

Reflections in the Water

CAROL ROSENBERGER PIANO

CHOPIN

DEBUSSY

FAURÉ

GRANADOS

GRIFFES

LISZT

RAVEL



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REFLECTIONS IN THE WATER

CAROL ROSENBERGER, Bösendorfer Imperial Concert Grand Piano

DISC ONE

WATER MUSIC OF THE IMPRESSIONISTS

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

- 1 Les Jeux d'eaux à la Villa d'Este (7:30)
(The fountains of the Villa d'Este)

Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920)

- 2 The Fountain of the Acqua Paola (3:52)

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

- 3 Jeux d'eau (Fountain) (5:36)
4 Ondine (6:54)

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

- 5 La Cathédrale engloutie (6:53)
(The engulfed cathedral)
6 Jardins sous la pluie (3:29)
(Gardens in the rain)
7 Reflets dans l'eau (5:40)
(Reflections in the water)
8 Poissons d'or (Goldfish) (3:48)
9 Ondine (3:20)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 47:02

DISC TWO

NIGHT MOODS

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

- 1 Nocturne Op. 55 No. 2 in E-Flat (5:56)

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

- 2 Nocturne No. 6 in D-Flat (9:31)

Claude Debussy

- 3 Clair de lune (Moonlight) (5:45)

Enrique Granados (1867-1916)

- 4 Quejas ó la Maja y el Ruiseñor (Laments,
or the Maiden and the Nightingale) (6:39)

Claude Debussy

- 5 La soirée dans Grenade (Evening in
Granada) (5:45)

Charles Tomlinson Griffes

- 6 Notturmo (6:26)

Franz Liszt

- 7 Harmonies du soir (Evening Harmonies)
(12:11)

Claude Debussy

- 8 La terrasse des audiences au clair de lune
(The Terrace for Moonlight Audiences)
(5:11)
9 Réverie (4:33)
10 Nocturne in D-Flat (6:18)
Frédéric Chopin
11 Nocturne Op. 27 No. 2 in D-Flat (6:54)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 76:12

Music is the expression of the movement of the waters, the play of curves described by changing breezes.

There is nothing more musical than a sunset... Everything that a keen ear perceives in the rhythm of the surrounding world can be represented musically... perfumes, colors, and sounds correspond to one another... Of all the arts, music is closest to nature — offers her the most subtle attraction... To musicians only is it given to capture all the poetry of night and day, of earth and heaven, to reconstruct their atmosphere and record the rhythm of their great heart-beats...

Claude Debussy

The Fountain of the Acqua Paola

Shimmering lights,
As though the Aurora's
Wild polar fires
Flashed in thy happy bubbles,
Died in thy foam.

William Sharp

Ondine

...I thought I heard a vague harmony in my sleep, and near me a murmur like the singing of a sad and tender voice.

Listen! Listen! It is I, Ondine, who sprinkles with drops of water your resonant window-panes lit by the pale rays of the moon; while there, the Lady of the Castle, in a

black gown, is gazing from her balcony at the lovely starlit night and the beautiful sleeping lake.

Each wave is a water sprite swimming with the current, and each current is a path that leads to my palace, and my palace is built of water at the bottom of the lake, in a triangle of fire, earth and air.

Listen! Listen! My father dips a branch of green alder into the bubbling water, and my sisters caress with their arms of foam the fresh islands of grasses, water lilies and irises, or laugh at the frail and bearded weeping-willow fishing with a line.

Having finished her murmured song, she begged me to place her ring on my finger, to show that I was married to an Ondine, and to go with her to her palace to be king of the lakes.

And when I replied that I loved a mortal woman, she was angry and sulky; she cried a little, then, with a burst of laughter, she disappeared into a shower of drops that fell in pale streams on my blue window pane.

Aloysius Bertrand

Moonlight

Your soul is a chosen landscape
That masked players will charm,
Playing the lute and dancing and somewhat
Sad under their fantastic disguises.

While singing in the minor mode
Triumphant love and fortunate life,
They do not seem to believe in their happiness
And their song mingles with the moonlight.

With the calm moonlight, sad and beautiful,
That makes the birds dream in the trees
And the fountains weep with ecstasy,
The great slender fountains among the marble statues.

Verlaine

The white moon
Shines in the woods;
From every branch
A voice calls out
Beneath the arbor...

Oh my darling.

The pool reflects,
A deep mirror,
The silhouette
Of the black willow
Where the wind weeps

Let's dream, it's the hour.

A vast and tender
Calm
Seems to descend

From the firmament
Which the star makes iridescent...

It's the exquisite hour.

Verlaine

Evening Harmony

The time has come when swaying on its stem
Each flower offers its fragrant incense,
Sounds and scents revolve in the evening air,
Melancholy waltz and languid giddiness!

Each flower offers its fragrant incense,
The violin quivers like a heart in anguish,
Melancholy waltz and languid giddiness!
The sky is sad and lovely like a great altar.

The violin quivers like a heart in anguish,
A tender heart, that shrinks from void and
darkness!
The sky is sad and lovely like a great altar,
The sun has drowned in its clotting blood.

A tender heart, that shrinks from void and
darkness
Hoards every trace of past radiance.
The sun has drowned in its clotting blood.
Your memory, like a monstrosity, glows in me!

Baudelaire

Water Music of the Impressionists—

In the last years of his life, Franz Liszt (1811-1886) astounded his contemporaries with his remarkable, innovative writing. As he once expressed it in a letter to the Princess Wittgenstein, his one remaining ambition was to “hurl a lance as far as possible into the boundless realm of the future.” The legendary master pianist hurled a lance into the impressionism of the early 20th century with his *Les Jeux d’eaux a la Villa d’Este* (from the *Années de Pelerinage*, Third Year: Italy), which was written in 1877 and first published in 1883. This work must have inspired the young Maurice Ravel (1875-1937), who, some twenty-four years later, broke new impressionistic ground in a piece with a similar title, *Jeux d’eau*. It is interesting to note that Claude Debussy (1862-1918) actually met Liszt and heard him play in 1885, on the aging virtuoso’s last visit to Rome. The young Debussy, living in Rome as a result of winning the *Prix de Rome* was deeply affected by the experience, and referred throughout his life to Liszt’s way of handling the instrument.

Liszt delighted in his visits to the Villa d’Este at Tivoli — a setting still renowned for its magnificent gardens and splashing fountains — and was inspired to describe musically the dazzling play of water. Cascading, spraying arpeggios and glistening tremolandos dominate the first half of *Les Jeux d’eaux a la*

Villa d’Este, but in the quieter middle section, the water takes on a mystical meaning, and Liszt has here inserted a quotation from St. John 4:14:

“the water that I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.” Though the music churns up again to a great climax, the piece ends in a spiritual mood, with the chords of a plagal cadence.

The American composer Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920) was strongly influenced by both Debussy and Ravel, and must have known Ravel’s history-making *Jeux d’eau* well by the time he wrote his own version of the fountain in 1916. Yet *The Fountain of the Acqua Paola* departs from the virtuosic piano writing of both Ravel and his predecessor, Liszt. Of the three “fountain pieces” the *Acqua Paola* distinguishes itself by a gentle sentimentality, a quality to which Dane Rudyar referred when he wrote that “Griffes’ music has a peculiar nostalgia and inner sadness akin to the German *Selmsucht*.” Published as one of the set called “Roman Sketches” (which also includes the famous *The White Peacock*), *The Fountain of the Acqua Paola* was built on a poem by William Sharp quoted above.

Griffes admired and practiced brevity in musical composition. The “shimmering lights,” the nostalgic melodies, the dramatic arpeggios which surge from the depths of the

piano's bass register and spray into the treble, have come and gone in under four minutes.

With the *Jeux d'eau*, Maurice Ravel (1875-1937) ushered in a new era of piano writing. As the composer himself wrote, in his autobiographical sketches:

"The *Jeux d'eau*, which appeared in 1901, stands as the point of departure for all new pianistic expressions one may find in my works. This work, inspired by the bubbling of water and the musical sounds of fountains, waterfalls, and brooks, is built on two themes in the manner of the first movement of a sonata, without, however, being subjugated to the classic tonal formula."

As a preface to the piece, dedicated to Ravel's teacher, Gabriel Fauré, the composer quoted a line from Henri de Regnier: "Dieu fluvial riant de l'eau qui le chatouille" (a river god laughing at the water which tickles him).

Indeed, the variety of liquid images vividly captured in *Jeux d'eau* all communicate joy and delight. When asked how this remarkable virtuoso piece should be played, Ravel answered "like Liszt, of course." Another interesting suggestion about the interpretation of *Jeux d'eau* comes from the pianist Ricardo Viñes, who gave many of the Ravel and Debussy piano works their first performances: "Ravel recommended the use of the pedal in high passages to produce, instead of clear notes, the vague impression of vibrations in the air."

The magnificent *Ondine*, from the set *Gaspard de la Nuit*, is thought by some to be the masterpiece of all "water pieces." Ravel himself remarked on its "transcendent virtuosity," but that phrase doesn't begin to suggest *Ondine's* sensuous beauty, the "sad and tender" song with its passionate climax, the scintillating liquid figuration which somehow manages to convey richness, depth and transparency all at the same time.

The five Debussy works included in this album exhibit a remarkable range of expression, representing water in a variety of contexts. They, along with most of Debussy's major works for the piano, were all written when the composer was in his forties, after the appearance of the younger Ravel's *Jeux d'eau*. **La Cathédrale Engloutie (The Sunken Cathedral or The Engulfed Cathedral)** is from the *Preludes Book I*, which were published in 1910. Mystical and unusually dramatic among Debussy's works, this well-loved prelude describes the Cathedral of Ys which, according to an old Breton legend, was engulfed in the fourth or fifth century but could be seen, emerging from the sea, just at sunrise. The widely-spaced, empty chords suggest the distant cathedral's vastness — at the beginning, only faintly discernible through the water and the mists of early morning. As the cathedral rises, and the music reaches its climax, the chords become full and sonorous over the

tolling of the great cathedral bell, the low C in the bass. As the cathedral recedes again, the music of the climax is echoed against a marvelously soft and rolling bass figure representing the water which once again submerges the cathedral.

Jardins sous la Pluie (Gardens in the Rain) appeared as part of the set *Estampes* ("Prints," 1903). Debussy has woven themes from two popular French nursery songs "Dodo, l'enfant, do" (Sleep, child, sleep) and "Nous n'irons plus au bois" (We'll not return to the woods) through the work, and one can imagine children watching rain sweep through the garden. Steady patterns of rain-figuration change direction with gusts of wind, and change appearance with the varying shades of dark and light in the sky. There are soft drops of water clinging to leaves and flowers, sudden bursts and showers and a couple of thunderclaps. Toward the end, while raindrops are still falling, the sun suddenly breaks through in major, brilliant as it reflects on glistening surfaces.

Reflets dans l'eau (Reflections in the Water) is from the first set of *Images* (1905). There are many kinds of reflections to be found here: mirror images, augmentations, diminutions, arpeggiated "reflections" which spread out like widening ripples — some of these occurring simultaneously. The myriad tonal reflections of floating melodic and chordal motifs suggest not only visual imagery

but inner, personal reflection as well. The warm emotional tone of the piece is underlined by the intensely lyrical climax.

Poissons d'or (Goldfish) appeared as one of the second set of *Images*, published in 1907. Some say that the inspiration for this piece was an Oriental lacquer; others that it was a piece of embroidery. Whatever it was that set Debussy's creative imagination in motion, the descriptive figuration in this brilliant work conveys vividly the buoyant water, the gentle movement of fins, the darting motion of the fish, the sudden upward rushes and downward plunges, and the brilliant flashes of color as the fish leap through the surface of the water or dive to the depths. But most of all in this delightful piece one feels an infectious sense of joy and freedom in movement.

The Debussy **Ondine**, from the *Preludes Book Two*, published in 1913, differs strikingly from the *Ondine* of Ravel. Shimmering, undulating figuration portrays Debussy's Ondine as cool and elegant, and whimsically abrupt arpeggios conjure up her playfulness. This water sprite is elusive, and the glimpses of her are lovely but fleeting. Unlike her counterpart in the Ravel work, she never gives the illusion of human warmth and passion. She retains her identity with the mysterious deep where, as the motifs sounded in the bass remind us, there lurk dangers for any mortal who takes her song too seriously.

Night Moods — music for twilight, for the settling darkness, for the fullness of evening, for deep into the night, when imagination and sensitivities reach their farthest frontiers, almost forgotten in daylight hours...

The composer most identified with the quintessential night piece is certainly Chopin, whose improvisatory, passionate **Nocturne Op. 55 No. 2 in E Flat** (1843) opens this program. A quotation from Franz Liszt's review of one of Chopin's rare public appearances (*Revue et Gazette Musicale*, 1841) expresses this identification, and is a touching tribute from one great Romantic master of the piano to another: "He has seldom allowed himself to be heard in public; the eminently poetic nature of his talent is not suited to that. Similar to those flowers which open their fragrant calyces only in the evening, he requires an atmosphere of tranquillity and composure in order to yield up the melodic treasures which repose within him... He did not play any concerto, sonata, fantasy, or variations but rather preludes, études, nocturnes, and mazurkas. Addressing himself to society rather than the public, he could, with impunity, reveal his true nature, that of an elegiac poet, profound, pure, and pensive."

Debussy called Fauré "that Master of Enchantments," and referred to "the play of the graceful, fleeting lines described by Fauré's music." Fauré, whose composing was

largely restricted to summer holidays due to the demands of his teaching and church activities, wrote the **Nocturne No. 6 in D Flat** in the late summer of 1894. Robert Orledge calls it "the apotheosis of the starlit night with no virtuosity for its own sake... profound, pure and contemplative... the Nocturne sings forth in long musical paragraphs of timeless serenity." The great French pianist Alfred Cortot felt that "Few works in the piano literature can be found to compare with this... The emotion in this Nocturne goes far beyond personal sentiments to arrive at a universality which is the mark of a masterpiece."

Clair de lune (Moonlight) from Debussy's *Suite Bergamasque*, inspired by Verlaine's poem of the same title and considered to be the first example of impressionistic music, was composed around 1890 and revised before its publication in 1905. Its moonlit scene is quiet but far from motionless, taking its shape from the faint outlines of a slow dance. The double-triple alternations set up gentle motions, along with the murmuring figures in the bass—here a breeze, there a murmur. It has both the sense of spacious quiet and tender longing, and its upper-register sonorities lend sheen to the picture. E. Robert Schmitz describes its atmosphere as "half-shades and half-lights... the peace of the transparent and soft light..."

Granados weaves a passionate Spanish tale in **Quejas ó la Maja y el Ruiseñor (Laments, or the Maiden and the Nightingale)**, the gem of the suite *Goyescas*, which was inspired by paintings of Goya and subtitled *Los Majos Enamorados* (The Enraptured Lovers). Dedicated to the composer's wife Amparo, this most personal and poetic utterance was completed in 1911, when Granados had reached his artistic peak. Tragically, Granados was drowned just five years later while trying to save his wife when their ship was torpedoed in the English Channel. Pedro Morales maintained that "rarely has the Spanish soul manifested itself so clearly in cultured music as in the initial theme of La Maja y el Ruiseñor." The maiden's haunting, richly ornamented lament and the nightingale's enchanting cadenza-like song at the end give, in the words of Ernest Newman, "the voluptuous sense of passing the fingers through masses of richly colored jewels."

"The images in the moonlit waters of the *albercas* adjoining the Alhambra" was Spanish composer Manuel de Falla's description of Debussy's **La soirée dans Grenade (Evening in Granada)** from the set of *Estampes* (1903) and subtitled "Mouvement de Habanera" ("In the rhythm of a Habanera"). Falla paid Debussy the supreme compliment: "The power of evocation con-

centrated in those few pages of the Evening in Granada approaches the miraculous when one realizes that this music was composed by a non-Spaniard, guided by the insight of genius... it is Andalusia itself that we see; truth without authenticity, so to speak, since not a bar of this music is borrowed from Spanish folklore, and yet the entire composition, to its smallest detail, conveys, most admirably, the essence of Spain" (*Revue Musicale*). The sensuous Habanera rhythm blends many moods—the languid opening of a Moorish melody (Debussy suggests "Start slowly in a rhythm nonchalantly graceful"), the casual strumming of a guitar, an extroverted dance, a sinuous duet...

The lovely **Notturmo** from *Fantasy Pieces Op. 6* (1915) creates its own nostalgic magic as it takes us to the New England/international "interior landscape" of the American composer Charles T. Griffes. Griffes, who spent his study years in Germany and was much taken with the French impressionists, developed his own brand of musical impressionism and blends the late Romantic and the Impressionistic elements in his highly individual music. The Notturmo's quietly murmuring night scene is infused with very personal emotions as the melodic and harmonic intensity builds, only to yield again to the refreshing tranquillity of the setting. Griffes generally found poetic titles and

descriptive passages as introductions to his works after he had written them; and for the Notturmo, he chose poetry of Verlaine. See above: ("The white moon...")

"The undeniable beauty of Liszt's work is I believe due to the fact that he loved music to the exclusion of every other sentiment," wrote Debussy of the inventor of modern piano playing—the greatest pianist of his, or perhaps any, time. The wonderfully expressive **Harmonies du soir (Evening Harmonies)** is from the collection of *Transcendental Etudes* (1838-39, revised 1851). Ever the innovator, Liszt was intrigued by then-new pedal effects, by the mingling of "foreign" harmonies in new combinations—characteristics associated with impressionistic music. Liszt's evening scene is almost orchestral in scope, from the low tolling in the bass at the beginning to the massed harmonies, in all registers of the piano, which support the melodic climax. There is a tender serenade with harp accompaniment, and there are moments of hushed grandeur when a cloud of harmonies is suspended in mid-air. After the pouring forth of such pianistic riches, the repose at the end of this musical canvas is almost a meditation.

La terrasse des audiences au clair de lune (The Terrace for Moonlight Audiences) from *Preludes, Book II* epitomizes Debussy's ability to make the piano "the poetic instrument of a wandering imaginative spirit, able

to seize upon and define the soul of far-off countries and their peoples" (Edward Lockspeiser). *La terrasse...* was probably written in 1912, its title deriving from a description of the 1912 Indian Durbar—the ceremonies for the coronation of King George V as Emperor of India. Debussy was evidently struck by the phrase describing "the hall of pleasure, the garden of the sultaneses, the terrace for moonlight audiences..." His uncanny evocation of India, "an altogether imaginary India, though how original and authentic" (Lockspeiser), is spellbinding with its sinuous, gliding, chromatic lines, its placement of harmonies that give the impression almost of motionlessness, of perfumed air, and, as the impression takes shape, of palatial grandeur.

Debussy's early **Réverie and Nocturne In D-flat** are both from around 1890. By the time they were published, Debussy was considerably beyond them in the development of his individual style, and therefore not happy to see them appear. Nevertheless, both of these Fauré-like pieces retain their appeal. **Réverie's** dreamy melody became such a favorite that it was made into a popular song, *My Reverie*, in the 1930s. E. Robert Schmitz comments: "it is truly a dream-song, and ideal in the sense of immaterial; the impression is preciously guarded by the long periods of modal suspense, by the fluidity

and breadth of the melodic line, by the supersensitive ability to avoid any gross evidence of hackneyed patterns in the accompaniment." The Nocturne is improvisatory in style, with sweeping arpeggios, a relaxed, engaging melody and a dreamy middle section, which is marked with the suggestion "in the spirit of a popular tune" and has just a hint of the informality of the café. At the end, we are whisked lightly off into a star-studded night.

"Chopin carried you with him into a dreamland, in which you would have liked to dwell for ever" wrote Charles Hallé, after hearing Chopin play. He could surely have been writing about the **Nocturne Op. 27 No. 2 In D Flat** (1835), which carries the "Night Moods" program to a dreamlike conclusion with its gentle melody, its "harmonic day-dream," its "profusion of delicate fiorature." James Huneker called this piece "a song of the sweet summer of two souls." In his edition of Chopin works, Debussy sums up the enchantment of Chopin's music as certainly "amongst the most beautiful ever written... [which] often takes flight towards the forest of *As You Like It*, where the fairies alone hold sway over our minds..."

Carol Rosenberger

"Ravishing, elegant pianism" wrote *The New York Times* of American pianist **Carol Rosenberger**, who continues to attract an ever-widening international audience as she brings her special blend of refined virtuosity and poetically compelling interpretations to both traditional and contemporary repertoire. "Eloquent and sensitive playing" wrote *The Times of London*, while that city's *Daily Telegraph* commented: "Her playing was alive to every fleeting sense impression, yet intellectually commanding. These were ideal performances." Since her 1970 debut tour, which elicited such raves in New York, Boston, London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin and other capitals, Rosenberger's distinguished recital programs and guest appearances with orchestras have carried her to most major European and American cities. Her many recordings for Delos have garnered a number of awards and commendations, including a Grammy Award Nomination, *Gramophone's* Critic's Choice Award, *Stereo Review's* Best Classical Compact Disc, *Billboard's* All Time Great Recording, and *CD Review's* "10/10." She has given workshops for young musicians at universities across the country, in the wide-ranging area of musical, physical and psychological preparation for performance. She has also produced a number of recordings for Delos, including most of the Music for Young People Series.



Water Music of the Impressionists

Executive Producer: *Amelia S. Haygood*

Assistant Producer: *Mary Mark Zeyen*

Chief Engineer: *Stan Ricker*

Digital Recording and Mastering:

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Night Moods

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Director of Recording: *John Eargle*

Recording Engineer: *Laura J Wirthlin*

Recording Producer: *Bejun Mehta*

Production Associate: *Adam Stern*

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For Billie and Rosey Rosenberger



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