



**Constantine Orbelian, conductor**  
**Moscow Chamber Orchestra**  
**Philharmonia of Russia**  
**Dmitry Khakhamov, violin**  
**Oleg Sergeev, flute**  
**Italian Saxophone Quartet**  
**John Aler, Donald George, tenors**  
**Grant Gershon, Lucy Mauro, pianos**



LD 04487

# LAUGH WITH CLASSICAL MUSIC

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- 1. Henri Vieuxtemps: Souvenir d'Amérique, Variations on "Yankee Doodle," Op. 17 (4:53)**  
*Dmitry Khakhamov, violin • Constantine Orbelian, conductor*  
*Moscow Chamber Orchestra*
- 2. Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (arr. Mnatsakanov): Flight of the Bumblebee (1:09)**  
*Oleg Sergeev, flute • Constantine Orbelian, conductor*  
*Moscow Chamber Orchestra*
- 3. The Green-Eyed Dragon (3:06)**  
Music by Wolseley Charles, Words by Greatrex Newman  
*John Aler, tenor • Grant Gershon, piano*
- 4. Dmitri Shostakovich: Galop (VI) from Ballet Suite No. 1 (L. Atovmian, 1949) (1:32)**  
*Constantine Orbelian, conductor • Moscow Chamber Orchestra*
- 5. Dmitri Shostakovich: Polka from *The Golden Age* (2:14)**  
*Constantine Orbelian, conductor • Moscow Chamber Orchestra*
- 6. Margaret Ruthven Lang: There Was an Old Man in a Tree, from Nonsense Rhymes and Pictures, Op. 43 (1:44)**  
Limerick by Edward Lear  
*Donald George, tenor • Lucy Mauro, piano*
- 7. Margaret Ruthven Lang: There Was an Old Person of Cassel, from Nonsense Rhymes and Pictures, Op. 43 (1:43)**  
Limerick by Edward Lear  
*Donald George, tenor • Lucy Mauro, piano*
- 8. Dmitri Shostakovich: Dance (III) from Ballet Suite No. 3 (L. Atovmian, 1952) (2:06)**  
*Constantine Orbelian, conductor • Moscow Chamber Orchestra*
- 9. Margaret Ruthven Lang: There Was an Old Man of Dumbree, from Nonsense Rhymes and Pictures, Op. 43 (1:11)**  
Limerick by Edward Lear  
*Donald George, tenor • Lucy Mauro, piano*
- 10. Dmitri Shostakovich: Humoresque-Waltz from Ballet Suite No. 1 (L. Atovmian, 1952) (2:52)**  
*Constantine Orbelian, conductor • Moscow Chamber Orchestra*
- 11. Margaret Ruthven Lang: There Was an Old Person of Jodd, from Nonsense Rhymes and Pictures, Op. 43 (1:37)**  
Limerick by Edward Lear  
*Donald George, tenor • Lucy Mauro, piano*
- 12. Aram Khachaturian: Masquerade Suite: *Galop* (2:54)**  
*Constantine Orbelian, conductor • Philharmonia of Russia*
- 13. Jean Françaix: Sérénade Comique from Petit Quatour pour Saxophones (2:06)**  
*Italian Saxophone Quartet*
- 14. Margaret Ruthven Lang: There Was an Old Lady of France, from Nonsense Rhymes and Pictures, Op. 43 (1:24)**  
Limerick by Edward Lear  
*Donald George, tenor • Lucy Mauro, piano*
- 15. Margaret Ruthven Lang: There Was a Young Lady of Parma, from Nonsense Rhymes and Pictures, Op. 43 (2:30)**  
Limerick by Edward Lear  
*Donald George, tenor • Lucy Mauro, piano*

## NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Over the years, music that we can definitely peg as humorous or comic in nature has taken many forms. We at Delos have combed through our CD catalog to identify some prime examples, and bring them to you in this collection of music that is sure to make you smile, giggle, or even laugh out loud.

Virtuoso performers have always loved to show off, and – especially in encores – have enjoyed bringing smiles to their listeners' faces with flashy antics that will both impress and amuse. One famed Belgian violin virtuoso-composer, Henri Vieuxtemps, wrote his *Souvenir d'Amérique, Variations on "Yankee Doodle,"* after his first American tour. He performed it often during later tours, prompting inevitable laughter – especially in America! Violin sorcerer Dmitry Khakhamov, performing with Constantine Orbelian and his Moscow Chamber Orchestra, delivers it to happy perfection.

Sometimes, music isn't necessarily written to be humorous – as with Rimsky-Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumblebee* – which was composed for the scene in his fairy-tale opera, *The Tale of the Tsar Saltan*, where the young hero is magically transformed into a bumblebee to help save the day. But the throngs of

youngsters – and their elders – who have enjoyed the opera (often in children's theaters) have come to think of it as funny. Flutist extraordinaire Oleg Sergeev increases the fun factor with his high-speed tempo as he joins Orbelian and company for a thrilling rendition.

Art songs have long been favored vehicles for the expression of humor. Among the several examples offered here are "The Green-Eyed Dragon," by Wolseley Charles (words by Greatrex Newman): a song that can be absolutely side-splitting, especially when royally hammed up as it is here by esteemed tenor John Aler, with deft keyboard support from Grant Gershon.

Speaking of hamming things up: Even songs from a more genteel time and place – like nineteenth-century America – often display wit and whimsy, as with the short, but highly imaginative limerick settings of newly rediscovered Boston composer Margaret Ruthven Lang. Six such "nonsense songs" from her are scattered throughout this collection. Prime examples include "There Was an Old Man in a Tree" (complete with a buzzing bee), and "There Was an Old Man from Dumbree" (who taught little owls to drink

tea). Outstanding tenor Donald George's amusing vocal sound effects and often deadpan delivery are nicely backed up by Lucy Mauro's droll renditions of Lang's excellent piano accompaniments. Kids, in particular, are sure to get quite a kick out of these as giggle-inducing alternatives to nursery rhymes.

Russian master Dmitri Shostakovich had quite a sense of humor, and didn't need words to express it – especially in his dance suites and ballets. His waltzes, polkas and galops often sound like they belong in a cartoon chase scene: like the headlong “Galop # 6” from the *Suite No. 1*. Others simply radiate general musical goofiness, as in the “Polka” from his *Golden Age* ballet). His colleague, Russian-Armenian icon Aram Khachaturian, gets in on the action with his own “Galop,” part of the suite from his incidental music to the play, *Masquerade*. Orbelian and

friends deliver these here with particular verve and comic flair.

Some instruments offer the sorts of sounds that lend themselves particularly well to comedic expression. Of such humor-friendly music-makers, the saxophone is close to the top of the list. French tunesmith Jean Françaix thought so, too – as he demonstrated in the “Comic Serenade” from his *Little Quartet for Saxophones*: rendered here to perky effect by the Italian Saxophone Quartet.

They say that laughter is the best medicine. So file this collection in your virtual medicine cabinet, and – whenever life gets you down – let Delos help you feel better!

— Lindsay Koob

#### *Laugh With Classical Music credits*

Delos Executive Producer: *Carol Rosenberger*  
Booklet editor: *Lindsay Koob*

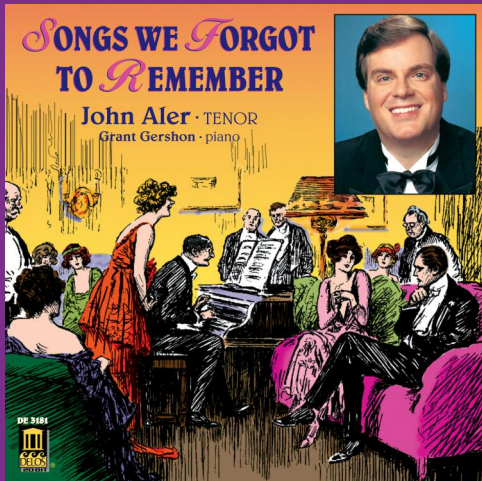
Mastering: *Matthew Snyder*  
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#### **Recording credits for original tracks**

Delos Executive Producer: *Amelia S. Haygood (tracks 1-5, 8, 10, 12, 13); Carol Rosenberger (tracks 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15)*  
Recording Producers: *Ramiro Belgardt (tracks 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12); Peter S. Myles (track 3); Donald George and Lucy Mauro (tracks 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15)*  
Recording Engineers: *John Eargle (track 3); Jeff Mee (tracks 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12); Mark Benincosa II (tracks 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15)*  
Recorded: *First Congregational Church, Los Angeles (track 3); Skywalker Sound, Marin County (tracks 1, 2); Great Hall, Moscow Conservatory, Moscow (tracks 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 10, 12); Block Hall, West Virginia University, Morgantown (tracks 6, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15); Sala Maffeiana, Verona (track 13)*



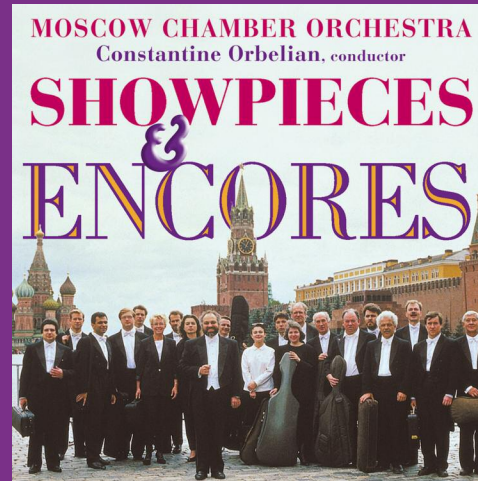
“Laugh” tracks originally from these CDs



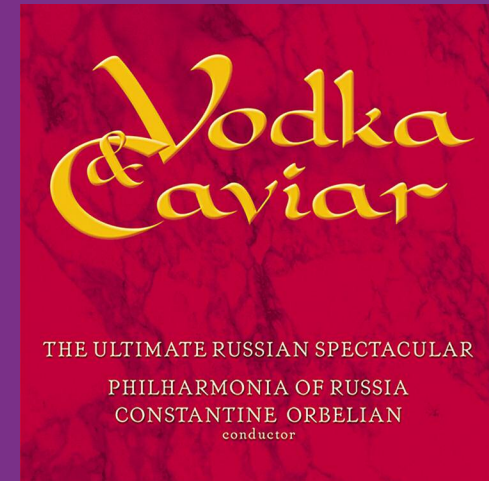
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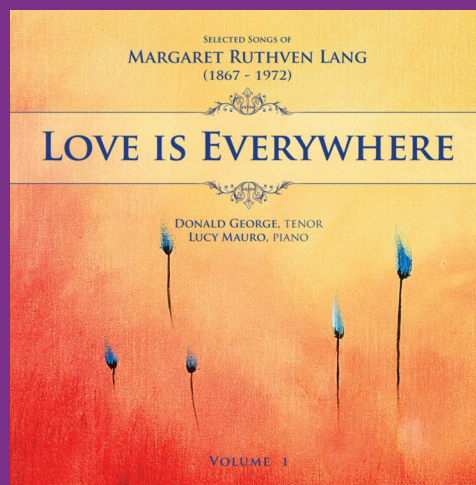
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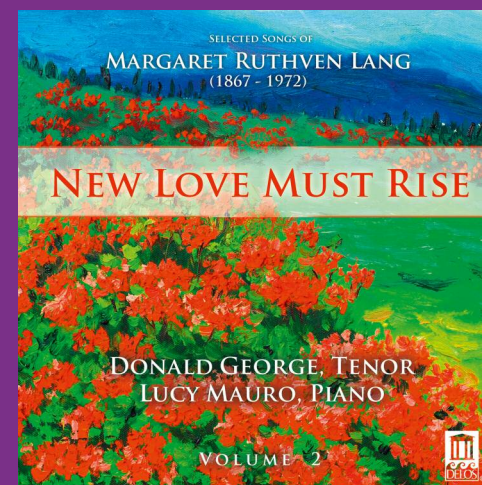
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