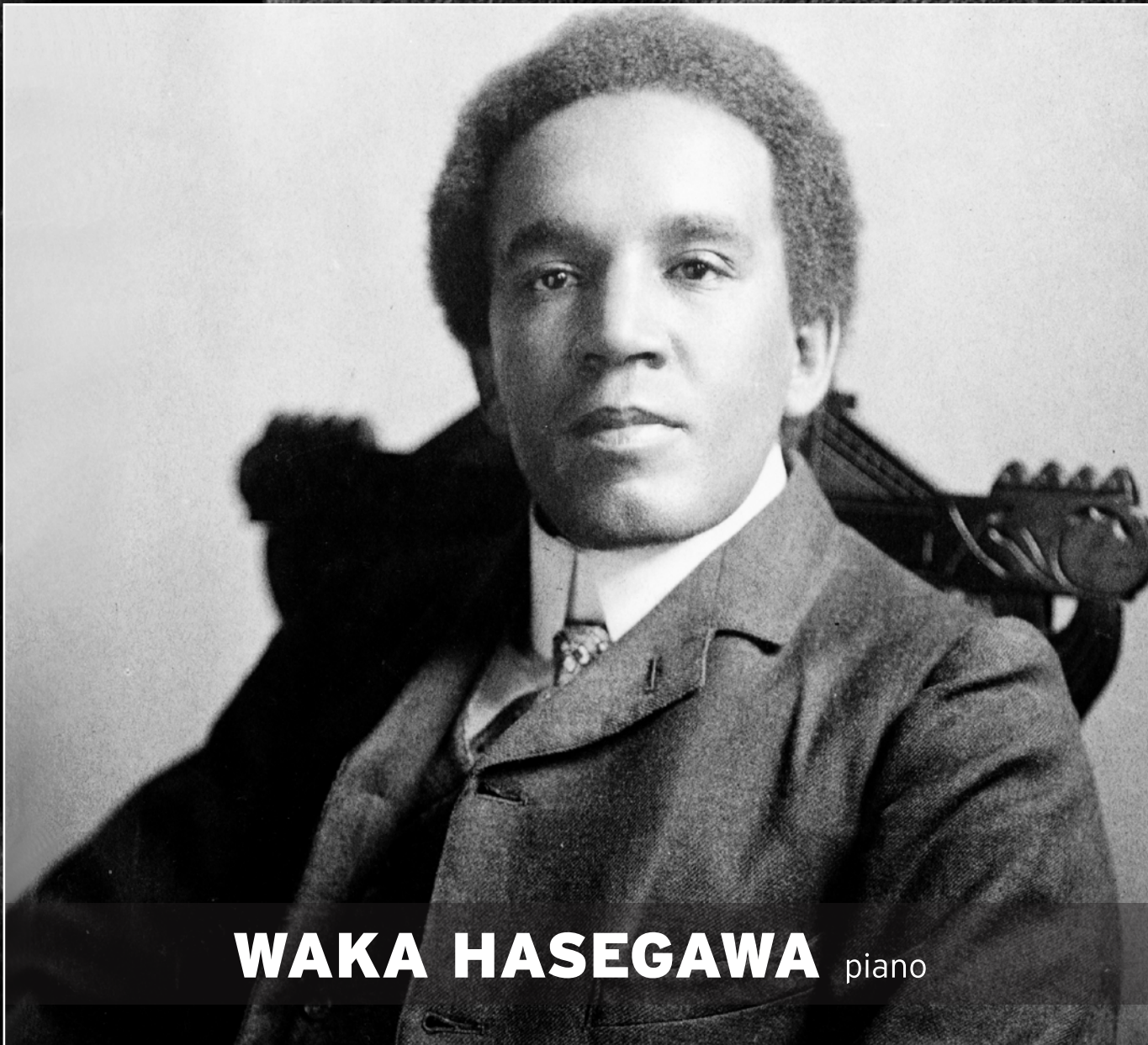


UNDISCOVERED
PIANO WORKS
SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR
(1875 - 1912)



WAKA HASEGAWA piano

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

(1875 - 1912)

At this point in musical history, 100 years after the composer's death, it is difficult to believe that Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's first major choral work was so popular with his contemporaries as to rival *Elijah* as the choral societies' second favourite after *Messiah*. The phenomenal success of *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* after its first performance in 1888 was such that Coleridge-Taylor was persuaded within the next two years to write two more choral works on the same theme, *The Death of Minnehaha* and *Hiawatha's Departure*, together with a *Song of Hiawatha Overture*. While the sequel cantatas proved less popular than *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, they were prominent in the repertoire until the Second World War. Indeed, between 1928 and 1939 all three of them were performed annually in a spectacular ballet version at the Royal Albert Hall with a huge chorus and as many as 200 dancers.

The mixed-race son of Alice Martin and Daniel Taylor - a doctor who had returned to Sierra Leone apparently unaware of his impending fatherhood - Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in London in 1875 and named after the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (the poet boasted no hyphen in his name; the composer adopted his early on in his professional career). His extraordinary musical talent was recognised at an early stage and at the age of 15 he was admitted to the Royal College of Music where he first studied violin with Henry Holmes and then composition with Charles Villiers Stanford, whose favourite pupil he was and whom he in turn revered.

It was in response to a challenge from Stanford, who asserted that after Brahms's Clarinet Quintet no one could write a work of the same kind without showing the German composer's influence, that Coleridge-Taylor wrote one of the most remarkable works of his student days. On seeing his pupil's Clarinet Quintet, Stanford had to admit, "You've done it, me boy!" It is, indeed, a work of precocious maturity, original in content in spite of the stylistic influence of Dvorak and highly accomplished in technique. Sadly, however, the extraordinary promise of that work and others written at the same time, like the similarly impressive Piano Quintet, was never fulfilled.

Had he not signed away the rights to *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* for 15 guineas - "If I had only a farthing royalty on every copy sold I should be a wealthy man," he later lamented - his career would have worked out differently. He



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875 - 1912)

would have had the means to support himself and his family without subjecting himself to the incessant money-making labours which, as he finally succumbed to pneumonia, killed him at the age of 37. He had had to turn out dozens of light-music trivialities to buy time for his more ambitious works, had held three professorships of composition simultaneously, had adjudicated at numerous competitive festivals, and conducted or played in concerts all over Britain and in the United States.

Although he was a more than competent pianist – piano had been his second study throughout his time at the RCM – Coleridge-Taylor's piano pieces are not among his most ambitious works. But the best of them are not among his light-music trivialities either, even if they do from time to time betray light-music mannerisms and lobby pianist gestures. The first work on this CD, **Cameos, Op.56**, is particularly interesting. It was written in 1904 and one might assume, from the evidence of the American influence it reveals, that it followed his first tour to the United States in the same year. In fact, since it was actually published in 1904 and since the tour took place in November and December, it must have originated several months earlier, perhaps in anticipation of the tour. The fact is that by then Coleridge-Taylor had long taken an interest in African-American music, not least by way of the concerts given by the Fisk Jubilee Singers who regularly toured this country. Through them, he said, "I first learned to appreciate the beautiful folk-music of my race." By "my race" he meant both West African and African American. He had attended the Pan-African Conference in London in 1900 – where he met the manager of the Jubilee Singers, Frederick J. Loudin – and was dedicated to the cause of wider African music. In the United States he became an icon of black artistic creativity.

This is not to suggest that the Cameos are aggressively nationalistic. None of Coleridge-Taylor's music is, not even the 24 Negro Melodies, a piano work written also in 1904, where as a well brought-up Edwardian musician he does not seek to make unduly prominent features of their harmonic and rhythmic characteristics. The Cameos are even more discreet. Even so, the stylistic origin of the coolly syncopated rhythms of the opening *Allegro ma non troppo* and the chromatic harmonies are unmistakable, particularly in the middle section. It is less easy to identify specific instances in the following *Allegro moderato* although the main theme in dotted rhythms has something of the same feeling. The concluding *Andante* is close to the Edwardian norm, which is presumably why, as we know from its many arrangements, it was so popular in its day.

The **Three-fours** waltz suite might have been inspired, at least in its alternations between quick and slow tempi, by Schubert's *Valses nobles et sentimentales*. The contrast between "noble" and "sentimental" might be between two contiguous waltzes, like the opening *Allegro molto* and the following *Andante*, between the quicker outer and slower middle sections of the next two or, in the *Andante molto* fifth waltz, the other way round. At the same time they anticipate something of the *Valses nobles et sentimentales* that Ravel was to write two years later. There is nothing like Ravel's hard-edged harmonies in Coleridge-Taylor's waltzes, unless it is in the heroic opening of the last, but there is a similar quality of a pianist-composer's

delight in compiling an anthology of heady waltz tunes – not for dancing but for their sheer melodic pleasure and their rhythmic verve. Certainly, the British composer displays the full panoply of his keyboard technique here, indulging his love of spread chords, extended arpeggios and assertive right-hand octaves, as often as not filled in with the thirds and fifths. The third *Allegretto moderato* waltz presents a comparatively rare and welcome example of prolonged left-hand melody.

Forest Scenes presents an intriguing problem. It looks from the five movement-headings as though the composer is recounting a musical narrative based on some existing literary source. But it is difficult to find a likely poetic candidate and at the same time impossible to accept that a self-respecting poet would use the word "erstwhile" as ungrammatically as it stands in the heading of the fourth movement, "Erstwhile They Ride..."

The probable answer to the problem is that the composer invented some fairy-tale scenario to spur his romantic imagination. It is certainly a romantic work. In "The Lone Forest Maiden" our heroine is charmingly represented by parallel thirds and delicately tripping triplets in the right hand and, although she expresses herself with more passion than seems proper in those thunderous left-hand octaves, she recovers her maidenly poise by the end. The galloping second movement is like nothing else on this CD. Propelled by a vigorous left-hand ostinato which is repeated more than fifty times and never varied whatever the rhythmic collisions between the two hands, it presents the "Phantom Lover" as a formidable figure. In "The Phantom Tells his Tale of Longing," however, he turns out to be melodically congenial, expressively persuasive, and pianistically as fragrant as the maiden herself. So it is hardly surprising when, with a return of galloping rhythms in the next movement, they ride off together and, as the tempo slows down, she acknowledges her love in tender terms. "Now Proudly they Journey Towards the Great City" – not in march-time but, rather surprisingly, in waltz time, though with no lack of splendid tunes and with much pianistic effulgence at the end.

Moorish Dances, one of several Coleridge-Taylor pieces in an idiom popular at the time, is an impressive example of the inspiration he found in the exotic, whatever its origin. Characteristically limiting the Arab element to what a British audience would not find too alien, he delivers here what is probably the most brilliantly written of all his piano works. The outer sections offer fierce dance rhythms which are then contrasted with seductively harmonised song melody. The middle section takes that melody and, in a passage marked *Largamente*, amplifies it in massively sonorous augmentation, straining the resources of the piano and the pianist to their limits in *fortissimo* eight-note chords each one of which is to be struck with maximum emphasis. The ending, after the return of the opening section, threatens to be just as majestic but actually, and most effectively, disappears in near silence.

WAKA HASEGAWA

(Piano)

Having established a successful career as an internationally acclaimed piano duo "Piano 4 Hands" with the British pianist Joseph Tong, Waka is also much in demand as a soloist. She has given recitals in various venues in UK, America, Europe and Japan as well as giving broadcasts on BBC Radio 3, BBC World Service and WFMT Radio Chicago. Also as a chamber musician she has worked with various musicians including players from BBC Symphony Orchestra and BBC Wales Symphony Orchestra. Waka also enjoys performing new works and has worked with many composers including Dai Fujikura, Nicola LeFanu, John McCabe, Edwin Roxburgh and many more to name.

Waka came to London to study at the Royal Academy of Music with Piers Lane with major scholarship and then at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama with Joan Havill where she won most of the major prizes for pianists. During this time she was awarded many prizes and scholarships including Sidney Perry Foundation Award from the KPMG/Martin Musical Scholarship Fund, generous assistance from the Craxton Memorial Trust. Since making her acclaimed London South Bank solo debut, she then went to win 3rd Prize in the 2000 British Contemporary Piano Competition Waka was made Associates of the Royal Academy of Music in 2008.

Together with her piano duo partner Joseph Tong Piano 4 Hands is widely regarded as one of Britain's leading piano duos. Their debut CD of Debussy duets on the Quartz label was Album of the Week in The Independent and highly recommended in BBC Music Magazine and the Penguin Guide to Recorded Classical Music. Their more recent CD recordings of Schubert and John McCabe (both duo and solo piano works) have received similar critical acclaim in publication such as International Piano and Gramophone.





WAKA HASEGAWA

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR (1875-1912) PIANO WORKS

CAMEOS, OP.56 (1904)

1. I	ALLEGRO MA NON TROPPO	4.55
2. II	ALLEGRO MODERATO	4.18
3. III	ANDANTE	3.53

VALSE SUITE "THREE-FOURS" , OP.71 (1909)

4. I	ALLEGRO MOLTO	1.55
5. II	ANDANTE	3.32
6. III	ALLEGRO MODERATO	3.48
7. IV	VIVACE	2.50
8. V	ANDANTE MOLTO	3.56
9. VI	ALLEGRO ASSAI	3.17

FOREST SCENES "CHARACTERISTIC PIECES FOR PIANO" , OP.66 (1907)

10. I	THE LONE FOREST MAIDEN	3.40
11. II	THE PHANTOM LOVER ARRIVES	1.55
12. III	THE PHANTOM TELLS HIS TALE OF LONGING	4.57
13. IV	ERSTWHILE THEY RIDE, THE FOREST MAIDEN ACKNOWLEDGES HER LOVE	3.37
14. V	NOW PROUDLY THEY JOURNEY TOGETHER TOWARDS THE GREAT CITY	4.05

MOORISH DANCE, OP.55 (1904)

15.	PRESTO - LARGAMENTE - PRESTO	9.28
-----	------------------------------	------

TOTAL TIMING 56.06



© 2013 METROPOLIS RECORDINGS, A METROPOLIS GROUP COMPANY, UNDER EXCLUSIVE LICENSE TO NAXOS OF AMERICA. UNAUTHORISED COPYING, REPRODUCTION, HIRING, LENDING, PUBLIC PERFORMANCE AND BROADCASTING OF THE RECORDED WORK AND/OR ARTWORK ARE PROHIBITED. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

CREDITS

Music by

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

Performed by

Waka Hasegawa (Piano)

Produced by

Waka Hasegawa & Mazen Murad

Published by

Metropolis Music Publishing Ltd,
administered by Bucks Music Group

Recorded at

Metropolis Studios, London

Mastered by

Mazen Murad

Recording Engineers

Haydn Bendall & Xavier Stephenson

Liner Notes

Gerald Larner, © 2012

Waka Photography by

Oded Shein