

NAXOS

FAURÉ

Violin Concerto

Pénélope – Prélude

Berceuse • Élégie

Romance • Fantaisie • Dolly

Pierre Fouchenneret, Violin

Martin Johnson, Cello

Catriona Ryan, Flute

**National Symphony
Orchestra of Ireland**

Jean-Luc Tingaud



Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)

Violin Concerto

Gabriel Fauré is in many ways a mysterious figure in French music. His best-known works, the *Requiem* and *Pavane*, are not at all typical of an output that focused largely on solo piano pieces, songs and chamber music. This went against the grain of a contemporary French musical scene where success in the opera house was the primary goal of most composers. Fauré's smaller-scale works were often performed in aristocratic salon circles, a world which was far removed from Fauré's provincial origins in the south of France. This album spotlights his music for orchestral forces, though due to the many demands on Fauré as a teacher and performer, these works were often orchestrated by others.

Born in the southern French small town of Pamiers, the son of a schoolteacher, Fauré moved to Paris as a child to board at the École Niedermeyer, a small institution that focused on training organists and choirmasters. The musical language of sacred chant had an important impact on his music, and his school piano teacher, Saint-Saëns, was to become his most significant mentor and a lifelong friend. After graduating, he obtained positions in Brittany as an organist and teacher and his reputation as a composer slowly grew. Returning to Paris in 1871, he was a founding member of the Société nationale de musique, a concert organisation that aimed to promote contemporary French music, predominantly instrumental music which was then marginal to Paris musical life; many works on this album were premiered under the auspices of the Société nationale.

In 1874 he was appointed as organist at the prestigious Madeleine church, initially deputising for Saint-Saëns. Despite never being a student at the Paris Conservatoire, he was appointed professor of composition in 1896, and became director of the institution in 1905. As a director, he modernised the curriculum by introducing both contemporary and ancient music. Increasing deafness prompted his resignation in 1920, and he died four years later.

Pénélope, Fauré's only opera, is based on Homer's *Odyssey*, though the focus is not on the wandering hero Ulysses but on his wife Penelope, who patiently awaited his return to the island of Ithaca. The opera was premiered in Monte Carlo in 1913 and Paris a couple of months later, but despite its musical quality, it has never been at the centre of the operatic repertoire. Its Paris premiere was sadly overshadowed by the overwhelming reception of Stravinsky's ballet *The Rite of Spring* (as was Debussy's ballet *Jeux*).

The opera's short prelude conveys the sombre reflective mood of the heroine and occasionally builds up to passionate outbursts. The string section is at the heart of the orchestration, and dotted rhythms on the trumpets and woodwind both inject vitality and perhaps call to mind a typical feature of the classical French overture.

Audiences are familiar with Fauré's *Violin Sonata No. 1* (1875–76), but the *Violin Concerto* he composed shortly afterwards for his friend, the Belgian violinist and composer Ovide Musin, remains unpublished. Fauré intended the concerto to have the traditional three movements, but only the first, performed here, survives in completed form. The second, slow movement was performed in a version for violin and piano at the Société nationale in 1878, and reworked in 1897 as an *Andante* for violin and piano, but the finale was never finished. Fauré never completely forgot the first movement, even reworking its first theme in his final work, the *String Quartet, Op. 121* (1924). This movement was premiered in 1880 by Musin and the conductor Édouard Colonne, and it is conceived on the large scale we associate with the Romantic solo concerto.

The orchestral introduction has a regular rhythmic underpinning which is characteristic of Fauré, and when the violin enters it has a long solo. Fauré's wide-ranging solo part gives the violin plenty of opportunities to show off, and there is some lovely dialogue between the soloist and woodwinds. Within its Romantic harmonic language, Fauré's elliptical shifts are already apparent, and there are many playful changes of texture and rhythm. This piece shows that Fauré definitely could orchestrate, and it does indeed sound like the first movement of a large-scale work. If Fauré had completed the concerto as he intended at this early stage in his career, it would surely have changed his audience's view of him as a composer happiest with chamber formations.

Fauré's *Berceuse* ('Cradle Song') was originally composed for violin and piano in the same period as his concerto. Fauré and Ovide Musin premiered the work in 1880 and the composer himself orchestrated the work in that year. Its rocking accompaniment, lilting melody and muted violin timbre make this unpretentious piece one of Fauré's most popular works. *Berceuse* was first recorded in 1912 by the celebrated Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe. The piece had an important effect on Fauré's career as it attracted the attention of Julien Hamelle: *Berceuse* was one of many Fauré works to be published by Hamelle's firm.

Fauré's poignant and intense *Élégie* (1880) was originally intended as the slow movement of a cello sonata, but only this movement was composed. It was premiered in 1883 with the dedicatee Jules Loeb as soloist. Like the *Violin Concerto*, it opens with a procession of chords; when the cello enters, its descending melody sets the mournful mood. This material later appears in elaborated form after a dramatic climax. The orchestrated version, which is mostly by Fauré, was premiered in 1901 featuring the great cellist Pablo Casals.

The *Romance* for violin and piano in B flat was composed in 1877 in Cauterets, a mountain resort in the Pyrenees close to Fauré's birthplace. In a letter to his friend Marie Clerc, Fauré even claimed that the angular melodic line reflected the shape of the mountain ridge. The piece has two principal ideas: a lyrical violin melody opens and closes the work, and a more impassioned minor key episode provides a strong contrast in the centre. The piece was orchestrated in 1913 by the French flautist, conductor and composer Philippe Gaubert (1879–1941).

In Fauré's time, France was the principal centre for woodwind manufacture, teaching and performance, and his *Fantaisie* is one of many distinguished French flute pieces of the period. It was composed for flute and piano in 1898 and dedicated to Paul Taffanel, one of the leading flautists of his generation; such is its continuing popularity with flautists that it was orchestrated by Louis Aubert in 1957, well after Fauré's death. The piece shows off the lyrical side of the instrument in the slow first section and its flexibility and sparkling virtuosic capability in the lively second section.

The 'Dolly' of the title of Fauré's *Dolly* suite (1893–96) is Regina Hélène Bardac, always known as Dolly, the young daughter of Emma Bardac with whom Fauré had a long affair in the 1890s. Emma Bardac, a fine amateur singer, eventually left her husband and married Debussy in 1908. Originally composed for the very domestic medium of the piano duet, the movements evoke the life and home of Dolly; the first movement, *Berceuse*, honoured her first birthday. Some of Fauré's own movement titles were completely changed in meaning by his publisher: *Mi-a-ou* is nothing to do with a cat, but was rather inspired by Dolly's brother Raoul (known to the girl as 'Messieu Aoul'). As for *Kitty-Valse*, its inspiration was Ketty, the children's pet dog... This whirling waltz makes us imagine the animal chasing his tail. *Le Jardin de Dolly* ('Dolly's Garden') and *Tendresse* have beautiful melodies with subtle harmonic shifts typical of Fauré, and the finale *Le Pas espagnol* ('The Spanish dance'), unusually for this composer, taps into the contemporary vogue for all things Hispanic. The piece was orchestrated by Fauré's Conservatoire colleague Henri Rabaud in 1906.

Caroline Potter

Pierre Fouchenneret



Photo: Vincent Ducard

French violinist Pierre Fouchenneret is renowned for his boldness of playing and visionary repertoire choices. He has performed as a soloist with Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orchestre National de Bordeaux Aquitaine, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg and the National Symphony Orchestra (Ireland). Deeply passionate about encouraging future generations, he is an artistic director of Orchestre Ostinato, which supports the emergence of young talent from the best conservatoires through professional integration, and teaches at the Haute école de musique de Genève. A child prodigy, Fouchenneret began his studies in Nice and completed his education at the age of 16 at the Conservatoire national supérieur de musique et de danse de Paris. He has performed all over the world, and is regularly invited to play alongside renowned musicians. As a chamber musician, he is the founder of Quatuor Strada, and has recorded the chamber works of Brahms (across twelve albums), Beethoven's sonatas for piano and violin, Schumann's violin concerto and chamber works and the chamber works of Fauré for B Records and Aparté.

www.pierrefouchenneret.com

Martin Johnson



Photo: Mark Stedman

Martin Johnson studied cello at the Royal College of Music, London. In 2000, he joined the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra (now National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland) and has been its section leader for two decades. In 2006 he was invited to become a member of the World Philharmonic Orchestra, and is also a regular guest principal with the major orchestras in Ireland and the UK. Johnson has appeared as a soloist with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland on more than 20 occasions, with live solo broadcasts including concertos by Frank Corcoran (recorded for RTÉ lyric fm) and Strauss's tone poem *Don Quixote, Op. 35* with Pascal Rophé at Ireland's National Concert Hall, Dublin. Johnson is a University College Dublin Creative Fellow, a Countess of Munster scholar, an IT President's Prize Winner and has been supported by The Loan Fund for Musical Instruments as well as Music Network's Music Capital Scheme in Ireland. He plays a cello by Thomas Kennedy of London (c. 1810) and a bow by legendary archetier Eugène Sartory made for the 1908 Expo.

Catriona Ryan



Photo: Mark Stedman

Catriona Ryan was a scholarship student with Doris Keogh at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and Trevor Wye at the Royal Northern College of Music. She is flute section leader of the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, having also performed with the BBC Philharmonic, Manchester Camerata, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and The Hallé. A keen chamber musician, Ryan founded the Amici Trio with cellist Martin Johnson and pianist Aileen Cahill, and is a member of Cassiopeia Winds, Ireland's premier wind quintet. She is frequently invited to perform in recital at music festivals including the Vogler Quartet's Sligo International Chamber Music Festival, Music for Galway Midwinter Festival, the Fidelio Trio's Chamber Music on Valentia and the National Concert Hall's Chamber Music Series. Regular appearances as a soloist with various ensembles include multiple concertos with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland. Ryan has an active career tutoring, teaching, giving masterclasses, presenting, adjudicating and examining for National Conservatoires and bodies such as the European Union Youth Orchestra and Trinity Laban, London.

National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland



The National Symphony Orchestra (of Ireland), previously the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, has been at the centre of Ireland's cultural life since 1948 when the Raidió Éireann Symphony Orchestra, as it was originally called, was founded. In 2022 the orchestra transferred to the remit of the National Concert Hall, Ireland's National Cultural Institution for music. The orchestra plays a central role in classical music in Ireland through year-long programmes of live performances, schools and educational projects, broadcasts, recordings and new commissions. World-class conductors associated with the orchestra's early days were Jean Martinon, Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt, Edmond Appia, Milan Horvat, Sir John Barbirolli and Tibor Paul. Distinguished guest artists and composers with whom it has worked include Josef Szigeti, Isaac Stern, Henryk Szeryng, Ruggiero Ricci, Wilhelm Kempff, Julius Katchen, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Martha Argerich, Radu Lupu, Joan Sutherland, Bernadette Greevy, Angela Gheorghiu, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, Mstislav Rostropovich, Paul Tortelier, Sir James Galway, Constantin Silvestri, Sir Charles Groves, Witold Lutosławski, Olivier Messiaen, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Steve Reich, Arvo Pärt and Bill Whelan. The orchestra has been critically acclaimed for recordings across labels including Naxos, BIS, Claves, Toccata Classics and RTÉ lyric fm. They include the Composers of Ireland series and recordings of selected orchestral works by Aloys Fleischmann, Frederick May and Seán Ó Riada. www.nch.ie

Jean-Luc Tingaud



Photo: Jean-Baptiste Millot

Jean-Luc Tingaud (b. 1969) studied with the French conductor Manuel Rosenthal. Notable opera engagements have included *Pénélope* and *Le Roi malgré lui* (Wexford Festival Opera), *Roméo et Juliette* (Arena di Verona), *Faust* (Macerata), *The Turn of the Screw* (Lille), *Dialogues des Carmélites*, *La Bohème* and *Madama Butterfly* (Pittsburgh), *La Fille du régiment* (Madrid), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Prague National Theatre), *Les Pêcheurs de perles* (English National Opera), Spontini's *Fernand Cortez* (Florence), *L'Ange de Nisida* (Donizetti Opera festival, Bergamo), *Carmen* (Tokyo) and *Lakmé* (Beijing). Orchestras he has conducted include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica Arturo Toscanini, the Warsaw and Kraków Philharmonics, Orchestre National des Pays de la Loire, Orchestre National de Lyon, Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra, the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin

and the orchestras of the Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa and the Teatro Massimo, Palermo. His recordings include *Sapho* (Wexford), *Werther* (Martina Franca), *La Voix humaine* (Compiègne) and *Le Siège de Corinthe* (Bad Wildbad) and, most recently for Naxos, works by Dukas (8.573296), Bizet (8.573344), D'Indy (8.573522), Poulenc (8.573739), Franck (8.573955), Massenet (8.574178) and the Franck and Chausson symphonies (8.574536). www.jeanlucatingaud.com

Gabriel Fauré is best known for his *Requiem* and *Pavane*, but these are not typical of an output that focused largely on solo piano pieces, songs and chamber music, many of which were orchestrated by others. His *Violin Concerto* was never completed but the surviving first movement reveals Fauré's characteristic playfulness with rhythm and harmony. The short prelude to *Pénélope*, Fauré's only opera, conveys the sombre and passionate moods of its heroine, heard here alongside favourites such as the poignant *Élégie*, the beloved *Dolly* and, famous among flautists, the distinguished *Fantaisie*.



Gabriel FAURÉ (1845–1924)

Orchestral Works

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|--|--|
| 1 <i>Pénélope – Prélude</i> (1913) 7:49 | 6 <i>Fantaisie, Op. 79</i> (1898) (orch. Louis Aubert [1877–1968], 1957) 5:11 |
| 2 <i>Violin Concerto, Op. 14 – I. Allegro</i> (1878–79, unfinished) 14:50 | Dolly, Op. 56 – Six Pièces pour Piano à quatre mains (1893–96) (orch. Henri Rabaud [1873–1949], 1906) 15:40 |
| 3 <i>Berceuse, Op. 16</i> (1878–79, orch. 1880) 3:30 | 7 No. 1. <i>Berceuse: Allegretto moderato</i> 2:46 |
| 4 <i>Élégie, Op. 24</i> (1880, orch. pub 1901) 6:20 | 8 No. 2. <i>Mi-a-ou: Allegro vivo</i> 1:53 |
| 5 <i>Romance in B flat major, Op. 28</i> (1877) (orch. Philippe Gaubert [1879–1941], 1913) 5:50 | 9 No. 3. <i>Le Jardin de Dolly: Andantino</i> 2:36 |
| | 10 No. 4. <i>Kitty-Valse: Tempo di valse</i> 2:35 |
| | 11 No. 5. <i>Tendresse: Andante</i> 3:43 |
| | 12 No. 6. <i>Le Pas espagnol: Allegro</i> 2:07 |

Pierre Fouchenneret, Violin **2** **3** **5**

Martin Johnson, Cello **4** • Catriona Ryan, Flute **6**

National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland

Jean-Luc Tingaud

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Cover: *Penelope at her Loom*, attributed to Sidney Harold Meteyard (1868–1947)

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