

MARCO POLO

DDD

8.223409

Jacques
IBERT

Piano Music

Petite • Histoires • Les rencontres

Hae-won Chang, Piano



Jacques Ibert (1890-1962)

Piano Music

The French composer Jacques Ibert spent much of his career as director of the Académie de France in Rome. His earlier education was at the Collège Rollin and he taught in Paul Mounet's Conservatoire classes for dramatic declamation before becoming a student of harmony there under Ravel's harmony teacher, Emile Pessard. His studies at the Paris Conservatoire were interrupted for war service in 1914, but on his return in 1919 he won the Prix de Rome for his cantata *Le poète et la fée*.

His compositions in Rome included an orchestral work based on Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, performed at the Colonne concerts in 1922, and the symphonic suite *Escales*, later arranged for solo piano, the result of travel not only in Italy, but also to Spain and Tunis. His envois from Rome included also an opera, *Persée et Andromède*, based on Jules Laforgue.

On his return to Paris Ibert enjoyed an active career as a composer, writing music for the theatre and cinema, chamber music and orchestral compositions, some of the last adapted for concert performance from earlier incidental music. In 1937 he returned to Rome to take charge of the Académie de France, retaining the same position until 1960. A versatile and prolific composer, he combined technical assurance with a certain elegance and precision and prolific versatility.

Noël en Picardie was written in December 1914, during military service. The piece is described as a symphonic sketch for piano, its musical argument provided by the army doctor Charles Teissier. It is dedicated to De Lagoanère, director of music at the Théâtre Lyrique de la Gaîté in Paris. The Argument Musical is printed at the head of the score:

Ce n'est point un Noël ouaté de neige, au ciel pur, glacé, étincelant d'étoiles, mais un Noël brumeux dans une nuit noire.

Clodochent		De clowns déhauchés
Les trilles		Dans un flot de brume
Des cloches		D'une nuit sans lune
Quadrilles		S'éteignent ... glacés

Petit soldat qui dans la tranchée entend le son lointain des cloches, ne sois pas triste!
...Un Noël carillonnera une nuit à toute volée la gloire de la Victoire et la joie du retour au foyer!

(It is not a Christmas of fleecy snow, with a clear sky, icy, shining with stars, but a misty Christmas on a dark night.)

There hobble		The limping clowns'
Trills		In a wave of mist
Of the bells		Of a moonless night
Dances		End ... frozen.

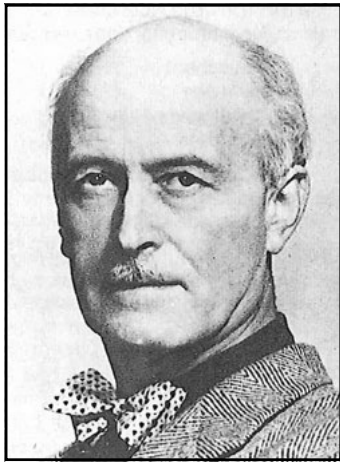
(Little soldier, hearing in your trench the distant sound of the bells, do not be sad!
A Christmas will sound out one night with all the bells, proclaiming the glory of Victory and the joy of returning home!)

The music mingles the ringing of bells with fragments of a traditional Christmas carol, leading to a final peal of joy.

Matin sur l'eau belongs to a slightly later period, a gentle Barcarolle, while the Scherzetto is similarly restrained in its texture and form, both originally written for harp as part of a sequence of six pieces.

Escales, first performed in its original orchestral form in Palermo in 1922, was published in 1924 in a piano arrangement. The first of the three sketches, *Palermo*, moves from the tranquility of its opening to a more energetic dance rhythm. The second sketch, *Tunis Nefta*, makes use of Arab inflexions in its mysterious oriental textures, while the third, *Valencia*, uses the rhythms and melodic phrases associated with Spain.

Féerie, originally an orchestral work, was written in 1924, the piano transcription appearing a year later. It is an evocative piece, very much in the spirit of Debussy. Three years later Ibert contributed to the composite ballet *L'éventail de Jeanne*, with the collaboration of Ravel, Ferroud, Roland-Manuel, Delannoy, Roussel, Milhaud, Poulenc, Auric and Florent Schmitt. For this he wrote a waltz. The inspiration for the work came from Mme. Jeanne Dubost, who gave the ten leaves of her fan to ten different composers, asking them for a dance each. The first private performance took place at Mme. Dubost's salon in June 1928, and this proved so successful that it was staged in March 1929 at the opéra with the petits rats (children) of the Opéra ballet school, including the remarkable child prodigy Tamara Toumanova, born in a train near Shanghai in 1919 and now making her debut as a dancer. Ibert's association with ballet was more considerable than this. In 1925 he had written the score for Nijinska's *Les rencontres* and went on to provide music for a number of distinguished dancers and choreographers, including Fokin, Roland Petit and, in the cinema, Gene Kelly. *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* was choreographed in 1945 by Sergey Lifar.



Jacques Ibert

Hae-won Chang

Chang Hae Won was born in Korea in the city of Seoul and started to play the piano at the age of six, completing her professional studies at Ewha University in Seoul in 1963. From 1964 until 1968 she studied at the Frankfurt Musikhochschule with Professor Leopolder on a German government scholarship and was awarded her diploma as a concert pianist. On her return to Korea she was appointed professor of piano at her old university.

In Korea Hae-won Chang won various prizes, including first prize in the 1960 Korean National Piano Competition. Her career as a concert pianist began three years earlier, in 1957, when she played Beethoven's C minor Piano Concerto with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. Since then she has enjoyed a busy career as a teacher and as a performer in Korea, in other Asian countries, in America and in Europe, with annual concert tours and engagements at home and abroad. She has appeared as a soloist with major orchestras and in recitals with Ruggiero Ricci, Christian Ferras, Renata Tebaldi, Franco Corelli, Aaron Rosand, André Navarra and others. She has performed as a soloist at numerous music festivals, including the Paris Chateau de Breteuil Festival, the National Music Festival in Korea and the festival for the opening of the Sejong Cultural Centre and of the Goethe-Institute in Seoul. She has served on the Vienna da Motta Competition jury in Lisbon. In 1985 she was acclaimed by the Music Critics' Circle of Korea as Musician of the Year, and won high praise in the German press for her technical accomplishment and musicianship. Her recordings for Naxos and Marco Polo included piano works by Pierné, Scarlatti's sonatas, concertos by Hummel and J.S. Bach and other piano music.

Jacques Ibert

L'oeuvre pour piano de Jacques Ibert (1890-1962) tient en un seul disque. Pianiste de formation, le compositeur, quia abordé tous les genres musicaux (y compris les musiques de films, de scène et de spectacles *son et lumière*), n'a guère écrit pour son instrument. Mieux, on ne trouvera dans l'oeuvre d'Ibert aucun concerto pour piano et peu de pages de musique de chambre ou l'instrument apparaisse; quelques melodies, la *Sonatine pour flûte et piano* de 1923, *L'Age d'or* pour saxophone et piano de 1935, un *Impromptu pour trompette et piano* de 1951 et quelques transcriptions.

L'oeuvre pour piano solo de Jacques Ibert fut écrit entre 1915 (*Le Vent dans les Ruines*) et 1943 (*la Petite Suite*). Il s'y manifeste une grande unité de style, comme si les caractéristiques qui sont exposées dès les premières partitions se confirmaient encore vingt ans après. Comment pourrait-on définir le style pianistique d'Ibert? A première écoute, on est en présence d'un art "essentiellement classique de forme", "authentiquement français", selon le mot de Henri Dutilleul. Ces qualités, toujours sujettes à être ambiguës, il faut, comme l'on dit, les replacer dans leur contexte. L'écriture d'Ibert est "essentiellement française" parce qu'elle est lumineuse, claire, divertissante, un rien volage; elle abhorre le pathos. Elle se place aussi, comme chez Ravel, dans la lignée des grands compositeurs classiques comme Rameau et Couperin.

Le *Scherzetto* de 1917 qui ouvre ce disque vient merveilleusement étayer ces propos. Dans cette page, la structure musicale est transparente, immédiatement appréhendable par l'auditeur, obéissant ainsi à l'un des credos de la musique française de l'Entre-deux-guerres. La répartition des thèmes dans ce Scherzetto, la régularité des reprises et de la coupe, les alternances entre le refrain et les couplets, tout ce cheminement mélodique n'est guère différent de celui qu'un Rameau aurait pu adopter, deux siècles auparavant.

Autre caractéristique des oeuvres pianistiques d'Ibert, leur propension, grâce à leur clarté, à devenir musique d'orchestre. Comme Ravel, Ibert a volontier transcrit ses oeuvres pianistiques pour des formations orchestrales, surtout quand elles appelaient la danse. C'est le cas des *Histoires* de 1922 et des *Rencontres* de 1924 (dont le sous-titre est "petite suite en forme de ballet").

Eminemment français, Ibert n'a pas été moins influencé par Bach dans sa musique de piano. Non pas le Bach des grandes constructions intellectuelles, mais celui des toccatas pour le clavier. A ce genre, où la virtuosité digitale est de mise, appartiennent la *Toccata sur le nom d'Albert Roussel* de 1929, le début de Française de 1926, une grande partie du *Vent dans les ruines* de 1915, la plupart des miniatures qui composent la *Petite suite*, le célèbre *Petit âne blanc* et *Le cortège de Balkis* enfin, deux pièces des *Histoires*.

Dans l'oeuvre pianistique d'Ibert c'est l'élégance joyeuse - rarement mélancolique - de la petite forme qui domine. Une musique de tableautins et de saynètes qui correspond bien à l'idéal insouciant de l'Entre-deux-guerres.

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1	Scherzetto	2:44
2	Pièce Romantique	5:52
3	Tocatta	0:57
4	L'espiègle au village de Lilliput	0:54
5	Française	2:33
6	Le vent dans les ruines	2:51
7 - 21	Petite Suite	16:18
22 - 31	Histoires	21:21
32 - 36	Les recontres	16:07

Recorded at Tonstudio van Geest in Heidelberg
from 29th to 30th September, 1991.

Producer: Teije Van Geest

Music Notes: Keith Anderson

Cover Painting: Lady at the Piano by Renoir

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STEREO

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1	Scherzetto	2:44
2	Pièce Romantique	5:52
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7 - 21	Petite Suite	16:18
22 - 31	Histoires	21:21
32 - 36	Les recontres	16:07

Playing Time: 70'42"

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