

rather than just simple. The titles should tell you as much: *Three Little Waltzes* and *Two Cats* don't come from Pierre Boulez, right? The scherzo of *Perennials* could have been written by Eric Ewazen (b 1954), if that tells you more, and I don't mean to take anything away from either composer with the comparison. Both write music that sounds like now in the most accessible way possible.

GORMAN

DOWLAND: *Blissful Kisses*

Fortune's Musicke

Musicaphon 56943—60 minutes

Here is a beautiful "homage" to Dowland's music, to quote the notes, an interweaving of some of his most compelling songs with lute pieces. The songs are on his two main themes, love and sorrow; and it is fitting that they should be intertwined since the one cannot, in this world, be extricated from the other.

The two musicians here are soprano Hanna Thyssen and lutenist Susanne Peuker. The songs are treated with simplicity, but they are best that way. Thyssen has an uncomplicated voice, and its silver transparency seems to fit these straightforward songs—whose simplicity belies a certain complexity, nonetheless. The notes call attention to Dowland's tone painting, an invitation to sit down in a quiet place and listen closely to these. I also enjoyed Susanne Peuker's lute work.

This program is not a novelty: the songs are easily obtainable elsewhere and some are very familiar: 'Come Again', 'Can She Excuse?', 'Go From my Window', 'Come Away', 'Flow, My Teares'. But these are always in season, and this lovely program gives one an excuse to listen again.

CRAWFORD

DRAESEKE: *Symphonies 1-4; Gudrun Overture; Serenade; Funeral March*

North German Radio/ Jorg-Peter Weigle

CPO 777 786 [3CD] 3:11

Felix Draeseke (1835-1913) began as a lion of the New German School of Liszt and Wagner. He was first known as Der Recke (The Warrior). His probing analysis of Liszt's symphonic poems shows that, like Brahms, he could have been an excellent musicologist. His epic symphonic poem *Julius Caesar* (1860) was the first orchestral piece to include the Wagnerian brass apparatus of a quartet of tenor and bass tubas, along with a bass trumpet. His style became more conservative, causing Liszt to surmise that the lion was becoming a rabbit. He eventually taught at the Dresden Conservatory. He wrote several operas and a five-hour oratorio, *Christus*, intended to be played over three evenings. He composed five sym-

phonies—a youthful effort from 1859 was lost. For years he was largely forgotten, but in 1966 Dr Alan Krueck's in-depth analysis of his symphonies (now available online) reawakened interest in his work.

Draeseke's extant symphonies span his adult life—1872 to 1912. This set has all four, plus a tidy sampling of his other symphonic work. CPO released the individual works a while back (see index), but the package is available at a reduced price. Draeseke was, from the outset, interested in unifying his symphonies. His personality, if not style, formed early, with fluid voice-leading and irregular phrase-lengths. His musical language derives from Schumann and the Wagner of *Lohengrin*.

In Symphony 1 (1872), the expansive I proves that Draeseke could already sustain a symphonic span. II, the scherzo, has perky tunes punctuated with slamming timpani accents. Its slow movement, running 15 minutes, is Draeseke's longest. Krueck makes a strong case for its structural resemblance sometimes to the slow movement of the Bruckner 8th. The finale, resembling a muscle-bound Mendelssohn *Italian* Symphony, is not as good.

Symphony 2 (1876) could be called a bridge from Schumann to Richard Strauss, with its upward-swinging themes and melodies often fleshed out in thirds and sixths. Its exuberance recalls the mood of Schumann's *Rhenish* Symphony. Draeseke achieves unity by transforming a theme from I into the main material for all the other movements. The work has an attractive andantino rather than a conventional slow movement. The whimsical finale eventually transforms its jaunty main tune into a powerful chorale.

Symphony 3 (1886), the *Tragic*, has always been regarded as his masterpiece. There have been at least three recordings. In Draeseke's day, conductors like Nicode and Schuch took it up. Later, its champions included Karl Bohm, Artur Nikisch, and Fritz Reiner. An unusual aspect is that three of its four movements celebrate the dance. II is a sarabande, III a waltz-laendler, and the finale a saltarello. The symphony constantly polarizes motion against stasis, via an *idée fixe*, transformed in each movement versus a rising and falling octave figure. The sarabande slow movement is one of Draeseke's most profoundly beautiful statements. The polarity here is between the grave dance melody and a descending triplet figuration threatening to bring the movement to a halt. The finale builds relentlessly to a climax where Draeseke—again as in Bruckner's Eighth—combines the themes from all four movements, eventually collapsing against the octave figure, now hammered out with monolithic intensity. This leads to a reconciliation recap-

ping the introduction to I, with harmonies exceeding in tenderness even the end of Raff's *Lenore*. The symphony has come full circle, and one could easily imagine it beginning all over again.

A quarter-century separates Symphony 3 from 4, the *Comica* (1912). Its composition came after a vexing episode in Draeseke's life. He'd become increasingly disillusioned with contemporary composers, especially Richard Strauss. To his dismay, even his friend and advocate, Jean-Louis Nicode, liked to conduct Strauss's work. In 1906, Draeseke published an article 'Confusion in Music', singling out Strauss and his *Salome* for disdain. Strauss, naturally, retaliated in kind—a sad turn of events, as in his earlier years, Strauss had respected Draeseke's music. Draeseke's response was the *Comic* Symphony, though *Ironic* would be just as apt.

The *Tragic* is his most ambitious symphony, but this compact jewel (the 4th) impresses me more with every hearing. It's sometimes called 'The Battle of the Flies' after its slow movement. Draeseke's nephew visited him one summer afternoon and was swatting flies—an incident the composer incorporated into his music. Listeners will easily pick up the wiry little violin melisma describing the pest as well as the staccato cymbal whacks to slay it. Once the fly has been dispatched, there's a brief eulogy, complete with mock-tragic harmonies for the ill-fated aeronaut. The movement is a droll sendup of the pretensions of program music and Strauss. Whereas Strauss's program works described such lofty, complex ideas as Nietzschean philosophy, heroic egos, or death as a transcendental passage, Draeseke turns program music on its head to describe—a dead fly. Krueck rightly sees the movement as the composer's rebuttal to his critics, comparing them to the most mundane insect. *Pace* Liszt, the rabbit still had some teeth. The remainder of the symphony is just as enjoyable, representing a return to the clarity of classical structures and principles. The music is light in mood, but not in weight. Had he been more famous, Draeseke—not, say, Stravinsky—could have been known as the man who led the response against post-romantic grandeur.

The other selections are also eminently listenable. The *Gudrun* Overture (1882) is a swashbuckling chunk of Wagneriana. Its premiere was one of Draeseke's most unqualified successes. A wailing theme in the minor in its introduction, after much fine drama in between, rides over the work fully armored in the major for a rousing conclusion. The *Serenade* (1888) is a captivating work. The polonaise movement has one of Draeseke's most

unusually arresting melodies and the finale one of his most charming. Call it Easy Listening for Thinking People. The *Funeral March* (1897) honors German soldiers killed in its colonial wars. Political incorrectitude aside, it's a weighty piece of eulogizing.

The performances generally bring out the best in the music. Georg Hansen's interpretation of the *Tragic* on MDG is sometimes more forceful, but Weigle better captures the steadily mounting drama of the finale. The conducting and playing really come to the fore in the *Comica*, a fiendish little piece to coordinate, with tricky entries and phrasings demanding complete virtuosity from all involved. CPO's resonant sound makes the best of Draeseke's rich textural writing. For analytic readers, Petrucci has online scores to Symphonies 1-3 and the *Gudrun* Overture.

O'CONNOR

DUTILLEUX: *Correspondences; Tout un Monde Lointain; Shadows of Time*

Barbara Hannigan, s; Anssi Karttunen, vc; Radio France Philharmonic/ Esa-Pekka Salonen

DG 17944—67 minutes

The recent *Correspondences* (2003—the composer was born in 1916) is a song cycle taking its title from the poem by Baudelaire dealing with synesthesia. The texts proper are from Rilke, Mukherjee, Solzhenitsyn, Rilke again, and Van Gogh, all sung in French. The Baudelaire poem itself does not appear in the cycle. All the remaining texts equate the art form with the most profound elements of existence. The atmosphere is movingly valedictory, each song packed with deeply expressive lines and sumptuous harmonies. The piece was commissioned by Dawn Upshaw and then revised, the last of the songs written specifically for Ms Hannigan.

Tout un Monde Lointain (A Whole World Far Away) (1970), a concerto for cello and orchestra written for Rostropovich, also takes its title from Baudelaire. In five sections, the work is entirely built on the opening rising arpeggiated figure. It is a set of (continuous) variations, a slow movement, a scherzo, another slow movement, and a rapid finale. The competition is on the Chandos three-disc set of Dutilleux's orchestral works (M/A 2001) played by Boris Pergamenschikow. You'll need the complete set for that performance, but I prefer it to this one. Mr Karttunen's rapid-fire vibrato is not to my taste, and the BBC Philharmonic is a better orchestra than this French one.

The Shadows of Time (1995-7) is a tone poem in five sections depicting time, evil (in the personas of Ariel and, later, Hitler, as reported by Anne Frank), and thoughtful resig-