

poulenc

milhaud

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

Annette Haas-Hamburger, *piano*

Orchestre de l'Association
des Concerts Pasdeloup

Pierre Dervaux, *conductor*

Suite for Violin,
Clarinet, and Piano

Three Pieces for Piano

1. Improvisation
2. Humoresque
3. Valse

Annette Haas-Hamburger, *piano*

Jaques Parrenin, *violin*
Ulysse Delecluze, *clarinet*
Annette Haas-Hamburger, *piano*

SPL 563



LONG PLAYING RECORDS

POULENC

CONCERTO for PIANO and ORCHESTRA

THREE PIECES for PIANO

1. Improvisation, 2. Humoresque, 3. Valse

ANNETTE HAAS-HAMBURGER, *piano*

ORCHESTRE DE L'ASSOCIATION DES CONCERTS PASDELOUP

PIERRE DERVAUX, *conductor*

MILHAUD

SUITE for VIOLIN, CLARINET and PIANO

JAQUES PARRENIN, *violin*, ULYSSE DELECLUZE, *clarinet*

ANNETTE HAAS-HAMBURGER, *piano*

The art of Poulenc and Milhaud is an outgrowth of what in the last analysis was a minor artistic revolution following the first World War. The members of the once closely fused group that formed *Les Six* were Milhaud, Auric, Honegger, Poulenc, Durey, and Germaine Tailleferre. Their spiritual and cultural guides were Satie and Cocteau; the creations they produced with amazing profuseness were hydra-headed and defy an attempt to catalogue them comfortably. They range from solemn masses to satire in the jazz idiom, from imitation of the baroque to frail and exquisite vocal and chamber pieces. Effects are often contrived by daring juxtaposition of the antique and the currently popular. If one makes a careful selection, however, omitting the sheerly rhetorical, the purely virtuosic, the deliberately daring, or the attempts to confound the senses with multiple novel appeals, we are left with a fairly large number of works of enduring interest, all exhibiting talent of a high order, skillful manipulation of "sound" forces, twentieth century sophistication, and entertainment value on no mean level. Three of the six (Milhaud, Poulenc, Honegger) still arouse keen public interest and are likely to survive through isolated compositions of their varied output.

The present disc features material of Poulenc and Milhaud that is particularly attractive. In his *Three Pieces for Piano*, Poulenc, an especially gifted miniaturist, reveals his facile and familiar charm—"the sophistication of the graceful" as Cocteau phrased it—a blend of folk melody and rhythms cast in the salon style and maintaining a carefully calculated balance between gentle lyricism and *jeu d'esprit*. *Improvisation, Humoresque, and Valse* are characterized by lightness, skipping grace, and artfully fluid movement. Melodies are made rhythmically piquant but stop this side of angularity. Poulenc is a very well behaved modern who imposes very definite bounds on his modernity. His material must conform to his own standards of charm, style, and sleek finish. His is the music of the nineteenth century drawing room—mood vignettes which, while giving off the same air of elegant nostalgia and sentiment as their predecessors, know enough to bar tedium by variety, to hark back to the old, daringly to allow an intrusion of the popular, to distract with a discord, to anticipate the experienced listener's reaction by mocking the very mood he has set.

In Poulenc's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*, the same characteristics are in evidence but transferred to a larger work. The form is conventional. The first movement (*allegretto*) has a promising attention-getting theme with a

Hebraic flavor. This is contrasted with a sprightly counter-melody in march rhythm. The element of cynical humor is the result of Satie's influence; the highly polished orchestration Poulenc comes by legitimately via Ravel. There is a decided French tang to this stylish and decorative music with its obviously superficial emotional content. Melodies are attractive and of a slightly sentimental cast; rhythms are varied, bright, and percussive so that the whole is kept supple and gracefully flowing. Discordant passages are skillfully interwoven with sweet strings which remove the former's bite. The second short movement (*Andante con moto*) begins lyrically, gains in drama as orchestral forces are augmented and the piano is given a significant role, and then relapses into a reverie-like mood. The third movement, a rondo, is rapid with staccato outbursts. You will recognize *Swanee River* and *La Sorella* recurring as integral parts of the structure.

Darius Milhaud has written operas, ballets, orchestral works, concertos, chamber music, choral works. The quality of these is uneven, some not rising above dated and banal music hall material; some being ultra modern, harsh, brittle; some poetically lyrical. It is in the last category that his *Suite for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano* belongs. This work of the thirties is the product of an infinitely skillful craftsman, giving graceful and expressive shape to his ideas. Its diverse elements are skillfully blended without once falling into the snares which frequently beset Milhaud—pedantic polyphony, deliberate stridency and emptiness, too quaint folkishness.

The first movement (*Overture*) is lively and dance-like with complex cross rhythms. There is an overall woodwind coloration with the percussive piano accenting the beat like a drum. Folk rhythms transmuted by a sharp modern musical idiom become racy and tangy. The second movement (*Divertissement*) is a conversation between clarinet and violin, the dark clarinet tones contrasting with the high sweet violin. The second section of this allows the piano to take a leading role. The third movement (*Jeu*) is short—filled with the spirit of play and showing Milhaud at his most charming. The last movement (*Introduction and Finale*) begins slowly and sadly with percussive piano, then goes into the *Finale* which like the opening is obviously using folk melodies but making new patterns of them and changing their character by varying the rhythms and by dressing them in interesting new combinations of tone color.

BERNARD LEBOW

Meridian

Micro
Groove

33 1/3 RPM

Francis
POULENC

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra

SPL 563-A

Side 1

Annette HAAS-HAMBURGER, Piano
Orchestre de l'Association
des Concerts PASDELOUP
Pierre DERVAUX, conductor

UNBREAKABLE

LONG PLAYING RECORDS

Period

Darius
MILHAUD

Band 1

Suite for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano
Jacques PARRENIN, violin
Ulysse DELECLUZE, clarinet
Annette HAAS-HAMBURGER, Piano

SPL 563-B

Side 2

Francis
POULENC

Band 2

Three Pieces for Piano
1. Improvisation 2. Humoresque
3. Valse
Annette HAAS-HAMBURGER, Piano

Micro
Groove

33 1/3 RPM

UNBREAKABLE

LONG PLAYING RECORDS