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GEORGE ENESCU WORKS FOR VIOLIN & PIANO



DANIEL ROWLAND *violin*
NATACHA KUDRITSKAYA *piano*

GEORGE ENESCU (1881–1955)

VIOLIN SONATA No.3 IN A MINOR, Op.25 (1926)**'DANS LE CARACTÈRE POPULAIRE ROUMAIN'**

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | <i>i</i> Moderato malinconico | 09'15 |
| 2 | <i>ii</i> Andante sostenuto e misterioso | 09'41 |
| 3 | <i>iii</i> Allegro con brio, ma non troppo mosso | 07'41 |

VIOLIN SONATA No.2 IN F MINOR, Op.6 (1898)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|-------|
| 4 | <i>i</i> Assez mouvemente | 07'18 |
| 5 | <i>ii</i> Tranquille | 07'18 |
| 6 | <i>iii</i> Vif | 07'41 |

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 7 | IMPRESSIONS D'ENFANCE, Op.28 (1940) | 25'02 |
|---|--|-------|

Total playing time: 73'59

Produced and edited by Matthew Bennett
 Engineered by Dave Rowell
 Recorded on 29th–30th June and 1st July 2015 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

Cover & inlay photographs by Juuso Westerlund

Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen
 Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: Matt Buchanan

For me there is something magical about the music and the personality of George Enescu. Everything about him conjures up a sense of generosity, big-heartedness and limitless imagination. Casals described him as “the greatest musical phenomenon since Mozart”. Menuhin said, “Enescu gave me the light that has guided my entire existence.” He also considered Enescu to be “the most extraordinary human being, the greatest musician and the most formative influence” he had ever experienced. Ivry Gitlis, another student of Enescu, has been, and still is, a great inspiration for me, encouraging freedom, colour, contrast, fantasy and daring. Hearing Ivry reminisce about Enescu it seems that these are the very qualities he embodied too: a unique composer, virtuoso violinist, a brilliant pianist, successful conductor and teacher of several generations of outstanding violinists, including Yehudi Menuhin, Christian Ferras, Ivry Gitlis, Arthur Grumiaux and Ida Haendel. He is someone I would have very much loved to have met!

The three works on this disc are all close to my heart, and show the wide scope of Enescu’s musical language. The deeply soulful, romantic second sonata has more than a few echoes of Fauré, yet is unmistakably young Enescu, written just before the astonishing Octet. This is music overflowing with emotions, passion and tenderness.

The third Sonata ‘In the popular Romanian style’ is probably his most famous chamber music work. The piece evokes all the elements of gypsy music, crystallised to a highly sophisticated level. The piece is a paradox in the sense

that it is extremely densely annotated; there are endless small details one has to negotiate in order to sound completely improvisatory. One needs an accountant's attention to detail coupled with the fiery, limitless abandon of a gypsy!

Impressions I find to be a uniquely touching piece: the memories of an older man describing his childhood in a remote Romanian village. It's in essence a day in this child's life: the street fiddler, the slightly scary beggar, the garden stream, birdsong... Then it's time to sleep, and after his mother sings a touching lullaby and the moon shines behind the curtains a tremendous storm builds up: "le vent dans la cheminée". The sunrise after this is a magical moment of great beauty, and builds up to a gloriously incandescent culmination.

It has been a great joy recording with Natacha these pieces that I love at Champs Hill, the perfect place for music to fly freely. Warmest thanks to those who made it possible.



George Enescu (1881–1955) is today most widely celebrated as one of the world's greatest violinists of his generation, a fine conductor and by far the most significant composer of his native Romania. Certainly many great musicians who knew him – including his pupils and protégés Yehudi Menuhin, Arthur Grumiaux and Ivry Gitlis, and colleagues such as Alfred Cortot – held him in the highest esteem. Yet even today his music, apart from his exuberant *Romanian Rhapsody No.1* for orchestra (1901), is scarcely known by the wider public. His one major opera, *Oedipe* (1921–32), though recorded and since accorded increased respect, remains rarely staged; and his extensive work for solo violin (though – perhaps significantly – not including a concerto) is only beginning to catch the attention of a new generation of soloists.

In adult life George Enescu liked to describe himself as a 'son of the soil', yet his father was in fact an estate administrator and in his own right a modest land owner – therefore a man of some importance to the local community in Liveeni where the future composer was born. Nonetheless, Enescu's earliest musical experiences were close to the local peasantry: among his childhood memories was listening aged three to a gypsy band playing on panpipes, violins, a cimbalom and a double bass; and hiding in an orchard to listen to an old gardener play a flute.

In Romania, masters of improvisation and ornamentation in instrumental music were known as 'lautari' – literally 'fiddlers' but a title which applied to any professional folk musicians with such skills – quite often but not invariably gypsy musicians. It was from such a musician, known as Lau Chioru ('Squinting Nick'), that Enescu first learned to play violin at the age of four. Such was his innate talent that his parents soon took him to audition with the violin professor and director of the Conservatoire at Iasi (capital of Moldavia) Eduard Caudella. The

good professor recommended that Enescu should learn to read music; Enescu accordingly was taken home to learn this skill, and he almost immediately started to compose. Taken back to Caudella when he was seven, the professor – highly impressed by the youth’s burgeoning talent – now recommended that Enescu should enter the Vienna Conservatoire. This he did that very year, on 5 October 1888.

Enescu continued to compose, and while in Vienna fell under the spell of both Wagner and Brahms. He saw no paradox in admiring both composers, and once explained: “Wagner and Brahms were not at all antithetical as people have made them out to be. They were opposed to each other much more by reason of policy than musically.” The prospect of studying under Massenet then brought him to Paris early in 1895. Though the Paris Conservatoire was then still under the directorship of Ambroise Thomas, whose stifling academicism was to inspire much rebellion from Paris’s more able musicians, Enescu appreciated the teaching and encouragement he received from both Massenet and his successor, Fauré. Enescu also received a solid grounding in counterpoint from the lesser-known but much admired teacher André Gédalge (who also taught Ravel, Koechlin and Schmitt, as well as, some time after Enescu’s graduation, Ibert, Honegger and Milhaud). Enescu found Gédalge’s methods very much in accord with his natural inclination, and was later to state: “Harmonic progressions only amount to a sort of elementary improvisation. However short it is, a piece deserves to be called a musical composition only if it has a line, a melody, or, even better, melodies superimposed on one another.”

In April 1899, Enescu composed his Second Violin Sonata. By then he had achieved compositional fame with his *Poème Roumain*, completed in 1897 and which had enjoyed remarkable success when premiered by the Colonne Orchestra in Paris. It caused an even greater sensation when played in Bucharest, securing Enescu

overnight national fame and the patronage of the Queen of Romania. In the meantime a theme had been germinating in Enescu’s mind, one which first occurred to him – he later said – “At the age of 14, when I was walking by myself in Prince Maurouzi’s garden... I carried it inside me for three years; then, at 17, I wrote my Second Violin Sonata in the space of a fortnight.” The success of his *Poème* had no doubt galvanised his confidence, and his Violin Sonata in F minor was the most distinctive work he had ever composed till then, in terms of its character and its lean, purposeful sense of unity, being largely derived from its long opening theme.

In three movements, it begins with that sombre and mysterious theme, played in unison by violin and piano. As the music progresses and blossoms, one may perhaps hear the influence here of Fauré, and there of Chausson in the music’s moments of harmonic poignancy; but Enescu’s delivery is far more forthright than the sensibility of either of those French composers. The second movement, also in F minor, is more straightforwardly songful in a melancholic manner: there is a central section in which the melody undergoes a dreamy variation, with perhaps a hint of the twin influences of Brahms and Wagner which had been so crucial to the young Enescu. The former mood returns, though with the violin now muted and entering a more shadowy realm with a scurrying *tremolo*. The movement ends as if with a question, which links straight into the finale. In that movement the strongest influence appears to be Fauré, its *scherzando* mood built on quirky, elliptical harmonies. In true cyclic style the Sonata’s opening theme reappears, an impassioned statement in the midst of so much light-hearted banter; and later still the second movement’s melancholic song also appears. The general mood, though, is playful and merry, with an appropriate final pay-off.

Asked once to describe the essential character of Romanian music, Enescu replied: “Dreaming. And a tendency, even in fast sections, towards melancholy, towards minor keys.” It was above all the *doina* – a slow and melancholic song or instrumental melody found particularly in Romania – which inspired some of Enescu’s most characteristic music, including his Third Violin Sonata. Enescu composed this in August through to November 1926, and described the Sonata on its title page as “dans le caractère populaire roumain”. In an interview two years later, Enescu emphasized the difference between ‘style’ and ‘character’ and why he opted for the latter description: “I don’t use the word ‘style’ because that implies something made or artificial, whereas ‘character suggests something given, existing from the beginning.”

Enescu was particularly wary of using genuine folk themes in sophisticated music for the concert hall, describing the result as “diamonds set in concrete”. Rather, he in effect invented his own folk language, having deeply absorbed the peasant and gypsy music of his native country. This influence can be not only heard in the exotic inflections and character of the music, but may also be witnessed in Enescu’s meticulous notation of the violin part – generally inspired by the improvisatory style of Romanian fiddlers – indicating which part of the bow the player should use, degrees of *vibrato* and exactly how to execute the many ornaments in the violin’s music. Meanwhile the piano is often imitating instruments such as the cimbalom, or such natural sounds as bird song or the chirping of crickets.

Enescu brought this imitative art to a new level 14 years later with *Impressions d’enfance* – truly an artful evocation of a child’s perspective on a world that appears intriguing, magical and sometimes threatening. The suite, very specifically,

recalls Enescu’s own childhood; as the twelfth and only surviving child, he had been cosseted by his mother who had prevented him from playing with other children. So the memories evoked by this suite are those of a solitary child, who hears a gypsy musician, encounters a beggar, a caged bird and a cuckoo clock, and such living creatures or natural phenomena he might encounter in the family’s garden. There’s even an eerie evocation of the wind howling in the chimney. All of this is woven into music which is not merely evocative, but haunting, disturbing and strange, until dawn the next morning brings the suite to a joyous conclusion.

© Daniel Jaffé



I DANIEL ROWLAND

Dutch/English violinist Daniel Rowland's playing has been acclaimed as "wonderful, ravishing in its finesse" by *The Guardian*, "totally and truly charismatic" by *Beeld*, while *The Glasgow Herald* praised his "astonishing sound and uniquely single minded intensity".

Daniel has established himself on the international scene as a highly versatile, charismatic and adventurous performer, with a broad repertoire from Vivaldi to Ferneyhough. He has performed concertos by composers including Mozart, Elgar, Korngold, Berg, Prokoffief, Schnittke, Glass, Saariaho and Ferneyhough with orchestras from Tromso to Cape Town. As a soloist he has performed last season the Korngold Concerto with HET Symfonieorkest (Enschede), The Vivaldi/Piazzolla *Eight Seasons* with both the Ulster Orchestra and the Arcos Orchestra (New York) and the Philip Glass Concerto with the Joensuu Symphony Orchestra (Finland).

A passionate chamber musician, Daniel has performed with artists as diverse as Ivry Gitlis, Heinz Holliger, Gilles Apap, Marcelo Nisinman, Martin Frost, Elvis Costello and Lars Vogt. He is a frequent guest at many of the foremost international chamber music festivals, such as Kuhmo, Risor, Osnabrück and Sonoro. The Stift International Music Festival in Holland, of which he is founder and artistic director, saw its 11th edition in August 2015.

Daniel is the first violin of the renowned Brodsky Quartet with whom he has recorded many CDs for Chandos, and has formed an acclaimed recital duo with pianist Natacha Kudritskaya. As well as this present recording the duo have recorded *Les Années folles* (Paris between the wars) for Gutman records. Daniel is also a founding member of the contemporary tango quintet ChamberJam Europe, described by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* as "a group with the power of dynamite".



photograph by Juuso Westerlund

Daniel is professor of violin at the Royal College of Music in London, he is also in demand as a soloist/director, and as guest concertmaster with the BBCSO, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Daniel plays on a Lorenzo Storioni violin, Cremona 1776.

Daniel was born in London, and started his violin lessons in Enschede after his parents moved to Twente in the eastern Netherlands. He studied with Jan Repko, Davina van Wely, Herman Krebbers, Viktor Liberman and Igor Oistrakh. Meeting Ivry Gitlis in 1995 was an important musical impulse, and led initially to lessons in Paris and later to musical collaborations. Various successes at competitions include first prize at the 1995 Oskar Back competition at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

Natacha Kudritskaya was a student of the Lysenko Music School in Kiev, where she completed her training at the age of 17. Following these formative years – between 1996 and 2002 – she undertook three tours across the USA with the Kiev Symphony Orchestra; her very first experience as a concert musician.

At 19 she subsequently enrolled in the Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine in Kiev, where she studied with Irina Barinova and Igor Riabov, as well as winning a place at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse in Paris. She studied simultaneously in both these institutions, graduating with the highest distinctions and jury honours.

Four personalities have left their mark on Natacha's pianistic technique. First Alain Planès; "my first professor, simply the representation of elegance, possessed a sheer sophisticated style". Then Jacques Rouvier; "... very attached to the text, a rigorous and meticulous personality". Her later encounter with Ferenc Rados in Budapest was crucial; "he taught me how to read in between the notes". And finally, Henri Barda; "... felt like a hurricane devastating my whole work and training, for there to reign only the power of music".

Natacha Kudritskaya has performed for major festivals and concert halls across France and Europe, including the Cité de la musique and Musée d'Orsay Auditorium in Paris, Wigmore Hall in London, Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre, Gstaad's Festival, Concertgebouw in Bruges, Flagey in Bruxelles, Helsinki Philharmony, Konzerthaus in Vienna, la Grange de Meslay, Oxford Chamber Music Festival and Kuhmo Festival in Finland.

Rameau's compositions have greatly influenced Natacha as a musician, and she has dedicated two albums to this composer: the first was released in 2009, in association with Luciano Berio, and the second in 2012 on 1001 Notes label.

In 2014, Natacha Kudritskaya signed to Universal Music. Her first album *Nocturnes* was released by Deutsche Grammophon.

