



EWA  
PODLEŚ

contralto

HANDEL  
arias from  
RINALDO &  
ORLANDO

CONSTANTINE  
ORBELIAN  
conductor  
MOSCOW  
CHAMBER  
ORCHESTRA

DE 3253



**EWA PODLEŚ · HANDEL** arias from **RINALDO & ORLANDO**  
**CONSTANTINE ORBELIAN** conductor **MOSCOW CHAMBER ORCHESTRA**

RINALDO

- 1 Venti turbini (4:03)
  - 2 Cara sposa (9:21)
  - 3 Abbruggio, avvampo e fremo (2:37)
  - 4 È un incendio frà due venti (4:06)
  - 5 Ogni indugio d'un amante (4:16)
  - 6 Or la tromba (3:52)
  - 7 Tale stupor m'occupa ...
    - 8 Cor ingrato (4:44)
  - 9 Il Tricerbero umiliato (2:14)
- ORLANDO
- 10 Fammì combattere (3:49)
  - 11 È questa la mercede ...

- 12 Cielo! Se tu il consenti (4:52)
- 13 Imagini funeste ...
  - 14 Non fu già men forte Alcide (6:16)
- 15 Già lo stringo (2:25)

- 16 Ah Stigie larve! ... 17 Già latra Cerbero ... 18 Vaghe pupille (8:08)



DE 3253

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TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 60:45



## GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

### Rinaldo

1. Venti turbini *Act I, scene ix* (4:03) \*
2. Cara sposa *Act I, scene vii* (9:21)
3. Abbruggio, avvampo e fremo *Act II, scene vii* (2:37) \*
4. È un incendio frà due venti *Act III, scene iv* (4:06)
5. Ogni indugio d'un amante *Act I, scene i* (4:16) \*
6. Or la tromba *Act III, scene ix* (3:52) \*
7. Tale stupor m'occupa ...
  8. Cor ingrato *Act I, scene viii* (4:44)
9. Il Tricerbero umiliato *Act II, scene iii* (2:14)

### Orlando

10. Fammi combattere *Act I, scene ix* (3:49)
11. È questa la mercede ...
  12. Cielo! Se tu il consenti *Act II, scene iii* (4:52)
13. Imagini funeste ...
  14. Non fu già men forte Alcide *Act I, scene iii* (6:16)
15. Già lo stringo *Act III, scene iii* (2:25)
16. Ah Stigie larve! ...
  17. Già latra Cerbero ...
    18. Vaghe pupille, *Act II, scene xi* (8:08)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 60:45

**Ewa Podles, contralto**

**Constantine Orbelian, conductor**

**Moscow Chamber Orchestra**

**Continuo harpsichord: Jory Vinikour • Malcolm Hamilton\***



### *John Eargle describes VR<sup>2</sup> and Surround Sound*

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*John Eargle*

**Ewa Podles wishes to thank Jory Vinikour for his inspired help with the da capo ornamentation in many of the arias on this album.**

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Recording Engineers: John Eargle, Jeff Mee  
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Editing: Ramiro Belgardt, Chris Landen  
Sony-Philips DSD Recording: Gus Skinas  
Recorded March 6–9, September 7–12, 2000  
– Skywalker Sound, Marin County, CA  
20-bit Digital Processing: Apogee AD-8000  
Digital Editing: Sonic Solutions  
Monitor Loudspeakers  
Recording: B&W Matrix 801  
Postproduction: JBL 250T  
Microphones: Sanken CU-41; Sennheiser MKH series;  
Console: Neve Vxs, Grace microphone preamplifiers  
Harpsichord: Kevin Fryer, 1998, after Ioannes Ruckers 1624  
Harpsichord Technician: Kevin Fryer  
Cover photo: Constantine Orbelian  
Inlay and disc photos: Harry Pack  
Session photo: Steve Jennings  
Creative Direction: Harry Pack, Tri Arts and Associates  
Graphics: Mark Evans  
Special Thanks: Jerzy Marchwiński, Vladimir Koptzov  
Leslie Ann Jones, Director of Music Recording & Scoring,  
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We dedicate this recording to the memory of the late Reverend Dr. Hosaiah Williams whose humanity, love and dedication to the arts gave all of us strength and inspiration.

C.O.

“In the multiplicity of musicological theories and scientific treatises which confront each other concerning the style and performance of Baroque and Classical music, one can be completely at a loss. But who can be utterly certain about the way in which this music should be played today, or the manner in which it was played or sung at the time of its creation? The interpretations I offer in the program chosen for this recording arise from instinct and from the heart. For of one thing I am absolutely sure: these composers were human beings of flesh and blood, writing for other living beings. And in his innermost substance, man remains the same today as he was in the past: in happiness, joy and the ecstasy of love; in the pain and despair of solitude, separation or loss...”

*Ewa Podles*



## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

**E**wa Podleś is one of the most versatile and exciting singers before the public today. Her repertoire ranges from Handel and Rossini to recent music by Krzysztof Penderecki, from Verdi's dramatic mezzo roles to Wagner's Erda. She stands at the forefront of a new breed of singers who, stylistically at home with music of many eras, give new artistic vitality to the Baroque operatic revival, not long ago the domain of early music "specialists." With a voice that at once has brightness and tonal depth and with her unfailing facility for coloratura, Podleś has established herself as one of our most accomplished Handel interpreters. Her three-octave range allows for exhilarating possibilities of ornamentation, and, not least, the sheer amplitude of the voice assures that the heroic dimension of the brave warriors Handel created for the most celebrated alto castratos of his day is given its full due.

In addition to having such a hero for a title character, the operas *Rinaldo* and *Orlando* have another point in common, for each is based on one of the two leading epic poems of the Italian Renaissance, Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* and Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, sources for countless operas before and after Handel. *Rinaldo* (1711) was Handel's first opera for London and, in fact, the first Italian opera specifically written for the city. In selecting a

libretto based on Tasso's epic, Handel chose wisely, for its magical elements and opportunities for military pageantry helped satisfy an audience predilection for scenic effects not unlike that of French audiences. According to the libretto at the premiere, earlier Italian operas in London were deficient in lacking "Machines and Decorations, which bestow so great a Beauty on their Appearance." No doubt a spectacular performance by the castrato Nicolini in the title role also contributed to the opera's resounding success.

Before the opera begins, Goffredo, a Christian leader of the Crusades, had promised Rinaldo the hand of his daughter Almirena if Jerusalem is captured. In the first of his eight arias, **Ogni indugio d'un amante**, Rinaldo complains of the torment that delay causes him as a lover. Almirena's abduction by the sorceress Armida gives rise to the great lament **Cara sposa**, one of three arias for Rinaldo clustered at the end of the first act. The expressive counterpoint of its string accompaniment and its striking chromaticism, together with the serenity of vocal line, were surely at the root of Charles Burney's assessment of "Cara sposa" as "by many degrees the most pathetic song, and with the richest accompaniment, which had been then heard in England." Rinaldo attempts to explain his grief to his companions

in **Cor ingrato**, which counters the luxuriant textures of “Cara sposa” with a vocal line of disarming directness accompanied by basso continuo only; as with “Cara sposa,” the mood changes radically for the B section, here to give vent to Rinaldo’s anger. Upon learning that a hermit endowed with magical powers offers hope, Rinaldo summons winds and hurricanes in the energetic **Venti turbini**, but the aria’s major key and lively dialogue between solo violin and bassoon underscore his excited optimism.

In the second act, Rinaldo is distracted by mermaids claiming Almirena has sent them. As he prepares to enter their boat, he evokes Hercules’s subjugation of the three-headed dog Cerberus in the aria **Il Tricerbero umiliato**, which finds voice and instruments concentrated in a forceful, unison melodic line. Transported to Armida’s enchanted palace, Rinaldo senses a trick when the sorceress appears in Almirena’s form and launches into **Abbruggio, avvampo e fremo**, a rage aria tinged by martial elements as violins imitate trumpet calls. Eventually, Rinaldo and Almirena are reunited, but Goffredo reminds them that Jerusalem remains to be captured. The gigue-like rhythm of **È un incendio frà due venti** conveys Rinaldo’s elation as he faces battle bolstered by prospects for glory and love. The military aria *par excellence*, however, is **Or la tromba**, which Rinaldo

sings before storming the city. Here the trumpets — four in number — are very real, and Rinaldo vies with them with salvos of ecstatic coloratura.

Handel revived *Rinaldo* for the fifth and final time in 1731 when the title role was taken by the great Senesino, Handel’s leading castrato during the 1720s. In all, Handel created seventeen new roles for Senesino, the last of which was the title role of *Orlando*. *Orlando* was well received and proved to be the first of three late operas that Handel based on Ariosto’s epic (*Ariodante* and *Alcina* are the others). But during the run of performances following the opera’s premiere in January 1733, Senesino resigned from Handel’s company, eventually joining the rival Opera of the Nobility. Dissatisfaction with his music in *Orlando* may have been a factor, for Orlando is allotted only three arias in the standard da capo form. Yet today we regard the departures from conventionality in the hero’s music as a element of distinction, above all in the mad scene that closes act two, madness brought on by his unrequited love for Angelica, Queen of Cathay. As the opera opens, the magician Zoroastro urges Orlando to abandon love and follow the path of glory, conjuring a vision of Cupid’s palace of love. The image first provokes guilt, as Orlando reveals in the accompanied recitative **Immagini funeste**, but he reasons that pursuing love can bring

glory too, citing examples of Hercules and Achilles in the sunny aria **Non fu già men forte Alcide**, with its attractive rhythmic lilt and plush, horn-supported accompaniment. In the same vein, he later assures Angelica that he would fight fierce monsters to demonstrate his love: the incisive melodic gestures and vigorous coloratura of the brilliant **Fammi combattere** reveal Orlando at his most valiant. In the second act, when he finds evidence of Angelica's unfaithfulness, Orlando's rage finds an outlet in the fearsome coloratura of the tempestuous **Cielo! Se tu il consenti**.

After Angelica is spirited away by Zoroastro's magical powers, Orlando loses his reason. In the accompanied recitative **Ah! Stigie larve** that begins his remarkable mad scene, Orlando imagines himself a shade and calls upon the spirits of the underworld, who he believes have abducted Angelica, to deliver her to him. As in *Rinaldo*, a vision of Cerberus supplies material for an aria, the brief **Già Iatra Cerbero**, and again voice and instruments proceed in an assertive unison. In the accompanied recitative that follows, he imagines Angelica's lover in the arms of a weeping Proserpine, and

his rage is briefly quelled. The mood continues with the aria **Vaghe pupille, non piangete, no**, a rondo in which the sprightly rondo theme alternates first with a deeply felt episode based on a ground bass, then one in which vigorous coloratura signals the return of Orlando's rage. Although the opera ends happily with Orlando's reason restored, his third-act aria **Già lo stringo** finds him preparing to fight an imaginary enemy. This aria too takes an unusual form, for the text of the brief, unison A section is not restated in its entirety within that section; the mood changes completely for the poignant B section, in which, to a simple chordal accompaniment, Orlando imagines himself dying of his wounds.

*George Loomis*



(L to R) Dann Thompson, Jerzy Marchwiński, Gus Skinas, Ewa Podleś, Carol Rosenberger, Ramiro Belgardt, Constantine Orbelian, Amelia Haygood, Jeff Mee.

# VOCAL TEXTS

## Rinaldo

### Venti turbini (Act I, scene ix)

Venti, turbini, prestate  
Le vostre ali a questo piè.  
Cieli, numi, il braccio armate  
Contro chi pena mi diè.

### Cara sposa (Act I, scene vii)

Cara sposa, amante cara,  
Dove sei?  
Deh! Ritorna a' pianti miei!  
Del vostr'Erebo sull'ara,  
Colla face del mio sdegno  
Io vi sfido, o spirti rei.

### Abbruggio, avvampo e fremo (Act II, scene vii)

Abbruggio, avvampo e fremo,  
Di sdegno e di furor.  
Spero, ma sempre temo  
d'un infernal error.

### È un incendio frà due venti (Act III, scene iv)

È un incendio frà due venti,  
  
Frà due fiamme questo cor.  
Hà di gloria gli alimenti,  
Lo nodrisce un fermo amor.

### Ogni indugio d'un amante (Act I, scene i)

Ogni indugio d'un amante  
È una pena acerba e ria.  
Il timore sempre lo sforza,  
La speranza seco scherza,  
Or lo prova l'alma mia.

### Or la tromba (Act III, scene ix)

Or la tromba in suon festante  
Mi richiama a trionfar.  
Qual guerriero e qual amante,  
Gloria e amor mi vuol bear.

Winds, hurricanes, lend  
your wings to my feet!  
Heavens, gods, fortify my arms  
against the one who brings me  
grief.

Beloved betrothed, dear beloved,  
where are you?  
Oh! Return to my laments!  
On the altar of your Erebus,  
with the torch of my contempt  
I defy you, oh evil spirits.

I burn, blaze and shudder,  
with scorn and furor.  
I hope, but I ever fear  
a hellish mistake.

My heart is a fire between two  
winds,  
between two flames.  
It has the foods for glory,  
a steadfast love nourishes it.

Every delay of a lover  
is a bitter and cruel punishment.  
Fear always compels it,  
hope jokes with it,  
now my soul feels it.

Now the trumpet in jubilant sound  
summons me to triumph.  
As warrior and as lover,  
glory and love want to make me  
happy.

### Tale stupor m'occupa . . . Cor ingrato (Act I, scene viii)

Tale stupor m'occupa i sensi, e tale  
È il dolor che m'accuora,  
Che posso a pena articular gli accenti!  
Qui con note innocenti  
Stavo spiegando del mio cor gl'affetti  
Alla bella Almirena,  
Quando (o Cieli, che pena!)  
Amazzone corsara  
Mi rapì, guisto Ciel, gioja si rara!

Cor ingrato, ti rammembri,  
E non scoppii di dolor?  
Ma se stupido rassembri,  
Ti risvegli il mio furor!

### Il Tricerbero umiliato (Act II, scene iii)

Il Tricerbero humiliato  
Al mio brando renderò.  
E d'Alcide l'alto fato  
Colà giù rinoverò.

### Fammi combattere (Act I, scene ix)

Fammi combattere  
Mostri e tifei  
Novi trofei  
Se vuoi dal mio valor.  
Muraglie abbattere  
Disfare incanti,  
Se vuoi ch'io vanti  
Darti prove d'amor.

### È questa la mercede . . . Cielo! Se tu il consenti (Act II, scene iii)

È questa la mercede  
Angelica spietata!  
Del mio amor, di mia fede?  
Ah! non vi gioverà da me fuggire;  
Che sino d'Acheronte sulla strada  
Vi giungerà il mio sdegno, e la mia spada!

Cielo! Se tu il consenti  
Deh! fa' che nel mio seno  
Possa anche il ferro entrar;

Such stupefaction possesses my senses,  
and such is the grief that afflicts me,  
that I can hardly form my words!  
Here with innocent words  
I was explaining my heart's feelings  
to the lovely Almirena,  
when (oh, Heavens, what torment!)  
a piratical Amazon stole from me,  
righteous heaven!, a joy so rare!

Ungrateful heart, do you remember,  
and not burst with sorrow?  
But if you seem stunned,  
you reawaken my furor!

I will humble the three-headed  
Cerberus with my sword.  
And I will repeat down in Hades  
the noble destiny of Hercules.

## Orlando

Make me fight  
monsters and giants,  
if you want  
new tokens of my valor.  
I will bring down ramparts  
and undo spells,  
if you want me  
to give you proof of love.

Is this your thanks,  
merciless Angelica,  
for my love, for my trust?  
Ah! It will not help you to flee from me,  
For my scorn and my sword will  
reach you as far as the road to Acheron!

Heavens! If you permit it,  
Oh! let a sword be  
plunged into my breast.

Perchè a un sì rio dolore  
Dal misero mio core  
Sappia col ferro almeno  
L'uscita ritrovar.

**Imagini funeste ... Non fu già men forte Alcide** (Act I, scene iii)

Imagini funeste  
Che turbate quest'alma!  
E non avrò sopra di voi la palma?  
Sì, già vi fuggo, e corro

A inalzar col valor novi trofei:  
Ti rendo o bella gloria i affetti miei.  
my  
Ma che parlò! e non moro!

E lascierò quel idolo, che adoro!

No: parto, e fia mia gloria,  
Più servir ad amor, ch'aver vittoria.

Non fu già men forte Alcide  
Benchè in sen d'Onfale bella

Spesso l'armi egli posò!  
Nè men fiero il gran Pelide  
Sotto spoglie di donzella  
D'Asia i regni minacciò!

**Già lo stringo** (Act III, scene iii)

Già lo stringo, già l'abbraccio  
Con la forza del mio braccio  
Nuovo Anteo l'alzo da terra:

E se vinto non si rende,  
Perchè Marte lo difende,  
Marte ancor io sfido a guerra.  
Son morto, a caro bene,  
Trafitto da rie pene  
Langue cado a terra.

For with a sword,  
a grief so cruel  
could at least find release  
from my wretched heart.

Fatal images  
that disturb my soul!  
won't I have victory over you?  
Yes, I already flee from you and hasten  
to win with valor new laurels.  
To you, O gracious glory, I surrender  
my emotions.  
But what have I said? And I do not die!  
Will I will leave the idol whom I adore?

No: I depart, and may my glory be  
rather to serve love than to win victories.

Hercules was no less strong,  
even though he often set down his arms  
when with the lovely Omphale!  
Nor was the great Achilles less fierce  
when in a girl's dress  
he threatened the kingdoms of Asia!

Now I press him, now I clasp him,  
With all the strength of my arm  
I lift him from the earth like a new Antaeus.  
And if he is not defeated  
Because Mars defends him,  
I challenge Mars to fight.  
I am dying, my dear love,  
Pierced by cruel pains  
I fall languishing to the ground.

**Ah Stigie larve! ... Già latra Cerbero ... Vaghe pupille** (Act II, scene xi)

Ah Stigie larve! Ah scelerati spettri,  
Che la perfida donna ora ascondete,  
Perchè al mio amor offeso  
Al mio giusto furor non la rendete?  
Ah misero e schernito!  
L'ingrata già m'ha ucciso;  
Sono lo spirito mio da me diviso;  
Sono un'ombra, e qual ombra  
adesso io voglio  
Varcare là giù ne' regni del cordoglio.  
Ecco la Stigian barca.  
Di Caronte a dispetto  
Già solco l'onde nere: ecco di Pluto

Le affumicate soglie, e l'arso tetto.

Già latra Cerbero  
E già dell'Erebo  
E Ogni terribile  
Squallida furia  
Sen viene a me.

Ma la Furia, che sol mi diè martoro  
Dov'è? Questa è Medoro.  
A Proserpina in braccio  
Vedo che fugge. Or a strapparla io corro.

Ah! Proserpina piange!  
Vien meno il mio furore,  
Se si piange all'inferno anco d'amore.

Vaghe pupille, non piangete, no,  
Che del pianto ancor nel regno  
Può in ognun destar pietà;  
Vaghe pupille, non piangete, no,  
Ma sì, pupille, sì piangete, sì,  
Che sordo al vostro incanto  
Ho un core d'adamanto,  
Nè calma il mio furor.  
Ma sì, pupille, sì piangete, sì.

Ah, Stigian ghosts! Ah, wicked spectres  
that now hide the faithless woman,  
why don't you surrender her  
to my offended love, to my just furor?  
Ah, wretched and mocked!  
The ungrateful one has already killed me;  
I am the spirit cut off from myself;  
I am a shade, and now I want that shade

to pass down into the realms of sorrow.  
Here is the Stigian boat.  
In spite of Charon,  
I already plow the black waves: here are  
Pluto's  
blackened doorsteps and burnt dwelling.

Already Cerberus howls,  
and every  
horrible, squalid  
fury of Erebus  
comes up to me.

But where is the fury who alone causes  
me torment? This is Medoro.  
I see him fleeing  
to Proserpine's arms. Now I run to  
wrench her away.  
Ah! Proserpina weeps!  
My furor lessens  
if even in Hell one weeps for love.

Lovely eyes, do not weep, no,  
For even in the realm of tears,  
it can awaken pity in everyone;  
Lovely eyes, do not weep, no,  
But yes, eyes, yes, do weep, yes,  
For deaf to your enchantment,  
I have a heart of adamant,  
neither is my furor calmed.  
But yes, eyes, yes, do weep, yes.

English translation: *George Loomis*

## ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

Beyond a distinctive voice of staggering range, agility and amplitude, the Polish contralto **Ewa Podleś** sings with profound emotional commitment and a *lieder* singer's sensitivity to text. As comfortable with Mahler and Prokofiev as the breathtakingly florid music of Gluck, Handel, Vivaldi and Rossini, she is a true original, a "Golden Age" singer for our time. Her 2000-2001 season includes debuts with the Detroit Symphony (opening the season, Music Director Neeme Järvi conducting performances of Mahler's *Second Symphony*), Toronto Symphony (Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*), Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (a Gluck/Handel program conducted by Nicholas McGegan) and concert with Music of the Baroque in Chicago's Orchestra Hall. She also returns to Carnegie Hall for Handel Arias with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under Constantine Orbelian (including some of the arias heard in this recording); makes her Dallas Opera debut, as Erda in Wagner's *Siegfried*; sings her first-ever Mistress Quickly in Verdi's *Falstaff* at the Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin; and Cornelia in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* at the Gran Teatre del Liceu. In addition she makes a North American recital tour with the pianist Ania Marchwinska. In the 2001-2002 season she sings the title role of *Giulio Cesare* for her Canadian Opera Company debut.

1999-2000 highlights included performances of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Philadelphia Orchestra (including one in New York's Carnegie Hall) and Ottawa's National Arts Centre Orchestra; *Kindertotenlieder* with Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra; and *Third Symphony* with Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony. In addition she performed *Alexander Nevsky* with the New World Symphony Orchestra in Miami Beach, Florida; offered her celebrated Rossini *Arias for Contralto* program with Constantine Orbelian and the Moscow Chamber Orchestra in the San Francisco Opera House; and gave recitals at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw as well as in Montreal, Philadelphia and New York. Opera engagements that season included the title role of Handel's *Giulio Cesare* in Oviedo, Spain; her first-ever Baba the Turk in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at Catania's Teatro Bellini and the title role of Rossini's *Tancredi* in Warsaw. The preceding season she made a hugely successful European tour (Paris, Birmingham, Vienna, Amsterdam) in the title role of Handel's *Rinaldo* with Christopher Hogwood and the Academy of Ancient Music; a unanimously acclaimed North American recital tour (including Washing-

ton, D.C., Cleveland, Toronto, and opening the "Art of the Song" series at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall); five *Alexander Nevskys* with the San Francisco Symphony under Libor Pešek; a virtuosic baroque program with Québec's Les Violons du Roy under its Music Director Bernard Labadie; the Rossini *Arias for Contralto* program with the Edmonton Symphony and the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under Constantine Orbelian, the latter her Carnegie Hall debut; Berlioz' *La mort de Cléopâtre* and arias from the Berlioz's version of Gluck's *Orphée* with Charles Dutoit and the Montreal Symphony; and Bradamante in Handel's *Alcina* at Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu.

Mme. Podleś has sung her "signature" role of Rossini's *Tancredi* at La Scala and the Staatsoper Berlin (and on the Grammy®-nominated Naxos recording); Arsace (*Semiramide*) at Venice's Teatro La Fenice; Handel's *Rinaldo* at New York's Metropolitan Opera and Paris' Théâtre Châtelet; Dalila in Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila* at Paris' Opéra Bastille; and Ulrica in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* at Madrid's Teatro Real. She has also sung principal roles at the Frankfurt Alte Oper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, Naples' Teatro San Carlo, Warsaw's National Theatre, the Rome, Budapest and Vancouver Operas. In addition she has been welcomed at the Aix-en-Provence, Flanders and Montpellier Festivals; as well as Canada's Festival International de Lanaudière. She has appeared with the Pittsburgh and NHK Tokyo Symphonies, Hong Kong and Dresden Philharmonics, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino Orchestra, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande and National Orchestra of Spain, under such conductors as Lorin Maazel, David Atherton, Gianluigi Gelmetti, Peter Maag, Myung-Whun Chung and Armin Jordan. Her many collaborations with Marc Minkowski and Les Musiciens du Louvre includes two Deutsche Grammophon recordings: Handel's *Ariodante* (winner of the coveted *Diapason d'Or*) and Gluck's *Armide*. Other recent issues include *A Treasury of Polish Songs* with pianist Ewa Poblocka, Respighi's *Il Tramonto*, two recordings of Gluck's *Orfeo*, Mahler #2 and #3, *Alexander Nevsky*, and a unanimously acclaimed all-Rossini disc, awarded the prestigious *Preis der Deutschen Schallplatten Kritik*. An especially renowned interpreter of Russian song, her widely acclaimed *Mélodies Russes* CD with pianist Graham Johnson earned the *Grand Prix de L'Académie Française du Disque*. An altogether riveting recitalist, Mme. Podleś

has offered programs at London's Wigmore Hall, Paris' Salle Gaveau, Théâtre de l'Athénée and Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre and San Francisco's Herbst Theater. Recently Mme. Podleš began collaborating with the renowned pianist Garrick Ohlsson, including a forthcoming Arabesque recording of Chopin songs. Among the international publications in which she has been profiled are *The New York Times*, *Orpheus*, *Opera News* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

The brilliant pianist and conductor **Constantine Orbelian** is the first American ever to become music director of an ensemble in Russia. His appointment in 1991 as Music Director of the celebrated **Moscow Chamber Orchestra** was a breakthrough event, and came in the midst of Orbelian's successful career as a concert pianist. In September, 2000, Orbelian was named Permanent Guest Conductor of the Moscow Philharmonic, putting him in a unique leadership position with not only Moscow's outstanding chamber orchestra but also its most illustrious symphony orchestra.

Maestro Orbelian's ambitious new series of recordings on Delos with the MCO is indicative of the scope of his current musical activities with the orchestra, and includes the Shostakovich Chamber Symphony and Schnittke Piano Concerto, in which Orbelian is also the piano soloist (DE 3259, "Dedicated to Victims of War and Terror"); Tchaikovsky Serenade and The Seasons (DE 3255); Shostakovich Waltzes (DE 3257); *Russian Soul* (DE 3244); Piazzolla Tangos, with Italian saxophonist Federico Mondelci (DE 3252); and *Mozart Adagios* (DE 3243).

Rachmaninoff's one-act opera, *Aleko*, with baritone Vassily Gerello in the title role and soprano Olga Guryakova as Zemfira, was released in August, 2000 (DE 3269). The opera was performed live with the same cast at the Palaces of St. Petersburg Festival in June, 2000.

Born in San Francisco to Russian and Armenian emigré parents, **Constantine Orbelian** made his debut as a pianist with the San Francisco Symphony at the age of 11. In his early teens he went to the Soviet Union on a music scholarship; at the age of 18, after graduating from Juilliard in New York, Orbelian embarked on a solo career that typically involved 85-90 concerts per year. His solo appearances with orchestra have included the Symphony Orchestras of Boston, Detroit, San Francisco, and St. Petersburg, the Moscow Philharmonic, Scottish National and Russian State Symphony Orchestras, the Moscow Virtuosi, and the Budapest Chamber Orchestra among many others. His piano recordings include concertos of

Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven and Khachaturian, the latter winning "Best Concerto Recording of the Year" award in the United Kingdom.

Maestro Orbelian's recent guest conducting appearances include the world premiere performance in Jerusalem of Josef Bardanashvili's work, "A Time for Love," performed by four Armenian monks singing in Armenian, Georgian and Hebrew. Orbelian performs regularly as piano soloist/conductor, both as guest and with his own orchestra, in concerto repertoire ranging from Mozart to Schnittke.

He is Founder and Music Director of the annual Palaces of St. Petersburg International Music Festival, a three-week event featuring concerts in many of St. Petersburg's magnificent, lavishly restored palaces. He also founded Moscow's unique concert series, "Musical Treasures at the Museums of the Kremlin." Orbelian is in charge of the Music Program for the Stanford University Overseas Campus in Moscow.

One of the world's great chamber orchestras, the **Moscow Chamber Orchestra** was created in 1956 by renowned conductor and violist Rudolph Barshai, and has been an inspiration to important Russian composers such as Dmitri Shostakovich, who entrusted the first performance of his 14th Symphony to the orchestra.

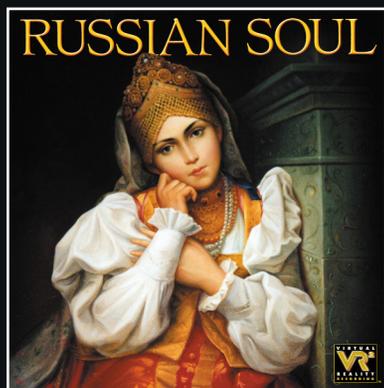
The appointment of Constantine Orbelian as Music Director of the MCO in 1991 brought the orchestra into a new era of international activity and acclaim. Under Orbelian's direction, the MCO performed at the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the United Nations in San Francisco and has made extensive international tours in France, Germany, Italy, Holland, Finland, Sweden, Korea, Japan, South Africa, South America, Canada and the United States. Maestro Orbelian and the MCO now perform more than 120 concerts per year, including three Carnegie Hall appearances in 1998 and 1999, and a sold-out subscription series in the Great Hall of Moscow's famed Tchaikovsky Conservatory. It is also under Orbelian's leadership that the orchestra was accorded the honor of "Academic" in its official Russian title (Russian State Academic Chamber Orchestra).

It has often been noted that the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under Orbelian's direction has a special "luminous" sound and that they play "with one voice." As London's *The Daily Telegraph* put it, "The musicians channel all of their emotion into the music and give performances of such passion and musicality... producing music making of both subtlety and verve."

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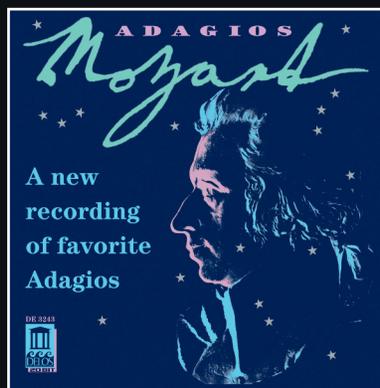
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