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**PAUL TAFFANEL : FANTAISIES**

**Olga LEONKIEWICZ** - flute

**Kinga FIRLEJ-KUBICA** - piano

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**Paul TAFFANEL (1844-1908)**

\*Grande fantaisie sur Mignon, Opéra comique d'Ambroise Thomas (1874)

\*Fantaisie sur le Freischütz, Opéra de C.M. von Weber (1876)

\*Fantaisie sur les Indes Galantes, Opéra ballet de J.-P. Rameau (1877)

\*Fantaisie sur Jean de Nivelle, Opéra de Léo Delibes (1881)

\*Fantaisie sur Françoise de Rimini, Opéra d'Ambroise Thomas (1884)

\*Andante pastoral et scherzettino (1907)

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**The International Flute Competition in Kraków** was founded in 1999 and is held every three years. It is organized by the Academy of Music in Krakow under the honorary patronage of Krzysztof Penderecki. The main idea of the event is the promotion of outstanding young performers from around the world and the popularization of the high-calibre interpretations of music for flute, including works by Polish composers.

The opportunities to compare the results of musical training and of the performance traditions championed by representatives of academic centres from Europe and elsewhere constitute a tangible contribution to the development of flute performance by young instrumentalists in Poland and around the world.

The universally acknowledged prestige of the International Flute Competition in Kraków is surely the result of the high artistic level demonstrated by its finalists. Many of the event's past laureates are among the most sought-after flute virtuosos of our time. The stature of the competition is also enhanced by the high profile of the jury which brings together the most eminent personalities in flute music. This reflects the organizers' concern for the highest possible standards of judgement.

The World Forum of the Art of Flute Performance, which is held alongside the competition, is an important platform for the exchange of views on artistic and academic topics by jury members, performers, observers and invited guests.

The recording of this CD by Olga Leonkiewicz has been possible thanks to a joint award which she received at the 6th International Flute Competition in Kraków in 2014 from the Rector of the Academy of Music in Krakow, Professor Dr. Hab. Zdzisław Łapiński, Yamaha Music Europe GmbH and DUX Recording Producers.

French flute player and conductor Paul Taffanel (1844-1908) was an extraordinary virtuoso and a major figure in fin-de-siècle Parisian musical life. As the flute professor at Paris Conservatory (among his most famous students were Philippe Gaubert and Marcel Moyse) and one of the authors of the *Méthode de flûte*, he ushered flute-playing into the modern age. His five opera fantasies were written between 1874 and 1884. This kind of composition was hugely popular in the nineteenth century, mainly because it allowed the performer to display his or her virtuoso skills. Whereas the average flautist-composer merely wanted to demonstrate his abilities, enriching someone else's original themes with acrobatic variations, Taffanel delved deep into the music of the original, frequently adding his own ideas which blended perfectly with the overall atmosphere of the work.

#### **Grande fantaisie sur Mignon, Opéra comique d'Ambroise Thomas (1874)**

This is Taffanel's first published work (dedicated to his teacher Louis Dorus). In it, the composer draws on the old tradition from which he had come. The piece is laid out in the general format and style of the four other fantasies. An introduction sets the musical scene and provides the flute with a brief cadenza. Then follows a series of themes from the opera, embellished with variations: Mignon's aria *Connais-tu le pays?*, Philine's aria *Je suis Titania*, the orchestral entr'acte that opens Act 2; and the *Forlane* that appears in the Overture and was originally included in an early draft of the conclusion of Act 3 but later omitted by Thomas.

#### **Fantaisie sur le Freischütz, Opéra de C.M. von Weber (1876)**

Taffanel carefully selected extracts from the Overture and each of the opera's three acts, notably key arias for Agathe, Max and Aennchen. Although the variations are very taxing for the player, they seem to grow naturally from within the given melodies, rather than being superimposed from without. The treatment of Agathe's aria from Act 2 is particularly atmospheric, while later – a truly imaginative touch – Taffanel gives the original Act 3 flute solo to the piano and surrounds it with a gentle counterpoint on the flute.

#### **Fantaisie sur les Indes Galantes, Opéra ballet de J.-P. Rameau (1877)**

*Fantaisie sur les Indes Galantes* is the least "composed" of the five fantasies and the least embellished. First comes a *Maestoso* that is actually the Overture to Rameau's *Hippolyte et Aricie*, then an Allegretto that uses the Minuets from Scene 2 of the Prologue of *Les Indes Galantes* and finally a Rigaudon based on the March and two Tambourins from Scene 6 of Act 1 (*Première Entrée*).

#### **Fantaisie sur Jean de Nivelle, Opéra de Léo Delibes (1881)**

For the theme of his *Jean de Nivelle* fantasy, Taffanel chose one of the opera's most popular arias, the *Ballade de la mandragore* from Act 1. This celebrates the magic powers of the mandragora plant, around which the complicated action of the plot revolves. Taffanel juxtaposed it with the *Marche des archers* and the *Trio bouffe* and he opens and concludes the fantasia with the picturesque imagery of the watermill, the *Fabliau du Moulin* from Act 2.

### **Fantaisie sur Françoise de Rimini, Opéra d'Ambroise Thomas (1884)**

Taffanel chose to base the *Fantaisie sur "Françoise de Rimini"* only on instrumental sections of the score: the Prologue and three dances from the ballet music from Act 3 - *Adagio*, *Saltarello* and *Sevillana* – probably recognizing that these displayed Thomas's lightweight lyrical talent at its best. And it is the lyricism and pathos that Taffanel underlines in the first half of the piece, with the Prologue of Virgil and Dante arriving at the entrance to Hell, and the *Entrée de Virgile*. The *Adagio* continues the mood and the variation embellishes the melody in a shimmer of hemidemisemiquavers. After this there is a straightforward presentation of the *Saltarella* and *Sevillana*.

### **Andante pastoral et Scherzettino (1907)**

This is the last work for flute and piano composed by Taffanel, which the French flautist dedicated to his student, Philippe Gaubert. The *Andante pastoral* is paced in long legato phrases that have the shape and range of the melodic line characteristic of vocal music. Taffanel's detailed phrasing and dynamic markings require the utmost attention from the player, both technically and musically. The *Scherzettino* exhibits the same careful attention to detail and clarity of texture. The composer was not just concerned with finger virtuosity, which is strikingly illustrated by the complexity of articulation patterns throughout the piece. *Andante pastoral et scherzettino* represents in essence the style and sound-world of the French flute school.

Description based on:  
Edward Blakeman, *Taffanel – Genius of the Flute*,  
Oxford University Press, 2005

**Olga LEONKIEWICZ** was born in Lublin, where she started to learn playing the flute in 2000 under the direction of Zbigniew Szela. In 2006 she graduated with honours from the Karol Lipiński School of Music in Lublin. She continued her education in the flute class of Professor Antoni Wierzbiński at the Grażyna and Kiejstut Bacewicz Academy of Music in Łódź, where she obtained an Honours Diploma. In the summer term in 2010 she took part in the Erasmus Scholarship Programme at the Hochschule für Musik Detmold (Germany), the flute class of Professor János Bálint. Since 2011 she has taken up further education at the Conservatoire de la Ville de Luxembourg in the flute class of Professor Carlo Jans and PhD studies at the Academy of Music in Łódź. She has been a member of the orchestra of the Grand Opera Theatre in Łódź since October 2012.

She participated in many national and international masterclasses, improving her skills under the guidance of such personalities as Robert Aitken, Lars Asbjornsen, Philippe Benoit, Carlos Bruneel, Łukasz Długosz, Michael Faust, Elżbieta Gajewska-Gadzina, Jean-Claude Gérard, Barbara Gisler-Haase, Wally Hase, Anne-Cathérine Heinzmann, Gudrun Hinze, Urszula Janik, Nils Thilo Krämer, Mirjam Nastasi, Grzegorz Olkiewicz, Gaby Pas-Van Riet, Sibel Pensel, Jean-Michel Tanguy, and Peter Verhoyen. Olga Leonkiewicz has taken part in numerous competitions. She was a semifinalist of the 4th, 5th and 6th International Flute Competition in Kraków (2008, 2011, 2014). In 2008 she was a finalist of the 7th Aleksander Tansman Competition of Music Personalities in Łódź. In 2009 she was a finalist and received an honourable mention at the 3rd Michał Spisak International Music Competition in Dąbrowa Górnicza (Poland) and a special award for the best performance of a piece composed by a Polish composer. She was also a scholarship holder from the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage for outstanding academic achievements. In 2011 she won Second Prize at the 14th Friedrich Kuhlau International Flute Competition in Uelzen (Germany). In 2013 she was awarded Third Prize at 7th Polish Flute Competition in Wrocław. In 2014, as the best Polish participant at the 6th International Flute Competition in Kraków, she won a special prize for the recording and release of a new CD.

**Kinga FIRLEJ-KUBICA** was born in Łódź. She started her musical education in the city's primary and secondary music schools, gaining an Honours Diploma from the class of Małgorzata Wronko in 1997. She then studied with Professor Tadeusz Chmielewski at the Academy of Music in Łódź, graduating with distinction in piano performance (2002). She has been on the faculty of her alma mater since 2007. In 2011 she gained a doctorate. Kinga Firlej-Kubica's honours include Second Prize (First Prize was not awarded) at the 2nd Chamber Music Competition in Toruń (1994), Second Prize at the 13th International Chamber Music Competition in Łódź (1998), First

Prize at the Chopin International Piano Competition in Vilnius (Lithuania, 1999), an honourable mention at the 34th Polish Piano Festival in Słupsk (2000) and First Prize at the 14th International Chamber Music Competition in Łódź (2001). She has performed in numerous venues in Poland (Warsaw, Wrocław, Łódź, Kraków, Szczecin, Katowice), playing as a soloist with orchestras as well as in duos and trios. Foreign tours have taken her to Germany, France, Holland, Lithuania and China (TV recordings, 2004). She has attended masterclasses given by Bernard Ringeissen, Lazar Berman, Rudolf Buchbinder, Victor Merzhanov, Halina Czerny-Stefańska, Aleksey Orlovetsky, Brenno Ambrosini, and Jean-Paul Sevilla. She has participated as an accompanist in many international music courses, including those in Krzyżowa (2005), Zamość (2006-2009) and Myślibórz (since 2009). In 2001 Kinga Firlej-Kubica recorded a CD featuring chamber works by Brahms and Schumann (with the cellist Dominik Połowski) for the Polish label DUX. It received a nomination for the Fryderyk Award of the Polish recording industry. Since 2007 Kinga Firlej-Kubica has performed in a piano duo with Wojciech Kubica and a flute trio with Ewelina Zawislak and János Bálint. She has made many recordings for radio and television.