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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

Jacques Offenbach

Mélodies

Mariam Sarkissian
mezzo-soprano

Fanny Grouet
soprano

Daniel Propper
piano



Sung texts available on www.brilliantclassics.com

Jacques Offenbach 1819-1880

Mélodies

1. Jalousie! (<i>Jealousy</i>)	3'28
2. J'aime la rêverie (<i>I love the day dreaming</i>)	4'14
3. Sérénade du torero (<i>Toreador's serenade</i>)	4'29
4. Jeanne la rousse (<i>Red-haired Jeanne</i>)	2'42
5. La Croix de ma mère (<i>My mother's cross</i>)	4'17
6. Ronde tyrolienne* (<i>Tyrolian circle dance*</i>)	4'19
7. Rends-moi mon âme! (<i>Give me back my Soul</i>)	6'00
8. L'Etoile** (<i>The Star**</i>)	4'39
9. Wenn ich ein muntres Vöglein wär (<i>When I was a little bird</i>)	4'10
10. Was Fliesset auf dem Felde (<i>What flows in the field</i>)	2'47
11. O bleib bei mir (<i>Stay with me</i>)	3'22
12. Doux ménestrel (<i>Gentle ministrel</i>)	5'27
13. Dors mon enfant (<i>Sleep my child</i>)	6'01
14. Meunière et fermière (<i>Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Farmer</i>)	11'45

*Julian Milkis *clarinet* · **Levon Arakelyan, *cello*

Mariam Sarkessian *mezzo-soprano* · Fanny Crouet *soprano* · Daniel Propper *piano*

Recording: April 2016, Aram Khachaturian Concert Hall, Erevan, Armenia

Executive producer: Mariam Sarkessian

Recording producer: Gracia Artis, Paris

Recording engineer: Sergey Gasparyan

Artistic director: Mariam Sarkessian

Piano: Steinway D-274

Cover picture: by Evgénia Saré © Mariam Sarkessian

Artist Photos: © Mariam Sarkessian

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Offenbach, still to (re)discover

Offenbach was undoubtedly a top-level entertainer, Master Jacques of the Second Empire who didn't finish to be finished – but he was also, above all, a skillful musician who even in the depth of his most facetious verses could develop a waltz rhythm or a melody of original colors here and there, or again, a surprising harmonic invention. Among others, thanks to the irreplaceable Jean-Christophe Keck, today we are also aware of a number of works, the existence of which was previously unknown: this album, thought and realised by Mariam Sarkessian, brings a beautiful touch to this recapture of a rich and such a manifold repertoire, which well justifies Rossini having called Offenbach "the little Mozart of Champs Elysées."

For the most part, Offenbach's songs reunited here belong to his early works, ranging from his savory *Ronde tyrolienne* composed at the age of 19 for voice, piano and oboe (or clarinet) to the drama romance *Jalousie*, written at the age of 20, or the beautiful melody in German *O bleib bei mir* (*Stay With me*), which dates back to 1840 (he was 21 at that time) to, again, the most ambitious *Rends-moi mon âme* (*Give Me Back My Soul*), that he wrote when he was 24, or especially the amazing duo bouffe *Meunière et fermière* (*Mrs Miller and Mrs Farmer*) that he composed in 1846, at the age of 27, and which allowed Mariam Sarkessian to rejoin the excellent soprano Fanny Crouet, with whom she had already sung a very beautiful duet by Léo Delibes *Les Trois oiseaux* (*The Three Birds*) on the CD which the young French coloratura devoted to the author of *Lakmé*.

Thus, in these 14 pieces, recorded for the first time for the most part, there is a whole universe which releases Offenbach, made of lightness and daydreaming, sometimes comical by nature (his *Toreador's Serenade* based on a poem by Théophile Gautier!), but always subtly melodic.

Mariam Sarkessian's beautiful compelling voice, which is both so sensual and hemmed with shadow, opens up unforeseen perspectives, accompanying the pieces and duos for cello which, back then, could captivate those for whom Offenbach was

not more than an audible thorn in the side. One had to be a true musician to convey all the depth of their sound to these so delicate pieces: Mariam Sarkessian is this musician, who takes us to this attic full of discoveries.

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Translation: Michèle Kahn © Mariam Sarkessian

Offenbach, toujours à (re)découvrir

Offenbach a sans aucun doute été un amuseur de première classe, le Maître Jacques de ce Second Empire qui n'en finissait pas de finir – mais il a été aussi, surtout, un musicien subtil qui, même au cœur de ses couplets les plus facétieux, savait développer ici un rythme de valse, là une mélodie aux couleurs originales, là encore une invention harmonique surprenante. On connaît aujourd'hui, entre autre grâce à l'irremplaçable Jean-Christophe Keck, nombre d'œuvres dont l'existence demeurait inconnue : ce disque pensé et réalisé par Mariam Sarkessian apporte une belle pierre à cette reconquête d'un répertoire riche et si multiple qui justifie bien la désignation d'Offenbach par Rossini comme « *le petit Mozart des Champs Elysées* ».

Pour la plupart, les pièces d'Offenbach réunies ici sont des œuvres de jeunesse, de sa savoureuse *Ronde tyrolienne* écrite à 19 ans pour voix, piano et hautbois (ou clarinette) à sa romance dramatique *Jalousie*, composée à 20 ans, ou d'une jolie mélodie sur un texte allemand, *O bleib bei mir* (Reste avec moi), qui date de 1840 – il a 21 ans – jusqu'à, encore, la plus ambitieuse *Rends-moi mon âme*, qu'il signe à 24 ans, ou surtout ce formidable duo bouffe, *Meunière et fermière*, qu'il compose en 1846, à 27 ans, et qui permet à Mariam Sarkessian de retrouver l'excellente soprano Fanny Crouet, avec laquelle elle avait déjà chanté un très joli duo de Léo Delibes, *Les Trois oiseaux*, dans le disque que la jeune colorature française a consacré à l'auteur de *Lakmé*.

Ainsi, dans cette quinzaine de mélodies, inédites pour la plus grande partie, c'est tout un univers que libère Offenbach, fait de légèreté et de rêverie, de cocasserie

parfois (sa *Sérénade du torero*, sur un poème de Théophile Gautier!), de subtilité mélodique toujours.

Mariam Sarkessian, avec sa belle voix prenante, à la fois si sensuelle et ourlée d'ombre, ouvre des perspectives imprévues, complément de ces pièces et duos pour violoncelle qui, en leur temps, ont pu surprendre ceux pour qui Offenbach n'était qu'un poil à gratter sonore. Il fallait bien une vraie musicienne pour donner toute l'épaisseur de leur tissu sonore à ces mélodies si délicates : Mariam Sarkessian est cette musicienne qui nous entraîne dans ce grenier rempli de découvertes.

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Mariam Sarkissian. Born in Moscow, Parisian since 1996, follower of her first teacher, the great mezzo-soprano Zara Dolukhanova, Mariam Sarkissian graduated in classical singing from Schola Cantorum (Anna Maria Bondi's class) and Ecole Normale de Musique of Paris (Daniel Ottevaere's class). Her specializations are belcanto and chamber music.

Prize-winner of many international competitions and foundations, Mariam Sarkissian

appeared in opera (Rosina from *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, Angelina from *La Cenerentola*, Cherubino from *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Oreste from Offenbach's *La Belle Hélène*, the title-role in Mascagni's *Zanetto*...) and concerts at Théâtre du Capitole de Toulouse, Opéra de Nice, Opéra de Toulon, Opéra de Massy, Salle Cortot, Salle Gaveau, Renaissance Festival (Israel), Belle-Ile Opera Festival, Antibes Opera Festival... She performed under the direction of conductors such as Dominique Rouits, Jean-Marie Zeitouni, Benjamin Pionnier, Philip Walsh, Jean-Louis Petit, Balázs Máté, Iñaki Encina Oyon, Alexander Brussilovsky, Alexander Rudin, Florin Totan...

Mariam Sarkissian is particularly passionate about research and discovery of contemporary, little known or unfairly forgotten vocal chamber music repertoire. She has made many world premiere recordings, appeared in recitals and chamber music concerts in Europe, the US and Israel. Critically acclaimed, she received in 2015 a Golden Orpheus of the French *Académie du Disque Lyrique* (the highest French

reward for vocal music recordings) for her CD « Tristesse des choses » (*Sadness of it all*), composed of French art songs by César Cui and Piotr Tchaikovsky.

As a vocal coach, Mariam Sarkissian elaborated her own teaching method based on the Italian belcanto technics (Lamperti, Everardi, Garcia schools) and created the concept of the *Triangle of Balance* (le Triangle de l'Equilibre).



Fanny Crouet. A lawyer by profession, Fanny Crouet developed a passion for singing throughout the course of her career. Janine Reiss, the famous vocal coach of Maria Callas, encouraged her to start an operatic career. She received a complete artistic training at the Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris and then continued to perfect her vocal technique with Mariam Sarkessian in Paris and with conductor Niels Muss in Vienna.

She is a recipient of international contest awards and has appeared in great coloratura roles such as the Queen of the Night, Olympia, the Fairy Godmother in *Cendrillon* by Massenet, the Fire in Ravel's *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges* and the title role in *Lakmé* by Léo Delibes, to whom she also devoted her first art songs CD *Jardin Intime*, acclaimed by critics (*Golden Orpheus* of the best discographical initiative).

Fanny Crouet has performed at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Angers Opera Theater, Gaveau and Cortot Concert Halls, Massy Opera House, the National Library of Morocco in Rabat, Beijing Concert Hall, Beijing Century Opera Hall, Jinan Opera Hall, Guangzhou Opera House, and at festivals Les Nancyphonies and La Folle Journée de Nantes.

She recorded the famous Flower Duet for the film "Marguerite" by Xavier Giannoli and also dubbed actress Catherine Frot in an extract from Bellini's *Norma*.



Daniel Propper. Born in Stockholm, Daniel Propper began his piano studies with Gunnar Hallhagen and went on to receive advice from Tatiana Nikolaieva. Prize-winner of many competitions and grants, including, in 1990, the biggest grant ever allocated by the Swedish Royal Academy of Music, he completed his musical studies at Juilliard School in New York and at the Paris CNSM Conservatory with Jaques Rouvier and Gérard Frémy.

He performs with internationally acclaimed artists such as Alexander Brussilovsky, Julian Milkis, Anton Martynov, Mark Drobinsky, Emmanuelle Bertrand, Noël Lee, Dominique Rouits, Emmanuel Krivine, Yutoka Sado...

He appears in concert with Stockholm Symphony Orchestra, Malmö Orchestre, Orquestra Nacional do Porto, Orchestre National d'Île de France, Opéra de Massy Orchestra, in recital in Salle Cortot, Salle Adyar, Wigmore Hall (London), *Cité interdite (Pékin)*, Boris Brott Festival (Canada), Salzburg Festival...

His recordings include the *Goldberg Variations* by J.S.Bach and the *Lyric Pieces* by Grieg, acclaimed by critics. In 2012, he received a Napoléon Foundation Award for his CD *Echoes from the Battlefield*, historic and musical works.

He regularly performs music by Schubert, Chopin and Liszt as well as the music by the Brazilian composer Antonio Santana.

Fascinated by the lyrical singing, Daniel Propper frequently collaborates with singers in art songs projects.

I would like to thank my dear friends Julian Milkis, clarinet, and Levon Arakelyan, cello, for putting their art at the service of this repertoire that is so dear to me.

I also thank Jean-Christophe Keck for contributing to the creation of this album by putting at our disposal the scores of melodies J'aime la rêverie, La croix de ma mère, Ronde tyrolienne, Wenn ich ein muntres Vöglein wär as well as the magnificent duo bouffe Meunière et fermière. And a big congratulations to Fanny and Daniel for their investment and their tenacity: the end of the recording of the duo at five in the morning on the stage of the Philharmonie of Yerevan was epic!

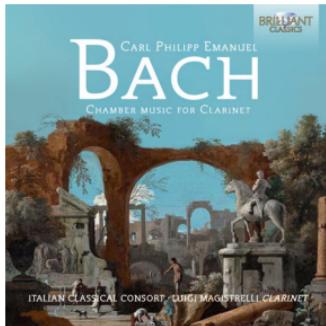
Mariam Sarkessian

Je tiens à remercier mes chers amis Julian Milkis, clarinette, et Levon Arakelyan, violoncelle, d'avoir mis leur art au service de ce répertoire qui m'est si cher.

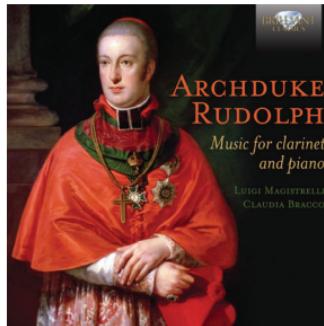
Je remercie également Jean-Christophe Keck d'avoir contribué à la réalisation de cet album en mettant à notre disposition les partitions des mélodies J'aime la rêverie, La croix de ma mère, Ronde tyrolienne, Wenn ich ein muntres Vöglein wär ainsi que celle du magnifique duo bouffe Meunière et fermière. Et un grand bravo à Fanny et Daniel pour leur investissement et leur tenacité: la fin de l'enregistrement du duo à cinq heures du matin sur la scène de la Philharmonie d'Erevan a été épique!

Mariam Sarkessian

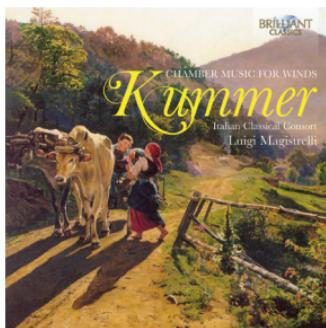
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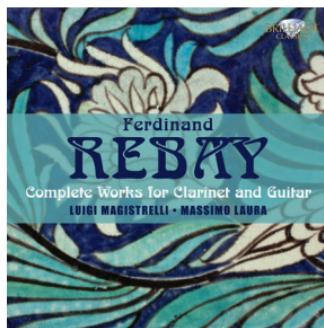
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