the piano part in the faster passages of the opening movements of both sonatas. This problem becomes more apparent in the Trio, when Power and Crawford-Philips are joined by Tim Hugh on cello, and the denser grouping gives rise to issues of balance. The viola is not a natural soloist in a chamber setting, and the distinct tone of the clarinet offers far more scope for contrast of colour and texture. Yet there is much to enjoy in this performance. The playing is never anything but musical and the intelligence of the performers is clearly apparent. The Trio has never fared as well in the popularity stakes as its partner piece the Quintet; its concise style of writing has none of the accessibility of the Quintet's sweeping melodies. This is a work, however, that deserves repeated listening. As is the case with the Quintet, the Trio seamlessly combines the old and the new. Allusions to Brahms's youthful scherzo style in the opening movement, and reminiscences of his *Liebeslieder* waltzes in the 'Andante grazioso' are offset by a terseness and economy of thought that could only be late Brahms. Power, Hugh and Crawford-Phillips are comfortable in this milieu. The interaction between the three is both thoughtful and passionate and makes for a very enjoyable recording of the Trio. Essentially, this is a very enjoyable recording, which does much to promote the validity of the viola arrangements.

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Chaminade

Piano Music Vol. 1

Peter Jacobs *pf*

Helios CDH 55197 (71 minutes: DDD)
Notes and translations included.

Peter Jacobs is effectively carving out a niche for himself as a champion of piano music by lesser-known English and French composers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His recordings of the piano works of John Foulds, Frank Bridge and Déodat de Séverac, among others, demonstrate that such relatively unknown composers produced music worthy of recognition, preservation and study. *Piano Music by Cécile Chaminade, Volume 1*, the first of a three-volume set, does so brilliantly. The music Jacobs has chosen to make his speciality was largely ignored by twentieth-century commentators, who dismissed it as 'light' music lacking seriousness, complexity, innovativeness or monumentality – values central to the modernist aesthetic that dominated critical and academic discourse on music throughout much of the century. In the wake of postmodernism, we are no longer shackled with these biases, and composers who shunned modernism's aesthetic mandates just as it was emerging as a hegemonic critical paradigm have now begun to receive attention that has long been overdue.

Chaminade's posthumous reputation has suffered from even stronger biases based on her gender. Chaminade scholar Marcia J. Citron is among several writers

who have thoughtfully exposed the double bind women composers have had to face.[1] Encroaching on an area historically dominated by men – the long-standing institutional and social barriers to women becoming professional composers have been well documented – women composers have been (mis)judged according to unacknowledged masculinist biases. Should they eschew the dominant masculinist paradigm, their music is dismissed as 'weak', 'overly sensual' or 'irrational', or otherwise tainted by traits typically associated with femininity. Should they work within the prevailing aesthetic framework, they are chided for writing music inappropriately masculine for a female composer. We can see, for instance, how carefully C. Leonard-Stuart attempts to contend with this double bind in his biographical sketch of Chaminade published with her *Album of Seventeen Pieces for Pianoforte*. 'Such is the virility of her compositions', he writes, 'that, in ignorance of her sex, several critics referred to her early publications as the work of a man. Her works are marked with great vigor and strength, and bear the impress of the widest knowledge of her art.' But he hastens to add that her music contains 'the elegance and grace which constitute the true feminine charm, and with her that charm truly is a most distinguishing quality', and that as a conductor she provides 'an attractive feature at Parisian orchestral concerts'.[2] Less subtle is the *Musical Courier*'s 1903 review of an opera composed by Ethel Smyth, to whom the reviewer compares the music of 'other women – Chaminade and Holmes, for instance', unfavorably: 'She thinks in masculine style, broad and virile. She has fully mastered the modern orchestral mode … . Her climaxes are full-blooded, and the fortissimos are real … . In this respect (and it is not the only one) the gifted Englishwoman has successfully emancipated herself from her sex.'[3] To write great music is to write manly music, and if a woman composes it, then she is not truly a woman, as the reviewer's implicative aside makes clear.

Of course, modernism and masculinism hold a number of values in common, many of which provide the basis for dualities that imply normative qualitative hierarchies that have been deployed to devalue music by women – strong/weak, serious/light, grand/miniature, public/domestic, professional/amateur, intellectual/sensual, among others. The one-paragraph entry on Chaminade in the 1911 edition of *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* concludes that 'notwithstanding the real charm and clever writing of many of Chaminade's pieces they do not rise above drawing-room music', an entry shamefully reprinted virtually unchanged in the 1980 edition of the encyclopedia.[4] Labelling Chaminade a composer of drawing-room music places her on the wrong side of several of these dualities, as the drawing room has been understood as the locus of light, domestic, amateur music-making. Implicit in such a disparaging remark is the idea that no music of any real value can come out of the drawing

[1] Marcia J. Citron, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (Cambridge, 1993); and *Cécile Chaminade: A Bio-Bibliography* (New York, Westport, CN, and London: Greenwood, 1988): 23–6.

[2] C. Leonard-Stuart, 'Biographical Sketch', in Cécile Chaminade, *Album of Seventeen Pieces for Pianoforte* (New York: G. Schirmer, 1899): np.

[3] 'An Opera in New York', *Musical Courier* 46 (18 Mar. 1903): 12, quoted in *Women in Music: An Anthology of Source Readings from the Middle Ages to the Present*, ed. Carol Neuls-Bates, rev. ed. (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996): 226–7.

[4] Gustav Ferrari, 'Chaminade, Cécile (Louise Stéphanie)', *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. J.A. Fuller Maitland, 5 vols (New York: Macmillan, 1911): I, 496, and *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 6th ed., ed. Stanley Sadie, 20 vols (London: Macmillan, 1980): IV, 125. The 6th edition features an updated bibliography by Jean Mongrédien.

room (or, in Chaminade's case, the salon), the only musical venue then open to female composers. As late as 1992, a concert reviewer could use the composer's domestic milieu to denigrate her music, dismissing her Concertino for Flute and Orchestra as a 'numbingly mindless salon bonbon' (never mind that one is not likely to encounter on orchestral work in the salon).[5] In recent decades feminist scholars in various fields have recovered the salon as a significant, rich sphere for women's creative efforts, and it is within this context that we can best understand the music of Chaminade.

In spite of the numerous barriers to women seeking a professional compositional career, Chaminade was extremely successful, garnering impressive sales figures throughout France, England and the United States. As the primary breadwinner in her family following the premature death of her father, such commercial success was vital and depended on observing a number of restrictive preconditions inherent in music for the salon, including the technical limitations of amateur musicians, the minimal performing forces necessitated by the venue, and the miniature dimensions favoured within this context. While these aspects of most of her music – she also wrote more difficult large-scale works not intended for the salon – have been routinely cited in dismissals of her music, I would argue that it should not be considered a failure that she wrote within the constraints of the only viable market available to her. Rather, it should be considered a remarkable achievement that she wrote such compelling, satisfying music under such restrictive preconditions. To be sure, most of the works on this recording are diminutive, with only 2 of the 19 tracks exceeding five minutes and most clocking in at around three minutes. But, as Chaminade and Jacobs demonstrate, size doesn't always matter.

The collection of works on this recording is generally well chosen for the first of a multi-volume set, featuring several of Chaminade's best-known piano works, including *Automne* (from her op. 35 *Etudes de concert*) and *La lisonjera*, mixed in with pieces that would be known only to dedicated Chaminade aficionados. Inexplicably, however, neither this nor the subsequent two volumes of the set includes the *Pas des écharpes*, one of Chaminade's most popular piano pieces. (Or perhaps there is an explanation: when played on iTunes, the disc erroneously lists *Callirhoë – Air de Ballet* as the *Scarf Dance*. Both pieces were extracted from the ballet *Callirhoë*, arranged for piano, and published as numbers 3 and 4 of her op. 37 album. Could it be that the producers of the recording thought that they were one and the same piece? The liner notes do nothing to clarify the issue.) The playlist spans most of Chaminade's career, from the early *Chaconne* op. 8, published without a date in 1879 or 1880, to the *Etude scholastique* op. 139 of 1910. Rather than arranging the tracks chronologically, as is often the case in multiple-volume sets dedicated to a single composer's output within a given genre, the tracks are arranged as one might arrange a concert programme, to provide the most satisfying succession of musical statements. While the earliest work does open the recording and the latest work comes last – the *Chaconne* makes for an effective opening and the *Etude scholastique* a fitting closer, both in a neo-Baroque style often used by Chaminade – the rest of the recording moves through her output in a non-linear, but fluid, fashion. The playlist also does well to represent the variety of stylistic ground we find in Chaminade's piano music, including neo-Baroque pieces (*Autrefois*, in addition to the works mentioned above),

[5] Allan Ulrich, 'Women's Philharmonic Launches Twelfth Season', *San Francisco Examiner* (5 Oct. 1992), reprinted in Neuls-Bates, ed., *Women in Music*, 340.

stylized dances (*Deuxième valse*, *Callirhoë – Air de Ballet*, *Valse romantique*), works in the 'songs without words' vein (*Solitude*, *Souvenance*), emotionally charged late-Romantic effusions (*Etude pathétique*, *Elévation*), a barcarolle (*Pecheurs de nuit*), and Spanish-inflected music (*La lisonjera*).

Jacobs' playing is admirable throughout. He effectively demonstrates that there is more variety to Chaminade's piano music than has been generally acknowledged, emphasizing in turn delicacy, exuberance, lyricism, brilliance, serenity, vitality, passion and playfulness. The Scherzo in C major momentarily lacks the desired rhythmic fluidity, but this is a minor criticism. In his pithy, well-written liner notes – given in English, French and German – Calum MacDonald finds similarities to the piano music of a number of well-established composers, including Chopin, Liszt, Schumann, Debussy, Brahms and Fauré. We might add Mussorgsky (*Callirhoë – Air de Ballet* has much in common with 'The Ballet of Unhatched Chicks' from *Pictures at an Exhibition*) and even Beethoven (*Automne* is reminiscent of the 'Pathétique' Sonata). More importantly, however, these recordings highlight virtues particularly characteristic of Chaminade's piano music, including her crystalline textures, highly appealing melodies, fluid transitions and inventive accompaniments. As MacDonald asserts, the reputation of Chaminade 'almost certainly calls out for upward revision'. He need not have been so tentative. This disc goes a long way towards making his point.

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Liszt

Dante Sonata
Petrarch Sonnets 47, 104 and 123
Mephisto Waltz No. 1
Impromptu (Nocturne)
Valse-Impromptu
Song transcriptions:
Frühlingsnacht (Schumann)
Widmung (Schumann)
Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2

Jon Nakamatsu *pf*

Harmonia mundi HMU907409 (76 minutes: DDD)
Notes and translation included.

Liszt has enjoyed something of a recording revival in the last 20 years, through the rehabilitative efforts of Alfred Brendel, the Naxos phenomenon and the emergence of comprehensive or complete series (with Leslie Howard's complete Liszt recording for Hyperion leading the way) and a steady trickle of one-off piano recitals by distinguished pianists such as Polini (DG: 1990) Perahia (Sony: 1991) and Zimerman (DG: 1992), followed by a new generation – most notably

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