

Cantilena II



Odinn Baldvinsson *flute*
Patricia Romero *piano*



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CANTILENA II

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937)

Suite for flute and piano, Op. 34 **17:07**

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------|
| 1 | <i>Moderato</i> | 3:33 |
| 2 | Scherzo: <i>Allegro vivace</i> | 2:52 |
| 3 | Romance: <i>Andantino</i> | 4:19 |
| 4 | Final: <i>Vivace</i> | 6:22 |

Cecile Chaminade (1857-1944)

5 Concertino, Op. 107 **8:12**

Henri Dutilleux (1916-2013)

6 Sonatine for flute and piano **10:11**

Otar Taktakishvili (1924-1989)

Sonata for flute and piano **18:07**

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------|
| 7 | <i>Allegro cantabile</i> | 6:52 |
| 8 | Aria: <i>Moderato con moto</i> | 5:07 |
| 9 | <i>Allegro scherzando</i> | 6:07 |

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992)

Histoire du Tango **23:48**

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------|
| 10 | Bordel 1900 | 4:14 |
| 11 | Café 1930 | 9:08 |
| 12 | Night-club 1960 | 5:19 |
| 13 | Concert d'aujourd'hui | 5:06 |

Total CD duration **78:08**

ODINN BALDVINSSON *flute*

PATRICIA ROMERO *piano*

Charles-Marie Widor (1844-1937) is today mainly recognised for his compositions for the organ, in particular ten large-scale works described as "Symphonies for Organ". From 1870 to 1934 he was the organist of St. Sulpice in Paris, and was professor of organ at the Paris Conservatoire, following in the footsteps of Cesar Franck. He was, however, a prolific composer, his output including three operas, symphonies, concertos, chamber music, piano solos and songs.

Of his chamber works, perhaps one of his finest pieces is this *Suite for Flute and Piano*, Op. 34. Widor composed the Suite in 1877 (although it was not published until 1898) for Paul Taffanel (1844-1908), a fellow professor at the Conservatoire and a fine, highly influential flautist who developed many technical aspects of flute playing to the extent that France became the acknowledged centre of the flute in Europe. It was mainly because of Taffanel that the flute is so prominent in French music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It has the length and substance of a sonata, but Widor withheld that title, possibly because the first movement is not in the style of a formal sonata-allegro movement with the usual development. Nevertheless, one of Taffanel's pupils described the Suite as having "all the characteristics of a sonata and produces the happiest effect from the contrasting timbres of the flute and piano."

The opening movement, marked *Moderato*, differs most from the conventional form of a sonata movement, being more introductory and lyrical in style, concentrating more on this lyricism than the development of musical ideas. A short scherzo follows – *Allegro vivace* – containing much florid writing for the flute, with a slightly slower, more tranquil Trio section in the middle. This is followed by the slow movement, a Romance, marked *Andantino*, warmly lyrical in character with some cadenza-type passages for the flute in the middle of the movement. The finale – *Vivace* – is the most virtuoso in character with some brilliant writing for the flute before both instruments combine to bring the Suite to a triumphant conclusion.

Cecile Chaminade (1857-1944) is, of course, unusual as a composer in that she is a woman. She was born in Paris in 1857, and was predicted a famous career at the early age of eight by Bizet after he heard some of her very early compositions. Ten years later Ambroise Thomas also prophesised great things for her: "This is not a woman composer but a composer-woman."

She was a notable pianist, and toured widely, regularly visiting Britain and the United States, playing many of her own pieces in her concerts. She wrote orchestral music, ballets and songs, but was mainly known for her piano pieces: essentially lightweight, but tuneful and attractive.

Chaminade wrote the *Concertino* for flute and orchestra in 1902, and later made an arrangement for flute and piano. It was commissioned by the Paris Conservatoire, most likely as an examination piece for flute students, and was used as such for many years after. It is dedicated to Paul Taffanel, who before he became a professor at the Conservatoire enjoyed a long career in the Paris Opera Orchestra. There is a legend that Chaminade wrote the *Concertino* to punish a flute playing lover after he had left her for another woman, wanting to compose a piece so difficult that he would struggle to play it. Unfortunately this colourful story, though attractive, is not supported by any evidence.

This work does, however, make serious demands of a flautist. The opening is *Moderato*, with an expansive melody and leads on to a faster section, marked *Più animato*, followed by a virtuoso passage for the flautist, full of chromatic runs and brilliant staccato arpeggios. A short cadenza follows, after which we hear the opening theme once again before a short and exciting coda brings this most attractive piece to an end.

Henri Dutilleux (1916-2013) is regarded as one of the finest French composers of the twentieth century, with the majority of his most notable works belonging to his later years. Very few of his early pieces survive; he was a perfectionist and only allowed a small amount of his music to be published. The rest he renounced, destroying most of them, feeling that these pieces were derivative, sometimes bland, and not truly representative of his mature style. He numbered as Op.1 his *Piano Sonata* (1946) written for the pianist Genevieve Joy, who became his wife. One work written before this which survives however, is the *Sonatine* for flute and piano. Just like Chaminade's *Concertino* decades earlier, Dutilleux composed this *Sonatine* in 1942, in response to a commission from the Paris Conservatoire that required a test piece for graduating flautists. It was published in 1943 and first performed in the following year, with Dutilleux himself as the pianist.

The *Sonatine* is made up of three sections but played as one continuous movement. The sections are marked *Allegretto*, *Andante* and *Animé*. It begins with a theme on the flute, full of mystery, set in 7/8 time against an angular piano accompaniment. A cadenza provides a link to the second section which recalls Poulenc in its lyrical nature. The final section is characterised by constant semi-quaver movement, passing from piano to flute and back again. A short but technically demanding cadenza (as befits a test piece) recalls themes from all three sections before the piano rejoins the flute in a hectic accelerando impelling the music to its conclusion.

In an interview given in 1977 Dutilleux was rather dismissive of the *Sonatine*:

"I had written...some pieces commissioned by Claude Delvincourt, then the director of the Conservatoire. He had a double aim: to make young composers explore instrumental technique (you can't write any old thing for young players) and, at the same time, to force instrumental students to work on new scores, which Delvincourt wanted to be full of traps and technical difficulties. This is how I came to write, one after the other, pieces for bassoon, flute, oboe,

and trombone; the flute piece is the *Sonatine* for flute and piano, which has been recorded many times abroad, although I have never wanted it to be recorded in France because it doesn't yet sound like my music. But I haven't put any embargo on that."

Notwithstanding Dutilleux's feelings, although the *Sonatine* might not contain the quality and maturity of his later pieces, with its broad melodies and formidable technical demands it has become established as one of the core works of the twentieth-century flute repertoire.

Otar Taktakishvili (1924-1989) was born in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi and maintained close links with his home city all his life. While a student at the Tbilisi Conservatoire he composed the official anthem of the Georgian Republic.

As teacher, conductor, composer and administrator Taktakishvili made a significant contribution to the musical life of his home state. He gained notable political recognition, winning three USSR state prizes, and was named Peoples Artist of the USSR in 1974. In 1982 he was awarded the Lenin Prize, one of the highest honours of the USSR, following in the footsteps of Prokofiev and Shostakovich.

Taktakishvili wrote operas, symphonies, oratorios and concertos, but his main output was vocal music, drawing heavily – as did other Soviet composers – on folk material from his native land. The use of folk music with its modality, parallelism, and the technique of Georgian polyphony together with sudden chromatic changes are characteristics of his style of composition: naturally melodic and highly accessible.

The *Sonata for Flute and Piano* was written in 1966, only becoming known in the West when it was published in the United States eleven years later. It is in three movements: the outer movements – *Allegro cantabile* and *Allegro scherzando* – both in C major and of a generally optimistic and witty character frame the central *Aria*. This movement is marked *Moderato con moto*, in the relative key of A minor, and contains music that is more reflective, tinged with sadness, and highly expressive, with a melodic character reminiscent of Prokofiev and Kabalevsky. This sonata remains one of Taktakishvili's most popular works and has a significant place in the flute and piano repertoire of the last century.

Astor Piazzolla (1921-1992), composer, bandoneon player and arranger is the most highly regarded composer of the tango. Born in Mar del Plata, Argentina to Italian immigrant parents he grew up from the age of four in Greenwich Village, New York City – at that time a tough immigrant neighbourhood. As a boy he listened to his father's records of tango orchestras, but he also listened to jazz and classical music. He learned how to play the bandoneon, and wrote his first tango in 1932. He subsequently took lessons with the Hungarian pianist Bela Wilda, a pupil of Rachmaninoff, who taught him how to play Bach on the bandoneon.

In 1936 Piazzolla returned to Argentina where he played in a number of tango orchestras and also worked as an arranger. At the suggestion of Artur Rubenstein, who at the time was living in Buenos Aires, he studied composition with Ginastera for five years: this period was an important stage in his musical development. All this time he was composing both classical pieces and tangos. With one of his compositions he won a grant from the French government to study in Paris with Nadia Boulanger.

The legendary Boulanger taught Piazzolla composition and counterpoint, and, recognising his talent, encouraged him to continue his career in tango. He was also inspired by the octet of the American jazz saxophonist Gerry Mulligan, whom he heard while staying in Paris. These varied experiences had a profound effect upon his work. Piazzolla revolutionised the traditional tango into a new style called "nueva tango", in which classical music and jazz influences changed the traditional tango into something different – and far more sophisticated. The Argentine psychoanalyst Carlos Kuri observed that Piazzolla's mixing of tango with a wide range of Western musical elements was so successful that he produced a new and quite individual style.

Piazzolla regarded it as his life's work to bring the tango from the dance halls and bordellos of his native Argentina into the concert halls of Europe and the United States. *Histoire du Tango* is one of his most famous compositions. Written in 1986 for flute and guitar, it is often played with other instruments: the violin instead of the flute and the harp or marimba in place of the guitar. The version for flute and piano is rarely heard, which is a pity as the writing for the piano is both rich and evocative. This is a substantial work in four movements, charting the development of the tango through the twentieth century from the bordellos in the early 1900s to the concert halls of the 1980s. The composer provided his own programme notes, which are quoted here:

Bordello, 1900: The tango originated in Buenos Aires in 1882. It was first played on the guitar and flute. Arrangements then came to include the piano, and later, the concertina. This music is full of grace and liveliness. It paints a picture of the good natured chatter of the French, Italian and Spanish women who peopled those bordellos as they teased the policemen, thieves, sailors, and riffraff who came to see them. This is a high-spirited tango.

Café, 1930: This is another age of the tango. People stopped dancing as they did in 1900, preferring instead simply to listen to it. It became more musical, and more romantic. This tango has undergone total transformation: the movements are slower with new and often melancholy harmonies. Tango orchestras come to consist of two violins, two concertinas, a piano and a bass. The tango is sometimes sung as well.

Night Club, 1960: This is a time of rapidly expanding international exchange, and the tango evolves again as Brazil and Argentina come together in Buenos Aires. The bossa nova and the new tango are moving to the same beat.

Audiences rush to the night clubs to listen earnestly to the new tango. This marks a revolution and a profound alteration to some of the original tango forms.

Modern-day Concert: Certain concepts in tango music become intertwined with modern music. Bartók, Stravinsky and other composers reminisce to the tune of tango music. This is today's tango, and the tango of the future as well.

Cantilena is an exciting flute and piano duo with a fast-rising reputation; it was founded in 2007 by Odinn Baldvinsson and Patricia Romero, both distinguished performers in their own right. Their repertoire is an eclectic mix of the well-known and the rarely-heard, ranging from Bach and Mozart to Piazzolla and Martínů. Their programmes have fascinated and delighted audiences in equal measure.

Cantilena has performed regularly in various venues across Britain. Notably, the duo was invited to give a recital at the Royal Opera House as part of the ROH Chamber Music Series. In November 2011, Cantilena performed at the inaugural Latin American Piano Festival, which was hosted by the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela at the Bolivar Hall in London. The duo has also performed regularly in other London venues such as St. Martin-in-the-Fields, St. James' Piccadilly, the Schubert Society and the Fairfield Halls. Further afield, Cantilena has given concerts in numerous music clubs and societies including Portsmouth, Chichester, Redhill, Gravesend, Harrow and Woking.

In 2009, Cantilena's eponymous debut CD was released by Divine Art's *Diversions* label; the recording received generous praise from the critics. This second CD of the duo covers some of the more important works of the French repertoire for the flute, as well as a Sonata by the Georgian composer Taktakishvili, and concludes with the first recording by flute and piano of Piazzolla's *Histoire du Tango*.

Born in London, **Odinn Baldvinsson** began his studies at the Trinity College of Music, where he obtained the Hambourg Award for Improvisation. He continued his studies at the London College of Music, where he studied with Patricia Lynden and Rainer Schuelein, graduating with Honours; whilst there, he also obtained the Licentiate Diploma with the highest marks ever awarded at the time. Additionally, Odinn was awarded the Recital Certificate from the Guildford School of Music with Honours. Odinn went on to further his development under the tutelage of the internationally renowned flautists William Bennett, Trevor Wye and Susan Milan, the last of which he studied privately with for three years. Odinn went on to win several international competitions.

Odinn made his recital debut in Reykjavik, Iceland to critical acclaim. Subsequently, he has performed regularly at notable venues in London, including the Royal Opera House Crush Room, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, St. James' Piccadilly, and the Fairfield Halls. With a wide and varied repertoire, covering both light classical and classical, and ranging from baroque to the Twentieth Century, Odinn has frequently delighted audiences abroad, including Switzerland and France; he has in particular performed on numerous occasions in Paris.

Closer to home, Odinn was invited to perform a series of concerts at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2006; he has also performed with the Brent Symphony Orchestra and the Millennium Sinfonia. Odinn has extensive experience of freelancing with various orchestras in Britain, and for a number of years has been the principle flautist of the orchestra

of the prominent 11th Century church of St. Mary's, Harrow on the Hill. Furthermore, Odinn has given concerts for many music clubs, societies and festivals in England.

In 1994 the British-Mexican pianist **Patricia Romero** enjoyed a notable triumph in the performing of the complete solo piano works of Ravel in two recitals at the Purcell Room. She has a successful international career performing an extensive repertoire stretching from Bach to the Twentieth Century, including a detailed knowledge of Spanish and Latin American music.

Patricia studied at Trinity College of Music in London with Joseph Weingarten, graduating with Honours. She won several prizes at Trinity College, including the Herbert Shead prize for the best performance of a Romantic Sonata, and the Maud Seton Prize for the most outstanding student. She also took Master Classes with Angélica Morales, Bernard Flavigny, Jörg Demus and John Lill. In 1983, Patricia attended the International Musicians Seminar, Prussia Cove, participating in solo piano and chamber music Master Classes under Sándor Végh and Louis Kentner.

After college she studied for several years with the eminent pianist and teacher Louis Kentner, during which she won several International competitions including the Clara Haskill prize for her Schumann interpretation and the Yamaha International Piano Competition in Mexico City.

Patricia made her London debut at the Wigmore Hall in a recital which was well received by the critics; she has since played regularly in London venues including the Purcell Room, St. John's Smith Square, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Leighton House, St. James' Piccadilly and the Fairfield Halls. Internationally, in 1998 Patricia toured Australia and New Zealand, following this later in the year with a tour of Scandinavia and Russia. In early 1999, she performed in Argentina and Brazil, followed by the Middle East in the autumn that same year. She has also performed regularly across Europe.

Additionally, Patricia has given lecture recitals as well as many chamber music recitals with a variety of performers including the Russian violinist Rasma Lielmane, the cellist Nagi el Habashy, and most recently Odinn Baldvinsson. She was also a founder member of the Maggini Piano Trio. Patricia has broadcast on the B.B.C., and has performed with the Filarmónica del Bajío, the Orchestra of the University of Guadalajara, the Orchestra of Coyoacán, the Jupiter Orchestra, the Dartford Symphony Orchestra and the Hatfield Philharmonic.

Patricia is a member of EPTA and the ISM, and she appears in the International Who's Who in Classical Music.



CANTILENA II was recorded at Trinity Concert Hall, Trinity School, Croydon, England on 9 and 10 April 2014.

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CANTILENA: the first album



J. S. BACH: Flute Sonata No. 6 in E major, BWV 1035

SAINT-SAËNS: Romance in D major, Op. 37

POULENC: Sonata for Flute and Piano

BORNE: Fantaisie Brillante sur 'Carmen'

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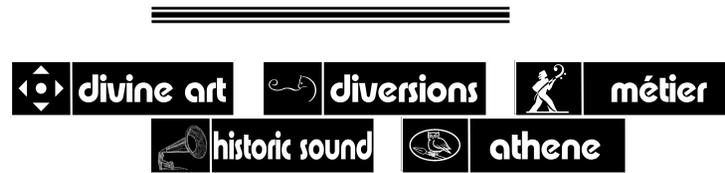


“This enchanting disc incorporates music for flute and piano by four renowned composers who are only too well known and another one which is a complete rarity. Both soloists offer crisp and agile performances and their playing is continually arresting.” – Gerald Fenech (*ClassicalNet*)

“Odinn Baldvinsson is a consummately equipped player, capable of terrific fingerwork and able to sustain lines with formidable stamina. On the whole I would commend the duo for their bright-eyed vision ... the playing is deserving of serious estimation.” – Mark Tanner (*International Record Review*)

“The debut recording by this flute/piano duo finds them showing just how much music two players in synch can make. A tasty treat throughout.” – Chris Spector (*MidWest Record*)

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Cantilena



Patricia Romero Odinn Baldvinsson