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GEORGES
BIZET

SYMPHONY IN C
JEUX D'ENFANTS
VARIATIONS CHROMATIQUES

MARTIN WEST
—
SAN FRANCISCO
BALLET ORCHESTRA



REFERENCE
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Bizet lived 36 years, dying three months after the production of *Carmen*. Biographers recount that having walked the streets of Paris after the first night his opera premiered, Bizet mourned the failure of his *Carmen*, so disillusioned, he retired to his home to die of a broken heart. Not quite true. *Carmen* received 37 performances in its first season, but did not immediately win extraordinary success, this came later. In reality, Bizet's death came after the 33rd presentation of *Carmen*. He suffered from *angina pectoris* (a chest discomfort that occurs when the heart is not getting enough blood). Bizet died in Switzerland during such an attack.

Bizet was born Alexandre César Léopold, October 25th 1838, in Paris. His godfather, disregarding the impressive appellation, called the baby "Georges", and Georges Bizet he was from that time forth. George's father was a teacher of singing. His mother was a pianist. By four, Georges was showing such an acute response to music that his mother began teaching him notes along with his ABC's. Georges enjoyed the game, and before long, was singing and playing the piano. It was clear to his parents that he had outgrown home instruction. However, the Paris Conservatoire did not accept children. Nevertheless, his father convinced Conservatoire officials to audition Georges. Playing the piano well, sight-reading with ease, and naming any chord or interval, he astonished the officials. Within weeks Georges was admitted.

Bizet was a joy to his teachers—bubbling over with friendliness and good nature. He studied piano with Marmontel, harmony with Zimmerman and composition with Halévy. For the next 9 years he collected awards for composition, and performance on piano and organ. Bizet entered his *Le Docteur Miracle* among 78 other competitors for the best setting of a one-act opera *bouffe*. He won first prize (from Jacques Offenbach). By 18, Bizet won his final grand prize (for *Clovis et Clotilde*), the dream of every French music student—the *Prix de Rome*.

Bizet spent three happy years in Rome, and despite poor health, enjoyed the country, the people, and the music. He completed a *Te Deum*, the opera *Don Procopio*, and an ode-symphony *Vasco de Gama*. In July 1860, Bizet left Rome, leisurely traveling through Italy. In Venice he received shocking news: his mother had been hospitalized. She died September 8th, 1861, shortly after his arrival to Paris.

Distraught, Bizet attempted the life of a concert pianist. Performing did not go beyond playing at musical parties and charity events. He continued composing unabated, penning the *Scherzo and Marche funèbre*, and the overture *La chasse d'Ossian*. Bizet's first major work, the opera *Les Pêcheurs de perles* (The Pearl Fishers) received an important performance at the Théâtre Lyrique in Paris in September 1863. It was a mature work, filled with memorable melodies and harmonic coloring. Musicologist Arthur Hervey wrote: "The languidly enervating melodies, full of luscious sweetness, are redolent of Eastern climes. The score is imbued with poetical sentiment and strong dramatic temperament." Unfortunately, *Les Pêcheurs de perles*, *La Jolie Fille de Perth* (1866) and *Djamileh* (1871) were not successes. In 1869, Bizet married Geneviève Halévy, the daughter of his teacher at the Conservatoire. The Bizets' only child, Jacques, was born in 1872. In 1871 Bizet composed his suite for piano duet, *Jeux d'enfants*, from which he orchestrated five of the sections, which were premiered March 2nd, 1873 as a *Petite suite d'orchestre*. In 1872 Bizet wrote the incidental music for Daudet's play *L'Arlésienne*. His score attracted little attention when the play was produced, but a suite derived from the score became one of Bizet's best-known works.

In 1872, Bizet wrote: "I am asked to write three acts for the Opéra-Comique. Meilhac and Halévy will do the piece. It will be bright, but of a brightness that allows style." Thus Bizet worked on what became his final masterpiece—the opera *Carmen*. Based on Prosper Mérimée's famous story, *Carmen* was staged March 3rd, 1875 at the Opéra-Comique. Later that month Bizet developed an acute inflammation of the tonsils, followed by deafness in his left ear,

then an attack of rheumatism, followed by a severe heart attack. His funeral was June 5th, 1875 at the Montmartre church of La Trinité. He was buried in Père Lachaise.

Symphony in C Major

In 1855, at 17, while at the Paris Conservatoire, Bizet composed *Symphony in C Major* as a school exercise. The work shows traces of Schubert and Rossini, revealing the individuality of a man with a rare gift for melody and an instinctive grasp of form. Polishing off his one symphony with superb orchestration, Bizet forgot all about it. There is no record of his referring to it in correspondence or conversation. Ending up in the Paris Conservatoire archives, it remained unnoticed for 80 years, until musicologist D.C. Parker and Jean Chantavoine, Conservatory General Secretary, came upon it. They notified Felix Weingartner, who conducted its world premiere February 26th, 1935, six decades after Bizet's death.

Fashioned in one sitting, the symphony is a gem. The opening *Allegro vivo's* main subject is a joyous little theme, developed with spontaneity and wit. The happy mood carries on in a lyrical melody for solo oboe. Then two themes proceed until a long crescendo ushers in the repeat. Hearing influences of Beethoven and Mozart, biographer Martin Cooper writes, "Bizet shows a most unusual grasp of design and unfailing sense of style. There is a nervous brilliance and, above all, an astonishing sureness of touch in the crisp, semi-comic cut to some of the phrases."

The nostalgic, at times sad, mood of the *Adagio* haunts the oboe, and the expansive song theme for violins, interrupted only by a middle section *fugato* for strings. The *Allegro vivace*—actually a scherzo (or fast minuet), though not so marked—has a Schubertian main theme development. Marked *Trio*, a bucolic episode for clarinet and bassoon resonate, over the drone for lower strings. In the finale, the violins introduce a bustling theme and, after a march tune,

trace a singing line. The extensive movement is with a sureness of touch that stamps the entire work—an amazing achievement for a boy of 17.

The work was introduced January 30, 1936 in America at a Rochester Philharmonic concert, in Rochester, New York, Sir Hamilton Harty conducting. Two ballets were produced utilizing Bizet's symphony: *Assembly Hall*, a one-act ballet, choreographed by Andrée Howard and first produced at the Sadler's Wells Opera Ballet in London April 8th, 1946; and *Le Palais de Cristal*, a symphonic ballet in four movements, choreographed by George Balanchine, first produced July 28th, 1947 by the Paris Opéra Ballet. It was revived as "Symphony in C", for the Ballet Society New York City Center, March 22nd, 1948, with a cast of 50 including Maria Tallchief and Lew Christensen. The San Francisco Ballet premiered it March 17th, 1961, at the Alcazar Theater in San Francisco. Balanchine stated that although *Symphony in C* has no story, it describes the music to which it is danced, with the choreography and steps of each movement developing as the melodies, and themes are developed in the music. The costume and scenery are pared down to simple elegance: white tutues for women and black tights and tunics for men. A different pair of principal dancers lead each symphony movement, ending with the virtuoso finale, that includes all the dancers from the previous movements.

Jeux d'enfants, Opus 22

Bizet was a remarkable pianist, praised by Berlioz and Liszt for his effortless technique and sense of musical line. This captivating four-hands piano suite was composed in 1872. The entire set is filled with youthful wonder, and fanciful, charming, memorable tunes. In his miniatures of childhood scenes and games, Bizet alternates idyllic slow and graceful pieces with swift and agile sections, imitating the characteristic animation of a toy or game being played. The music, filled with bounce and sparkle, attracted the attention of many

dancers. *Jeux d'enfants* debuted as a ballet, in Monaco's Théâtre de Monte Carlo, April 14th, 1932, choreographed by Leonide Massine, with costume design and surrealistic scenery by Joan Miró. Miró's designs recalled the shining hard-painted surfaces of actual toys. The principal dancers were Tatiana Riabouchinska (as the Child), Irina Baranova and Tamara Toumanova (alternated in the part of the Top, spinning through swift fouettés in dizzying striped tights). David Lichine danced as the Traveler and Leon Woizikovsky was the Athlete. Boris Kochno's book of the ballet is about a little girl, who knows Hans Christian Andersen's stories, and takes part in the charming life play-things enjoy, while the rest of the world sleeps. Below, the synopsis from the original Monte Carlo performance program:

"The drop-curtain is white, with a splash of elementary colors in a design like a child's drawing. This curtain rises to reveal a nursery, with geometric cones and circles in bright colors against a light wall. Two signs, one reading "Paris", the other "New York", stand at the sides.

Two figures, the Spirits, emerge from behind the geometric structures and gravely go about animating the toys. They are spinning the Top, when the Child tiptoes in. Delighted, she runs from one to the other of her live toys, then lies on her side downstage, leaning on an elbow, while the toys perform for her. The Wooden Horses rock for her. Two Rackets bat a dancing Shuttlecock back and forth between them. Amazons march on, fight a mock battle with swords and shields, and retire. Soap Bubbles in pastel colors float and twirl about the stage.

Now the Traveler, a vigorous figure, dances a journey, which takes him to the four corners of the earth. The Child, in love with him, rises and dances with him. Three Sportsmen in athletes' costumes enter and perform gymnastic stunts, and the Child is drawn to the Tumbler. But the jealous Top spins between them. All the toys gather, dance and play games, until the Spirits, reappearing at dawn, solemnly change them back to their original form and the curtain falls on a nursery once more quiet."

In assembling all 12 pieces (as intended in the four-hand piano version), we took Bizet's own orchestrations of five of the pieces, premiered in 1873, and collated them in order. The remaining seven orchestrations are by Hershey Kay and Roy Douglas. This recording is the very first to present all 12 orchestrated pieces, and the very first recording of the orchestrations by Hershey Kay and Roy Douglas.

Hershey Kay was born November 17th, 1919 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He studied cello and orchestration at the Curtis Institute of Music. Kay produced some original compositions, but became best known as an arranger and orchestrator for the New York City Ballet and a wide range of Broadway musicals (including several by Leonard Bernstein). Kay died December 2nd, 1981 in Danbury, Connecticut.

Roy Douglas was born December 12th, 1907 in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent. Douglas never had any lessons in composition, orchestration or conducting. Self-taught, he played in a municipal orchestra until 1933 when he became a member of the London Symphony Orchestra, as pianist, organist, celesta player, fourth percussionist and librarian. In 1936 he created his own, now celebrated, orchestration of Chopin's music for *Les Sylphides*. He orchestrated all of Richard Addinsell's music for eight BBC programs and 24 films, including the world famous *Warsaw Concerto* (1942). From 1944 until the death of Ralph Vaughan Williams in 1958, Douglas was Vaughan Williams' musical assistant, helping him prepare works for performance and publication, including his last four symphonies, and the opera *Pilgrim's Progress*. Douglas also composed many original works, music for 32 radio programs, five films and six documentaries. Douglas orchestrated the Bizet pieces in 1944.

Variations chromatiques

Bizet's piano works (with the exception of his celebrated four-hand suite *Jeux d'enfants*) have mostly been forgotten. They remained unknown until Reynaldo Hahn gave his Bizet collection to the Paris

Conservatoire Library in 1933. Catalogued in 1948, this donation had published and unpublished scores. There were 18 individual works, comprising 36 piano pieces, composed in two periods 1851-1857 and 1865-1868. *Variations chromatiques* was composed in 1868. Bizet wrote to his pupil, Edmond Galabert: "I have just finished the *Grandes variations chromatiques*. It is about the theme I drafted this winter. I am, I admit it, totally satisfied with this piece. It is treated audaciously, you will see." Dedicated to Stephen Heller and inspired by Beethoven's 32 *Variations in C minor*, Bizet's set of variations is dramatic—a sense of doom is present from the beginning, and although one variation promises a deceptive redemption, destiny fulfills itself at the end with all its force. Throughout the 14 variations, the theme remains unaltered, with a varying texture of seven in C minor followed by seven in C major. Conductor, composer and pianist Felix Weingartner (1863-1942) studied Bizet's piano music, and orchestrated the *Variations chromatiques*, publishing his score in 1933.

Recorded only once before, by the Louisville Orchestra in 1973, this performance by the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra conducted by Martin West is the first modern recording and the first time this work is available on compact disc. The soloist in the cadenza is San Francisco Ballet Orchestra's Concertmaster, Roy Malan. As a book end to this program, it seems fitting that Weingartner, who premiered Bizet's *Symphony in C Major*, should have the last word with his austere and powerful orchestration of Bizet's most significant piano work.

—Victor and Marina A. Ledin



MARTIN WEST

Martin West is acknowledged as one of the foremost conductors of ballet, garnering critical acclaim throughout the world. Born in Bolton, England, he studied math at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge University, before studying at the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music and London's Royal Academy of Music.

In the fall of 1997, West made his debut with the English National Ballet and was immediately appointed resident conductor. There, he conducted almost half of the company's performances throughout England and abroad. In 2004, he was appointed principal conductor, a title he held along with his current appointment at San Francisco Ballet, until 2007.

From 1998 to July 2005, West was the music director of the Cambridge Philharmonic, one of England's oldest and highest-achieving amateur music societies. In recent seasons, West has worked with the Hallé Orchestra, Holland Symfonia and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra as well as recording a disc of Mozart Piano Concerti with Odense Symphony, Denmark. In addition, he had a long association with Pimlico Opera, touring frequently with them, including conducting *West Side Story* inside a prison with the inmates as part of the cast. He made his U.S. symphonic conducting debut with Silicon Valley Symphony, resulting in an immediate re-invitation. He has worked with many of the top companies in North America, such as New York City Ballet, Houston Ballet and the National Ballet of Canada.

In fall 2005, West joined the San Francisco Ballet, having been a frequent guest since his debut two years earlier. Recent recordings with the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra include suites from *Sylvia* and *Coppélia* on RR; the complete score of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker*; and a CD of Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky cello music.

SAN FRANCISCO BALLET ORCHESTRA

The oldest professional ballet company in America was also one of the first to have its own permanent body of musicians. In October 1975, the San Francisco Performing Arts Orchestra was founded to serve as the Ballet's official orchestra, and in 1983, the group's name was changed to San Francisco Ballet Orchestra.

With the appointment of Helgi Tomasson to the position of artistic director of San Francisco Ballet in 1985, the Company's reputation evolved from that of a regional troupe to a world-class dance company. As the Company's acclaim grew, so did the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra's, and by the 1990s it was generally regarded as one of the finest ballet orchestras in the world. In 1995, the Orchestra accompanied 12 international dance companies, as well as San Francisco Ballet, during the United We Dance Festival, which promoted international communication and understanding while celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The Orchestra has also accompanied a number of prestigious international ballet companies during their Bay Area engagements, including American Ballet Theatre, the Bolshoi Ballet, Paris Opéra Ballet, Paul Taylor Dance Company, The Royal Ballet, the Royal Danish Ballet, and the Stuttgart Ballet.

Under the leadership of founding Music Director Denis de Coteau for more than 20 years, the Orchestra has subsequently been led by Emil de Cou, Jean-Louis LeRoux, and Andrew Mogrelia. In 2005, Martin West was appointed music director and principal conductor.

Today, the Orchestra accompanies the Ballet for the annual *Nutcracker* production and throughout each repertory season. The ensemble's vast repertoire includes hundreds of works spanning four centuries of music history, from Monteverdi and Mozart to film scores. The San Francisco Ballet Orchestra has made critically acclaimed recordings of composers from Handel to Goldenthal, as well as five televised recordings for the PBS series "Dance in America" (Helgi Tomasson's *Nutcracker*; Lar Lubovitch's *Othello*; Michael Smuin's *The Tempest*, *Cinderella*, and *Romeo & Juliet*), and most recently, John Neumeier's *The Little Mermaid* on PBS' "Great Performances Presents."

The San Francisco Ballet Orchestra
Martin West - Music Director & Principal Conductor

Violin I

Roy Malan, Concertmaster

Janice McIntosh, Associate

Concertmaster

Beni Shinohara, Assistant

Concertmaster

Heidi Wilcox

Mia Kim

Robin Hansen

Brian Lee

Mariya Borozina

Violin II

Marianne Wagner, Principal

Craig Reiss, Associate Principal

Jeanelle Meyer, Assistant Principal

Patricia Van Winkle

Clifton Foster

Elbert Tsai

Viola

Paul Ehrlich, Principal

Anna Kruger, Associate Principal

Joy Fellows, Assistant Principal

Caroline Lee

Chihiro Fukuda

Cello

Eric Sung, Principal

Jonah Kim, Associate Principal

Victor Fierro, Assistant Principal

Thalia Moore

Nora Pirquet

Ruth Lane

Contrabass

Steve D'Amico, Principal

Shinji Eshima, Associate Principal

Jonathan Lancelle, Assistant Principal

Mark Drury

Flute

Barbara Chaffe, Principal & Piccolo

Julie McKenzie, 2nd & Piccolo

Oboe

Laura Griffiths, Principal

Marilyn Coyne, 2nd & English Horn

Clarinet

Natalie Parker, Principal

James Dukey, 2nd & Bass Clarinet

Bassoon

Rufus Olivier, Principal

Patrick Johnson-Whitty,

2nd & Contrabassoon

Horn

Kevin Rivard, Principal

Keith Green

Brian McCarty, Associate Principal

William Klingelhofer

Trumpet/Cornet

Charles Metzger, Principal

John Pearson *

Ralph Wagner

Trombone

Jeffrey Budin, Principal

Timothy Higgins *

Hall Goff

Bass Trombone

Scott Thornton, Principal

Tuba

Peter Wahrhaftig, Principal

Timpani

James Gott, Principal

Scott Bleaken *

Percussion

David Rosenthal, Principal

Todd Manley

Tyler Mack

Harp

Olga Rakitchenkov, Principal

Orchestra Personnel Manager

and Music Administrator

Tracy Davis

Music Librarian

Matthew Naughtin

* Acting Principal



A Note from the Producers

When Martin West approached us about recording Bizet's *Symphony in C*, we immediately thought of adding two rarely heard works by Bizet to the program. The legendary conductor Felix Weingartner premiered the *Symphony in C* in 1935. Two years before, Weingartner orchestrated Bizet's *Variations chromatiques*. It occurred to us that these two works belonged together on the disc. We knew that Bizet's *Jeux d'enfants* was staged as a ballet in the 1930s, however, Bizet orchestrated only five of the piano pieces, while the rest were orchestrated only many years later by Roy Douglas and Hershey Kay. Upon locating the scores, it was clear to us, and to Maestro West that presenting the complete *Jeux d'enfants* would provide a wonderful finishing touch to this disc of Bizet's music. We hope that you enjoy this recording!

About the Producers

Marina A. Ledin and Victor Ledin have jointly produced over 250 recordings, written over 2,000 liner notes, collected 10,000 Scores, and over 20,000 recordings. They have enjoyed producing the GRAMMY® award winning *Quincy Porter's Complete Viola Works*, and have been nominated five times by The Recording Academy as "Producers of the Year—Classical". The Ledins provide a broad range of consulting and producing services to record labels, artists, institutions, musical organizations, libraries and archives.

Recorded: April 19 and 20, 2012

Skywalker Sound, a Lucasfilm Ltd. company, Marin County, California

Producers: Victor and Marina A. Ledin, Encore Consultants LLC

Recording Engineer: Keith O. Johnson

Recorded by: Sean Royce Martin

Executive Producer: Marcia Martin

Editing: Victor and Marina A. Ledin, Sean Royce Martin

Mastering Engineer: K.O. Johnson

Skywalker Assistant: Dann M. Thompson

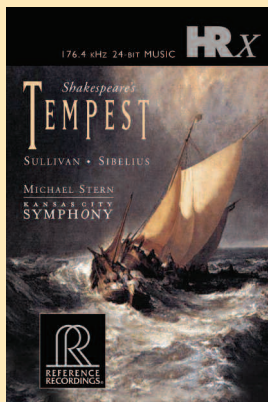
Program Notes by: Victor and Marina A. Ledin

Design: Bill Roarty

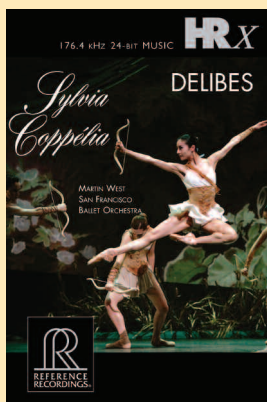
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San Francisco Ballet: Helgi Tomasson,
Artistic Director & Principal Choreographer

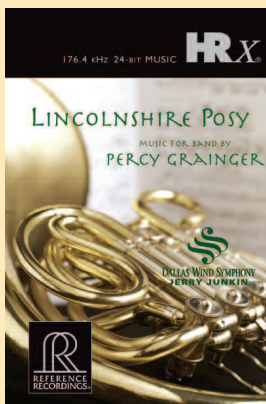
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BIZET

SYMPHONY IN C (1855)

- 1 *Allegro vivo* 2 *Adagio*
3 Scherzo, *Allegro vivace* 4 Finale, *Allegro vivace*

JEUX D'ENFANTS, OPUS 22 (1871)

(Orchestrations by Georges Bizet, Hershey Kay, and Roy Douglas)

- 5 L'Escarpolette (The Swing/Sea Saw) [Kay]
6 Impromptu: La Toupie (The Top) [Bizet]
7 Berceuse: La Poupée (The Doll) [Bizet]
8 Les Chevaux de Bois (Hobby Horses) [Douglas]
9 Le Volant (The Shuttlecock/Badminton) [Kay]
10 Marche: Trompette et Tambour (Trumpet and Drum) [Bizet]
11 Les Bulles de Savon (Soap Bubbles) [Douglas]
12 Les quatre Coins (Puss in the Corner) [Douglas]
13 Colin-Maillard (Blind Man's Buff) [Douglas]
14 Saute-Mouton (Leap-Frog) [Douglas]
15 Duo: Petit Mari, petite Femme (Little Husband, Little Wife) [Bizet]
16 Galop: Le Bal (The Ball) [Bizet]

17 VARIATIONS CHROMATIQUES (1868)

(Orchestrated by Felix Weingartner)

MARTIN WEST / SAN FRANCISCO BALLET ORCHESTRA

WARNING:

Computer and audio equipment can be damaged by improper setup and playback. We recommend consulting a computer music specialist when designing and building your system.

We applaud you for being a pioneer in the new field of computer music playback!