

**Jacques
DESBRIÈRE**
Piano Concerto
**Cinq pièces
étranges**
**Huit préludes
intérieurs**

**Cecilia Löfstrand,
Piano**

**Patrick Gallois,
Flute and Conductor**
**Sinfonia Finlandia
Jyväskylä**



Jacques Desbrière (b. 1925)
Cinq pièces étranges • Huit préludes intérieurs • Piano Concerto

Jacques Desbrière was born in 1925 into a family of art lovers. As a young boy he liked nothing better than to sit at the piano inventing variations on the pieces he had been taught, and he derived particular pleasure from improvisation, both indications of the composer to come. Although he was a pupil of Henri Challan at the Paris Conservatoire in 1943, he responded less well to this instruction than to that of the organist and composer André Tournier, a renowned teacher and accomplished musician. At the age of eighteen he partially abandoned composition in order to serve under General De Lattre de Tassigny (one of De Gaulle's generals). After the war he returned with an injury to his hand which prevented him becoming the pianist he must have dreamt he would be. He strayed temporarily into the world of commerce, which his successful businessman father thought would prove more secure than an artistic career, before returning to composition.

It was meeting the flautist and conductor Patrick Gallois in 1987 that inspired Desbrière to write several works for flute and piano which were recorded with the pianist Elizabeth Sombart and published by Carrère. The *Cinq pièces étranges* (Five Strange Pieces) for flute and piano on the present recording have been recorded and played by numerous flautists throughout the world, including Claudio Marinone, Nikolay Stoykov, and Alexis Kossenko. *Préludes intérieurs* (Internal Preludes), a suite of eight works for solo piano here interpreted by Cecilia Löfstrand, belong to the same period. In 1993 he composed a ballet score for Lahsen Zinoun, a

Moroccan choreographer and film-maker, which was performed at the Casablanca Festival of Dance by the Russian Bolshoy Ballet. In 1997 he produced a series of piano works, published by Quantum under the title *Cahier de musique*. This was recorded by the pianist Sylvie Carbonel.

At the request of his friend Patrick Gallois, Artistic Director of the Jyväskylä Sinfonia of Finland, Desbrière wrote his first symphony, recorded for Naxos, with orchestral excerpts from *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Sibelius [Naxos 8.557985]. For the same orchestra he wrote the *Piano Concerto* on the present disc, given its première in 2011 by Cecilia Löfstrand. He is currently working on *Divertissement à la française*, for flute, piano and orchestra, dedicated to the Philharmonic Orchestra of Sofia on its 85th anniversary. The première, a performance by Maria Prinz and Patrick Gallois, is scheduled to take place at a Day of French Music in Bulgaria in March 2014.

On first hearing, the music of Jacques Desbrière seems entirely in the French tradition: at once tonal and modal, arching from the Couperins to Francis Poulenc by way, naturally, of Fauré, Satie, and above all Ravel, to whom his *Piano Concerto* refers. The deliberate and distinctive quotations from Ravel's *G major Piano Concerto* reveal how profoundly original the concerto by Desbrière is in its harmonic treatment and sense of organization, and in the composition at once free and structured which gives it direction.

Maurice Delage

Translated by Elizabeth Long

Jacques Desbrière

Jacques Desbrière belongs to the generation of French composers of the second half of the twentieth century, a contemporary of Dutilleux, Sauguet, Jolivet, Françaix, Ibert and others. He has composed numerous instrumental works for piano and chamber ensemble. He studied music formally at the Paris Conservatoire in the 1940s under Claude Delvincourt, but insists his real instruction in composition came from the organist and composer André Tournier, with whom he stayed in close contact until the latter's death. His work is less a reflection of a world we share than it is the summation of the artist's own personality. The response of a listener or spectator to this point of reference is dependent on his or her 'taste': beauty is subjective, it is found in what pleases our individual tastes or inclinations.

During recent times this subjective view of art became increasingly pronounced. Avant-gardists extolled the idea of artists creating *ex nihilo*, and of a *tabula rasa* with regard to

tradition; for them 'originality' should ultimately supplant all other aesthetic values. Today such devotion to newness for its own sake is entirely outmoded. It is in this context that the music of composers such as Franck, Ravel, Satie or Desbrière – music that can be said to be 'modern' but not 'avant-garde' – has today unrivalled relevance. The musical tradition that did not renounce tonality gives us what would be improbable, even condemned, in the atonal universe: authentically modern beauty.

With this music it is not fitting to speak of 'discovery' or 'invention', but rather of 'expression', as it encapsulates the very personality of its composers. The work of composer Jacques Desbrière on this recording demonstrates this ideal to perfection.

Luc Ferry

Translated by Elizabeth Long

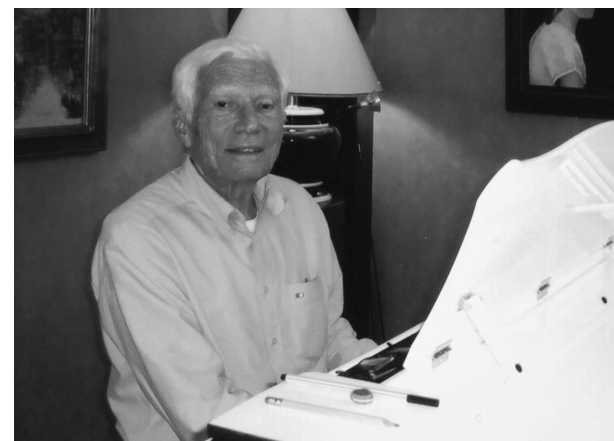


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Cecilia Löfstrand

Cecilia Löfstrand was born in 1973 in Umeå, Sweden. She started to play the piano at the age of three and at the age of eight gave her first concerts and began to accompany singers and instrumentalists. From the age of thirteen she started to prepare for a career as a professional musician under the guidance of Maria André-Frid (a pupil of Hans Leygraf) and Pera Szmukler (a pupil of Heinrich Neuhaus). She made her first recording for Swedish Radio at the age of twelve and went on to be a prize-winner at an early age at several piano competitions in the Nordic Countries. After her graduation she studied with Einar Steen-Nøkleberg at the Music Academy of Oslo, followed by studies at the Hanover Hochschule für Musik und Theater. At the same time she won the Culture Prize in her home town in Sweden. Since 1999 she has lived in Paris. Her concert career has taken her to Sweden, Norway, Finland, France, England, Italy, Germany, Greece, Turkey, Canada and Japan. Her first recording of *Sonatas for Flute and Piano* by Philippe Gaubert with flautist Patrick Gallois was released in 2008 on the Saphir label and won the highest praise in the French music magazine *Diapason*.



Photo: Tiina Osara

Patrick Gallois

Patrick Gallois belongs to the generation of French musicians leading highly successful international careers as both soloist and conductor. From the age of seventeen he studied the flute with Jean- Pierre Rampal at the Paris Conservatoire and at the age of 21 was appointed principal flute in the Orchestre National de France, under Lorin Maazel, playing under many famous conductors, including Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, Pierre Boulez, Karl Boehm, Eugen Jochum, and Sergiu Celibidache. He held this post until 1984, when he decided to focus on his solo career, which has subsequently taken him throughout the world. He regularly performs and records with leading conductors and collaborates in chamber music with musicians such as Yuri Bashmet, Natalia Gutman, Peter Schreier, Jorg Demus, the Lindsay Quartet and formerly with Jean-Pierre Rampal and Lily Laskine. He has been invited to appear as a soloist with major orchestras in Europe and in Asia, and in leading international festivals, with tours to Germany, Japan and Israel, and annual master-classes at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. For twelve years after establishing his own orchestra in Paris, the Académie de Paris, Patrick Gallois developed a conducting career which has taken him to Japan, Scandinavia, Italy, Portugal, the United States and Bulgaria, in addition to appearances as a conductor in France. In 2003 he was appointed Musical Director of the Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä and tours regularly with the orchestra. Both as a conductor and as a flautist he has a wide repertoire, with a strong taste for contemporary music, and many new works have been dedicated to him. His recordings include an award-winning series for DG. For Naxos he has recorded the complete *Flute Concertos* of C.P.E. Bach (8.557515–16), Haydn's *Symphonies Nos. 1–5* (8.557571) and *9–12* (8.557771), and Gounod's *Symphonies* (8.557463), among other works. His recording for Naxos of Kraus's *Aeneas i Cartago* (8.570585) was awarded a Choc by *Musica* in April 2010. His recording of the *Violin Concertos* of Saint-Saëns with Fanny Clamagirand (Naxos 8.572037) was awarded a Choc (*Musica*) in February 2011 and a Diapason d'Or in March 2011. A further Choc (*Musica*) was awarded for his recording of the Mendelssohn *Violin Concertos* with Tianwa Yang and Sinfonia Finlandia (8.572662).

Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä

Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä was founded in 1955 and has seen various stages, among them phases as a private organization and as a communal unit. The orchestra has operated in its present form since 1965. After nine years with Patrick Gallois as Music Director, the artistic committee is now responsible for programme planning, before the appointment of a new Music Director in autumn 2013. The orchestra consists of 38 musicians and has made a number of tours abroad, including appearances in Japan, France, Spain, Poland, and Norway. Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä has recorded extensively for a number of major companies, among others for Naxos. These include a series of early symphonies by Joseph Haydn (8.557571, 8.557771), Franz and Karl Doppler's flute music (8.570378) as well as Louis Spohr's *Violin Concertos*, performed by Simone Lamsma (8.570528). The orchestra has also made a platinum-selling recording with the opera star Karita Mattila. Recent releases include, among others, music by George Gershwin (8.570939), Saint-Saëns *Violin Concertos* (8.572037) and the most recent recording from spring 2011 presents eighteenth-century American overtures (8.559654). In addition to the orchestra's international activity, Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä also gives concerts regularly in Finland and since 1993 has been active in education and audience development aimed at schools in Central Finland.



Photo: Pekka Rötönen

Jacques Desbrière (b. 1925)

Cinq pièces étranges • Huit préludes intérieurs • Concerto pour piano

Jacques Desbrière est né en 1925 dans une famille d'amateurs d'art. Très jeune, mis devant le piano, il n'aime rien tant que modifier à sa guise les petits morceaux qu'on lui enseigne et prend surtout plaisir à improviser, ce qui marquera le futur compositeur. Il est moins sensible à l'enseignement qu'il reçoit de Henri Challan, avec qui il étudie en 1943 au Conservatoire national supérieur de musique de Paris, qu'à celui que lui dispensera l'organiste et compositeur André Tournier, admirable pédagogue et musicien accompli. Il délaisse en partie le papier réglé pour s'engager à dix-huit ans dans l'armée de Lattre de Tassigny. La guerre finie, il revient avec une blessure à la main qui le privera de devenir le pianiste qu'il avait sans doute rêvé d'être. Il retourne à la composition après une embarquée dans le monde des affaires que son père, grand industriel, préférerait pour lui à l'incertaine carrière artistique.

Sa rencontre en 1987 avec le flûtiste et chef d'orchestre Patrick Gallois lui permet d'écrire plusieurs pièces pour flûte et piano qui furent enregistrées et publiées chez Carrère avec la pianiste Elizabeth Sombart. Les « 5 pièces étranges » pour flûte et piano présentes dans cet enregistrement seront enregistrées et jouées par un grand nombre de flûtistes dans le monde entier, tels Claudio Marinone, Nikolay Stoykov, Alexis Kossenko. Les « préludes intérieurs », une suite de huit pièces pour piano solo interprétées par Cecilia Löfstrand dans ce disque, appartiennent à la même période. En 1993, il écrit une musique de ballet pour Lahsen Zinoun, chorégraphe et cinéaste marocain, qui fut présentée dans le

cadre du Festival de danse de Casablanca avec les Ballets Russes du Bolchoï. Il publie en 1997 une suite de pièces pour piano groupées sous le titre de « *Cahier de musique* » par Quantum; ces pièces seront enregistrées par la pianiste Sylvie Carbonel.

A la demande de son ami Patrick Gallois, Directeur artistique de Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä, Desbrière écrit sa première symphonie enregistrée pour Naxos en compagnie des extraits symphoniques de *Pelléas et Mélisande* de Jean Sibelius [Naxos 8.557985]. Toujours à l'intention de cet orchestre, il écrit le concerto pour piano créé en 2011 par la pianiste Cecilia Löfstrand et enregistré ici. Il travaille actuellement sur *Divertissement à la française*, pièces de concert pour flûte, piano et orchestre dédiées à l'Orchestre philharmonique de Sofia pour ses 85 ans. La création aura lieu en Bulgarie, en mars 2014, par Maria Prinz et Patrick Gallois pour la Journée de la musique française.

La musique de Jacques Desbrière paraît à la première audition dans la pure tradition française : tonale et modale à la fois, elle va des frères Couperin à Francis Poulenc, en passant, bien sûr, par Faure, Satie et, surtout, Ravel auquel ce concerto se réfère. Les citations caractéristiques et intentionnelles du concerto pour piano en sol majeur de Maurice Ravel révèlent l'originalité profonde du concerto de Jacques Desbrière dans son traitement harmonique et son sens de l'organisation, et la composition à la fois libre et construite qui la dirige.

Maurice Delage

Jacques Desbrière

Jacques Desbrière, né en 1925 à Paris, appartient à la génération des compositeurs français de la seconde moitié du vingtième siècle, contemporains des Dutilleux, Sauguet, Jolivet, Françaix, Ibert, etc. Il est l'auteur de nombreuses pièces instrumentales pour piano et formations de musique de chambre. Il fait des études classiques au Conservatoire national supérieur de musique de Paris dans les années quarante sous la direction de Claude Delvincourt, mais il affirme devoir sa véritable initiation à la composition à l'organiste et compositeur André Tournier, avec qui il est resté en étroit contact jusqu'à la mort de ce dernier. Son œuvre n'est pas tant le reflet d'un monde commun qu'elle n'est l'expression la plus achevée de la personnalité de l'artiste. A cette orientation centrée sur l'auteur répond du côté de l'auditeur-spectateur celle qui est liée à la notion de « goût ». Le Beau est subjectif; il réside pour l'essentiel dans ce qui plaît à notre goût, à notre sensibilité.

La période contemporaine a radicalisé cette subjectivisation de l'art : d'abord sous les auspices de l'avant-garde

qui prône l'idéologie de la création « ex nihilo » et de la table rase des traditions passées, au point que l'« originalité » tendra finalement à supplanter pour les avant-gardistes toute autre valeur esthétique : culte du nouveau pour le nouveau, conception qui se trouve aujourd'hui complètement dépassée. C'est dans cette situation que la musique française qu'on a pu désigner comme « moderne » mais non « d'avant-garde », qu'illustrent les noms de Franck, Ravel, Satie ou Desbrière, retrouve aujourd'hui une inégalable actualité. Et cette tradition musicale qui n'a pas renoncé à la tonalité nous donne l'exemple, improbable, voire honni dans l'univers atonal, d'une authentique beauté moderne.

Découverte et invention ne sont plus ici les mots qui conviennent mais plutôt « expression », car cette musique possède au plus haut point l'art d'exprimer la personnalité de ses auteurs. Jacques Desbrière, que l'on découvrira dans cet enregistrement, illustre magnifiquement cet idéal.

Luc Ferry

One of the generation of composers that includes Dutilleux, Françaix and Ibert, Jacques Desbrière inhabits a long-standing French tradition of tonal and modal composition from Couperin to Poulenc, his *Piano Concerto* also embracing the expressive language of Ravel in deliberate quotations. Desbrière's friendship with renowned flautist and conductor Patrick Gallois inspired several pieces for flute and piano in the late 1980s. Of these the *Cinq pièces étranges* has achieved worldwide popularity. The solo piano suite *Préludes intérieurs* also belongs to this fruitful period, all of these works demonstrating to perfection the composer's ideal of an authentically modern aesthetic of beauty. Also conducted by Patrick Gallois, Desbrière's *Sinfonia* can be heard on Naxos 8.557985.

Jacques DESBRIÈRE

(b. 1925)

Cinq pièces étranges, for flute and piano†			
1 No. 1 Andante moderato	3:27	8 No. 3 Énergique, rythmé	0:47
2 No. 2 Andante	2:22	9 No. 4 Égal et fluide	1:20
3 No. 3 Assez vif	1:23	10 No. 5 Doucement allant	1:59
4 No. 4 Quasi adagio	1:46	11 No. 6 Doucement allant	1:20
5 No. 5 Allegretto	2:54	12 No. 7 Moderato cantabile	3:30
Huit préludes intérieurs, for piano*		13 No. 8 Rapide, énergique	0:44
6 No. 1 Tranquillo	1:38	Piano Concerto‡*	25:12
7 No. 2 Pas trop lent	1:43	14 I. Largo – Allegro vivace	13:01
		15 II. Très calme	5:22
		16 III. Très vif	6:46

*** WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING**

Cecilia Löfstrand, Piano

Patrick Gallois, Flute† and Conductor‡

Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä‡

Recorded at Hankasalmi Church, Jyväskylä, Finland, 14–18 May 2012

Producer, Engineer & Editor: Sean Lewis • Publishers: La Stravaganza (tracks 1–5); others unpublished

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