

CHANDOS COLLECT

RAPHAEL WALLFISCH

Popular Works for Cello

Glazunov • Bloch • Dvořák • Tchaikovsky



English Chamber Orchestra • Geoffrey Simon

Linn Hendry *piano*

Popular Works for Cello

Alexander Konstantinovich Glazunov (1865–1936)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|------|
| 1 | Chant du ménestrel, Op. 71* | 3:51 |
| | for Cello and Orchestra | |

Ernest Bloch (1880–1959)

From Jewish Life[†] 7:52

Three Sketches

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|------|
| 2 | I Prayer | 3:25 |
| 3 | II Supplication | 2:25 |
| 4 | III Jewish Song | 2:02 |

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 5 | Pezzo capriccioso, Op. 62 [‡] | 7:16 |
| | Morceau de Concert (original 1887 version) | |

Two Songs[‡] 9:14

Instrumental version orchestrated by Tchaikovsky

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 6 | I Legend (Christ Had a Garden), Op. 54 No. 5 | 3:21 |
| 7 | II Was I Not a Little Blade of Grass?, Op. 47 No. 7 | 5:53 |

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)

Five Pieces for Cello and Piano[†] 28:22
Complete edition

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|------|
| 8 | I Rondo in G minor, Op. 94 | 6:32 |
| 9 | II Silent Woods, Op. 68 No. 5 | 5:06 |
| 10 | III Polonaise in A major, Op. posth. | 7:37 |
| 11 | IV Slavonic Dance, Op. 46 No. 8 | 4:29 |
| 12 | V Slavonic Dance, Op. 46 No. 3 | 4:38 |

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 13 | Andante cantabile [‡] | 7:37 |
| | Arranged by Tchaikovsky from String Quartet
No. 1, Op. 11 | |

TT 65:20

Raphael Wallfisch cello
Lynn Hendry piano[†]
London Philharmonic Orchestra^{*}
English Chamber Orchestra[‡]
Bryden Thomson^{*}
Geoffrey Simon[‡]

Popular Works for Cello

At the outset of a romantic programme putting the solo violoncello in the spotlight, Raphael Wallfisch first brings to the fore the instrument's capacity for long-phrased beauty of line and eloquence of emotional feeling. Glazunov's *Chant du ménestrel*, composed in 1900, was a familiar concert favourite in the early years of the century. On a visit to London in 1907 Glazunov conducted it at the Royal College of Music with Beatrice Harrison the seventeen-year-old soloist. She was later to make the first recording of Elgar's Cello Concerto, and remembered the *Chant* as 'so full of the utter sadness of life'.

A similar elegiac quality pervades *From Jewish Life*, the 'Three Sketches' which Bloch composed in 1924. They are part of a distinctive cycle of works, large and small, in which the Swiss-born composer, who had gone to live in the USA in 1916, drew on the remote ancestral elements in his personality: 'the complex, glowing, agitated Jewish soul that I feel vibrating throughout the Bible'. He turned gratefully to the cello to express this feeling, in major works like *Schelomo* (Solomon) and *Voice in the Wilderness*, as in the brooding poetry of these impassioned miniatures.

Despite its title, *Pezzo capriccioso*, the writing in this piece is suffused with the poignant melancholy that Tchaikovsky associated with its key, B minor. He composed it for the cellist Anatoly Brandukov after they had met in Paris in 1887, and sketched it in two days. The main theme, a song without words, lies favourably for the cello's vibrant middle register. Later there is livelier solo passage work as well as what might be thought 'capricious' modulations into other keys, D major and C major, before the piece ends with some vigorous bowing from the soloist.

Tchaikovsky only orchestrated three of his many songs, and one of these orchestrations is lost. The others, the *Two Songs* recorded here, are performed with the cello taking over the vocal line unaltered. 'Legend' comes from the *Sixteen Children's Songs* of 1883, the poem credited to 'an English source' about the Christ-child who makes rose garlands for his companions but is left only with the thorns to fashion a crown for himself. The second song comes from *Seven Romances* (1880), the poem by Ivan Surikov telling of a young girl betrothed against her will, who compares herself to a blade of

grass in the meadow cruelly trampled underfoot.

Dvořák went to New York in 1892 as the first Director of the city's newly established Conservatory; before leaving he spent several months on a 'farewell' tour of Bohemia and Moravia with his friends the violinist Ferdinand Lachner and the cellist Hanuš Wihan (who later inspired Dvořák's Cello Concerto). They performed together in the 'Dumky' Trio which the composer had but recently completed, and to give Wihan some new works to play in alternation with pieces played by Lachner, Dvořák composed or arranged four of what were later published as the **Five Pieces for Cello and Piano** gathered here.

A note in his autograph tells us that he had spent the previous Christmas Day and the next day composing the Rondo, which invites bravura technique as well as lyrical charm in its *Allegretto grazioso* character, and which also exists in an orchestral version. A couple of days later he borrowed for 'Silent Woods' one of the six genre pieces first written in 1883–84 as *From the Bohemian Forest* for piano

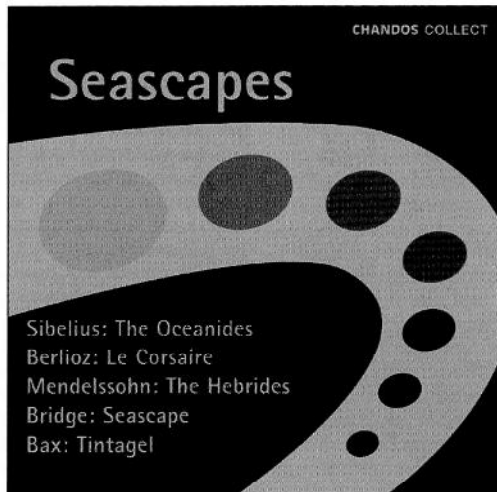
duet, a poetic nature picture in warmly romantic vein.

The Polonaise was written earlier, in 1879, for Alois Neruda, who took part in trio and quartet performances with Dvořák. A flamboyant dance movement with a lyrical middle section, it is enclosed by a brief introduction and an exhilarating coda. The two following 'Slavonic Dances' were specially arranged from his 1878 set for Wihan, the last piece here editorially finished for publication after Dvořák, perhaps in haste, had left it not quite complete.

The *Andante cantabile* movement from his String Quartet No. 1 in D major (1871) was already familiar as an independent orchestral work when Tchaikovsky arranged it yet again for cello and strings, for the same Brandukov who was to premiere the *Pezzo capriccioso*. The two main melodies are a folksong that the composer is said to have heard from a carpenter on the Ukrainian estate of his married sister, and an original theme of his own; the arrangement is directed to be played muted throughout, to poignant effect.

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