

Rarities of Piano Music New
at 'Schloss vor Husum' Volume 24.

Chabrier Valse romantique No. 3^a.
Delvincourt Croquembouche^b – No. 4,
Grenadine; No. 6, Plum pudding; No. 10,
Pets de nonne; No. 12, Huile de ricin.
Fauré Ballade in F sharp, Op. 19^b.
Fontana À la Mazurka^c. **Glière** Preludes,
Op. 30^d – No. 1 in C; No. 5 in D; No. 9
in E; No. 11 in F. **Gutmann** Nocturne in
A flat, Op. 8 No. 1^c. **Hahn** Le rossignol
éperdu^b – No. 28, Matinée parisienne;
No. 29, Chérubin tragique. **Liszt** Valse
mélancolique, S210^e. Adelaide
(Beethoven), S466 No. 3^e. **Marx** Prelude
and Fugue^f. **D. Scarlatti** Keyboard
Sonatas^g – G minor, Kk102; G, Kk547
(both arr. Enrique Granados).

Szymanowski Mazurka, Op. 50 No. 1^c.
^bSofja Gûlbadamova, ^cGianluca Luisi, ^eJoseph
Moog, ^gSandro Russo, ^hHubert Rutkowski,
^dAmir Tebenikhin, ^aDuo Grau/Schumacher
(pianos).

Danacord DACOD729 (full price, 1 hour
20 minutes). Website www.danacord.dk  Producers
Peter Froudjian, Jesper Buhl. Engineer Sven Will.
Dates Live performances at the Husum Festival,
Germany on August 18th-25th, 2012.

As will be self-evident from the above listing, the contents of this CD are clearly aimed at the music lover to whom the piano is a prime consideration, but one wonders if it will be welcomed as more than a memento of a festival. The record critic is obliged to comment on what he is sent, but when confronted with the work of no fewer than eight different pianists in music by eleven very different composers, is one expected to make a judgement on one pianist's playing of Fauré being better (or less good) than that of another pianist in Szymanowski?

Perhaps the one linking thread of the disc, which will commend it to piano fanciers, is that all of the music is very rarely encountered, and the Husum Festival – at which these live recordings were made in 2012 – is dedicated to the resurrection of unfamiliar music. Yet some of these composers are for most people little more than names in a dictionary, and even among the better known, to hear Fauré's *Ballade* in the solo piano version, or one of Chabrier's *Romantic Waltzes* for piano duet, are not everyday occurrences.

Effectively, therefore, one should investigate this disc for its unique qualities – there is much to enjoy and intrigue adventurous music

lovers. They will not be disappointed, and I can assure the unwary that each of the pianists here is a genuinely musical artist, technically and musically. It is indeed a fascinating experience to hear music of which one was quite unaware and feel the genuine nature of the era in which it was composed, as well as the influences of the individual composer's great contemporaries. Such an instance is found in Adolf Gutmann's *Nocturne* of 1844, in which the influence of Chopin is more than pervasive, but which in this performance (by Hubert Rutkowski) comes across as a genuine piece in its own right. There is nothing wrong in a composer choosing good models, models which are in keeping with his own natural style. The preceding track, Julian Fontana's *A la Mazurka* (1833), might be thought to show a Chopinesque influence, but does not – after all, some of Chopin's *Mazurkas* date from when he was barely a teenager – Fontana appearing to be a composer worth investigating for his own qualities, rather than those he possibly acquired later. Joseph Moog's rare Beethoven-Liszt and genuine Liszt (the *Adelaide* transcription and the *Valse mélancolique*) are superb performances: these open the disc in fine style.

Perhaps the most significant of these 'unknown' works is the *Prelude and Fugue* (1916) by Joseph Marx (a wonderful item for a 'guess the composer' quiz), for it is a work of undoubted worth, clearly very well laid out for the piano, and a serious and probing composition of high quality in that the fugal texture at no time becomes somewhat labyrinthine in Reger-like terms. Marx was by no means unaware of the elements that intrigued early Schoenberg, or Busoni, for that matter. It receives a fine account from Gianluca Luisi. Amir Tebenikhin's performances of four of Glière's Op. 30 *Preludes* are another highlight in purely musical terms – here is music that at times unites Scriabin and early Shostakovich, and which (once more) does not deserve the neglect which has befallen it.

Unfamiliar French piano music from Hahn and the Satie-esque Claude Delvincourt forms another series of revelations in Sofja Gûlbadamova's recital (she also plays Fauré's *Ballade*) – Delvincourt's 'Plum pudding' (*sic*) should be in the repertoire of every recitalist's encore collection (perhaps not his fugal study 'Huile de ricin!'). I was also very taken by Sandro Russo's accounts of the Granados transcriptions of two of Domenico Scarlatti's sonatas – the Spanish influence being striking in its endemic nature. The Grau/Schumacher Duo brings this fascinating disc to an excellent conclusion with the aforementioned Chabrier *Waltz*.

Throughout, the recordings are of a very high standard, and one must particularly commend the quality of the booklet notes, which are uncommonly informative. A very worthwhile issue indeed.

Robert Matthew-Walker