




**HAHN
KOEHLIN
TAILLEFERRE**

**MARTIN JONES
ADRIAN FARMER**
PIANO DUO


Nimbus Records

Martin Jones & Adrian Farmer

Piano Duo

Charles Koechlin (1867-1950)

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)

Germaine Tailleferre (1892-1983)

DISC ONE (75.30)

Reynaldo Hahn

1	Caprice mélancolique pour deux pianos (1897)	5.01
	Le ruban dénoué (1915)	
	Douze valse à deux pianos	38.14
2	I Decrets indolents du hazard [Indolent Decrees of Chance]	2.00
3	II Les soirs d'Albi [Evenings in Albi]	3.05
4	III Souvenir... Avenir... [Memory ... Future]	2.45
5	IV Danse de l'amour et du chagrin [Dance of Love and of Sorrow]	1.35
6	V Le demi-sommeil embaumé [The Fragrant Half-Sleep]	6.40
7	VI L'anneau perdu [The Lost Ring]	1.45
8	VII Danse du doute et de l'espérance [Dance of Doubt and of Hope]	2.22
9	VIII La cage ouverte [The Open Cage]	2.26
10	IX Soir d'orage [Stormy Evening]	3.00
11	X Les baisers [Kisses]	2.43
12	XI Il sorriso [The Smile]	3.11
13	XII Le seul amour [The One and Only Love]	6.35

	Pour bercer un convalescent pour deux pianos (1915)	4.53
	à Henri Bardac Sergent au 306 d'Infanterie, grièvement blessé à la bataille de l'Aisne	
14	I Andantino sans lenteur	1.37
15	II Andantino non lento	1.51
16	III Andantino espressivo	1.30

Charles Koechlin

	Suite pour deux pianos Op. 6 (1896)	11.35
17	I Andantino	3.03
18	II Andantino con moto	1.42
19	III Andantino con moto quasi allegro	3.14
20	IV Andantino quasi allegretto (Poco scherzando)	3.35
	Suite pour piano à 4 mains Op. 19 (1901)	14.44
21	I Canon. Allegro, poco scherzando	3.41
22	II Lied. Andantino	1.34
23	III Feuillet d'Album. Allegretto moderato	2.45
24	IV Berceuse. Andante tranquillo	2.01
25	V Final. Poco maestoso – Allegro con moto	4.40

DISC TWO (74.58)

Charles Koechlin

	Sonatine Française pour piano à 4 mains, Op. 60 (1919)	
	Sonatine No. 1	7.35
1	I Canons. Moderato tranquillo	1.18
2	II Allegretto. Moderato con moto	2.22
3	III Intermezzo. Molto moderato e scherzando	1.27
4	IV Dans les vergers de Normandie. Allegro scherzando	2.29

	Sonatine No. 2	10.34
5	I Pastorale. Allegro moderato	2.03
6	II L'apothéose des petits pauvres. Molto moderato	2.58
7	III Chant du soir. Andante	1.04
8	IV Menuet. Ben moderato	1.57
9	V Final. Allegro con moto	2.31
	Sonatine No. 3	5.38
10	I Scherzando. Allegro moderato	1.14
11	II Chant du soir. Andante	1.22
12	III Ronde de vendanges. Allegro con moto	3.02
	Sonatine No. 4	6.48
13	I Romance. Andante con moto	1.16
14	II Autre Romance. Adagio	1.53
15	III Final. Allegro	3.40

Germaine Tailleferre

	Jeux de Plein Air pour deux pianos (1917)	5.39
16	La Tirelittaine	2.04
17	Cache-cache mitoula	3.33
18	Image (1918) Transcription à 4 mains par l'auteur	4.28
19	Fandango pour deux pianos (1920)	3.24
	Deux Valses pour deux pianos (1928)	3.37
20	Valse lente	1.17
21	Valse brillante	2.17
22	Intermezzo pour deux pianos (1946)	3.46
23	Toccata pour deux pianos (1957)	3.33

	Sonate pour deux pianos (1974)	7.31
24	I Allegretto	2.46
25	II Andantino	2.32
26	III Allegro	2.12
	Choral et Variations pour deux pianos (1979)	11.15
27	Prologue	3.29
	-Variation 1 Sarabande	
	-Variation 2 La Crouilli	
28	-Variation 3 Scarlatino	3.41
	-Variation 4 Pastourelle	
	-Variation 5 Ariette	
29	-Variation 6 Menuet	4.05
	-Variation 7 Rigodon	
	-Épilogue	

Total playing time: 2 hours 28 minutes

Performer's note: This recording of Koechlin's Suite Op.19, and the Four Sonatines Françaises Op.60 was made on two pianos rather than as a piano duet. The performers felt strongly that the best musical result was achieved by eliminating the clash of fingers that are a feature of Koechlin's rigorous, but sometimes impractical, scoring.

Recorded by Nimbus Records at Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, UK
Reynaldo Hahn on 6-7 March 2019

Germaine Tailleferre & Charles Koechlin 10-12 January 2022

Production by Simon Callaghan. Editing by Adrian Farmer.

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Cover image: Étienne Neurdein, Promenade sur Paris en aeroplane, ca.1904-14

www.wyastone.co.uk

The American artist Paul Cadmus (1904 – 1999) created an ‘hommage à Reynaldo Hahn’ in 1963, entitled *Le ruban dénoué* (The Ribbon Untied), currently exhibited at the Columbus Museum of Art in Ohio. In this painting, Hahn, elegantly dressed in tail-coat and placed in a fantastic setting reminiscent of a Classical temple, is being interrupted in the act of composition by a pale Cupid who kisses him on the lips, while Pan, stretched out seductively on a stairway below, reaches out to him. Two ribbons unfurl here – Pan’s luxurious red spills over the steps to the right, and Hahn’s more restrained blue-grey into the distance on the left. Is Pan’s presence a source of artistic inspiration or erotic distraction to Hahn? Manuscript paper flies away unused, and neither the Pan’s pipes nor Hahn’s pen are active; there is, however, an air of supreme bliss over the scene.

The title of the painting comes from a major work composed by Hahn during the early years of the First World War and published in 1917. This suite of waltzes for two pianos is the most substantial piece in this recorded collection and was written, so Hahn said, to ‘stave off boredom’, although it is difficult to hear anything approaching ennui in this magical work; rather, it is tempting to detect in its most sensual moments the same air of erotic promise that hovers over Cadmus’s painting. The singer Jane Bathori (who, like Hahn, accompanied herself in concert and on recordings), programmed the work in her concert series shortly after the end of the war.

Hahn’s career started with song – his Verlaine settings, *Chansons grises*, were completed by the time he was sixteen in 1890, and were praised by the poet himself. Many of Hahn’s best-known songs date from his teenage years – *Si mes vers avaient des ailes* (1888), *L’énamourée* and *Offrande* (1891), *Fêtes galantes* and *D’une prison* (1892). He was also prolific as a composer of piano music but by the outbreak of the Great War, almost all his *mélodies* and works for solo piano had been written. After the war, he turned his attention mainly to operetta (*Ciboulette*, 1923, and *Mozart*, 1925, being the best-known) and to chamber music. *Le ruban dénoué* is not the only one of Hahn’s works to be written on a generous scale – there are also the cycle of ten *Etudes latines* (voices and piano, four hands), twelve *Rondels* (voice and piano) and, especially, the piano collection entitled *Le rossignol éperdu* (The Distracted Nightingale), fifty-three *Poèmes*, all with colourful titles – but it is in the present suite that Hahn achieves a richness and interconnectedness that is unique in his output.

There is an autobiographical element to the piece that the individual titles suggest, rather in the manner of Poulenc’s *Soirées de Nazelles*, completed some twenty years later. One can find direct or indirect references to a whole range of other composers within these pages – the

opening title, 'Indolent decrees of chance', is perhaps a half-memory of the quotation from Henri de Régnier that heads Ravel's *Valses nobles et sentimentales* – 'the delicious, ever-new pleasure of a useless occupation'. Musical reminiscences include a nod towards Fauré ('Kitty-Valse' from the *Dolly Suite* in the second Valse, 'Albi Evenings'), Schumann (the sixth Valse, 'The Lost Ring', has the dizziness of parts of *Carnaval*) and the sequences of dances by Schubert and even Brahms – the textures and variety of the *Liebeslieder-Walzer* seem to be a presence in the background throughout the collection, especially the final movement. Hahn reused the material of this movement in his setting of Victor Hugo's poem 'Puisque j'ai mis ma lèvre à ta coupe encore pleine' which ends with the exultant declamation 'My soul has more fire than you have ashes! My heart has more love than you have oblivion!' The centrepiece, almost a chain of waltzes in itself, is the dream-like fifth piece, 'The Fragrant Half-Sleep', and perhaps it was this that inspired Paul Cadmus to create his own dream-like image in tribute.

Hahn's earliest musical activity coincided with that period of French artistic endeavour often referred to as *La belle époque* – the period between the end of the Franco-Prussian War and the First World War. Hahn's music seems to reflect the mood of the age more completely than that of almost any other composer, save perhaps Massenet; there is a perfumed grace and refinement about much of his music, a simplicity, and a total avoidance of the overt emotionalism that was characteristic of the German music of the time and that some French composers – Duparc, Chausson, d'Indy, and even, if only briefly, Debussy – adopted. Nothing to shock; nothing to disturb. Absent from that view of Hahn, however, is an acknowledgement of his rich melodic gift, his harmonic subtlety and – in *Le ruban dénoué* – the tremendous rhythmic originality and variety that fills the entire canvas. The threes against fours heard at the opening and in 'The Open Cage' (No 8) and 'The Smile' (No 11) are just one manifestation of his fertile imagination. Those same qualities may also be heard in the other two pieces presented here – the *Caprice mélancolique* of 1897 (the oxymoronic title perhaps best interpreted as a 'whim' rather than anything more overtly playful), and the three short pieces, *Pour bercer un convalescent*, written in 1915 for Henri Bardac, 'a sergeant in the 306th Infantry, seriously wounded at the Battle of Aisne'. Jillian C Rogers, in her book *Resonant Recoveries* (2021), refers to this set as one of the 'numerous pieces composed during and after World War 1 [which] seem to have the bodily effects of musical rhythm as their *raison d'être*.' Certainly, the gently pulsating rhythms, modality and stripped-back simplicity suggest an act of musical healing. It is also notable that the finest of all the Great War pieces for two pianos, Debussy's *En blanc et noir*, dates from the same year.

Charles Koechlin was born in Paris in 1867 and was thus five years younger than Debussy and eight years older than Ravel. His interests were wide-ranging and not restricted to music – he was, after contracting tuberculosis at the age of twenty, keen to maintain his health and became an enthusiastic swimmer and mountaineer. He was a photographer and astronomer, spiritually inclined towards the mystic and ideologically supportive of socialism. He is probably best known for the sequence of works he composed based on Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* – four symphonic poems and a set of choral pieces with piano or orchestra. He was a great admirer of the stars of the silver screen of the 1920s and 30s – his *Seven Stars* Symphony of 1933 realises this admiration in a very public way; his *Sept Chansons pour Gladys* (a character played by Lilian Harvey in the 1935 film *Calais-Douvres*), *Épitaphe de Jean Harlow* (1937) for flute, alto saxophone and piano and *Dances for Ginger* for piano of the same year (dedicated to Ginger Rogers) are more personal and intimate portraits. His musical enthusiasms ranged from Gregorian chant (he composed a series of Monodies for various instruments that clearly take plainsong as their starting point) to Schoenberg (the monkeys in *Les bandar-log* caper through the rainforest to twelve-note rows); he experimented with unusual instruments (including hunting horns and the Ondes Martenot) and his musical style veers from the lush impressionism of the piano suite *Les heures persanes* (1913 – 19) to the careful counterpoint of much of his chamber music and the explosive magnificence of his orchestral *Hymne au Soleil* (1933). He was a prolific song-writer, and the almost unbearable nostalgia of *Novembre* would, in less than four minutes, define Koechlin as a master of the genre.

He studied with Gabriel Fauré at the Paris Conservatoire and wrote an early biography and assessment of his teacher's oeuvre, published in 1927. He was responsible for the orchestration of both Fauré's *Pelléas et Mélisande* Suite and Debussy's ballet *Khamma*.

The four *Sonatines françaises* (1919) and two Suites (1896 and 1901) recorded here all to some extent anticipate the *style dépouillé* that came into its own in various ways in the 1920s. There is gentle counterpoint here, folk-like melodies (again anticipating the direction that French music was to take in the decade after the First World War), simple diatonicism or modality with an occasional dash of bitonality, ostinato rhythms and a playfulness that engages and intrigues the listener.

Koechlin's use of forms such as canon, and other contrapuntal textures, are always a means to an artistic end, rather than a mere intellectual exercise – thus, the Canon that opens the first of the *Sonatines françaises* is presented as a serene pastoral fantasy, white notes symbolising the open air, with occasional ear-tickling chromatic side-steps, and the Menuet

from the second Sonatine dances along light-heartedly, unaffected by its fugal pretensions. Elsewhere, there are recollections of folk and nursery songs with subtle dovetailing of phrases to avoid any sense of squareness or too much regularity, for example in the second and fourth movements of the first Sonatine. That final movement, a sort of Normandy wassail song, also includes mischievous intricacies as simple and compound rhythms combine. Elsewhere in these Sonatines, we hear the ghosts of pealing bells – partly through the superimposed fifths in the bass that underpin and resonate throughout many of these movements, partly because of Koechlin's fondness for interjections in the upper reaches of the keyboard – and perhaps too we may catch sight of the spectre of Ravel's 'Petit Poucet' (*Ma mère l'Oye*) endlessly following a trail of breadcrumbs in Koechlin's 'Apotheosis of the Poor'.

One feature of Koechlin's music that may not be immediately obvious simply from hearing it is that the appearance of his scores can be unconventional – he did not go to the extent of doing away with bar-lines entirely, but he was quite happy to use them sometimes only as a visual guide to larger musical shapes without worrying unduly about time signatures. Thus, what a more conventional composer might notate as an upbeat is simply absorbed into the main bar. Similarly, he is often unconcerned about the practicalities of performing his music. In some of his songs the accompaniments suddenly require an unexpected third hand; here, fingers and hands clash and collide without taking cognizance of the needs of the two players.

These notational idiosyncrasies were all one with the chaotic but generous personality that attracted so many musicians to come to Koechlin's door for advice: his many students included Cole Porter and Francis Poulenc, as well as the third composer featured on these recordings, **Germaine Tailleferre**.

For many years, Tailleferre's music was barely known in the UK; the only works that were in the British record catalogues during her lifetime were her Harp Concertino and the short pieces she composed for composite works with the so-called Groupe des Six – the *Album des Six* and *Les mariés de la tour Eiffel*. Gradually her other compositions have started to attract the attention they deserve; nonetheless, the worklist that is readily accessible online reveals that there is still much to discover about this composer, prolific in all genres and productive over a period of more than seventy years.

The eight works presented here encompass almost her entire career, from the 'Outdoor Games' of 1917 (which brought her to the attention of Erik Satie, who, after hearing them, described her as his 'musical daughter') to the Choral et Variations of 1979 that revive memories of works such as Stravinsky's *Pulcinella*, Poulenc's *Les biches* and Ravel's *Le*

tombeau de Couperin – the neo-Baroque and neo-Classical are never too far from the surface of this music. Whilst it is not unusual for composers to write at the piano, Tailleferre often created her scores in a two-piano format before arranging or orchestrating them for other forces. One of her most intriguing sonic combinations also includes a piano duo – her rarely performed Concerto for two pianos, four saxophones, chorus and orchestra of 1934.

Jeux de plein air predates that arbitrary selection of the six quite disparate composers that Erik Satie, Jean Cocteau and Henri Collet gathered together in 1920, but the musical aesthetic of Les Six – popular in style, modern in outlook – seems to be anticipated here. The titles of the two movements refer to a card game or, in some sources, a tug-of-war (*La Tirelittaine* – a name that is derived from the French word for a piggy bank) and a form of hide-and-seek (*Cache-cache mitoula*). Both pieces are dances; the first also includes the evocation of gamelan textures, whilst the folky second anticipates the polytonality of Darius Milhaud and, even more specifically, Ravel's Violin Sonata.

Tailleferre befriended the American two-piano duo, Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale, in the late 1940s when they visited France; she was to write her Toccata and Sonata for them (Poulenc also dedicated his own Sonata for Two Pianos to them). Like the earlier Intermezzo, the Toccata is a piece based around motor rhythms and repetition, and the same features characterise the outer movements of the Sonata; the spirit of early Poulenc, exemplified by the *Mouvements perpétuels* and, especially, the Sonata for piano duet, is never too far away. The genial, chattering textures that emerge from the simplest material evoke the worlds of both Jean Françaix and, to move into a rather different milieu, Yves Montand's *La bicyclette*, a reminder that there was always a degree of permeability between a certain sort of French art music and music written in a more popular vein.

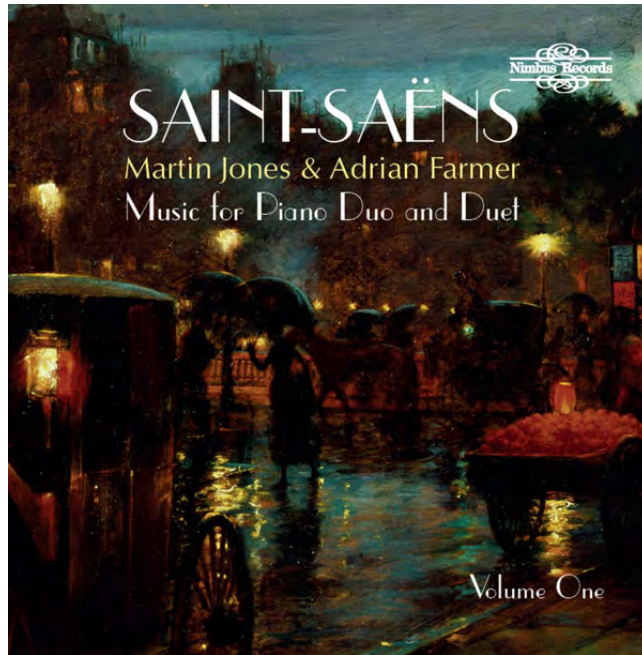
The final piece in this collection, the Choral et Variations, may exhibit a certain pardonable nostalgia for *temps perdu*, but surely what matters most, now that more than four decades have passed since its composition, is the sheer appeal of the music and the skill and artistry of the composer. We started our exploration of this rich vein of little-known two-piano and four-hand repertoire with Hahn's wistful reminiscences in waltz time, and we have now come full circle with another gentle Valse, Tailleferre transforming it, in the brief Epilogue that follows the brilliant sequence of variations, into a final moment of grandeur.

Dr. David Jones, 2023

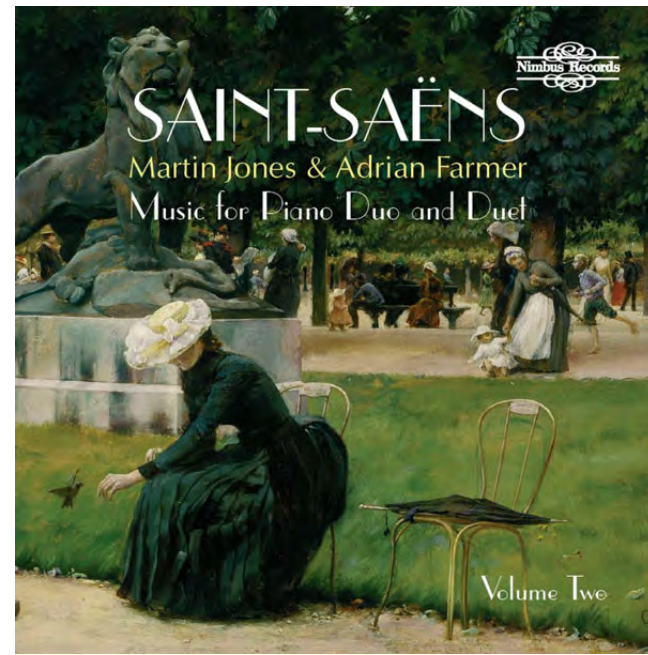
Martin Jones has been one of Britain's most highly regarded solo pianists since first coming to international attention in 1968 when he received the Dame Myra Hess Award. The same year he made his London debut at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and his New York debut at Carnegie Hall, and ever since has been in demand for recitals and concerto performances in Europe, Russia, Australia, Canada, North & South America. He has made over 90 recordings with Nimbus Records exploring music that is not often played including the complete works of 18 composers. This year will see the release of 4 discs of newly discovered manuscripts of Daniel Jones. Also, together with Adrian Farmer, 3 discs of French music for 4 hands. During next year, as well as giving concerts, he will complete 3 discs of the first recordings of all the piano works of Elizabeth Lutyens for Resonus Records, and continue his American Piano Series with Volumes 6 & 7 for Prova Recordings which will include several new works especially written for him, and, for Nimbus a collection of Brazilian music by Mignone, Gnatalli & Fernandez.

Adrian Farmer trained as an accompanist at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester from 1977, following a music degree at Birmingham University. He was invited to record for Nimbus in 1979, and quickly made the decision to join the founders, taking up the role of record producer. In the mid-1980s, during the company's expansion into Compact Disc production, he became Nimbus's Music Director. Through the 1990s Adrian spanned both sides of Nimbus's varied business interests; maintaining the creative focus for Nimbus Records, and coordinating the international marketing activity of the company's optical disc technology division 'Nimbus Technology & Engineering'. Adrian has made several recordings with other Nimbus artists: bass-baritone Shura Gehrman, pianists Nina Walker and Simon Callaghan, and with Martin Jones at one and two pianos in works by Ernesto Halffter, Franz Reizenstein, Alan Richardson, Jean Roger Ducasse, Françaix, and Saint-Saëns. It is with soprano Charlotte de Rothschild that he has found his most enduring partnership with the premiere recording of the songs of her ancestor, Mathilde de Rothschild. They have gone on to recorded albums of Schumann, Fauré, Hahn and Dupont, British composers Cyril Scott, and Norman Peterkin, and the Australian Miriam Hyde. They completed a three-album project of Roger Quilter's songs together with tenor Nathan Vale in 2021, and in 2022 the three of them issued 107 songs of the composer Armstrong Gibbs. In the 1980s he recorded Ravel's *Ma mère l'oye* with legendary pianist Vlado Perlemuter, which he retains as a treasured memory.

Also Available from Martin Jones & Adrian Farmer



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