insistent rhythms, it reminds the listener of Lalo's Spanish family heritage, his friendship with Pablo Sarasate, and of course, *Symphonie Espagnole*, though it is less obviously in the Spanish style. In this performance, Kim Cook handles the virtuoso demands of the music, culminating in a fast scale passage and a sensational C-sharp trill at the very end, with an ease that belies all difficulties. As she did earlier, she cultivates one of the most beautiful singing tones I have ever heard coaxed from a cello.

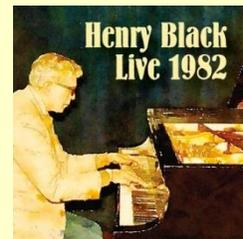
## ACA Digital announces Legacy Piano Series

Some things you do in the recording business are neither for money nor for fame, but simply because they *must* be done if you have a concept of service to the art and profession of music. To that end, ACA Digital Recording has just brought out a series of nine albums, available in digital format through *iTunes*, which preserve the memory and the vital contributions of eight remarkable men and women. Quite a few, happily, are still living and active in the musical profession. All reached countless listeners in their concert careers and have been inspired teachers who encouraged others to pursue careers in music.



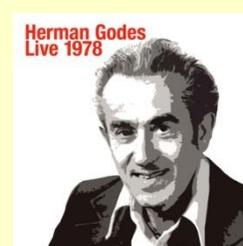
Here they are, the Legacy Piano Series Volumes 1 through 9 in order, with the *iTunes* links provided for us by ACA Digital founder Tommy Joe Anderson:

CM20115 John Perry <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/beethoven-live/id809002001> Regarded by many as a "dean" of American piano teachers, John Perry is actually English by birth, though he has lived so long in this country, performing, teaching, and founding the Southern California Music Institute in LA, that most people think of him as an American. With his authoritative keyboard presence and technique, he seems to have been born for Beethoven, as he shows us in the present 1989 recital of the "Pathétique" plus Sonatas 28, 24, and 32, recorded at Columbus College (GA).



CM20116 Jeannine Morrison <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/jeannine-morrison/id909097305> Currently Professor Emeritus of Music at Clayton State University, Morrow, GA, Morrison is well known as the longtime duo recital partner of Joann (Mrs. Fred) Rogers and the mother of dynamic U.S. organist Alan Morrison. In a live 1991 recital recorded at ACA Digital Studio, she displays her fine tone and tasteful artistry in a well-balanced program consisting of Beethoven's Sonata 18 and Schumann's Symphonic Etudes, plus other pieces by Chopin, Bach (Siciliano), Schumann/Liszt (*Widmung*), and Fred Roger's Variations on a Theme of Chopin.

CM20117 Herman Godes (1970) <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/herman-godes-live-1970/id909100028> Riga, Latvia native Herman Godes (1917-2007) survived wartime service and incarceration in a Nazi concentration camp to restart his concert career with renewed energy only six months after liberation. Respected for more than 40 years as artist-in-residence and teacher at West



Virginia University, he shows an incisive technique with lots of warmth and poetic beauty in this 1970 WVU recital of choice selections by Scarlatti, Albeniz (*Evocation*), Debussy, and Handel (*Passacaglia*), plus an excellent Chopin Sonata No. 3.

CM20118 Herman Godes (1978) <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/herman-godes-live-1978/id909106653> Godes works his magic again in a live 1978 recital at DeKalb Community College (GA) consisting of Handel's *Passacaglia*, Beethoven's Sonata 28, Rachmaninoff's Sonata No. 2, shorter works by Chopin and Prokofiev, and a luminous account of Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit*.

CM20119 Ann Schein <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/ann-schein-live/id909108233> The youngest of the pianists in this series, Ann Schein was on the piano faculty of the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore (1980-2000) and is still quite active as a solo recitalist and as the duo partner of her husband, violinist Earl Carlyss. In this 1987 recital at DeKalb College, she plays Beethoven's Sonata 26, two *Etudes-Tableaux* by Rachmaninoff, three *Etudes* by Chopin, and the best account I have ever heard of Elliott Carter's *Piano Sonata*. I'll go further: it places this work in perspective as one of the best sonatas of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

CM20120 Klaus Hellwig <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/klaus-hellwig-plays-beethoven/id909370152> German pianist Klaus Hellwig has enjoyed an extensive career as professor, giver of master classes, and competition judge, as well as a concert pianist with a distinctively refined tone. Before a live 2003 audience at the ACA Digital Studio, he displays his talents to perfection in a program featuring Beethoven's Sonatas 10 and 21, the "Waldstein," plus the first really convincing account I have yet heard of Schumann's *Davidsbündlertänze* (*Dances of the League of David*) that reveals this work to be a worthy companion to the more famous *Carnaval*.

CM20121 Ruth Slenczynska <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/slenczynska-plays-schubert/id908516545> Slenczynska has inspired many people over the years to pursue musical careers through her book *Music at Your Fingertips*, in addition to a long career as a concert pianist. Though she has not presented any of her famous three-concerto evenings for some years now, she is still active as a private teacher and competition juror. This 1997 all-Schubert recital at Georgia State University contains vibrant accounts of the *Six Moments Musicaux*, Op. 94, plus four *Impromptus* from Opp. 90 and 142, and an 8-minute selection of dances that makes them seem more than mere miniatures.

CM20122 Henry Black <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/henry-black-live-1982/id909101041> Henry Black (1928-2004), Savannah, GA native who taught at the Shenandoah Conservatory of Music from 1953 to 1986, was notoriously microphone-shy. So much so that Tommy Joe Anderson was at pains to conceal the mikes when he covertly recorded the artist's performances. The 1982 recital at Kennesaw State University (GA) begins with two fantastic warming-up exercises, Carl Czerny's *Variations on a Theme by Rode* and Schumann's *Toccata*, then displays the pianist's full range in Chopin's Sonata No. 2, the "Funeral March." This may, in fact, be the only chance you will have to hear this great artist. Less satisfactory recordings of Chopin's *Berceuse* and Debussy's *L'Isle joyeuse*, made in a 1982 recital at the Shenandoah Conservatory, still convey enough of this pianist's rare artistry to permit our appreciation of it.

CM20123 Natalie Hinderas <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/natalie-hinderas-live-1983/id909108307> Hinderas (*nee* Henderson), a native of Oberlin, Ohio, was one of the first African-American pianists to gain an international reputation, thanks partly to her tireless efforts as goodwill ambassador for the U.S. State Department. In addition to her career as an acclaimed artist, she taught at Temple University's Boyer School of Music from 1966 until her death in 1987. A beautifully balanced 1983 recital at DeKalb Community College begins with a fine account of Haydn's *Andante and Variations in F* and ends with Louis Moreau Gottschalk's *The Banjo* as encore. In between, we are given six *Preludes* by Debussy, Liszt's rousing *Hungarian rhapsody No. 10*, and a lovely account of Chopin's *Third Sonata*.

All of the above, with the exception of the two afore-mentioned Henry Black performances at Shenandoah, were recorded by Tommy Joe Anderson. Longtime ACA Digital associate Fred Horton, one of the best post-production engineers in the business, did a fine job mastering and balancing the digital transfers, so that in the end *Legacy Piano* sounds like a thoughtfully planned, consistent series and not just a miscellany of recordings. It should be a must for lovers of the piano.

