



Arianna Goldina and Rémy Loumbrozo

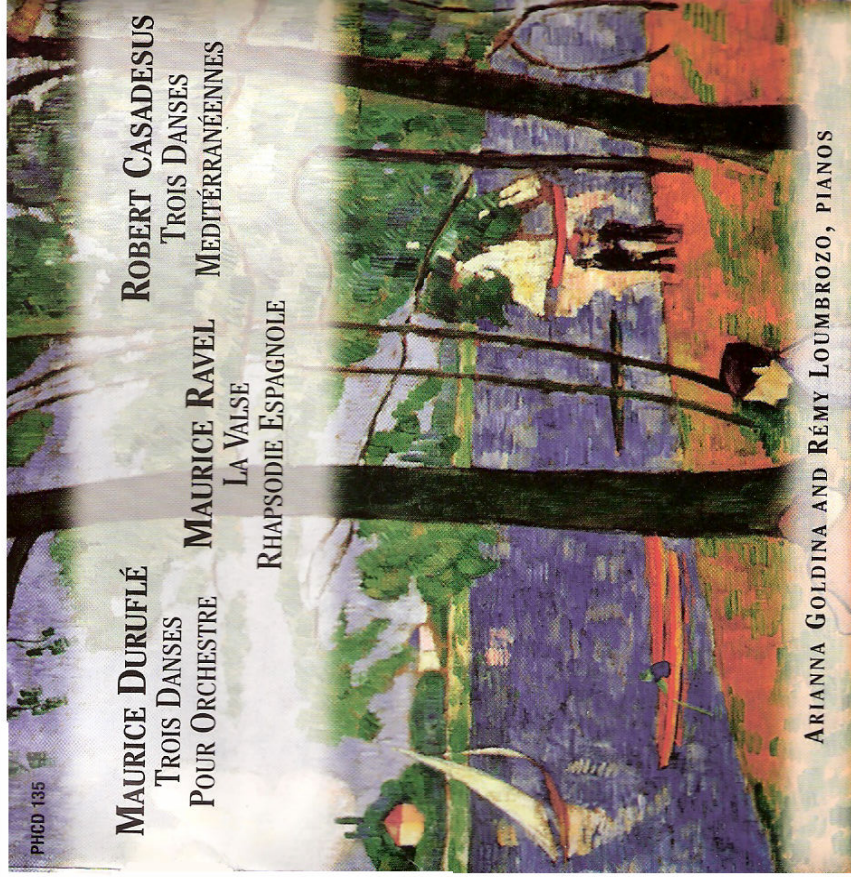
The exceptional musicianship of the American-French duo-pianists Arianna Goldina and Rémy Loumbrozo has brought them consistent praise and recognition from critics and audiences alike. Their rare beauty of ensemble playing has also led to the unique achievement of winning top prizes at five international duo-piano competitions, including First Prize at the 2nd Murray Drahoff Two-Piano Competition in Miami (the only international competition of this kind in North America) and First Prize at the 7th Valentino Bucchi Duo-Piano Competition of 20th Century Music in Rome, Italy.

Born far apart, in Latvia and France, Arianna Goldina and Rémy Loumbrozo met while studying at the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. Since then the husband and wife team has been performing in recitals and as soloists with orchestras in major music centers of the United States, Canada, England, France, Italy, Germany, the Baltic States, Scandinavia, and Russia. They have appeared in various international two-piano festivals in North America, Europe and Asia.

Arianna Goldina and Rémy Loumbrozo have been heard on numerous American French, Russian, and Latvian public radio stations, and on the BBC. They were seen on the ABC TV network in the United States as well as on French and Russian National TV. The varied and extensive repertoire of the duo encompasses all major works for one piano, four-hands, and two pianos. The pianists' interest extends to premiering new compositions and bringing to light rarely performed ones. This recording affirms their commitment to it.



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PHCD 135

MAURICE DURUFLÉ
TROIS DANSES
POUR ORCHESTRE

ROBERT CASADESUS
TROIS DANSES
MEDITERRANÉENNES

MAURICE RAVEL
LA VALSE
RHAPSODIE ESPAGNOLE

ARIANNA GOLDINA AND RÉMY LOUMBROZO, PIANOS

French Music for Two Pianos

From the French lutenists of the sixteenth century to the twentieth-century masters like Milhaud, Jolivet, Ohana, and others, dance forms and rhythms have been an important source of inspiration for many French composers. This recording focuses on distinctly individual contributions to the two-piano medium by three French composers: Duruflé, Casadesus and Ravel. Though each of the compositions included uniquely expresses the essential qualities of the musical style of its composer, they are linked by their common formal outline – each work is an essay in a dance form.

Maurice DURUFLÉ

Trois danses pour orchestre, Op. 6

(world premiere recording)

Transcription for two pianos by the composer.

- Divertissement
- Danse lente
- Tambourin

Maurice Duruflé (1902-1986) was a prominent and unique figure in French music around the middle of the twentieth century. He studied composition at the Paris Conservatoire with Dukas, who had a powerful influence on the formation of his musical personality, and was also a student and later an assistant of the eminent French organists, improvisers, and composers Charles Tournemire and Louis Vierne. From 1930 on he was the organist of St. Etienne-du-Mont and, as such, toured Europe, Russia, and the United States. His appointment as professor of harmony at the Paris Conservatoire followed in 1943.

A determined perfectionist, Duruflé has left a very small musical legacy. His principal works – the *Requiem* and compositions for organ – exemplify the highly personal quality of his musical language that, although unmistakably rooted in the French tradition, integrates the melodic simplicity of the Gregorian chant, with intricate polyphonic textures and luxuriant modal harmonies.

In 1932 Maurice Duruflé wrote *Trois Danses*, Op. 6, his first orchestral score, which he later transcribed for two pianos. This version remained unpublished until after the composer's death in 1986, when the manuscript was rediscovered by his widow. Mme Duruflé handed the score to the duo-pianists Arianna Goldina and Rémy Loubrozo, granting them the exclusive right to present its first public performance at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York City in March of 1989. She further commented, "Your performance of the *Trois danses* corresponds exactly to my husband's own interpretation. It is moving, even the rests have a soul of their own. I feel that my praise cannot do justice to your playing."

Duruflé's affinity to the traditions of Couperin and Rameau is clearly perceptible in the musical structure of *Trois Danses*, which is related to the dance forms of the French Baroque suite. The opening *Divertissement* is a rondo that contrasts a whimsical, scherzo – like main theme with episodes of great lyricism and restrained beauty. In *Danse lente* Duruflé introduces varied musical ideas, linked by a recurrent rhythmic motive, and merges them into a compact free form that develops naturally out of its musical content, creating a poetic and emotionally intense picture. The final movement, *Tambourin*, based on a thematic ostinato, evokes an atmosphere of a rustic dance. A recurrence of the melodic material from the first movement, especially the return of the lyrical theme in the middle section, helps to achieve musical unity of the entire work.

Notes by Arianna Goldina

Robert CASADESUS

Trois danses méditerranéennes, Op. 36

- Sardane
- Sarabande
- Tarentelle

A multifaceted personality, Robert Casadesus (1899-1972) was not only a great master of the keyboard, but also a well-known educator, chamber musician, and composer. Born in Paris in a family of musicians and actors, Casadesus studied at the Paris Conservatoire, where, at the age of 14, he received a Premier Prix in piano, followed by the *Grand Prix Diemer* (Louis Diemer, one of Casadesus' teachers, was a pupil of Liszt). This marked the beginning of an illustrious

career that spanned fifty years and brought him to three continents.

Casadesus, the composer, was often stimulated by Casadesus, the performer. Thus, the collaboration with his wife, pianist Gaby Casadesus, no doubt, gave an impetus to the creation of several works in the two-piano medium. His output was considerable and diverse, also including seven symphonies, several concertos for solo instruments with orchestra, works for solo piano, and vocal and chamber music.

Trois Danses méditerranéennes, Op. 36, for two pianos, were published in 1945. This work draws upon the rich folk idiom of three countries on the shores of the Mediterranean – Spain, France, and Italy. The three freely aggregated, stylized movements in dance rhythms form a suite that pays tribute to the French keyboard music of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. The first movement – *Sardane* (Sardana) – utilizes a characteristic rhythm of the most important circle dance of Catalonia, which was also popular in the French Provence. Joyful and vigorous, it is permeated with a spontaneity and impulsiveness of a genuine folk dance. The contrasting lyrical middle section is, nevertheless, dominated by a strong rhythmic pattern of the dance. The central slow movement of the work makes use of the French sarabande, one of the four standard dance movements of the Baroque suite. Emotionally intense and solemn, its expressive content establishes the *Sarabande* as the dramatic apex of the entire work. The final movement – *Tarentelle* (Tarrantella) – a virtuoso showpiece, is a folk dance of Southern Italy. Tripartite, the evocative and enigmatic atmosphere of the middle section of the movement that never loses its rhythmic verve is set off by the sparkling, exuberant, and forceful spirit of the outer parts, providing a brilliant conclusion to this set of three dances. Commenting on this recording, Mme Casadesus is quoted, “Your interpretation of the *Trois danses méditerranéennes* is excellent. As to the works by Ravel, you play them just right, with perfect dynamics.”

Maurice RAVEL

Sites auriculaires (1895-1897)

- Habañera
- Entre cloches (Among bells)

The year 1895 marked a turning point in the development of Maurice Ravel's musical personali-

ty. Among the Three compositions completed that year was *Habañera* for two pianos, one of Ravel's first published works that signified a radical departure from his earlier efforts. Indeed, the work contains many characteristics, such as repeated note figures, an extensive use of pedal point, and successions of parallel chords with numerous expressively dissonant appoggiaturas that later distinguished Ravel's mature style.

The First of Ravel's compositions in the Spanish idiom, it uses a distinctive rhythm of the habañera, a Cuban dance and song that spread to Europe and became particularly popular in Spain. Prefaced by a quotation from Baudelaire's *A une dame créée* from the collection *Les fleurs du mal*: “Au pays parfume que le soleil caresse” (In the perfumed land which the sun caresses), the *Habañera* evokes a luscious sensuality, languor, and exoticism of the poem. *Entre cloches* (Among bells), written in 1897, denotes another significant step in the development of Ravel's musical vocabulary. The imaginative use of the interval of the fourth, both melodically and harmonically, bold progressions of parallel chords utilized to create ostinato figurations, sophisticated harmonies are effectively exploited to paint a picture of chiming bells. The driving, rapidly moving successions of fourths in the opening and closing sections of the composition are contrasted by a lyrical middle section, where an exquisitely wrought, graceful melody is supported by bell-like overtones, effected by extended pedal points.

Both pieces, the *Habañera* and *Entre cloches*, linked together and entitled *Sites auriculaires*, were first heard on March 5, 1898, in a concert of the Société Nationale de Musique that also marked Ravel's first public appearance as a composer. It was an ill-fated performance. The dismay, created by a strange title, which probably reflects the influence of Erik Satie, whom the composer held in high esteem, and, as suggested by the Ravel scholar Arbie Orenstein, describes the aural equivalent of imaginary visits to picturesque sites, was compounded by serious ensemble problems experienced by Marthe Dron and Ricardo Vines during the performance of *Entre cloches*. Discouraged, Ravel withdrew the composition. It remained unpublished and virtually forgotten. In contrast, the *Habañera* was later orchestrated, and in this form reappeared as the third movement of the *Rapsodie espagnole* (1907). The complete *Sites auriculaires* was published for the first time in 1975.

Maurice Ravel
La Valse (poème chorégraphique)

Transcription for two pianos by the composer.

The choreographic poem *La Valse*, written in absolute seclusion during the winter of 1919-1920, introduces a new dimension to Ravel's musical expression. Although the origins of *La Valse* are found in the symphonic poem *Wien*, contemplated already in 1906, the dark and frenzied atmosphere of the work, no doubt, reflects the shattering effect on the composer of the tragedy of World War I and the death of his mother. The deep emotional crisis that set in following these events slowed down Ravel's creative processes to a point of almost virtual silence. The completion of *La Valse* was spurred only by a commission from Diaghilev for the Ballets Russes.

Before setting out to orchestrate his new composition, Ravel finished a piano solo and a two-piano version of the piece. It was in this latter guise that *La Valse* was heard in public for the first time. The performance took place on October 23, 1920, during the composer's visit to Vienna. It was presented by Ravel and the Italian pianist and composer Alfredo Casella in a concert organized in Ravel's honor. The orchestral version of *La Valse* was heard for the first time in December of 1920.

Intended as a tribute to Johann Strauss, *La Valse*, essentially a study in crescendo, consists of a series of uninterrupted waltzes, the melodic material of which, undergoes a considerable transformation in the recapitulation, reaching a powerful, yet unprecedentedly tense and almost frantic climax in the concluding section. Ravel supplemented the score with a *prélude* that evokes the overall atmosphere of the composition: "Through whirling clouds, waltzing couples may be faintly distinguished. The clouds gradually scatter: one sees an immense hall peopled with a whirling crowd. The scene is gradually illuminated. The light of the chandeliers bursts forth. An imperial court, about 1855."

Maurice RAVEL
Rhapsodie espagnole (1907-1908)

- *Prélude à la nuit*
- *Malaguena*

- *Habañera*
- *Feria*

It was in the year 1907 that one of the most characteristic aspects of Ravel's art – that of his predilection for Spanish music – became particularly pronounced. During this time he wrote several important essays in the Spanish idiom, including his first ambitious work for the orchestra, *Rhapsodie espagnole*. However, the first version of this oeuvre, completed by October, was written for one piano four hands. Shortly after Ravel finished the orchestration of the piece, the rhapsody was premiered at the Concerts Colonne in Paris. This event took place on March 15, 1908.

Ravel conceived *Rhapsodie espagnole* as a sectional work and all but one of its four movements are linked by a reappearing motive of a descending four-note scale (F, E, D, C-sharp) that opens the first movement, *Prélude à la nuit*. Hushed and languid, this movement is rich in sumptuous textural detail, which helps to evoke an atmosphere of stillness and nostalgia.

The immediately ensuing second movement, *Malaguena* is a stylized dance, inspired by Spanish gypsy music. Despite the interposition of a sensuous recitative and the four-note motive from the *Prélude*, the mood of this movement remains light and spirited throughout.

Since *Habañera*, the third movement, written in 1895., was originally part of the *Sites auriculaires* for two pianos, it was commented on earlier in the text. However, it must be mentioned that Ravel did not change a note when he decided to resurrect this youth work and include it in the rhapsody. He did, though redistribute the melodic material in order to produce a tightly knit texture characteristic of the piano duet idiom.

Feria, the fourth movement, is, by far the longest and brings the composition to a joyful and brilliant close. Ravel makes use of five popular dance – like tunes, three of which are heard in the opening section. A slow recitative provides a brief respite but the return of the opening motive of the first movement, intertwined with musical material from the *Feria*, leads back to the original atmosphere of jubilant celebration. The *Rhapsodie espagnole* concludes with an opulent burst of color that resolves in a luminous C major.

Notes by Rémy Loumbrozo

ARIANNA GOLDINA AND RÉMY LOUMBROZO
PIANOS

Maurice Durufié (1902–1986) Trois danses pour orchestre,
Op. 6 (world premiere recording of the 2 piano version)

- 1 Devertissement 7:17
- 2 Danse lente 8:23
- 3 Tambourin 5:44

Robert Casadesus (1899–1972) Trois danses
mediterranéennes, Op. 36

- 4 Sardane 3:47
- 5 Sarabande 5:16
- 6 Tarentelle 3:11

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) Sites auriculaires

- 7 Habanera 3:02
- 8 Entre Cloches 2:28

Maurice Ravel

- 9 La Valse 11:30

Maurice Ravel Rhapsodie Espagnole

- 10 Prélude à la nuit 4:52
- 11 Malagueña 2:15
- 12 Habanera 3:18
- 13 Feria 7:14

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