



Méditation sur le 1er Prélude de J.S. Bach [4:53]

Charles Gounod (trans. by Eric Ruske)

Two Romances (Op. 4, No. 4 and Op. 4, No. 5)
 My Beauty, Do Not Sing to Me (Op. 4, No. 4) [4:50]
 Oh You, My Harvest Field (Op. 4, No. 5) [4:11]

Sergei Rachmaninoff (trans. by Ruske)

Nana from "Siete Canciones Populares Españolas" [2:25]

Manuel de Falla (trans. by Ruske)

Sonata für Althorn und Klavier (1943)
 Ruhig bewegt [2:15]
 Lebhaft [3:55]
 Sehr langsam [2:07]
 Das Posthorn – Zwiegespräch / Dialogue [1:33]
 Lebhaft [2:56]

Paul Hindemith

Méditation de Thaïs [5:02]

Jules Massenet (trans. by Ruske)

Ave Maria, D. 839, Op. 52, No. 6 [4:23]

Franz Schubert (trans. by Ruske)

Le Cygne from "Le Carnaval des Animaux" [2:18]

Camille Saint-Saëns (trans. by Ruske)

Sonata für Horn und Klavier (1939)
 Mässig bewegt [5:45]
 Ruhig bewegt [5:15]
 Lebhaft [6:41]

Paul Hindemith

Trois Gymnopédies
 Lent et douloureux [2:57]
 Lent et triste [1:57]
 Lent et grave [2:35]

Erik Satie (trans. by Ruske)

Total Time = 66:00

parings (noun): thin strips that have been sliced or excerpted from the whole

pairings (noun): an arrangement resulting from organizing people or things into sets of two

These homonyms form the framework into which all of the repertoire on this recording, chosen from a wide variety of art song, chamber, operatic, piano, and traditional horn compositions, fit snugly. Whether comparing the pair of sonatas by Paul Hindemith, the pair of meditations, the two arrangements of the *Ave Maria*, or the shorter musical 'strips', pared from larger multi-movement works, I am convinced that the listener will enjoy the juxtaposition of currently unfamiliar works and those which are perhaps capable of being labeled 'popular music'.

We begin with one of the two famous *Ave Maria* settings on this disk. Ironically, it emerged as a collaboration between a pair of famous composers who never actually met. In 1722, Johann Sebastian Bach published his first volume of *The Well-Tempered Clavier*, a compilation of preludes and fugues in each of the twenty-four major and minor keys. A mere 131 years later, the French composer Charles Gounod composed his melody over Bach's incredibly popular *Prelude in C Major, BWV 846*, which was the first prelude in the set.

Shortly after having graduated from the Moscow Conservatory, the twenty-year-old Sergei Rachmaninoff completed his set of *Six Songs, Op. 4*. Having begun his piano studies at the age of four and widely considered one of the greatest pianists of the twentieth century, his compositions are staples in the world's concert halls, and his melodies are familiar to millions. Of the two excerpted from the set of six songs, the text for *My beauty, do not sing to me (Op. 4, No. 4)* comes from Aleksandr Pushkin, and the text of *Oh you, my harvest field (Op. 4, No. 5)* from Aleksei Tolstoy (a second cousin of the great Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy).

While living in Paris in 1914 and just prior to the pair of world wars that would separate and devastate Europe, the esteemed Spanish composer Manuel de Falla finished *Siete Canciones Populares Españolas*, a set of seven art songs from which the haunting lullaby *Nana* has been chosen.

During the second of these world wars, Paul Hindemith composed the *Sonata für Althorn und Klavier*. Though rarely performed on the alto horn (a cousin of the modern horn), this four-movement work finds its historical origins in the *sonata de chiesa* form, incredibly popular during the Baroque era. Similar to Bach's *Sonatas for Solo Violin, BWV 1001, 1003, 1005*, which are all composed in *sonata de chiesa* form, Hindemith followed the slow-fast-slow-fast tempo markings for this sonata. Unlike Bach however, Hindemith chose to reward the listener with an oral recitation that precedes the final movement. This short poem, penned by the composer, introduces the musical dialogue between hornist and pianist and provides a setting of the eternal conflict between the frenzied pace of contemporary (1943) life and the calm and meaningful days of yore.

Das Posthorn (Zwiegespräch)

Hornist:

Tritt uns, den Eiligen, des Hornes Klang
nicht (gleich dem Dufte längst verwelkter Blüten,
gleich brüchigen Brokats entfärbten Falten,
gleich mürben Blättern früh vergilbter Bände)
als tönender Besuch aus jenen Zeiten nah,
da Eile war, wo Pferde im Galopp sich mühten,
nicht wo der unterworfen Blitz in Drähten sprang;
da man zu leben und zu lernen das Gelände
durchjagte, nicht allein die engbedruckten Spalten.
Ein mattes Sehnen, wehgelaunt Verlangen
entspringt für uns dem Cornucopia.

Pianist:

Nicht deshalb ist das Alte gut, weil es vergangen,
das Neue nicht vortrefflich, weil wir mit ihm gehen;
und mehr hat keiner je an Glück erfahren,
als er befähigt war zu tragen, zu verstehen.
An dir ist's, hinter Eile, Lärm und Mannigfalt
das Ständige, die Stille, Sinn, Gestalt
zurückzufinden und neu zu bewahren.

The Posthorn (Dialogue)

Horn Player:

Is not the sounding of a horn to our busy souls
(even as the scent of blossoms wilted long ago,
or the discolored folds of musty tapestry,
or crumbling leaves of ancient yellowed tomes)
like a sonorous visit from those ages
which counted speed by straining horses' gallop,
and not by lightning prisoned up in cables;
and when to live and learn they ranged the countryside
not just the closely printed pages?
The cornucopia's gift calls forth in us
a pallid yearning, melancholy longing.

Pianist:

The old is good not just because it's past,
nor is the new supreme because we live with it,
and never yet a man felt greater joy
than he could bear or truly comprehend.
Your task it is, amid confusion, rush, and noise
to grasp the lasting, calm, and meaningful,
and finding it anew, to hold and treasure it.

From the 1894 opera *Thaïs*, by Jules Massenet, comes the incredibly lovely *Méditation*. During the scenes of Act II, the monk Athanaël endeavors to turn the beautiful and hedonistic Thaïs away from her life of pleasure and sin, and this violin solo with orchestral (and choral) accompaniment serves as the gorgeous interlude between those scenes.

Most assuredly one of the greatest art song composers, Franz Schubert completed a set of seven songs in 1825 which were based on *The Lady of the Lake*, a narrative poem by the Scottish poet, Sir Walter Scott. Three of the songs are intended for female voice, two for male, one for a male vocal ensemble, and the remaining for a female choir. This song, officially *Ellens dritter Gesang, D. 839, Op. 52, No. 6*, begins with “Ave Maria”, and is one of Schubert’s most popular works.

Scored for two pianos, small chamber ensemble, glass harmonica, and xylophone, *Le Carnaval des Animaux* is a fourteen-movement work written by Camille Saint-Saëns in 1886. Each of the movements depicts a different animal, and the penultimate movement, written originally for ‘cello solo and two pianos, is *Le Cygne* (the swan). As the only movement that Saint-Saëns allowed to be performed publicly during his lifetime, the entire work is now exceedingly popular, especially for young people’s concerts.

Completing our pair of sonatas by the German composer Paul Hindemith, the *Sonata für Horn und Klavier* was completed in 1939 while living in Switzerland, just prior to his faculty appointment at Yale University in 1940. As his *Gebrauchsmusik* (‘music for use’) ideology dictated, this is but one of the 26 sonatas that he composed for virtually every orchestral instrument, piano, organ, and harp. Of particular interest to my fellow hornists is his *Sonata für vier Hörner* (1952), which has become a staple of the horn quartet repertoire.

Erik (born Eric) Satie influenced some of the twentieth century’s greatest French composers (Ravel, Debussy, Poulenc), as well as collaborating with Diaghilev and Picasso on the 1917 ballet, *Parade*. His sparse compositional style is nowhere more evident than in his *Trois Gymnopédies* for solo piano, the first and third completed in 1888 and the second in 1895. To aid his financially and professionally faltering friend, Claude Debussy orchestrated the first and third *Gymnopédies* in 1897. Sadly, the charming and eccentric Satie died of cirrhosis at the age of 59.

“You know what we get to do today, Brooks? We get to play baseball.” – The Rookie (2002)

~ Liner notes by Eric Ruske

Recorded June 2nd and 3rd, 2025 at Futura Productions, Roslindale, MA USA

Produced by John Weston

Recorded, mixed, and mastered by John Weston

I would like to thank Coleman Casey and the Saunders Foundation, Carl and Susie Ingrao, Bryan Doughty, and Steve and Judi Lewis for their generous financial support, which made this recording possible. I would like to thank my kids (Siena, Julian, Eliot, and Jack) for their constant inspiration et merci, Mon Dieu pour ta grâce.

All transcriptions on this recording are available through Cimarron Music Press.

For this recording, Mr. Weaver played a 1988 Steinway D Artist Series Concert Grand, an American Steinway with Renner action.

Mr. Ruske plays an F/B-flat horn made by S.W. Lewis Horns.

Cover photo and design by Eric Ruske.

For more information on the individual artists, please visit:

www.ericruske.com

www.thomaseweaver.com

www.futuraproductions.com



Thomas Weaver and Eric Ruske – June 3, 2025 – Futura Productions

Horn soloist **Eric Ruske** has established himself as an artist of international acclaim. Named Associate Principal Horn of The Cleveland Orchestra at the age of 20, he also toured and recorded extensively during his six-year tenure as hornist of the Empire Brass Quintet. His impressive solo career began when he won the 1986 Young Concert Artists International Auditions, First Prize in the 1987 American Horn Competition, and in 1988, the highest prize in the Concours International d'Interprétation Musicale in Reims, France.

Of his recording of the complete Mozart Concerti with Sir Charles Mackerras and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, the New York Times stated, "Mr. Ruske's approach, firmly positioned with the boundaries of balance, coherence and good taste that govern the Classical Style, enchants by virtue of its confidence, imagination and ebullient virtuosity". Performances as soloist include appearances with the Baltimore Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Shanghai Radio Broadcast Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony, European Camerata, San Diego Symphony, Boston Pops Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic and a tour with the Israel Chamber Orchestra throughout Israel. His recitals have been presented in venues such as the Louvre in Paris, the

92nd Street Y in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., Dukes Hall in London, and the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing.

An active chamber musician, he has appeared with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Festival de Musica de Santa Catarina in Brazil, Moab Music Festival, Newport Music Festival, Spoleto Festival, Festival de Musique in St. Barthélemy, OK Mozart International Festival, Evian Festival, La Musica in Sarasota, Bargemusic in Brooklyn, Music from Angel Fire, Boston Chamber Music Society, and the Festival Pablo Casals both in Puerto Rico and in France. Mr. Ruske is in great demand as a teacher and clinician, and in addition to having given master classes at over one hundred universities and conservatories in the United States, he has taught at the Royal Academy of Music in London, Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, Banff Centre in Canada, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, Tokyo College of Music, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the College of Music at Seoul National University and most recently at the Ionian Academy in Corfu, Greece.

In 2012, Albany Records released a 7-CD box set of Mr. Ruske's recordings entitled *The Horn of Eric Ruske*. The set includes: *Music by Three*, a disc of music for horn, violin and piano; a collection of unaccompanied horn repertoire entitled *Just me and my horn*; two discs of virtuoso transcriptions for horn and piano, *The Classic Horn and Virtuoso Music for Horn and Piano*; a disc of the Strauss and Glière horn concerti, *The Romantic Horn Concerti*; the complete Mozart Horn Concerti and a disc of horn and piano repertoire entitled *Night Poems*. He has also made the world premiere recording of the *Concierto Evocativo* for horn and string orchestra by Roberto Sierra. His numerous arrangements and transcriptions, including a complete edition of the Mozart Concerti, are now available from Cimarron Music. A student of Dale Clevenger and Eugene Chausow, he grew up in LaGrange, Illinois and is a graduate of Northwestern University.

Joining architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, trumpeter Miles Davis and comedian Richard Pryor, Mr. Ruske was inducted into the Illinois Hall of Fame in 2007. He has received grants from the National Philanthropic Institute, the Saunders Foundation, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts, the International Institute of Education, the Mattina R. Proctor Foundation and Boston University. Mr. Ruske has been a member of the faculties of the New England Conservatory, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Boston University.

Thomas Weaver is a pianist, composer, and conductor currently on faculty at the Curtis Institute of Music and the Boston University Tanglewood Institute. Weaver began his musical training at the age of eight, first appearing in public performance at the age of nine. Weaver holds a strong belief that his eclectic career has helped to mold him as a well-rounded musician, equally at home on the stage and as an educator.

A sought-after pianist, Weaver has appeared in major concert halls throughout North America, Europe, and Asia, with frequent appearances in New York City, Philadelphia, Boston, and Tanglewood Music Festival. He has been presented by organizations including Carnegie Hall Presents, La Jolla Music Society, Princeton University Concerts, New York Philharmonic Ensembles Series, New York Chamber Music Festival, Astral Artists, Artcinia, and Red Rocks Music Festival. Weaver has appeared as a soloist with ensembles including the Curtis Institute's 20/21 Ensemble, Alea III, Boston University Tanglewood Institute Young Artists Orchestra and Young Artists Wind Ensemble, collaborating with notable conductors such as Bruce Kiesling and H. Robert Reynolds. An active chamber musician, Weaver has performed with eminent musicians such as Jess Gillam, Anthony McGill, Elmira Darvarova, Brittany Lasch, Gene Pokorny, Kenneth Radnofsky, Jennifer Frautschi, and members of the Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Weaver is currently a member of the Amram Ensemble. As a strong proponent of new music, Weaver has given the premiere of numerous compositions, including works by David Amram, Reena Esmail, Anthony Plog, David Loeb, John H. Wallace, Christopher LaRosa, Alistair Coleman, and Francine Trester. His recordings can be heard on albums released by Affetto Records, including music by Hungarian composers for violin and piano, music by Astor Piazzolla, and music by David Amram.

An award-winning composer, Weaver's music has been heard across four continents, in cities such as Philadelphia, New York City, Boston, Chicago, Dallas (United States), Berlin (Germany), Vienna (Austria), Itami (Japan), and Sydney (Australia). Weaver's compositional voice blends the world between neo-Romanticism and modernism, bringing a strong sense of flexibility and rubato to highly chromatic, motivically-based music. His works have been commissioned by organizations and musicians including New York Chamber Music Festival, Penn Museum, Boston University College of Fine Arts (in honor of the 150th Anniversary of the School of Music), Pharos Quartet, Daraja Ensemble, Alea III, Marian Anderson Historical Society, Kenneth Radnofsky, Brittany Lasch, and Joshua Blumenthal. Weaver's works have been performed by large ensembles including Alea III, Boston University Symphony Orchestra, and Mannes American Composers Orchestra. Weaver was the recipient of the Bohuslav Martinu Composition Award. As an arranger, Weaver's work has appeared on albums released by Affetto Records and his arrangements have been performed throughout the United States.

As a conductor, Weaver has led performances in Philadelphia, New York City, and Boston. Weaver formerly served as the music director of the Marian Anderson Museum and Historical Society, regularly leading performances in collaboration with operatic voices. Weaver's work as music director has included work in both classical repertoire and work in other musical styles, including frequent jazz performances. Weaver has appeared as a guest conductor at the Boston University Festival of the Arts.

An active educator, Weaver serves on the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music and Boston University Tanglewood Institute. As a member of Curtis's Musical Studies faculty, Weaver teaches courses in harmony, counterpoint, analysis, keyboard harmony, score-reading, orchestration, and composition, in addition to frequent performances as a pianist. At Boston University Tanglewood Institute, Weaver has taught theory electives, coached instrumentalists, and started the Collaborative Piano Fellowship, which offers training experience to pianists interested in pursuing careers focused on collaboration. Weaver has given lectures and master classes at places including Northwestern University, University of Central Florida, Murray State University, Austin Peay State University, People's Music School, and Cunningham Piano. Weaver has also served on juries for various competitions, including the Soloist of New England Young Soloists Competition, Rowan University String Ensemble Concerto Competition, and International Fringe Association Online Competition.

Weaver's primary piano teachers include Anthony di Bonaventura, Victor Rosenbaum, and Pavel Nersessian. His primary composition teachers have included John H. Wallace, David Loeb, Martin Amlin, and Jonathan Coopersmith, in addition to supplementary studies with Gunther Schuller, Samuel Adler, and Theodore Antoniou. His conducting teachers have included Emily Freeman Brown and Michael Charry.