

Catherine Lawlor | Violin
Valentina Seferinova | Piano

Myths & Legends





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CHARLES WAKEFIELD CADMAN (1881-1946)

[1] The Legend of the Canyon, Op. 68

4:10

JOSEPH JONGEN (1873-1953)

Aquarelles pour violon et piano, Op. 59

[2] I. Légende naïve

5:47

CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD (1852-1924)

[3] Legend

6:52

OTTO MALLING (1848-1915)

Faust Suite, Op. 55 *

13:53

[4] I. Faust

3:50

[5] II. Mephistopheles

2:40

[6] III. Siebel

2:58

[7] IV. Margarethe

4:25

FRANK BRIDGE (1879-1941)

[8] Norse Legend, H. 60

4:30

CYRIL SCOTT (1879-1970) trans. FRITZ KREISLER (1875-1962)

[9] Lotus Land, Op. 47 No. 1 (W183)

5:35

IGOR STRAVINSKY (1882-1971)

[10] Ballad (The Fairy's Kiss)

3:44

IAN SCHOFIELD (b. 1949)

[11] Anemoi *

7:31

KAROL SZYMANOWSKI (1882-1937)

Mythes, Op. 30

25:21

[12] I. La fontaine d'Arethuse

6:25

[13] II. Narcisse

9:03

[14] III. Dryades et Pan

9:49

TOTAL TIME: 77:24

* world premiere recording

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The idea for this recording was originally conceived by Catherine Lawlor and Mark Hartt-Palmer in 2019, and soon after, joined by Valentina Seferinova. Originally set to be recorded in early 2020, the first Covid lockdown in the UK was announced, and it took many months of practice in isolation before we were finally able to get together and rehearse. After further lockdowns and restrictions were announced, the first recording session took place in December 2020, followed by subsequent sessions in 2023 and early 2024.

This project would not have been possible without the support of many people: Ian Schofield, who wrote *Anemoi* especially for this recording; Antonio Yotsov for the front cover painting, pairing Echo with Narcissus which perfectly captures the colours and sonorities of the second Mythe of Szymanowski.

This recording contains many lesser-known and forgotten gems, thanks to the research of Gareth Vaughan.

Finally we wish to extend our sincere gratitude to Michael Lawlor, who painstakingly typeset some of the older scores into performing editions.

Charles Wakefield Cadman was an American composer who, though growing up in Pennsylvania, travelled throughout the United States extensively. He collected many of the tribal melodies of Native Americans and was greatly inspired by what he heard. His work *From the Land of Sky Blue Waters* brought him to wider attention and he composed a number of scores for Hollywood films, including *The Sky Hawk*. *The Legend of the Canyon* is cinematic and evokes an image of the American West.

Belgian composer **Joseph Jongen's** impressionist work *Aquarelles* (Watercolours) was written whilst he was living in England, having fled Belgium during the First World War. He dedicated the work to the English actress Eve Fairfax, who was also once a muse of Rodin. In 1921, *The Musical Times* wrote of the *Aquarelles*:

“Unlike many compositions of the violin, which too often are good violin music without possessing any intrinsic musical value, these two works, which are duets for the two instruments rather than accompanied pieces, are first and foremost excellent music. That they are splendidly written for both the violin and the piano is but a secondary consideration, but one which with a master like Joseph Jongen may be taken for granted. The “Légende naïve” is full of that fresh, clean poetry implied by its title...”

Irish composer **Charles Villiers Stanford** produced over 400 works during his lifetime, though he is perhaps less known than many of his students. He was a founding professor at the Royal College of Music; Frank Bridge, Gustav Holst, and Ralph Vaughan Williams were just a few of his pupils whose works are frequently enjoyed in concert halls today. His *Legend* is a piece with a great sense of yearning but also possessing optimism and lightness.

Though more famous for his organ music, Danish composer **Otto Malling** wrote in many genres including the *Faust Suite* for violin and piano. The German legend of Faust has been the inspiration for playwrights, poets, composers, and even rock bands through the centuries. Rather than writing programmatic music, Malling chooses to depict four of the characters, much as Franz Liszt did in his *Faust Symphony* of roughly forty years earlier.

The first movement introduces us to Faust, who sells his soul to the devil for knowledge and worldly pleasures. Mephistopheles is represented in the second movement, which is both playful and ominous; it is clear from the music that this character is not to be trusted. The third movement portrays Siebel, a boy who falls in love with Margarethe. There is a youthful energy in the music, but, even in the more melancholic central section there is still a sense of optimism. The final movement introduces Margarethe — also known as Gretchen – with whom Faust falls in love, and she with him. This is the only movement where elements from the earlier music can be heard. There is earnestness in Margarethe's theme, interspersed with the energetic Siebel and ominous Mephistopheles.

A pupil of Stanford, British composer **Frank Bridge** is relatively well known, yet this piece is not performed as often as some of his other more famous works. *Norse Legend* was written early in Bridge's life, and although the music lacks the more complex harmony and tone colours found in his later compositions, it aptly portrays a Scandinavian landscape. Bridge does not indicate which legend he is depicting, so it is up to the listener to decide whether they are hearing a story of trolls, sea spirits, or gods and goddesses.

Cyril Scott was an English composer and pianist, as well as a writer, poet and occultist. *Lotus Land* was written in 1905, and later arranged by the Austrian violinist Fritz Kreisler, who had earlier performed Scott's Piano Quartet alongside the composer. Whether Scott directly references the island in Homer's *The Odyssey*, or evokes the more general idea of a lotus-land as a place of perfection and lack of worry and haste is unknown. There is definitely a sense of bliss and a suspension of time in this work, though there are elements of hurry, perhaps as Odysseus attempts to pull his sailors back to the ship.

In 1927, Ida Rubinstein, a former dancer of Diaghilev's Ballet Russe, asked to use **Igor Stravinsky's** ballet *Apollon musagète* in her repertory as she launched her own ballet company in Paris. On learning that the European rights belonged to Diaghilev, she commissioned *The Fairy's Kiss* and requested that Stravinsky compose something inspired by the music of Tchaikovsky which delighted him. He wrote:

"It would give me an opportunity of paying my heartfelt homage to Chaikovsky's wonderful talent."

There was no direction from Rubinstein as to the story, so Stravinsky took Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ice Maiden* as his inspiration, condensing the tale into what would become *The Fairy's Kiss*. The music for *Ballad* is taken from Scene II of the ballet as the fairy, disguised as a gypsy, kidnaps the young man, who is based on the character of Rudy in *The Ice Maiden*, in order to take him back to her everlasting dwelling-place.

Anemoi, by the Hampshire-based composer **Ian Schofield**, was written in 2022 specifically for inclusion in this recording. In Ancient Greek religion and myth the Anemoi were the four principal wind gods, each of which was associated with differing weather conditions and times of the year. Eurus is a turbulent wind of storm, frequently responsible for endangering ships on the sea. Zephyrus, the west wind, is the gentlest of the breezes, the messenger of spring. Notus was the Greek god of the south wind and associated with late summer and autumn, whereas Boreas is the north wind, bringer of cold winter air.

Composed in the Summer of 1916 during **Karol Szymanowski's** impressionist period, the *Mythes* are programmatic pieces based on three Greek myths.

La fontaine d'Arethuse (The Fountain of Arethusa) tells the tale of the chaste sea nymph Arethusa, who flees from her home in Arcadia to escape the unwanted attention of Alpheus. He pursues her, so she asks the goddess Artemis to aid her escape. Artemis transforms her into a cloud; however, Alpheus continues his pursuit and she perspires from fear, turning into a stream. She travels to the island of Ortygia chased by

Alpheus, eventually resurfacing in Syracuse where her fountain stands today.

Narcisse (Narcissus), the son of a nymph and the river god Cephissus, was vain and cruel. He rejects the mountain nymph Echo, and, as punishment for his cruelty, Aphrodite curses him to fall in love with his own reflection in water. Narcissus looks into a spring and is entranced by his image. He dies by the water, and his body is transformed into the flower that bears his name.

Dryades et Pan (Dryads and Pan) tells of Pan's obsession with the woodland nymph Syrinx. A womaniser, Pan had many lovers, including Echo, but he pursues Syrinx to a river where she asks for help from the naiads. They transform her into reeds, and Pan, liking the sound when the wind passes through them, cuts the reeds and crafts them into the pan-pipes on which he is often portrayed as playing.

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British violinist **Catherine Lawlor** studied in Cardiff and New York with Marius Bedeschi and Daniel Phillips respectively, before embarking on a varied performance and teaching career. As an orchestral player, she has played in the UK, Europe, the USA and Asia, and has performed as a chamber musician across the UK, Europe and the USA.

She has led several British freelance orchestras, including The Studio Orchestra, Welsh Musical Theatre Orchestra, British Sinfonietta and Nova Foresta Philharmonic. She has performed as concerto soloist and recitalist across the UK and USA, and recorded for film (independent), television and radio for Amazon Prime, the BBC and Avanti. Catherine is a promoter of new music, and whilst studying for her undergraduate degree she sat as Leader of the new music group Sinfonia Newydd. She continued her exploration of contemporary music in New York as a member of Queens College New Music Group. A particular highlight was performing Harold Meltzer's *Sindbad* (Piano Trio & Actor) with the composer in the role of the actor at Carnegie Hall. She continues to play new works today, working with composers to bring their music to life.



Recognised as a child prodigy, award-winning pianist **Valentina Seferinova** gave her first solo performance aged 8, and her first orchestral soloist performance at the age of 12 with the Vidin Philharmonic Orchestra in Bulgaria. She studied at the National Academy in Sofia, later being appointed Assistant Professor of Piano Performance, beginning a successful teaching career which has spanned over the past 30 years.

She studied at the National Academy in Sofia, later being appointed Assistant Professor of Piano Performance, beginning a successful teaching career which has spanned over the past 30 years. She has appeared as soloist with orchestras, working with Grammy Award winning conductors across the UK, Europe and Asia. Valentina has gained a reputation for championing lesser-known composers and their music. Soon after settling in the UK, she recorded the first CD of Joachim Raff's piano music. Since then, she has brought back to life many other forgotten scores included in her extensive recording discography released on the Naxos, Toccata Classics, Acte Préalable, Cameo Classics and the Lyrita labels. Her recordings have been broadcast on radio stations worldwide.



WHR099

Recorded at 24-bit 192KHz resolution.

Recorded in Turner Sims Concert Hall, University of Southampton, UK
on 18th December 2020 (Tracks 3-7), Menuhin Room, Portsmouth, UK
on 17th December 2022, 27th January & 2nd February 2023 (Tracks 1-2, 8-14)

Cover Art: Antonio Yotsov - Echo & Narcissus
Design: Willowhayne Records

Recording Engineering, Production & Editing: Mark Hartt-Palmer
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