



Alexandre BOËLY

PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE

24 PIÈCES DIVERSES POUR PIANO DIVISÉES EN DEUX SUITES, OP. 20
IV SUITES POUR PIANO COMPOSÉES DANS LE STYLE
DES ANCIENS MAÎTRES, OP. 16: SUITE IV IN F MINOR
QUARANTE PIÈCES D'ÉTUDE, OP. 13: NO. 6
TRENTÉ ÉTUDES, OP. 6: NOS. 11 AND 20
CAPRICE, OP. 7

Stephanie McCallum

ALEXANDRE BOËLY Piano Music, Volume One

24 Pièces diverses pour piano divisées en 2 suites, Op. 20

Première Suite

21:53

- | | | |
|----------|--|------|
| ① No. 1 | <i>Allegretto moderato</i> | 3:24 |
| ② No. 2 | Romance (<i>Andante</i>) | 1:28 |
| ③ No. 3 | <i>Andantino</i> | 1:15 |
| ④ No. 4 | Scherzo (<i>Allegro moderato</i>) | 1:45 |
| ⑤ No. 5 | <i>Prélude</i> | 1:09 |
| ⑥ No. 6 | <i>Andante sostenuto con espressione</i> | 1:14 |
| ⑦ No. 7 | Romance (<i>Andantino</i>) | 1:21 |
| ⑧ No. 8 | <i>Allegretto con moto</i> | 1:15 |
| ⑨ No. 9 | <i>Allegretto</i> | 3:08 |
| ⑩ No. 10 | <i>Prélude (Andante)</i> | 1:30 |
| ⑪ No. 11 | <i>Allegretto grazioso</i> | 2:02 |
| ⑫ No. 12 | <i>Allegretto scherzando</i> | 2:10 |

IV Suites pour piano composées dans le style des anciens Maîtres, Op. 16

Suite IV in F minor

14:45

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|------|
| ⑬ I | <i>Fuga a 2 soggetti: Moderato</i> | 6:06 |
| ⑭ II | <i>Largo</i> | 4:16 |
| ⑮ III | <i>Polacca</i> | 4:21 |

24 Pièces diverses pour piano divisées en 2 suites, Op. 20

Deuxième Suite

31:32

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|------|
| ⑯ No. 13 | Romance (<i>Con espressione</i>) | 3:22 |
| ⑰ No. 14 | <i>Moderato con espressione</i> | 1:39 |
| ⑱ No. 15 | <i>Tempo di menuetto</i> | 3:20 |
| ⑲ No. 16 | <i>Danse villageoise (Allegro)</i> | 2:40 |
| ⑳ No. 17 | <i>Andante</i> | 1:39 |

21	No. 18	Scherzo and Trio (<i>Allegro</i>)	2:44
22	No. 19	<i>Larghetto affettuoso</i>	3:46
23	No. 20	<i>Allegro con vivacità</i>	1:54
24	No. 21	<i>Andantino con moto</i>	1:55
25	No. 22	Gavotte (<i>Allegretto grazioso</i>)	3:23
26	No. 23	<i>Marche des pèlerins (Tempo moderato)</i>	2:33
27	No. 24	<i>Allegro vivace e scherzando</i>	2:36
28	<i>Caprice pour le piano, Op. 7: Allegro grazioso</i>		5:48
<i>Trente études, Op. 6</i>			
29	No. 11	in E minor (<i>Allegro vivace</i>)	1:08
30	No. 20	in C minor (<i>Con fuoco</i>)	1:57
<i>Quarante pièces d'étude, Op. 13</i>			
31	No. 6	in E flat minor (<i>Allegro con fuoco</i>)	1:38
			TT 79:08

Stephanie McCallum, piano (Érard, Paris, 1853)

FIRST RECORDINGS

ALEXANDRE BOËLY: PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE

by Stephanie McCallum

A perfect musical writer, a theoretician of method, Boëly had this bizarre originality of seeking to live in the past.

Camille Saint-Saëns¹

Around the luminaries of the early Romantic period of pianist-composers, there was a wider environment of musicians which nourished them. Alexandre Pierre François Boëly (1785–1858), still half-remembered today as a fine composer of organ works, has been largely forgotten as pianist-composer. Part of the reason may have been that he was more a piano pedagogue than high-profile piano performer. His close colleague Pierre Baillot, one of the major French violin teachers of the day, regarded Boëly highly as a teacher of the piano, calling him ‘one of the best in Paris.’² More broadly, Boëly’s pianistic style was founded on his reverence for the past rather than excitement about the future. He avoided exploration of the new pianistic possibilities that drew such strong attention to the works of Chopin, Liszt, Alkan and Brahms. Although his range of piano music is extensive and was much admired by some of his contemporaries, it focused on the cultivation of old forms and traditional musical virtues. Saint-Saëns, who regarded Boëly as the French Bach, praised his devotion to the style of the old masters, and the masterful fugues he produced in homage to this style.³ He was valued as a refiner rather than a path-breaker. Posterity has largely accepted this view, and performance of his highly crafted pieces has languished.

¹ Cited in Georges Favre, ‘La musique française de piano entre 1810 et 1830: L’Œuvre d’Hérolde et de Boëly’, *Revue de musicologie*, Tome 31, Nos. 89/92 (1949), p. 72.

² Brigitte François-Sappey, preface to *Alexandre Pierre François Boëly: Dix études Romantiques pour le piano extraites des Trente études*, Op. 6, Édition Henry Lemoine, Paris, 1988.

³ Amédée Gastoué and Anselm Hughes, ‘A Great French Organist, Alexandre Boëly, and His Works’, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 1944, p. 339 (www.jstor.org/stable/739481).

Boëly was born in Versailles on 19 April 1785 to a court-musician father, Jean-François Boëly (1739–1814), who was noted for his spirited defence of the rules of counterpoint and his strong admiration for great musicians of the past, especially Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683–1764). He acted as Alexandre's first teacher, embedding strong conservative musical values in his son. Boëly went on to study piano with noted composer-teachers Ignace Ladurner and Mme de Montgeroult.⁴ He was admired as a pianist and had much success with his early publications of piano études and caprices. His dedications of his études to Friedrich Kalkbrenner (a fellow student at the Paris Conservatoire) and to the renowned Johann Baptist Cramer show affinity with a generation composing for the new piano, where the étude was emerging as a pianistic counterpart to the existing technical display genre for strings, the caprice. Boëly was first and foremost a pianist, but one with a real fondness for the music of earlier keyboard instruments. As such, he provides a link between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, as Brigitte François-Sappey suggests, created the most substantial body of French music for the fast-developing piano in France before the work of Alkan.⁵ Boëly also occupied important positions as organist in Paris, first at Saint Gervais (1834–38) and later (1840–51) at the historic church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, introducing Bach's complex style to Paris against some resistance. His final years, though, were passed as a modest and hard-working piano teacher and, despite the success of his early publications, and later his own financing of the publication of some works, about half of his piano music remained unpublished at his death. Along with this extensive but largely unknown output of piano music, there was also organ and religious music, for which he is still admired, as well as some chamber and vocal music.

The music for solo piano runs to several hundred short pieces. It includes the two early Sonatas, Op. 1, published in 1810; *Trente Caprices ou Pièces d'étude*, Op. 2; the 30 études of Op. 6 and 40 of Op. 13 (in two books); the *Caprice*, Op. 7; *IV Suites pour piano composées dans le style des anciens Maîtres*, Op. 16; *24 Pièces diverses pour*

⁴ Paul Fromageot, *Un disciple de Bach: Pierre-François Boëly (1785–1858)*, L. Bernard, Versailles, 1909, p. 8.

⁵ Brigitte François-Sappey, *Alexandre P. F. Boëly 1785–1858: ses ancêtres, sa vie, son œuvre, son temps*, Aux amateurs de livre, Paris, 1989.

le piano divisées en 2 suites, Op. 20; the *Fantaisie*, Op. 21 (dedicated to Saint-Saëns); 24 *Pièces*, Op. 22, in two books; and posthumous publications of collections of *pièces caractéristiques* grouped into thirteen opus numbers. This recording brings together all 24 *Pièces diverses pour piano divisées en 2 suites*, Op. 20 – small character pieces of considerable charm, possibly published with pedagogical intent, dating from across his life; the last of the *IV Suites pour piano composées dans le style des anciens Maîtres*, Op. 16 – a fine example of Boëly's masterful fugal writing; the *Caprice*, Op. 7, which shows a more extended form and more virtuosic writing; and a few of the more spectacular of Boëly's substantial output of 100 études, regarded by François-Sappey as the French counterpart to the 100 studies of Clementi's *Gradus ad Parnassum*.

The 24 *Pièces diverses pour piano divisées en 2 suites*, Op. 20, contain a range of styles and titles, many referring to eighteenth-century genres, such as Bach-style preludes, a minuet and gavotte, but equally many embodying more Romantic expressive qualities. The challenge for the performer lies in finding the depth of harmonic and formal inventiveness within an apparent naivety. Each piece is beautifully proportioned, often with a reflective coda, and the harmony sets off simplicity against imaginative moments of real subtlety, not dissimilar to the skills of Mozart in similar textures. Expressively, though, the pieces sit firmly within the Romantic sensibility and in the world of the piano rather than the fortepiano, recalling Schubert and Weber at times, but leaving the listener with a sense of Boëly's distinct musical personality.

The publisher Richault, who gathered together a bundle of pieces for publication shortly after Boëly's death, had received the *Pièces*, Op. 20, from him in 1857, just the year before. The **Première Suite** of Op. 20, however, comprises some of Boëly's earliest music, dating from around 1800, when he was still in his teenage years. As might be expected from a set drawn together from disparate periods, the keys, though drawn from a narrow, closely related group, show no structured pattern.

No. 1 (*Allegro moderato*) in A minor 1 is in Classical minuet-and-trio form, with the central section, in the tonic major, taking on the minuet character, regarded at the time as more formal and respectable, whereas the outer sections are in the more seductive waltz style, seen as more modern, even at times scandalous. The coda, moving through

D minor to a forceful tonic pedal point and brilliant cadence, exemplifies Boëly's ability to draw together simple threads with cumulative impact. No. 2, Romance (*Andante*) in C major [2], sings over a gentle broken-chord accompaniment, then closes with a *ritornello*, sounding quasi-improvised, like the ubiquitous piano preludes of the period. A sense of urgency characterises No. 3, *Andantino*, in A minor [3], as hand-crossing around a central murmuring texture creates a duet. A simple ternary form is cleverly augmented by a false reprise, inserting five bars before the true thematic return (Ex. 1).

Ex. 1

The image shows a musical score for a piano piece, likely a variation or exercise. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The piece begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides a broken-chord accompaniment. A bracket spans the first four measures. The dynamics then increase through a *cresc.* (crescendo) to a forte (*f*) dynamic. The piece concludes with a *ritornello* section, characterized by a more rhythmic and repetitive melodic pattern in the right hand.

No. 4, Scherzo, in E flat major [4], has a boisterous, Beethovenian quality, peppered with syncopated accents, sudden dynamic changes and detailed articulation enhancing irregularity. Bass octaves and showers of chords build momentum and approach the virtuosic textures of Weber.

A new group begins with the placid No. 5, *Prélude* in C in the style of Bach [5]. Its consistent texture, modified towards the *Adagio* close, is mirrored in the darkly brooding No. 6, *Andante sostenuto con espressione* in D minor [6]. One of the most tender and chromatically decorative pieces of the suite follows with No. 7, Romance (*Andantino*) in A major [7], which is in a simple ternary form with coda. As with many of these pieces, there are frequent changes of mood and dynamics in its 37 bars, with very detailed directions from *Dolce* to *rinforzando* accents. No. 8 (*Allegretto con moto*) in A [8] returns to an impetuous minor tonality only to flip to the major for its second half, interpolating an anxious reminder before the calm cadence (Ex. 2).

Ex. 2

No. 9, *Allegretto* in G major [9], returns to the waltz in more expansive form. Its central trio section, in C major, is alluded to texturally in the coda, where changes of register are used to sweep the music along energetically to a brilliant close.

The final group of the set begins with No. 10, *Prélude (Andante)* [10], recalling the previous Bach-style prelude (No. 5), likewise in C major; but this time there is a quality of Romantic ardour, quickly dissipated in a closing cadential figure repeated three times in descending octave registers. The waltzing ternary form of the substantial No. 11, *Allegretto grazioso* in F major [11], is extended by a cadenza-like flourish before the return and by an elaborate coda with decorated repeats and exciting cadential bars across a five-octave range. The final No. 12, *Allegretto scherzando* in G minor [12], is ruminative, with matching sections at the introduction and close, a lyrical theme marked *Dolce* and a contrasting trio section in the tonic major. After the introduction, the whole piece is marked to be repeated *ad libitum*, creating a major/minor alternation as well as an alternation between *dolce* lyricism and *minore scherzando* styles. This recording has been restrained to a single repeat.

Between the two *Suites* of Op. 20 comes an example of Boëly's unusual pre-occupation with contrapuntal music in the style of Bach, and with Baroque-style dance suites. In a letter to a friend⁶ he describes these suites for piano as being like Bach,

⁶ Letter of 5 February 1854, published in Michel Brenet, 'Boëly et ses œuvres de piano', *Revue SIM*, May 1914, p. 22, quoted in Favre, *loc. cit.*

Handel and Scarlatti. The *Suite IV* in F minor is the last of a set of *IV Suites dans le style des anciens Maîtres*, Op. 16, published by Boëly himself in 1854. It is actually one of seven suites from the same period, with three other similar suites later published posthumously by Richault but broken up among collections of other pieces. The fourth suite is unusual in starting with what Boëly calls ‘a rather long fugue in F minor with two subjects.’⁷ The beauty and cogent construction of the *Fuga a 2 soggetti* [13] could be mistaken for Bach himself – although the piece is clearly conceived not as harpsichord music but for a performer who has the sense of the keyboard sound intrinsic to the piano, which invites shapely *legato* playing and carefully contrasted voicing of individual lines. The fugue is followed by a highly contrapuntal and serene *Largo* in A flat major [14] which develops considerable expressive intensity. The suite ends with an enjoyably catchy *Polacca* [15], described by the composer as ‘perhaps recalling the style of Emmanuel Bach, so different to that of his father.’⁸ It makes fine use of the rich and clear bass of the Érard instrument recorded here.

The **Deuxième Suite** of Op. 20 begins with a Romance from around 1830, with the remainder composed in the years 1848–54.⁹ The pieces are a little more extended than those of the Première Suite and can similarly be roughly grouped. In this Suite they fall into three groups of four, each group corresponding in mood and pulse to the contrasting styles often found in the movements of a sonata.

No. 13, a Romance (*Con espressione*) in F major [16], is in ternary form, with the contrasting central section marked *Capriccio presto assai*. After an *ad libitum* link, the return of the theme is decorated with limping syncopations, building to strong syncopated octaves which accelerate to a coda marked *Come d’un prelude (sic)*, with the final bars *Adagio*. For the performer these small pieces contain many precise mood and tempo details which are particularly suited to the clarity of nuance obtainable on an historic Érard piano such as is used in this recording. The quasi-*Prelude* style is maintained in No. 14, *Moderato con espressione* in C major [17], with a duet texture

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ François-Sappey, *Alexandre P. F. Boëly, op. cit.*, p. 339.

and rippling semiquaver harmonies. No. 15, *Tempo di menuetto* in G major [18], is an authentically Baroque-style minuet, with the central trio section in the tonic minor. Its decorative elegance is enhanced by clever dovetailing of the thematic return within the outer major-key sections (Ex. 3).

Ex. 3

The image shows a musical score for a minuet in G major. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff for the right hand and a bass clef staff for the left hand. The music is in 3/4 time. The score is divided into three sections by double bar lines. The first section is in G major and features a melodic line in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. The second section is in G minor and is marked 'trio'. It features a more complex, rippling semiquaver accompaniment in the left hand and a melodic line in the right hand. The third section returns to G major and features a melodic line in the right hand and a simple accompaniment in the left hand. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

No. 16, *Danse villageoise* (*Allegro*), also in G major [19], brings the first group to a rousing close. It is described by François-Sappéy as ‘a kind of pair of *Bourrées*’.¹⁰ The central section is again in the tonic minor and moves away from the pastoral drones of the outer section to sparkling semiquaver movement, first in the right hand, then the left and eventually in both simultaneously. The final *Diminuendo e ritardando* (*sic*) allows this rustic scene to fade into the distance.

The next group begins in extreme simplicity with No. 17, *Andante* in A major [20], a lyrical binary form with a short coda which reiterates the opening idea above a sparse arpeggio. No. 18, *Scherzo and Trio* (*Allegro*) which follows [21], moves adventurously to the unrelated key of E flat major, with a serene A flat major in the *segue* trio section, which is marked *sempre legato con espressione*. This Scherzo is reminiscent of Weber, with quirky cross-rhythms embedded throughout and with a strategically held pedal point before the return of the theme (Ex. 4). The undulating arpeggio harmonies and soaring scales of the trio are more reminiscent of Schubert than Weber and are echoed in a similar section in A flat in the large-scale *Caprice*, Op. 7 [28].

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 339.

Ex. 4

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking and contains a melodic line with chromatic movement. The bass staff provides harmonic support with chords and a single note. The instruction "sempre crescendo" is written above the treble staff. The second system also has two staves. The treble staff continues the melodic line, and the bass staff features a long, sustained pedal point. Dynamic markings include *ff* (fortissimo), *dim.* (diminuendo), and *p* (piano).

No. 19, *Larghetto affettuoso* in C minor [22], strikes a tragic pose, with warmly chromatic lines threading over and around strong, simple progressions. The ternary form features a dramatic pause of a full bar before the return of the main theme and the final close over a long pedal-point bass. Again the sonority of the Érard piano on this recording allows a lyrical and unclouded lower line to sing with the same clarity as the soprano part. No. 20, *Allegro con vivacità* in C [23], switches to the major for an angular two-part invention which allows first the upper part and then the lower to lead complex contrapuntal imitation in a Baroque-style binary form with repeats.

The lyrical side of Scarlatti's style is recalled by No. 21, *Andantino con moto* in A minor [24], which begins the final group. Flowing compound-time quavers move between the hands in a simple ternary form. No. 22, Gavotte (*Allegretto grazioso*) in B flat major [25], is in a complex *ritornello* form, with four contrasting sections interpolated between the returning gavotte theme which, on its penultimate appearance, transforms into a lush D flat major with richly chromatic accompanying arpeggios. A timid minor-key version follows, abruptly changing to forthright brilliance, before the final

statement of the simple opening idea. As with several of the pieces recorded here, this piece seems to wrestle with Baroque traditions in a Romantic context. No. 23, *Marche des pèlerins* (*Tempo moderato*) in F major [26], is a miniature in a genre popular in the period, the Pilgrims' March, although the best-known examples of this type, such as those in Berlioz's *Harold en Italie* or Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, are rather more grandiose. It is interesting to compare this one with Alkan's *Chants*, Book 2, Op. 38, No. 4, *Procession-Nocturne*,¹¹ which has similar qualities of a ritualised march with pious intent but key-changes that suggest that the way ahead for the pilgrims is not clear. Boëly's simpler march is interrupted by two moments of prayer marked *più lento e sostenuto* and a coda where the marchers disappear into the distance over a pedal-point F. The suite ends with a substantial and brilliant waltz, No. 24, *Allegro vivace e scherzando* in G major [27], in a ternary form with extended coda. In the outer sections each return of the theme coyly creeps in from a prolonged dominant seventh, which takes a full eight bars to reach its tonic chord. The more forceful central section in the tonic minor has virtuosic scales across all registers and a cadenza-like passage before returning to a brilliantly varied main theme and a coda marked *con fuoco*, revelling in harmonically inventive contrary-motion arpeggios.

The *Caprice pour le piano*, Op. 7 [28], was published by Boëly himself at some point between 1830 and 1842, and then brought out commercially in 1843. Larger-scale caprices such as this one, as opposed to the study-like pieces of that title in Boëly's Op. 2, were popular at this period as bravura showpieces. Some of the best known are Mendelssohn's *Trois Fantaisies ou Caprices*, Op. 16 (1829), and his *Trois Caprices*, Op. 33 (1833–35). Contemporary French examples include Alkan's highly virtuosic Opp. 12, 13, 15 and 16, originally published as *Douze Grands Caprices ou Études* (1837).

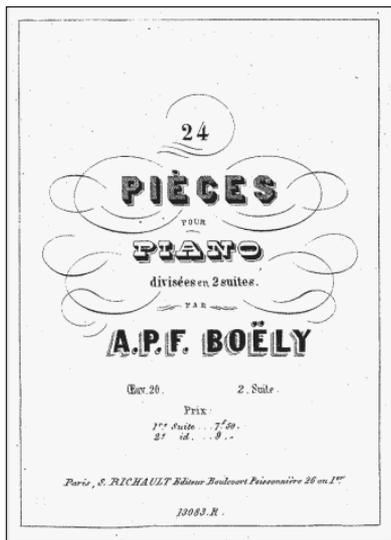
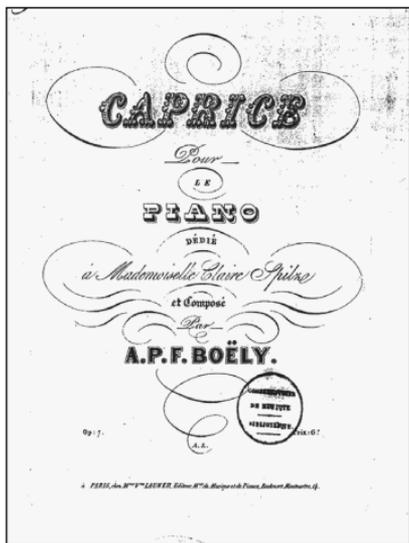
Boëly's *Caprice* shows a sense of fun and inventiveness that never relies on fashionable or perfunctory bravura. It uses an innovatively extended variant of scherzo-and-trio form with coda:

¹¹ Recorded on Toccata Classics TOCC 0157.

- *Capriccio: Allegro grazioso* in A flat major
- *Cantabile con molta espressione* in A flat minor
- return of original *Capriccio* section in the major, but transformed from triple time to duple and from *Allegro grazioso* to *Allegro vivace*
- extended coda recapitulating the original *Capriccio* and *Cantabile* themes and capped with *Allegro con fuoco* cadential bars.

The *Capriccio* section moves from placid waltz to more virtuosic material with rhythms constructed in twos across the triple metre. Sweeping arpeggios spanning the range of the piano create the transitional moments between sections. The haunting, Schubertian lyricism of the *Cantabile* moves from A flat minor to C flat major, switching enharmonically to B major for an adventurous series of modulations before returning to A flat minor. It builds to a climax of emotional intensity, marked *con anima*, before fading to a *pianissimo* A flat chord to link to the *Allegro vivace* return of the varied *Capriccio*. Here the energetic momentum of the passagework combines with wide left-hand leaps in a texture of impish virtuosity. The final coda section returns to the original *dolce* and *grazioso* character, with the return of the expressive *Cantabile* theme transformed from minor to a serene major before the final burst of *con fuoco* octaves, arpeggios and scales in thirds and sixths.

The études which conclude this recording are from two different collections and are dedicated to two gatekeepers of a conservative tradition of pianism, Friedrich Kalkbrenner and Johann Baptist Cramer, holding their own alongside the revelatory innovations of Chopin and Liszt. The two studies from the *Trente études*, Op. 6, show the pre-occupation with fingerwork typical of Kalkbrenner. The later étude chosen from the *Quarante pièces d'étude*, Op. 13, develops the free use of the forearms and moves beyond Cramer's style in the main theme to textures, if not harmonies, closer to those of Liszt. Boëly's *Étude*, Op. 6, No. 11 in E minor (*Allegro vivace*) (1824) ^[29], is notable, as with many Alkan études, for the equal treatment of difficult double notes in each hand and then with both hands in combination. The warmth and clarity of the bass on the Érard piano recorded here allows this dense texture to be heard to advantage.



The covers of Boëly's *Opp. 7 and 24*

The *Étude*, Op. 6, No. 20, in C minor (*Con fuoco*) (1825) [30], is less concerned with retaining equal problems in right and left hands. The right hand has to negotiate rapid scale-passages while also holding sustained notes, a technique often required of organists where there is no sustaining pedal. These scalic runs with thumbs occupied elsewhere are reminiscent of the challenges in Alkan's A major *Étude*, Op. 35, No. 1 (1848). This coupling of sustained notes and rapid scales is only rarely included by Boëly in the left hand, retaining clarity in the low register. Brigitte François-Sappey writes that the *Étude*, Op. 13, No. 6, in E flat minor (*Allegro con fuoco*) (1831) [31], 'carries

a flood of tempestuous chords and powerful octaves.¹² It also includes the challenges encountered in the previous studies of wide leaps, fast scales with only a few fingers available to play them, and awkward left-hand passage-work covering a wide range. The ternary form moves to B major for the central section, with startling harmonic leaps to match the physical leaps required in the contrary-motion chordal bravura.

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Described by Anthony Clarke in *The Bulletin* as ‘one of Australia’s foremost pianists’, **Stephanie McCallum** enjoys an international career, appearing on over forty CDs (including twenty solo discs) and also making live solo and concerto performances. Playing a repertoire from the eighteenth to the 21st century, she is especially noted for her performances of virtuosic music of the nineteenth century, particularly the music of Liszt and Alkan, and also for her advocacy of demanding contemporary solo and ensemble scores.

Stephanie McCallum is Associate Professor in piano at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music of the University of Sydney, where she herself studied with Alexander Sverjensky and with the noted Liszt player, Gordon Watson. After advanced studies in England with the Alkan authority Ronald Smith, she made her Wigmore Hall debut in 1982, when she gave what is believed to be the first performance of Alkan’s *Chants*, Op. 70. She is also credited with the first complete performance of Alkan’s *Trois Grandes Études*, Op. 76, in London. Her live performances of the Concerto, the Symphony and other works from Alkan’s *Douze études dans les tons mineurs*, Op. 39, have been described by critics as ‘titanic’, ‘awe-inspiring’, ‘stupendous’, ‘virtuosic pianism of the highest calibre’ and ‘one of the glories of Australian pianism’.



¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 337.

Stephanie McCallum has appeared extensively as a soloist in Australia, France and the United Kingdom, and has toured Europe with The Alpha Centauri Ensemble. She has made many appearances as soloist in the Sydney Festival, and performed in the Brighton, Cheltenham, Huddersfield and Sydney Spring festivals. A noted exponent of contemporary music, she was a founding member of the contemporary ensembles AustraLYSIS and Sydney Alpha Ensemble and was joint artistic director of the latter from its inception. She has performed with such groups as the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Elision and The Australia Ensemble. She appears in ensemble on many CDs as well as soloist on two discs by the Sydney Alpha Ensemble: *Strange Attractions* and *Clocks*, featuring works of Elena Kats-Chernin. In 2000 she gave the world premiere of Kats-Chernin's *Displaced Dances* with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, a piano concerto written especially for her (available with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra on ABC Classics 4816430). She also performs on historic eighteenth- and nineteenth-century instruments and has recorded piano-duet music by Alkan, Meyerbeer and Moscheles on instruments from the Maison Érard with Erin Helyard.

Her solo recordings include a two-disc set of the complete piano sonatas of Weber; *Illegal Harmonies: The 20th-Century Piano*; *Perfume*, a best-selling disc of rare French piano music; two CDs of music by Liszt, *The Liszt Album* and *From the Years of Pilgrimage*; and an album of piano works by Erik Satie, entitled *Gymnopédies*. With the release in 2006 of a two-CD set of Alkan's *Douze études dans les tons mineurs*, she was the first pianist ever to have recorded both of Alkan's sets of studies in the major and the minor keys, Opp. 35 and 39. More recent releases include *A Romantic Christmas*, a album of Schumann's piano music, *Scenes from Childhood*, including the *Fantasia* in C major, Op. 17, and a Beethoven premiere recording – *Für Elise: Bagatelles for piano by Ludwig van Beethoven*. This disc contains a *Bagatelle* in F minor, probably the last piano piece that Beethoven wrote, and never previously published, performed or recorded. Her recording of the complete Alkan *Recueils de chants* for Toccata Classics (rocc 0157 and 0158) was received with universal praise: *CD Review* on BBC Radio 3 felt that the music was 'really exquisitely played by Stephanie McCallum, who really "gets" the style' [...] if you really want to get to know what this Alkan guy is all about, then Stephanie McCallum can really show you very well indeed'. She followed up these Alkan recordings with a Toccata Classics album dedicated to the piano music of Guy Ropartz (rocc 0326), about which *Fanfare* was equally enthusiastic: 'Stephanie McCallum has given us a close-to-ideal first hearing of these works. She has an extraordinary dynamic range, a keen awareness of harmonic

tension and resolution, an expansive approach to rubato, and a sophisticated understanding of Chopart's large-scale structural organization.

For a complete list of recordings please visit Stephanie's website at www.stephaniemccallum.com.



Stephanie McCallum recording the music of Alexandre Boëly in the Maison Érard in Amsterdam

Stephanie McCallum on Toccata Classics

Charles-Valentin **ALKAN**



Complete Recueils de Chants Volume One

Books 1 and 2, Op. 38
Book 3, Op. 65
Une Fusée, Op. 55



Stephanie McCallum, piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDING

TOCC 0157

Charles-Valentin **ALKAN**



Complete Recueils de Chants Volume Two

Book IV, Op. 67
Book V, Op. 70

Deux Nocturnes, Op. 57
Deux Petites Pièces, Op. 60
Chapeau bas!
Désir



Stephanie McCallum, piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDING

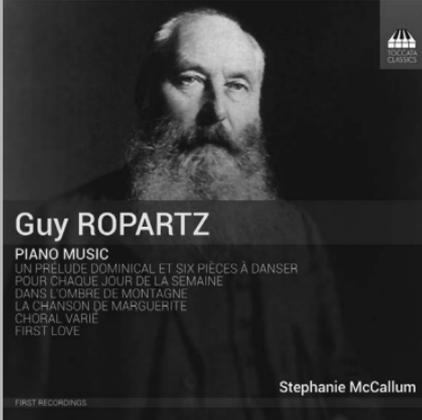
TOCC 0158

Guy **ROPARTZ**



PIANO MUSIC

UN PRÉLUDE DOMINICAL ET SIX PIÈCES À DANSER
POUR CHAQUE JOUR DE LA SEMAINE
DANS L'OMBRE DE MONTAGNE
LA CHANSON DE MARGUERITE
CHORAL VARIE
FIRST LOVE



Stephanie McCallum

FIRST RECORDINGS

TOCC 0326



Recorded on 20 and 21 December 2017 in the Maison Érard, Keizersgracht, Amsterdam
Piano tuner: Michiel Strategier
Piano technician: Frits Janmaat
Recording producer: Ralph Lane OAM
Recording engineer: Brendon Heinst, with Luuk Meijssen of trptk
Digital editing: Ralph Lane and Stephanie McCallum

My thanks go to Martin Anderson of Toccat Classics for leading me to discover this fascinating area of unknown piano music from a fertile period of major development of the instrument in Paris, and to Frits Janmaat for the use of the Maison Érard space and Érard piano from 1853, a superbly apposite choice for this disc from his inspiring collection of restored instruments.
Stephanie McCallum

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