

ARTHUR FOOTE (1853-1937)
COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC
KIRSTEN JOHNSON, PIANO

COMPLETE ON THREE DISCS
OVER 220 MINUTES OF MUSIC



ARTHUR FOOTE

COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC

KIRSTEN JOHNSON, PIANO

Trois Morceaux, Op. 3 • Cinq Pièces, Op. 6 • A Pedal Study in F Major (1885) • Gavotte, Op. 8, No. 1 • Eclogue, Op. 8, No. 2 • Suite No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15 • Piano Pieces, Op. 18 • Suite No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 30 • Nine Studies for the Piano, Op. 27 • Five Bagatelles, Op. 34 • Three Piano Pieces for the Left-hand, Op. 37 • Five Poems After Omar Khayyam, Op. 41 • Two Pieces for the Piano, Op. 42 • Little Etude in A Minor: Grazioso (1901) • 20 Preludes for the Pianoforte (In the Form of Short Technical Studies), Op. 52 (1903) • Serenade, Op. 45 • An Irish Folk-Song (1906) • Two Compositions for Piano, Op. 60 • Meditation, Op. 61 • Two Pieces, Op. 62 (1907) • Five Silhouettes, Op. 73 • Octave Study in G minor: Allegro Moderato (1917) • Rondo in G major (1921) • From Rest Harrow (A Little Suite for the Pianoforte)

Total Playing Time — DISC 1: 74:48 • DISC 2: 70:38 • DISC 3: 74:52



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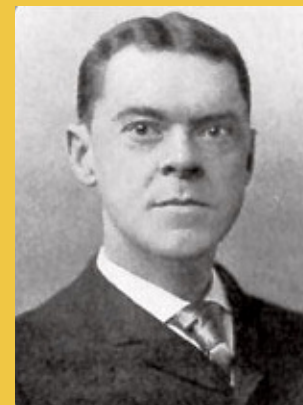


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ARTHUR FOOTE: COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC

KIRSTEN JOHNSON, PIANO



Arthur Foote

DISC 1 74.48

Trois Morceaux, Op. 3 [11:24]

1. No. 1 Impromptu (4:02)
2. No. 2 Gavotte (3:37)
3. No. 3 Mazurka (3:44)

Cinq Pièces, Op. 6 [19:09]

4. No. 1 Prélude (2:39)
5. No. 2 Nocturne (5:28)
6. No. 3 Sarabande (2:57)
7. No. 4 Petite Valse pour la main gauche (2:49)
8. No. 5 Polonaise (5:14)

9. A Pedal Study in F Major (1885) (1:16)

10. Gavotte, Op. 8, No. 1 (4:07)
11. Eclogue, Op. 8, No. 2 (2:40)

Suite No. 1 in D Minor, Op. 15 [13:33]

12. No. 1 Prelude (3:01)
13. No. 2 Fugue (2:44)
14. No. 3 Romance (4:31)
15. No. 4 Capriccio (3:15)

Piano Pieces, Op. 18 [6:52]

16. No. 1 Serenade (4:13)
17. No. 2 Humoresque (2:38)

Suite No. 2 in C Minor, Op. 30 [15:45]

18. No. 1 Prelude (3:50)
19. No. 2 Romance (7:41)
20. No. 3 Toccata (4:13)

DISC 2 70.38

Nine Studies for the Piano, Op. 27 [22:41]

1. No. 1 Moderato grazioso (2:15)
2. No. 2 Andante espressivo (2:05)
3. No. 3 Allegro non troppo (2:41)
4. No. 4 Andante con moto (3:29)
5. No. 5 Allegretto grazioso (1:36)
6. No. 6 Allegro (2:03)
7. No. 7 Andante espressivo (2:48)
8. No. 8 A Pedal Study (4:08)
9. No. 9 Non troppo allegro (1:36)

Five Bagatelles, Op. 34 [13:17]

10. No. 1 Pierrot (2:11)
11. No. 2 Pierrette (3:21)
12. No. 3 Without Haste, Without Rest (Étude Mignonne) (2:18)
13. No. 4 Idyl (3:11)
14. No. 5 Valse peu dansante (2:16)

Three Piano Pieces for the Left-hand, Op. 37 [8:28]

15. No. 1 Prélude-étude (2:45)
16. No. 2 Polka (1:36)
17. No. 3 Romanze (4:07)

Five Poems After Omar Khayyam, Op. 41 [17:45]

18. No. 1 "Iram indeed is gone..." (2:30)
19. No. 2 "They say the Lion and the Lizard..." (4:03)
20. No. 3 "Think, in this battered Caravanserai..." "Yet Ah, that Spring..." (3:58)
21. No. 4 "A Book of Verses..." (2:49)
22. No. 5 "Yon rising Moon..." (4:25)

Two Pieces for the Piano, Op. 42 [6:50]

23. No. 1 Scherzino (3:39)
24. No. 2 Étude Arabesque (3:11)

25. Little Etude in A Minor: Grazioso (1901) (1:28)

DISC 3 74.52

20 Preludes for the Pianoforte (In the Form of Short Technical Studies), Op. 52 (1903) [16:54]

1. No. 1 Non troppo Allegro (:52)
2. No. 2 Moderato (Right hand alone) (:57)
3. No. 3 Allegro (:33)
4. No. 4 Allegretto (Left hand alone) (1:04)
5. No. 5 Andante espressivo (1:09)
6. No. 6 Moderato (:46)
7. No. 7 Moderato (1:00)
8. No. 8 Espressivo (:55)
9. No. 9 Allegro brillante (:44)
10. No. 10 Allegro molto (:40)
11. No. 11 Allegretto (:41)
12. No. 12 Sostenuto (1:16)
13. No. 13 Andante espressivo (1:05)
14. No. 14 Allegro (:53)
15. No. 15 Molto Allegro (:55)

16. No. 16 Allegro Moderato (:48)
17. No. 17 Moderato (:48)
18. No. 18 Allegro (:48)
19. No. 19 Moderato (1:12)
20. No. 20 Senza tempo (:48)

Serenade, Op. 45 [11:03]

21. No. 1 Aubade (2:37)
22. No. 2 Air (3:32)
23. No. 3 A Dance (2:38)
24. No. 4 Finale (:44)
25. No. 5 Toccata (1:32)

26. An Irish Folk-Song (1906) (2:58)

Two Compositions for Piano, Op. 60 [8:38]

27. No. 1 Revery (5:10)
28. No. 2 A May Song (3:28)

29. Meditation, Op. 61 (4:11)

Two Pieces, Op. 62 (1907) [6:18]

30. No. 1 Whims (2:27)
31. No. 2 Exaltation (3:51)

Five Silhouettes, Op. 73 [13:14]

32. No. 1 Prelude (2:13)
33. No. 2 Dusk (4:07)
34. No. 3 Valse Triste (2:28)
35. No. 4 Flying Cloud (1:50)
36. No. 5 Oriental Dance (2:36)

37. Octave Study in G minor: Allegro Moderato (1917) (1:09)

38. Rondo in G major (1921) (2:41)

From Rest Harrow (A Little Suite for the Pianoforte) [6:28]

39. No. 1 Morning Glories (1:50)
40. No. 2 Rain on the Garret Roof (1:09)
41. No. 3 A Country Song (1:32)
42. No. 4 Country Dance (1:03)
43. No. 5 Alla Turca (:54)

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

In recent years, the musical public seems to have re-discovered the well-crafted and appealing music of romantic-era American composer Arthur Foote (1853-1937) – at least in terms of available recordings. But most of these releases have been devoted to his chamber and orchestral compositions. With practically no recordings devoted to Foote’s keyboard music, the time is right for this milestone release of his complete music for solo piano.

A native of Salem, Massachusetts, young Arthur was raised in a family of devout Unitarians, and grew up in a rich church music environment. Early music lessons were followed by formal study at Harvard under John Knowles Paine: a prominent member of the important group of American composers which (along with Foote) came to be known as the “Boston Six” (its other members being Amy Beach, George Chadwick, Edward MacDowell and Horatio Parker). We may well have to eventually consider re-naming this group the “Boston Seven” in the wake of Delos’ recent series of recordings offering the neglected music of another of the city’s pioneering woman composers, Margaret Ruthven Lang. In fact, Foote owed much to the Lang family: it was only

after his postgraduate organ studies with Margaret’s father, B. J. Lang, that he decided to make what had been his musical “hobby” his life’s work. He remains the only prominent American composer of his day to have trained exclusively in the United States.

In his twenties, Foote earned an enviable reputation as a concert pianist and performer of chamber music. But he soon realized that he preferred playing the organ in church – which, along with his work as a choirmaster, remained his primary performing activity for the rest of his life. In addition to his prominence as a teacher (piano and organ) and composer, he remains known as an editor (in collaboration with his older sister and his brother, a minister) of hymn collections; his compositions include largely forgotten liturgical music for organ and choir. Among several notable pedagogical books, he wrote *Some Practical Things in Piano-Playing* (1909).

Foote – along with all of his contemporaries – composed in forms and styles then prevalent in Europe; the uniquely American idioms of composers like Gershwin, Copland, Harris and Piston were not to emerge until near (or after) the end of his life. He gained some degree

of early notoriety by advocating the music of his European contemporaries Brahms and Wagner – despite the ironic fact that the respective supporters of those two composers in Europe were still at each other’s throats! But Foote’s European roots and influences went much deeper than that. As you will see in the following discussion of his piano compositions (and hear as you listen to them), Foote’s music, while reasonably original in its lyrical impulses and stylistic detail, also owes much to composers like Chopin, Mendelssohn, and Schumann – among others.

The music also reveals a thoroughly trained theoretician’s command of form and structure – fetchingly fleshed out by Foote’s melodic fecundity and harmonic imagination. More often than not, these piano miniatures – whether they are stand-alone pieces or movements of a suite or cycle – are cast in ternary (ABA) form. Many of them were written for his own use, often with Boston’s busy “salon” scene in mind. Finally, Foote the conscientious pedagogue is in evidence throughout (he was in considerable demand as a teacher). Not only does this program include two substantial cycles of technical studies, but he produced quite a few other pieces – both individual and as individual parts of cycles – that are subtitled as etudes or studies.

In the first CD’s opening *Trois Morceaux* cycle, it becomes quickly apparent that Frederic Chopin is probably Foote’s salient influence; the first and third movements (‘Impromptu’ and ‘Mazurka’) are especially reminiscent of the Polish master’s sound and style. The central ‘Gavotte,’ however, seems to have more of a sense of Brahmsian brusqueness to it. The following *Cinq Pieces*, Op. 6, also mostly redolent of Chopin, offer a romantic-era update of the Baroque suite, with three dance movements and an ornate, harmonically rich ‘Nocturne’ following the opening ‘Prelude.’ The ‘Sarabande’ seems to breathe an air of wide-eyed innocence, a-la Schumann. The fourth movement – ‘Petite Valse’ – is a cunning (and tricky) little marvel for the left hand alone, with the waltz-beat chords often “implied” to make room for the lovely melody.

Foote left us no formal piano sonatas – but we do have two fine suites from him that are rather sonata-like in style and structure. The Op. 15 *Suite No. 1*, in four movements, begins with a ‘Prelude’ – again of Brahmsian intensity – followed by a dandy ‘Fugue’ that reveals Foote’s sure command of classic counterpoint. After a ravishing ‘Romance,’ the cycle ends with a sparkling ‘Capriccio’ of exquisite delicacy. The *Suite No. 2*, Op. 30, is particularly sonata-like, launching its three-move-

ment course with a dramatic movement entitled 'Appassionato,' in which lurks a touch of Beethoven's stormy spirit. A substantial and varied 'Romanze' follows, leading into the finale: a headlong, octave-heavy 'Toccata.'

Interspersed amid these two cycles are two smaller groupings of pieces plus a rather nondescript 'Pedal Study' in F (no opus number). The two Op. 8 pieces are a rather somber, minor-hued 'Gavotte' and a quirky, but intriguing 'Eclogue' that lapses in and out of 5/4 meter. The pair of Op. 18 pieces offer prime examples of Foote's "Salon" music: the elegant and virtuosic 'Serenade' smacks again of Chopin, as does the rather serious-sounding (considering its title) 'Humoresque.'

CD 2 begins with firm evidence of Foote the piano pedagogue: his *Nine Studies*, Op. 27 – while they may lack the consistent flashes of genius found in Chopin's 27 *Etudes* – still demonstrate the composer's concern for making technical keyboard exercises palatable to players. I won't dwell on the individual pieces; suffice it to say that they encompass many of the knuckle-busting problems of technique that any budding would-be pianist (as I once was) has had to struggle with: they include exercises in thirds (and other intervals), runs of all kinds, arpeggios, trills, octaves, etc. You will no doubt

agree with me that there are some small gems among these. We hear further hints of Foote the teacher later in the CD, in his *Three Pieces for the Left Hand*, Op. 37. The first of them is a daunting 'Prelude-etude,' followed by a subdued 'Polka' (actually a parody of one) and a lovely 'Romanze' in a Brahms-like style. Master these for a rock-solid left hand!

Both of the two remaining cycles on CD2 may well strike the listener as being among his finest piano creations. The *Five Bagatelles*, Op. 34 are especially delightful miniatures. The first two, 'Pierrot' and 'Pierette,' convey the sense of innocent whimsy associated with this pair of beloved *Commedia dell'arte* characters. The third is the lovely and delicate 'Without Haste, Without Rest' – a technical tour-de-force (subtitled 'Etude Mignonne'). The cycle comes to a pleasant close with a celestial-sounding 'Idyll' and a waltz of particular charm.

The *Five Poems after Omar Khayyam*, Op. 41, are probably Foote's best-known piano works – at least judging from the fact that they have been recorded several times. These are all semi-programmatic "songs without words" of sorts: selected individual stanzas of Khayyam's poetry are printed at the bottom of each number's score. I was particularly taken with the stirring

martial pomp and drama of No. 3, 'Think, in this Battered Caravanserai' – as well as the sweetly pastoral romance of No. 4: the famous 'A Book of Verses, Underneath the Bough.'

Three more tracks bring CD2 to its close. The *Two Pieces*, Op. 42 offer a sprightly 'Scherzino' and the very beautiful 'Etude Arabesque' – both are quite challenging technically, and they sound as if they may well have been used as Salon pieces. The final 'Little Etude in A Minor' entails a legato right hand over a staccato left-hand accompaniment.

CD 3 begins with Foote's Op. 52 set of *20 Preludes*: most run under a minute in length. But these might just as well been called studies or etudes, as each deals with a different problem of piano technique, very much as the previous CD's *Nine Studies* do. Among the main pleasures found in *Five Serenades*, Op. 45, are 'Aubade,' a piece that breathes breezy contentment, in contrast to the more pensive mood of the following 'Air.' Crowning the *Five Silhouettes*, Op. 73, is one of our artist's favorites: 'Valse Triste,' with its sweetly brooding strains; it's the perfect foil to the happy tumble of 'Flying Cloud' and the exotic stylization of the concluding 'Ori-

ental Dance' that follow. *From Rest Harrow*, subtitled *A Little Suite for the Pianoforte*, has no opus number; it was written in 1922, and contains several charming little jewels, including a rather impressionistic piece, 'Rain on the Garret Roof.'

Rounding off our final CD are a few shorter sets and individual numbers – to include 'An Irish Folk Song,' based on 'You'll Wander Far and Wide, Dear.'" The first of the *Two Compositions for Piano*, Op. 60, is 'Revery' – a good example of typically reflective Victorian-era sentimentality in music; its companion piece, 'A May Song,' radiates more positive springtime spirits. 'Meditation,' Op. 61, projects a darker, more somber aura. Among my personal favorites in the entire collection are the *Two Pieces*, Op. 62. 'Whims,' the first, is a blithe Mendelssohnian romp, offset by the contrasting 'Exaltation' – with its ravishing, atmospherically nocturnal melody floating over a bed of broken chords in 16th notes. Following a short octave study is the cheerful little 'Rondo in G Major.'

— Lindsay Koob

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Kirsten Johnson enjoys a world-class career as a concert pianist, chamber musician and recording artist. Her recordings and performances have delighted listeners around the world. She has performed in Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, Japan and throughout the United States and United Kingdom. Her CDs have been given airplay on BBC Radio 3, on public radio stations across the U.S., and on radio stations in many European countries. In the UK she has performed in the Wigmore Hall, the Purcell Room, the Royal Academy of Music, the Holywell Music Room, Oxford, and the Austrian Institute, London.



Kirsten has wide-ranging musical interests and a large repertoire of works from the pre-Baroque to the present. Her 4-CD survey of the piano music of American composer Amy Beach has received consistent acclaim, and offers many world premiere recordings of Beach's works. Kirsten's albums "Këngë: Albanian Piano Music"

and "Rapsodi: Albanian Piano Music, Vol. II" have also met with critical acclaim, and have allowed more obscure repertoire to become known internationally. Kirsten's other recorded output includes the complete piano works of Heinrich Schultz-Beuthen (1838-1915) and pieces by Hermann Goetz (1840-1876).

"Kirsten Johnson advocates this little-known repertoire and does it with panache and aplomb," Minnesota Public Radio observed; while *Classics Today* wrote: "Kirsten Johnson's loving mastery of this music and skilful, nuanced pianism are a delight."

Born in the USA, Kirsten graduated summa cum laude from Evangel University, Missouri, at the age of nineteen with a Bachelor of Music in piano performance. After receiving her Master of Music degree in piano performance from the University of North Texas under a Teaching Fellowship in Piano, she studied in Vienna at the Hochschule für Musik as a Rotary International Foundation Scholar. She completed her DMA under Richard Cass at UMKC, having been awarded a Kemper Doctoral Fellowship. Dr. Johnson built her repertoire and explored the music of Alkan in her post-doctoral studies in England with Ronald Smith, FRAM. In 2004, she gave the world premiere of Raymond Head's "Of Birds and Bells" at a concert held at the Royal Academy of Music in London in memory of Ronald Smith. Kirsten holds dual U.S./U.K. citizenship and resides in Oxford.

Further information available at www.kirstenjohnsonpiano.com.

Recording Dates: 29-30 May, 2012 and 15-16 October, 2012

Venue: Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, United Kingdom

Piano: Steinway 'D', serial number 531743 - 1995

Piano technician: Philip Kennedy

Sound engineer: Jonathan Lane

Producer: Kirsten Johnson

Kirsten Johnson photo: Jonathan Lane

Acknowledgements: Special thanks to Dr. Douglas Moore, cellist, who recorded many of the works of Arthur Foote and helped in the research and development of this project. Thank you also to Mr. Jim Farrington, Sibley Music Library, Eastman School of Music, for his help and contacts in obtaining scores, including *Gavotte, op. 8, no. 1*; *Whims, op. 62, no. 1*; and *A Little Etude in A Minor*, to the Isham Memorial Library, Harvard University, for providing a copy of *Humoreske, op. 18, no. 2*; to Buswell Memorial Library, Wheaton College, for providing a copy of *Octave Study*; to the Library of Congress for providing a copy of *Rondo in G major*, and the Music Library, Wellesley College, for copies of *Bagatelles, op. 34, nos. 3, 4 and 5*.

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