

This Stereo Hybrid SACD can be played on any compact disc player

SACD-60641

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872-1958)

1. Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis [15:33]

Solo Quartet: John Kormoan, violin; Beverly Schiebler, violin;
Thomas Dumm, viola; John Sant'Ambrogio, cello

SAMUEL BARBER (1910-1981)

2. Adagio for Strings [7:30]

GABRIEL FAURÉ (1845-1924)

3. Pavane, Op. 50 [5:41]

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

4. Fantasia on Greensleeves [4:27]

JOHANN PACHELBEL (1653-1706)

5. Kanon [6:08]

PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY (1840-1893)

Serenade in C for Strings, Op. 48

6. I. Pezzo in forma di Sonatina
Andante non troppo [9:30]

7. II. Walzer Moderato. Tempo di Valse [3:34]

8. III. Élégie Larghetto elegiaco [8:23]

9. IV. Finale (Tema Russo) Andante-
Allegro con spirito [7:22]

PERCY GRAINGER (1882-1961)

10. Irish Tune from County Derry (Danny Boy) [6:18]

Total Playing Time [75:23]

Leonard Slatkin
Saint Louis Symphony
Orchestra



soundstream



BARBER: Adagio for Strings

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

PACHELBEL: Kanon

TCHAIKOVSKY: Serenade for Strings

GRAINGER: Irish Tune from County Derry
and more

Leonard Slatkin
Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra

50kHz Master Transfer To DSD
Direct Stream Digital

Vaughan Williams: Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

The *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* is scored for double string orchestra and solo string quartet and was written expressly for Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester Cathedral in 1910. Later in that year at the Leeds Festival his first major orchestral work, the *Sea Symphony* (on poems of Walt Whitman) was heard in program which included both Strauss' *Don Juan* and Rachmaninoff's *Second Piano Concerto*. Vaughan Williams' edition of the *English Hymnal* includes nine contributions by Thomas Tallis (to Matthew Parker's *Psalter* of 1567), this *Theme* listed as No. 92. It made a profound impression on him; the resulting *Fantasia* was the most personal and eloquent composition of the thirty-eighth year of his long life.

It is a marvel of instrumentation, employing only strings. . . a continuous interplay between the solo quartet and the main body in each choir reaching heights of sonic splendor. It has been described as "stained glass windows in sound" and most eloquently by the late Hubert Foss: "these nineteen folio pages hold the faith of England, in its soil and its tradition, firmly believed yet expressed in no articulated details. There is quiet ecstasy, and then alongside it comes a kind of blind persistence, a faithful pilgrimage towards the unseen light."

Barber: Adagio for Strings

Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* has remained his best-known and perhaps finest composition in the Romantic idiom, written in 1936 as part of a first string quartet, Op. 11. It shares with other pieces included in this album a faint suggestion of archaism, an essay in austere polyphony, slowly rising to Apollonian heights through a series of carefully-calculated suspensions. Like his *Essay for Orchestra*, Op. 12, composed a year later, it

quickly came to world attention through its introduction by the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra and Arturo Toscanini. Since that first performance in November of 1938, an subsequent recording by Maestro Toscanini, it has been played innumerable times the world over, and is one of the few American works in the active repertory of Russian orchestras.

Fauré: Pavane

Fauré's tender, haunting *Pavane*, Op. 50 seems to have taken shape quite by accident. In a letter to his wife the composer wrote: "While I was thinking about a thousand different things of no importance whatsoever, a kind of rhythmical theme in the style of a Spanish dance took form in my brain. And this theme followed its own dictates so to speak, without bothering me at all. But the odd thing is, that although preoccupied by everyday life, this theme developed by itself, became harmonized in different ways, changed and modulated; in effect, it germinated by itself." In the *Pavane*, Fauré glances backward to a past now irrevocably vanished, with melancholy tenderness, with no hint of pastiche, with a reverent, dignified nostalgia for an old Renaissance dance, stately in its archaic *mésure*. First recorded in the late '40's by British conductor Sir Malcolm Sargent, and issued on 70 rpm with what is described as "optional" chorus, it has been recorded many times in succeeding years, generally in the form heard here. Fauré's *Pavane* was the product of the year in 1887.

Fantasia on "Greensleeves"

As a music student, Vaughan Williams found that he had an affinity for modal harmonies and their implied musical atmosphere. When he discovered a little later that folk songs were permeated with such atmosphere, he became an assiduous collector. Between 1903 and

1913 he found over 800 tunes and variants in the villages and countryside of England. During the same period, he served as editor of *The English Hymnal*, a task which acquainted him with the rich modal hymns and polyphony of sixteenth-century composers like Tallis and Gibbons. These simultaneous activities profoundly affected the development of his personal style, as can clearly be seen in the Fantasia on "Greensleeves."

The tune was registered at Stationer's Hall, London in 1575 as "the Ballad of My Lady Greensleeves," and it has been around ever since. Shakespeare refers to it twice in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as though it were a melody known by everyone. For example, in Act II Mistress Ford describes Falstaff: "... I would have sworn his description would have gone to the truth of his words; but they do no more adhere and keep place together than the Hundredth Psalm to the tune of 'Greensleeves.'" Over the centuries the melody has been fitted with a variety of texts, including even verses of political satire. Toward the end of the nineteenth-century, the words of the carol "What Child Is This?" were joined to the melody and in this version it has become a perennial Christmas favorite.

Vaughan Williams made several settings of "Greensleeves" in his lifetime, the first being for his opera *Sir John In Love* (1929), which is based on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Taking a cue from Shakespeare, he has Mrs. Ford sing "Greensleeves" at the opening of Act III, in which Sir John Falstaff pays her a visit. It is this version that was adapted by Ralph Greaves for concert use as the Fantasia on "Greensleeves."

Vaughan Williams uses strings, two flutes and harp to suggest an Elizabethan atmosphere well-suited to the poignant major/minor alternations of the "Greensleeves" melody. The Fantasia has three sections; in the first and third, "Greensleeves" is played amid a multi-voiced texture of counter melody, with the harp's rhythmic chords suggesting the

accompaniment of a lute. For the middle section, Vaughan Williams realized that a lively folk song he collected in Norfolk called "Lovely Joan" would be an ideal companion to the stately "Greensleeves."

Kanon in D for Three Violins and Thorough-bass

Johann Pachelbel was one of the most celebrated organists and composers of his era, and is today considered a major figure in Baroque music just preceding the time of J. S. Bach. He excelled at writing contrapuntal music and directly contributed to the development of some forms that reached their culmination in the works of Bach.

One of the favorite seventeenth-century contrapuntal devices was the canon, defined by the *Harvard Dictionary of Music* as "A polyphonic composition in which all the parts have the same melody throughout although starting at different points." This is a deceptively simple formula; closer examination gives rise to questions like: At what point does each part enter? Does it enter on the same pitch as the first part? Does it treat the melody in the same way as the first part, or does it have the melody upside down, for instance, or backwards? The different ways of writing a canon cover these possibilities and many more. Each canon is governed by its own specific rules of construction. The challenge to the composer is to produce a piece that scrupulously follows all the rules but still comes out sounding like music instead of tonal math.

Pachelbel wrote his justly famous Kanon in D sometime around the turn of the seventeenth into the eighteenth-century. The rules he set for himself are simple but severely restrictive: Over a bass that repeats the same two-measure figure twenty-eight times, write a melody in the first violin which the second and third violins will imitate at the same pitch, the second violin entering two measures after the first, the third violin entering two measures after the second.

Pachelbel's famous Kanon therefore consists of just two lines of music—the recurring bass pattern and the melody played by the first violin. If the Kanon were played with just these two parts, the violin would describe a long line full of interesting patterns, sometimes moving slowly, sometimes racing ahead in elegant flurries of notes, all of it fitting nicely with the faithful bass figure below. It would sound for the most part like a skillful exercise in melodic variation. If, however, a second violin plays an exact clone of the melody, but starting two measures after the first violin begins, and still another clone starts on its way two measures after that, suddenly, instead of a one-line exercise, there will be a whole texture of beautifully interweaving lines providing vertical as well as horizontal dimension.

Pachelbel changes the pattern of his melody every four measures, with the result that the first violin is doing something new while its offspring are catching up. This ingeniously creates a mix of solos, duets, and full-voiced passages. The composer also varies the rhythmic pattern of the melody, in general starting with longer note values and progressing through a series of shorter ones, creating the illusion of forward motion even though the obstinate bass has gone nowhere. It's a bit like watching Marcel Marceau give the impression of skating merrily along, while his feet actually remain in the same place. Toward the end of the Kanon, Pachelbel returns to larger note values, producing a sense of slowing and allowing a chordal texture to develop for the feeling of a strong ending. The voices all end together, of course, which means that the second violin doesn't finish the last two measures of the melody and the third violin doesn't get to the last four measures. The supreme measure of Pachelbel's success in all of this is that, whether or not the listener is aware of all the careful construction, the Kanon in D is a lovely piece of music.

The Kanon was written as chamber music for three violins and "thorough-bass," the Baroque bass line which usually included a harpsichord reinforcing the chords formed by the dovetailing lines above. In the version by which it is known and loved today, the Kanon's four parts are played by the full string sections of symphony orchestras, resulting in a sonority that, like the Vaughan Williams version of "Greensleeves" on this album, has fascinating sense of belonging to both the past and the present.

Serenade in C for Strings, Op. 48

In early summer of 1880, Tchaikovsky received word from his publisher and friend, Peter Jurgenson, that he would be asked to write some festive music for the upcoming exhibition celebrating the *Silver Jubilee* of Tsar Alexander II's reign. The prospect of writing such music held little appeal for Tchaikovsky. He wrote back, lecturing Jurgenson on the need to be more specific about a thing that was, after all, a matter of business: "I believe you imagine I have no greater happiness than to compose occasional pieces to be played at forth-coming exhibitions, and that I ought to put my inspirations down post-haste upon paper, without knowing how, when or where. I shall not stir a finger until I get a positive commission. If something vocal is required of me, I must be supplied with a suitable text (when it is a question of an order I am prepared to set an advertisement for corn-plasters to music). . ." Instead of corn-plasters, he got "Montenegrin villagers receiving news of Russia's declaration of war on Turkey," a topic he was decidedly not prepared to set.

Later that year he did bring himself to write a work for the Exhibition, on the subject of Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812. As though rewarding himself for working on the *Jubilee* piece, he wrote for himself its exact opposite, a serenade for string orchestra modeled on eighteenth-century style. He finished both works in November and wrote to his

patroness, Nadezhda von Meck: “. . . I have written two long works very rapidly—a *Festival Overture* for the Exhibition and a *Serenade* in four movements for string orchestra. The *Overture* will be very noisy. I wrote it without much warmth or enthusiasm, therefore, it has no great artistic value. The *Serenade*, on the contrary, I wrote from an inward impulse; I felt it, and venture to hope that this work is not without artistic merit.” The *Festival Overture* was, of course, the *1812 Overture*. Though he never stopped apologizing for the piece, Tchaikovsky recognized the effectiveness of its musical pageantry and recommended it for performance on various concerts promoting his music.

That he chose to write a work like the *Serenade* for his own satisfaction is not surprising. He had a lifelong affection for the music of the eighteenth-century, considering it purer art than the music of his own time. He confessed to Nadezhda von Meck that the *Serenade*’s first movement was his homage to Mozart: “It is intended to be an imitation of his style, and I should be delighted if I thought I had in any way approached my model. . .” The first movement does show that Tchaikovsky was thinking of Mozart, by its humor and by the deft interplay of its sixteenth-note passages. Indeed, the *Serenade* as a whole is unified by the classical attributes of balance, grace and transparency of texture.

It is also unified by its special atmosphere, as though Tchaikovsky lavished on the *Serenade* all the affection he was unable to bring to the *Overture*. All its moods reflect the composer’s delight in the piece—the Waltz, one of the most elegant examples of Tchaikovsky’s affinity for the genre; the Elegy, which is not elegiac but is really more an exquisite reverie; and the high-spirited Finale whose primary theme is a Russian folk song.

With the appearance of the folk song, and the later recurrence of the slow introduction from the first movement, we are aware of the organic unity of the *Serenade*’s conception, for the slow introduction’s melodic profile is exactly that of the folk song’s first phrase.

Grainger: Irish Tune from County Derry (*Danny Boy*)

The Australian composer Percy Grainger belongs to that special group of turn-of-the-century artists who painstakingly collected (with Edison’s new-fangled cylinder recorder) the folk songs of the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. With Cecil Sharp, Cyril Scott, Balfour Gardiner, and others he combed the hills and vales boldly approaching natives and persuading them to sing songs of their particular region. In 1905 he instituted a class for folk-songs in a musical competition festival at Brigg in Lincolnshire. The first prize was won by a Mr. Joseph Taylor, who sang one of the most haunting of English folk-songs, *Brigg Fair*, set not only by Grainger for small chorus, but used as well by Frederick Delius for his orchestral Rhapsody. *Irish Tune from County Derry* was similarly harmonized “in memory of Irish childhood friends in Australia,” according to the composer. Miss Jane Ross of New Town, Limavady, Ireland is credited with collecting the tune originally, now known the world over as *Danny Boy*.

— Marshall Burlingame

ABOUT THIS TELARC SACD

Stereo Programs:

There are two separate stereo programs contained on this SACD. The first is a high definition layer in high definition DSD (Direct Stream Digital) format that can only be played on an SACD player. The second is a standard CD version that will play on any device that will play a CD. An SACD player must be instructed as to which program you wish to play, while a standard CD player will simply find and play the regular CD version.

Mastered from the Historic Soundstream Recordings:

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Technical Information

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Microphones: Schoeps Colette Series

Recorder: Soundstream Digital Tape Recorder

Console: Neotek

Monitor Speakers: ADS Model 1530 bi-amplified. ADS model C2000 Crossover

Power Amplifiers: Threshold Model 4000 / Model S/500 Stasis

Interconnecting Cables: Audio-Technica

Control Room Acoustic Treatment: Sonex from illbruck/usa

This SACD was produced from the original Soundstream masters using the Direct Stream Digital™ (DSD) recording process. Transfer to DSD is accomplished entirely in the digital domain through the DATA Conversion Systems 972 Sample Rate Converter with custom software, thereby preserving the original recording's 25 kHz frequency response and filtering characteristics. For most accurate playback of this disc on an SACD player, employ the 50 kHz playback filter. Playback on a standard CD player still results in superior playback quality due to the improved sample rate conversion and transfer from the resulting DSD master.

Recording Producer: Robert Woods

Recording Engineer: Jack Renner

Soundstream to DSD Transfer and Mastering: Paul Blakemore

SACD Production Supervisor: Erica Brenner

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