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LOUISE
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MUSIC FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO

DANIELE ORLANDO *VIOLIN* • LINDA DI CARLO *PIANO*

Louise Farrenc 1804-1875

Music for Violin & Piano

Variations concertantes sur une mélodie suisse Op.20 (1835)	Violin Sonata No.1 Op.37 (1848)	
1. Introduzione: Andante maestoso	9. I Largo-Allegro	9'21
2. Tema: Andante	10. II Poco adagio	5'58
3. Variation I: Più mosso	11. III Finale: Allegro vivace	5'34
4. Variation II	Violin Sonata No.2 Op.39 (1850)	
5. Variation II bis: Espressivo	12. I Allegro grazioso	10'44
6. Variation III: Brillante	13. II Scherzo: Allegro	5'18
7. Variation IV: Andante sostenuto	14. III Adagio	6'46
8. Finale: Vivace	15. IV Finale: Allegro	6'17

Daniele Orlando *violin*
Linda Di Carlo *piano*

A pianist's passion for Farrenc

According to George Upton, a late 19th-century music critic in Chicago, women could serve as muses to stimulate the inspiration of male composers and they could also interpret, especially as singers; but they could not write music – that is, great music. Upton's proof was that women had not written great music in the past. 'Woman is emotional by nature,' he claimed. '[She] lives in emotion and acts from emotion and this is the way she absorbs music; but to treat emotions as if they were mathematics, to bind and measure and limit them within rigid laws of harmony and counterpoint is a cold-blooded operation, possible only to the sterner and more obdurate nature of man. Woman reaches results by intuition, but music is not only art, but an exact science.'

History has proved Upton wrong. The music of Louise Dumont Farrenc is living proof that a talented woman, given the opportunities for musical education and formation afforded to men, can achieve great results. Farrenc had the benefit of an education that encouraged her to discover and nurture her talents. As a teenager she became a professional-standard pianist, later music teacher to the household of the Duke d'Orléans and from 1842 professor of piano at the Paris Conservatoire (after a while, earning the same salary as her male colleagues).

Her legacy to us now resides principally in her own music for orchestra and chamber ensembles. I would defy anyone to cast aspersions on the chamber music in particular on the grounds of her gender. An audience member once took me by surprise when they asked if I had chosen to play one of Farrenc's pieces because the author was a woman. The idea had never once occurred to me. I have enjoyed exploring her music ever since I came across scores of her two piano quintets in a Parisian music shop: a happy discovery that has led me since to get to know her beautiful trios, the Sextet for winds, the Cello Sonata and the violin sonatas and variations on this album. It is a source of great pleasure to me that I can now record this music for Brilliant Classics in the company of good friends and fine musicians.

© Linda Di Carlo

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Piano Technician: Diego Sciorpa

Artist photos: Adriano Scognamillo; by Paolo Iammarrone (Daniele Orlando alone)

Cover: Studying the Violin (1892-93) by Berthe Morisot (1841-1895)

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Serenity and fantasy

There has often been a certain ill-concealed embarrassment or clumsiness evident in studies of women artists and female creativity during the 19th century, despite all best intentions. It may be indicative of bias no less than convention that the music and career of Jeanne-Louise Dumont has become known via the surname of her husband, the flautist Aristide Farrenc.

The Dumonts were a prominent family in the Parisian artistic milieu at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, most notably in the field of sculpture. The works of Augustin Dumont (1801-1884) stand at iconic sites in Paris such as the winged Mercury in the Place de la Concorde, and Napoleon in the guise of Caesar Emperor in the Place de la Vendôme.

The music of Augustin's younger sister Louise occupied no less central a place in Parisian culture during the middle of the 19th century, before it fell victim to a chauvinistic hero narrative which focused exclusively on a few men to the exclusion of the culture from which they emerged. Discussing Farrenc is not easy without referring to early-Romantic luminaries such as Hummel, Mendelssohn or Schumann, but no less than them she found and refined a voice of her own in the context of an Austro-German heritage of instrumental music, transmitted in her case through study with Antonin Reicha, Czech-born but Bonn-trained, who also counted Berlioz, Liszt, Franck, Onslow and Vieuxtemps among his pupils.

Reicha's influence over Farrenc's music is most apparent in its long-breathed melodies and lively eloquence, relying less on German principles of formal development than on the articulate extension of melodic ideas. She prefers a mode of relaxed digression over tense discourse in her chamber music, where major keys prevail. Minor tonalities lend a passing access of sentiment or accent of pathos to the serene flow of ideas in her chamber music, whereas they take on more significant and disruptive roles in her three symphonies.

To the Austro-German grammar instilled by Reicha, Farrenc lends a French accent in conversational argument; whether scored for two or more instruments, the back and forth of her language is conceived in terms of a duet and the idiom fundamentally vocal in inspiration, a cousin to Paganini's concept of *suonar parlante* for instrumental voices. There was more than artistic integrity at stake for Farrenc as the proprietor of the Éditions Farrenc publishing house, which issued keyboard masterpieces from Rameau to Chopin and formed the tastes and appetites of Parisian pianists with a long-running series entitled 'Le Trésor des pianistes'.

In the *Variations Concertantes* Op.20, her *cantabile* style is adapted for the audience of a well-to-do Parisian audience exemplified by the salons of Pauline Viardot and the Princesse de Polignac, *née* Winnaretta Singer. She wrote them in 1835, and Schumann's review the following year of her *Air russe varié* also captures the spirit of the earlier set: 'So sure in outline, so logical in development ... that one must fall under their [the variations'] charm, especially since a subtle aroma of romanticism hovers over them.'

The violinistic fireworks and operatically influenced writing that belong to the variation genre are accordingly subdued in Farrenc's violin sonatas by the demands of the genre for a more formal elegance. Even so, there is a ready wit at work in the playful rhythmic structure of the Scherzos and a self-contained, aria-like quality to the slow movements. No less than Théophile Gautier wrote admiringly of the First Sonata from 1848: 'an excellent addition to her catalogue of works, and written, like most of them, in an austere classical style reminiscent of the great masters.'

She dedicated the Second Sonata to Louis Sina, a member of the Schuppanzigh Quartet, but the premiere was given on 19 March 1850 at the Salle Érard by the young Joseph Joachim. It opens with a distinct echo of Beethoven's 'Spring' Sonata, and the *opera buffa* spirit of Mozart hovers over the finale, but the elfen dance of the Scherzo is entirely Farrenc's own, characteristic inspiration.

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Daniele Orlando studied with Antonio Anselmi, Felice Cusano, Dénes Szigmondy, Ana Chumachenco and Boris Kuschnir. Aged 17 he played Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in concert under the direction of Donato Renzetti, who pays this tribute: 'Gifted with extraordinary musicality and technical virtuosity, his execution of the Concerto was exemplary both from a technical point of view and in the temperament that he displayed... I believe that Daniele Orlando is one of the most important discoveries of the new generation of soloists.'

Daniele Orlando frequently played under the direction of Claudio Abbado, as a member of Orchestra Mozart; he also collaborated with the European Union Youth and Gustav Mahler Jugend Orchester. He has gone on to perform the masterpieces of the repertoire by Beethoven, Sibelius, Mendelssohn and Mozart, as well as lesser-known concertos by Bacalov, Ghedini, Conti and Thoresen. His performance of Donizetti's Double Concerto with the cellist Giovanni Sollima was broadcast on Italian television live from the Quirinale in Rome. He has played with orchestras and in chamber music ensembles across Europe and the US, in the company of distinguished musicians such as Shlomo Mintz, Krzysztof Penderecki, Bruno Canino, Ramin Bahrami, Alessandro Carbonare, Michele Campanella and Vera Beths. His recordings include albums for Fuga Libera, Naxos, Tactus, Brilliant Classics and Muso.

Since 2014 Daniele Orlando has been the concertmaster of I Solisti Aquilani, the distinguished Italian chamber orchestra which takes its name from the town of L'Aquila. Their 2018 album of Vivaldi's Four Seasons on the Muso label was praised by the critic Sandro Cappelletto as a landmark recording. He is presently a professor of violin at the Nino Rota Conservatoire in the Apulian town of Monopoli. He plays an 1805 violin by the Cremonese maker Giovan Battista Ceruti.

Linda Di Carlo, pianist and harpsichordist, is a founder member of the Quintetto Bottesini. Both with the Quintet and as a soloist she has performed throughout Europe and the Americas. Many of the Quintet's concerts have been broadcast live on Italian radio. She is first and foremost a chamber musician, who has worked with the clarinetists Richard Stoltzman and Alessandro Carbonare, the singers Laura Brioli, Daniela Bruera and Marina Comparato, the wind ensembles of Rome Opera and Santa Cecilia, as well as the Cremona, Bernini, Fonè and Savinio quartets. Her recordings include albums for the Sagra Musicale Umbra Festival, the Camerata Tokyo label and *Amadeus* magazine.

The present album is the latest in a project to record the complete chamber music of Louise Farrenc for Brilliant Classics. Previous albums in the series have been enthusiastically received: 'A recording to savour... The performance is excellent from both the pianist, Linda di Carlo, who drives the music on, and the OperaEnsemble. There is a feeling of togetherness and enjoyment throughout their performance' (*MusicWeb International* on the Sextet and trios, 95319). 'The Quintetto Bottesini has done great service to Farrenc with superbly warm performances that allow the music to breathe. (*MusicWeb International* on the piano quintets, 94815).

Linda Di Carlo is also a founder member and harpsichordist of the Orchestra da Camera di Perugia. She is Professor of piano accompaniment at the "Francesco Morlacchi" Conservatoire of Perugia.





*In loving memory of my husband Roberto Sorrentino,
scientist, entrepreneur and passionate lover of music.
Linda Di Carlo*