

VERNON DUKE

VIOLIN CONCERTO

COMPLETE WORKS FOR VIOLIN

ELMIRA DARVAROVA, VIOLIN

SCOTT DUNN, PIANO AND CONDUCTOR

ORF RADIO-SYMPHONIEORCHESTER WIEN



Vernon Duke (Vladimir Alexandrovitch Dukelsky, 1903–1969)

Violin Concerto (1940–41)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|---------|
| 1 | 1. Allegro molto | (10:48) |
| 2 | 2. Valse | (5:21) |
| 3 | 3. Tema con variazioni | (14:23) |

Sonata in D for violin and piano (1948–49)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------|--------|
| 4 | 1. Poco maestoso | (7:45) |
| 5 | 2. Allegretto non troppo | (5:30) |
| 6 | 3. Brillante e tumultuoso | (5:10) |

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|---|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 7 | Etude for violin and bassoon | (3:31) |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------|

Hommage to Offenbach

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|----|------------------------------|--------|
| 8 | Part 1: Old Man's Polka | (1:45) |
| 9 | Part 2: Bridge of Sighs | (4:28) |
| 10 | Part 3: America Rediscovered | (3:21) |

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------|--------|
| 11 | Capriccio Méxicano | (5:31) |
|----|---------------------------|--------|

Elmira Darvarova, violin

ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien (1-3)

Scott Dunn, conductor (1-3) and piano (4-6, 8-11)

Kim Laskowski, bassoon (7)

Produced by **Elmira Darvarova**, **Scott Dunn**, and **Erich Hofmann**

Tracks 1-3 engineered by **Robert Pavlecka** and **Erich Hofmann**, recorded March 19th & 20th, 2014, ORF Funkhaus, Vienna

Tracks 4-11 engineered by **John C. Baker**, recorded November 24th, 2012, Edith Memorial Chapel, The Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, New Jersey

Mixed, edited, and mastered by **Samuel Ward** • Mastered for CD and download by **Gene Gaudette**

Executive producers: **Kay Duke Ingalls** and **Gene Gaudette** • Co-executive producer: **Diana Burgin**

Photos: **David Finlayson** (Elmira Darvarova), **Chris Lee** (Kim Laskowski), **Thomas Ramstorfer** (ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien), **Steve Sherman** (Scott Dunn), **Estate of Vernon Duke** (Vernon Duke)

Vladimir Alexandrovitch Dukelsky was born in 1903 in a railway station near the village of Parfianovka, Russia. At age twelve, he was admitted to the prestigious Kiev Conservatory to study composition with Reinhold Glière. Though older than Dukelsky, Sergei Prokofiev, Glière's most celebrated protégé, eventually became Dukelsky's life-long friend and mentor. In 1920, Dukelsky, his widowed mother, and brother Alexis fled the Bolshevik Revolution – spending two years in Constantinople before emigrating to the United States and arriving in New York City in 1922.

In New York, Arthur Rubinstein and George Gershwin took an interest in Dukelsky's talent. After hearing some of his piano pieces, Rubinstein asked the nineteen-year-old composer to write for him a “one-movement piano concerto, pianistically grateful and not too cerebral.” Both Gershwin and Rubinstein liked the new work; Gershwin would often ask Dukelsky to play its lyrical second theme at parties and Rubinstein promised to perform it (a promise not kept).

Dukelsky arrived in Paris the summer of 1924, with plans to orchestrate his *Piano Concerto in C*, secure its premiere, and “find his musical way.” He soon met Serge Koussevitzky, who offered Dukelsky a music publishing contract, and Serge Diaghilev, who upon hearing a two-piano performance of the new piano concerto by the composer (with ‘Les Six’ composer Georges Auric playing second piano) engaged Dukelsky to compose a new ballet for his Ballets Russes. (Duke fondly referred Koussevitzky, Diaghilev, and Prokofiev to as his “three Serges”.) For Diaghilev, Dukelsky composed *Zephyr et Flore*, which was presented in Paris and Monte Carlo in 1925 with a scenario by Boris Kochno, sets by Georges Braque, choreography by Léonide Massine, and costumes by Coco Chanel.

Dukelsky subsequently produced several ballets and a distinguished body of concert music: his *First Symphony* was premiered by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony in 1928; in 1931, *Epitaph for Diaghilev*, again with Koussevitzky and the BSO; in 1933, his *Second Symphony* in Paris; his *The End of St. Petersburg* oratorio, premiered at Carnegie Hall in 1938; and, again with the Boston Symphony, his 1943 *Violin Concerto* with Ruth Posselt and 1946 *Cello Concerto* with Gregor Piatigorsky.

The dual nature of Dukelsky's composing career developed early in the 1920's when Gershwin suggested he abbreviate his name to '**Vernon Duke**.' Gershwin had told him that “you'll never make any money writing that classical stuff,” and suggested he try his hand writing for London's West End, Broadway and film. With the huge successes that ensued, Duke contributed to more than seventeen West End and Broadway shows, and worked with such distinguished lyricists as Ira Gershwin, Yip Harburg, Sammy Cahn, Ogden Nash, and John Latouche. A number of his songs,

such as *April in Paris*, *Autumn in New York*, *I Can't Get Started*, *Round About*, and *Taking a Chance on Love*, have become standards of jazz and American popular song. His most notable Broadway success was the 1940 hit *Cabin in the Sky* with an all-black cast starring Ethel Waters, and choreography by George Balanchine.

During World War II, Duke served as a commissioned officer in the Coast Guard. For the Coast Guard, he wrote a touring fund-raising show which was also made into a movie in 1946 starring Sid Caesar, Janet Blair and Alfred Drake. After the war, Duke returned to Paris where Roland Petit commissioned him to write a hugely successful, jazzy ballet called *Le Bal de Blanchisseuses* (*The Washerwomen's Ball*), which received more than one hundred performances. At about the same time, his *Third Symphony* premiered in Brussels.

After several years of living between New York and Paris, Vernon Duke moved to Los Angeles in 1953 when Warner Brothers hired him to write scores for several musical films (including one, based on Duke's 1932 hit, called *April in Paris*). During this time Duke also wrote and published his autobiography, "*Passport to Paris*", as well as four books of poetry in Russian. Additionally, he worked on several Broadway projects; wrote art songs; composed concert and chamber music; and revised many of his early concert works, as well as an early opera called *Mistress into Maid*. Based on a Pushkin story and originally commissioned by Diaghilev, the opera is yet to be produced.

Also in Los Angeles, he was finally reunited with his beloved brother Alexis, his brother's wife Romona, and their daughter Natasha. Alexis worked as an artist at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer; Natasha has had a distinguished career as an animator for Disney Studios.

In 1957 Duke married the American soprano Kay McCracken, who had been a student of the great Lotte Lehmann. She and Duke traveled and performed extensively together in concerts and recitals throughout the United States.

Vernon Duke died in Santa Monica, California in January, 1969.

— Scott Dunn and Kay Duke Ingalls

It is Duke's beautiful and needlessly neglected *Violin Concerto* which is the central focus of this release. Up until the recording, the work had received only four high profile performances: two Boston 1943 premier performances, and two subsequent early 1944 flawed performances by the New York Philharmonic.

Diana Burgin, the daughter of Ruth Posselt (1911-2007) – the distinguished violinist for the premier performances – shared the following of her mother’s recollections about the work and its premiere:

Duke wrote his *Violin Concerto in g minor*, his sole essay in the genre, at the suggestion of Jascha Heifetz and completed the piano score in 1941. The full score was not finished until shortly before the premier performances, given in March 1943 at Symphony Hall in Boston by my mother, violinist Ruth Posselt with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and my father Richard Burgin at the podium.

Duke had met my mother in late 1939 and greatly admired her playing. He attended her premier performances of violin concertos by Walter Piston (1940), Paul Hindemith (1941) and Samuel Barber (1942), which together had established her reputation as a major champion of contemporary American violin music. When Duke approached Posselt about introducing his concerto with the BSO, she responded with enthusiasm. [In a rather bitter prior episode for Duke, Heifetz had declined to premiere the work as it wasn’t “completely to (his) liking”; more to the point, Heifetz probably just didn’t want to pay the commission.]

My mother received the manuscript of Duke’s concerto in early 1942, and that summer, played it (with piano) – “two times through” – for Koussevitzky, Duke and others at the conductor’s home in Tanglewood. The concerto aroused great enthusiasm, and Koussevitzky programmed the work for the BSO for the spring of the 1942-43 season.

The premier performances were conducted on March 19th and 20th, 1943 by my father, the Concertmaster and Associate Conductor of the BSO, Richard Burgin¹. It was the first world premiere my parents did with the BSO. Both of my parents had been close to the work from near its inception and had collaborated with Duke on changes and improvements for the solo and orchestral parts. Duke later wrote: “I had some trouble with the long cadenza in the opening *Allegro* and owe a word of thanks to Miss Posselt for her helpful suggestions.”

Diana Burgin also relates that Posselt loved the concerto and admired its “transparency, the care with which it was scored” and its “chamber music character”. These characteristics of the work were apparently also appreciated by the young assistant conductor of the New York

1 These live performances from 1943 can be heard on YouTube.com. Interestingly and by sheer coincidence, our recording sessions in Vienna began seventy-one years to the day since the work’s Boston premiere on March 19th, 1943.

Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, who had rehearsed the piece and was scheduled to conduct it with that orchestra at Carnegie Hall on January 5th and 7th, 1944. Bernstein had just made his famous last-minute debut with the Philharmonic, and his star was rising fast. Unfortunately, perhaps feeling threatened by Bernstein's growing acclaim, Artur Rodzinski (who had not rehearsed the work and clearly had not studied it) insisted on conducting the performances which resulted, per Duke, in "very unhappy" results. After the glowing notices in Boston, the concerto suffered a premature demise in New York and has not been heard since.

On a happier note, it turns out that her mother was already pregnant with her daughter Diana Burgin for the Boston premiere. Burgin writes:

My mother later recalled that throughout, "I could feel the baby kicking around. Someone who sent me flowers wrote on the card: 'No wonder it was good. There were three people on stage – Richard was conducting, you were playing and so was the baby.'"

The ***Sonata for Violin and Piano*** dates from 1948-49. According to the composer, "Roman Totenberg, the distinguished Polish violinist, commissioned the Violin Sonata ... [but] I was grievously disappointed (that) Totenberg only played the sonata once – on the radio." When the work was finally published by Ricordi in 1960, Duke dedicated it to his friend and colleague, violinist Israel Baker. Baker frequently collaborated with Duke and was a seminal member and frequent performer in Duke's "Society for Forgotten Music", a series of chamber music readings and concerts of neglected works, founded in 1948 by its director Duke, alongside Nicholas Slonimsky, Bernard Hermann, and others. Of the work the composer wrote: "The Violin Sonata, a longer work (in three movements) was also born under a Latin sign, although written in New York: in it, Mexico is the Latin influence. This is especially noticeable in the first movement (the most extended) and the frivolous, fiesta-like finale, wherein the alternating 6/8 and 3/4 suggest a 'zarape' in slow motion. Only the Romance, which lies between the two livelier pieces, shows no allegiance to Mexico whatever: it is an unrestrained bit of melodic 'Sehnsucht'"

The ***Étude for Violin and Bassoon*** was included on the composer's 1961 CRI recording with violinist Israel Baker and bassoonist Don Christlieb. The work dates from 1931 and is dedicated to Boaz Piller, then contra-bassoonist of the Boston Symphony whom Duke had gotten to know during the rehearsals and performances of his *First* and *Second Symphonies*.

Elmira Darvarova discovered Duke's ***Hommage to Offenbach***, a humorous and endearing three-movement suite for violin and piano, in the Library of Congress while researching other works for

this CD. It was written in Pacific Palisades, California and dates from 1957. It is also dedicated to Duke's friend, violinist Israel Baker (to whom he also re-dedicated his violin sonata.) According to the composer's widow, Kay Duke Ingalls, the work likely draws on materials from *Emperor Norton*, "a charming ballet based on Offenbach [composed] for the San Francisco Ballet in 1957. It was done in 1957 and 1958."

Duke composed the virtuosic *Capriccio Mexicano* for violin and piano in 1939. In 1960 he took an extended trip to Mexico, where he met Carlos Chávez and Silvestre Revueltas. Duke writes that he later dedicated the work ("a wild violin piece") to "Carolina Amor, Chavez's secretary; a girl as troublesomely pretty as her name." This, as with the violin concerto, is the first known recording of this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In 1998, I received permission from Kay Duke to finish the long neglected *Piano Concerto*. Working from the published two-piano score and with extensive help from my friend, the late great Richard Rodney Bennett, I orchestrated the entire work in time for the official Gershwin Centennial concerts of 1999. The concerto finally had a well received premiere at Carnegie Hall with the American Composers Orchestra, me at the piano and Dennis Russell Davies at the podium. In 2005 we recorded the concerto in Moscow for the Naxos label with Dimitry Yablonsky, conductor and the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra. (This recording also features the Duke *Cello Concerto* with cellist Samuel Magill.) In the fall of 2011, at the invitation of the Diaghilev PS Festival and after extensive reconstruction of the materials, I conducted the Saint Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) Philharmonic and chorus of the Mariinsky Theatre in the world premiere presentation of Duke's *Diaghilev Trilogy* (*The End of Saint Petersburg*; *Epitaph for Diaghilev*; and *Dedicaces* for orchestra, piano solo and soprano obbligato) to the wild acclaim of a huge Russian audience, with the composer's widow, Kay Duke Ingalls, also in attendance at the Great Hall of Saint Petersburg, Russia

With this most recent recording of these important 20th century violin works, we are sure that Vernon Duke's reputation will continue its resurrection and that others will take up his cause. I am most grateful to **Elmira Darvarova** for her splendid artistry and hard work; **Kay Duke Ingalls** for her incredible friendship, assistance and direct support; **Diana Burgin** for her wonderful insights, archival materials and support; **John Baker** for his amazing engineering and **Sam Ward** for his remarkable mixing and editing; and **Erich Hoffman** and the fabulous **ORF**

Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien for their beautiful contributions to this endeavor.

– Scott Dunn

Violinist **Elmira Darvarova**, former Concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra (and the first woman-concertmaster in the MET's history), started playing the violin at the age of three, gave her first recital at four, and made her debut as a soloist with an orchestra when she was eight years old. A prizewinner of several international competitions, including the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, she studied with Yfrah Neaman, Henryk Szeryng and Josef Gingold.

Performing with legendary cellist János Starker was a pivotal moment in her career, as Starker propelled and facilitated her escape from her then communist country, as well as her relocation to the United States where she has resided since 1986. She caused a sensation, becoming the first ever woman-concertmaster in the history of the Metropolitan Opera, toured Europe, Japan and the United States with the MET Orchestra, and was heard on the MET's live weekly international radio broadcasts, television broadcasts, CDs and laser discs on the Sony, Deutsche Grammophon and EMI labels. As concertmaster of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, she has performed with many of the most prominent conductors of all time, including the legendary Carlos Kleiber.

Appearing in concert halls and at festivals on four continents, she has been concerto soloist with the Moscow State Symphony Orchestra, and numerous other orchestras. She has also appeared with the MET Chamber Ensemble at Carnegie Hall under James Levine. She gives master classes worldwide, and has performed and recorded chamber music with such eminent musicians as James Levine, János Starker, Gary Karr and Pascal Rogé. A documentary film about her life and career was shown on European TV. She has recorded for Naxos (including two highly-acclaimed discs with pianist Scott Dunn), Melodiya, Azur Classical, Delphinium Records, and, most recently, several CDs for Urlicht AudioVisual, including a 2013 release of the Brahms Horn Trio with the principal horn of the New York Philharmonic Philip Myers, as well as a CD with music by Piazzolla



with the distinguished tango pianist Octavio Brunetti, an all-Poulenc disc with world-renowned French pianist Pascal Rogé and two CDs with double-bass legend Gary Karr.

Elmira Darvarova is the founder and leader of the New York Piano Quartet, performs with the Delphinium Trio, and is Artistic Director of the New York Chamber Music Festival. The STRAD has praised her “silky-smooth, voluptuous sound” and wrote of her “intoxicating tonal beauty and beguilingly sensuous phrasing”, while Gramophone hailed her “ultra-impassioned, vividly detailed performances.”



Distinguished American conductor and pianist **Scott Dunn** is the Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. He has recently also led the Seattle Symphony, Oregon Symphony, ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra of St Luke's, Colorado Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestre National de France, and Saint Petersburg Philharmonic, among others. As one of the most versatile musicians of his generation, he has garnered extensive critical praise.

Dunn is keenly interested in music from 1900 on with an affinity for American music from Charles Ives to John Adams and a special passion for so-called “crossover” composers ranging from George Gershwin, Vernon Duke and Leonard Bernstein to such noted Hollywood film composers as Leonard Rosenman, Howard Shore and Danny Elfman. His most recent conducting

projects include a 2013 memorial concert in New York for his late friend and mentor Sir Richard Rodney Bennett featuring an all-star string ensemble and such distinguished artists as bass-baritone Jonathan Lemalu, cellist Fred Sherry and saxophonist Eddie Daniels; a gala pops concert with Steve Martin and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; György Ligeti's *Piano Concerto* with pianist Gloria Cheng, a fiendish challenge for both conductor and soloist; Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat* with a “new” libretto by Kurt Vonnegut, directed by George de la Peña; the 2012 publication by Universal Editions and 2013 premiere of Dunn's own orchestration of Schoenberg's *Four Cabaret Songs* for voice and chamber orchestra with soprano Jennifer Zetlan; Phish frontman and guitarist Trey Anastasio's national “Winter Tour” symphonic concerts; the

Carnegie Hall premiere and recording of Mohamed Fairouz's *Sumeida's Song* (named one of 2013's "Best Recordings" by *Opera News*); as well as orchestration work on Danny Elfman's enormous retrospective Elfman/Burton Film Music Concerts and concert appearances as pianist in New York, London and Los Angeles.

Dunn made his 1999 Carnegie Hall debut with a performance of Vernon Duke's *Piano Concerto*, the same year in which he secured his first professional conducting engagements. He subsequently has held posts with The Music Festival of the Hamptons, The Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, Glimmerglass Opera and Pittsburgh Opera.

A one-time student of Byron Janis, Dunn appears regularly as piano soloist and collaborator in the world's most distinguished venues. He has numerous commercial recordings to his name, primarily for Naxos, including the complete solo works of his friend and mentor Lukas Foss, the Duke *Piano Concerto*, rare chamber works of Franco Alfano, and numerous other discs of works by Irwin Bazelon, Frédéric Chopin, Roger Reynolds, Maurice Ravel, and others.

Associate Principal Bassoon of the New York Philharmonic since 2003, **Kim Laskowski** was born in Brooklyn, and attended the High School of Music and Art and The Juilliard School, where she studied with Harold Goltzer, former Associate Principal Bassoon of the New York Philharmonic. While at Juilliard she won the Walter and Elsie Naumburg Award for Orchestral Excellence. She completed a master's degree at Juilliard while playing in the National Orchestral Association, and has also participated in the Tanglewood and Spoleto festivals. Recipient of a Fulbright grant for foreign study, she attended the Conservatoire National Supérieure de Paris, where she was a student of Maurice Allard. While at the Conservatoire, she toured Europe as a member of the Orchestre des Prix du Conservatoire.

As an active player on the New York musical scene, Ms. Laskowski has appeared with ensembles such as the Orchestra of St. Luke's, American Symphony Orchestra, and Eos Orchestra. She can be heard on numerous television, radio, and film scores, and holds two platinum records for CDs recorded with the rock group 10,000 Maniacs. As a chamber player, she has performed and recorded several CDs with



Music Amici in classical, jazz, and 20th-century works for mixed ensembles.

Before joining the Philharmonic, Ms. Laskowski played second bassoon in the New York City Ballet Orchestra. She was principal bassoon of the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra from 1999 through 2003.

The **ORF Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien** is a top orchestra of international renown and defines itself in the Vienna orchestral tradition. In September 2010, Cornelius Meister assumed his position as Principal Conductor and Artistic Director.

The RSO Wien is known for its exceptional, bold programming, combining nineteenth-century repertoire with contemporary pieces and rarely performed works of other time periods, often placing Romantic era classics in unexpected contexts.

All of the orchestra's performances are broadcast via radio, particularly on Österreich 1, with many also broadcast internationally. For the past several years, listeners have been able to hear each and every RSO Wien concert via the Internet for one week after the initial broadcast. The orchestra performs regularly throughout the Vienna concert season in both the Wiener Musikverein and the Konzerthaus and appears at major festivals at home and abroad, including the Salzburg Festival, the Wiener Festwochen, musikprotokoll im steirischen herbst, and Wien Modern. Tours have taken the RSO Wien to Japan, China, the USA, South America, Spain, Italy and Germany. Since 2007 the RSO Wien has established itself as an opera orchestra in collaboration with the Theater an der Wien.

The RSO Wien also regularly programs film music. Every year, the orchestra welcomes an Oscar®-winning composer as guest conductor. In 2012, the RSO Wien recorded the soundtrack music for the film «Die Vermessung der Welt» ("Measuring the World").

The broad scope of the orchestra's recording activities includes works in every genre.



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He is revered as one of the greatest of American songwriters, and the revival of his music for the concert hall reveals a great composer drawing on both his Russian roots and American culture.

Vernon Duke

(Vladimir Alexandrovitch Dukelsky, 1903-1969)

Violin Concerto (1940-41)*

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* World premiere recording

Elmira Darvarova, violin

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