

Romantic Piano Encores



**Kenneth Hamilton plays *Romantic Piano Encores*
Grainger, Godowsky, Mendelssohn and more...
Prima Facie PFCD160**

Prima Facie is delighted to present its latest release: *Kenneth Hamilton Plays Romantic Piano Encores*. Hamilton writes:

“This is an album of pieces I’ve long loved to play. It’s also a paradox: encores without a preceding programme; musical icing without the cake. But the tracks here were at least recorded as “encores”—played in joyful relaxation and relief towards the end of sessions largely devoted to other albums. Some of the pieces are pretty short, including the premiere recording of the elegant arrangement of Saint-Saëns’ *Swan* by one of my teachers, the late Lawrence Glover. Three of them – Mendelssohn’s quirky “Last Rose of Summer”, Grainger’s luscious *Rosenkavalier Ramble*, and Ignaz Friedman’s fabulous version of *Voices of Spring* – are fairly substantial, and the anchors of the programme. The final track (Godowsky’s *Symphonic Metamorphosis on the “Artist’s Life” Waltz*) is even longer. It’s really too long, I admit, to be an encore in a public concert, but it’s undeniably a lot of fun, and makes a great close for a CD. Hopefully, listeners will be both shaken and stirred.”

Kenneth Hamilton

Described by the *Moscow Kommersant* as “an outstanding virtuoso – one of the finest players of his generation”, by Tom Service in the *Guardian* as “pianist, author, lecturer and all-round virtuoso”, and by Stefan Pieper in *Klassik Heute* as a “pianist, scholar, maverick thinker and philosopher”, Kenneth Hamilton is well-known internationally as a recitalist and recording artist of originality and emotional depth. His CDs have attracted both critical acclaim and a large number of listeners worldwide. His best-selling *After the Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (Oxford University Press) is one of the most influential books on piano performance in recent decades.

Hamilton is deeply grateful for his pianistic training in Scotland with Lawrence Glover and Ronald Stevenson, experience that later informed his recordings of Stevenson’s music. He has appeared frequently on radio and television in Britain, the US, Germany, France, Canada, Australia, Turkey, Singapore, Thailand, China and Russia, including a performance of Chopin’s first piano concerto with the Istanbul Chamber Orchestra on Turkish Television, and a dual role as pianist and presenter for the television programme *Mendelssohn in Scotland*, broadcast by *Deutsche Welle* Channel. He is a familiar artist on BBC Radio 3, Radio 4 and the World Service, and a keen communicator. His recent BBC Radio 3 broadcast *My Life in Music: “Now, O now, I needs must part”*, was described by Sir Nicholas Kenyon in *The Observer* as “Revelatory... touching... a personal story of loss and death that reaches out from the radio. That is what broadcasting is all about.”

Hamilton’s recordings for the *Prima Facie* label: *Kenneth Hamilton Plays Ronald Stevenson Volumes 1 and 2*; *Back to Bach: Tributes and Transcriptions by Liszt, Rachmaninov and Busoni*; *Preludes to Chopin*; and *More Preludes to Chopin* have enjoyed outstanding reviews: “played with understanding and brilliance” (Andrew McGregor, BBC Radio 3 *Record Review*); “an unmissable disk... fascinating music presented with power, passion and precision” (Colin Clarke, *Fanfare*); “precise control and brilliance” (Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*); “thrilling” (Jeremy Nicholas, *Gramophone*); “a gorgeous recording and excellent performance” (Jack Sullivan, *American Record Guide*). He has also made the premiere recording of John Casken’s *Six Wooded Pieces* for the album *Stolen Airs* (“a terrific disc”, *Fanfare*).

Hamilton's Chopin and Stevenson CDs respectively reached top 10 and top 20 positions in the UK Classical Charts. *Preludes to Chopin* was especially popular, streamed online nearly a million times; *More Preludes to Chopin* was chosen as one of *Spotify's* "Best Classical New Releases". Hamilton's Chopin has attracted especial attention for the originality of its performance style. For Dr Chang Tou Liang of the *Singapore Straits Times* it encourages "a new way of listening to Chopin". Stefan Pieper (*Klassik Heute*) commented: "Hamilton's approach to Chopin ignores the pianistic fashions of today's music market, challenges the dogmas of historical performance practice, and offers an entire palette of new and intriguing experiences." James Manheim (*AllMusic*) wrote: "The commercial success of this release shows how strongly audiences hunger for fresh interpretations of mainstream repertory, and a fresh interpretation is exactly what you get." Ralph Locke (*ArtsFuse*) concluded "This is real music-making, not subservient reciting from a sacred text. Hamilton's Chopin could change your whole attitude toward the role of the performer in classical music."

Forthcoming releases include Volumes 1 and 2 of *Kenneth Hamilton Plays Liszt*, and the next instalments of Hamilton's Stevenson and Chopin series.

Audio Samples:

Track 7: Percy Grainger, *Rosenkavalier Ramble*: Opening to 1'26"

Track 9: Johann Strauss/Ignaz Friedman, *Voices of Spring*: Opening to 1'34"

Track 11: Camille Saint-Saëns/Lawrence Glover: *The Swan*: Opening to 0'58"

available at https://primafacie.ascrecords.com/romantic_piano_encores.html

Full Track Listing:

1. J. S. Bach/Alexander Siloti: Prelude in b minor (2'49")
2. John Dowland/Percy Grainger: "Now, O now, I needs must part" (3'46")
3. J. S. Bach/Charles Valentin Alkan: *Siciliano* (2'03")
4. Felix Mendelssohn: Fantasy on the Irish Air "The Last Rose of Summer" (7'19")
5. Percy Grainger: Irish Tune from County Derry (3'38")
6. Robert Schumann/Franz Liszt: *Widmung* (3'24")
7. Richard Strauss/Percy Grainger: *Rosenkavalier Ramble* (6'42")
8. Percy Grainger: *Colonial Song* (5'51")
9. Johann Strauß/Ignaz Friedman: *Voices of Spring* Waltz (9'39")
10. Edward Elgar: *In Smyrna* (3'35")
11. Camille Saint-Saëns/Lawrence Glover: *The Swan** (2'09")
12. Ignaz Paderewski: Nocturne in Bb major, op. 16 no. 4 (4'00")
13. Peter Tchaikovsky/Sergei Rachmaninov: Lullaby (4'50")
14. Leopold Godowsky: *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Johann Strauss's 'Artist's Life' Waltz* (14'55")

* First Recording

Total running time: 74'46"

Recorded at Cardiff University School of Music on 26/1/19, 21/8/19, 26/1/20 and 25/9/20.

Recording Producer: Stephen Plews

Recording Editor: Philip Hardman

Piano: Hamburg Steinway Model D

Piano Preparation: Ulrich Gerhartz

Piano technicians: Kait Farbon and Gavin Crooks

Album Cover: John William Waterhouse (1849-1917): *Pandora*

CD Booklet editing: Monika Hennemann

Photo of Kenneth Hamilton: Andrew Bi

