



CHAMPS HILL
RECORDS



KSENIJA SIDOROVA

FAIRY TALES

ACCORDION

BBC National Orchestra of Wales
Clark Rundell



I FOREWORD

The accordion was the very first instrument I played (at the age of five, thanks to my Grandmother!) and it has been my passion ever since.

Building a programme – in concert or recording – for this relatively young instrument is still a path of discovery and I believe that the repertoire on this disc shows accordion's possibilities to the full.

I found it both challenging and fascinating to record some of the most famous romantic works by Grieg, Mendelssohn and Moszkowski alongside flamboyant and glitzy original repertoire, which includes Vaclav Trojan's concerto *Fairy Tales* performed with the wonderful BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Clark Rundell.

The other original works on this disc include a *Scherzo-Toccata* by Pyotr Londonov (very popular amongst accordionists) and a new work which I was very keen to record – *Who's the Puppet?* – a result of my collaboration with a Russian composer Artem Vassiliev.

The accordion possesses unique colours like no other instrument. It can conjure a range of emotions, and brings a discovery of new characteristics or sound qualities of other instruments playing alongside. As one of the greatest musicians of all time, Mstislav Rostropovich once said: 'If cellists want to discover all the possibilities of the cello, they should play with accordion and not piano.' I have always wished to present and secure the accordion's place on the classical platform. So far it has been an unpredictable and unexpected journey during which I have had wonderful opportunities to collaborate with some of the most exciting and acclaimed musicians and ensembles such as Bryn Terfel, the Belcea String Quartet, mandolinist Avi Avital, violinist Nicola Benedetti and guitarist Milos Karadaglic amongst others.

Like never before it is indeed an exciting time to be an accordionist!

Concerto & Oblivion:
Produced by Alexander Van Ingen
Engineered and mixed by Andrew Mellor
Assisted by Huw Thomas
Edited by Dave Rowell
Recorded on 24th September 2012 at BBC Hoddinott Hall, Cardiff, UK
BBC National Orchestra of Wales
Conducted by Clark Rundell
Leader: Lesley Hatfield

Solo repertoire:
Produced & engineered by Alexander Van Ingen
Assisted by Claire Hay
Edited and mastered by Dave Rowell
Recorded on 3rd & 4th May 2012 at the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

All for SIX Music Productions (www.sixmp.net)

Photographs of Ksenija by SL Chai - Colour Blind Design

Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen
Product Manager for Champs Hill Records: John Dickinson

	MORITZ MOSZKOWSKI (1854-1925)	
1	CAPRICE ESPAGNOL (arr. F. Lips)	7'40
	VACLAV TROJAN (1907-1983)	
	FAIRY TALES CONCERTO FOR ORCHESTRA & ACCORDION	
2	Let us Dance into the Fairy Tales	2'32
3	The Sleepy Princess	3'53
4	The Magic Box	1'35
5	The Enchanted Princess, the Brave Princess & the Evil Dragon	5'11
6	The Naughty Roundabout	1'46
7	The Sailor & the Enchanted Accordion	5'49
8	The Acrobatic Fairy Tale	4'24
	ARTEM VASSILIEV (1974-)	
9	WHO'S THE PUPPET? (dedicated to Ksenija)	5'45
	EDVARD GRIEG (1843-1907)	
	HOLBERG SUITE	
10	Praeludium	2'53
11	Sarabande	3'29
12	Gavotte	3'09
13	Air	4'59
14	Rigaudon	3'25
	FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847) <i>trans. Rachmaninov</i>	
15	SCHERZO FROM A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM (arr. A. Sevast'yan)	5'00
	PETR LONDONOV (1928-1981)	
16	SCHERZO-TOCCATA	2'41
	<i>Bonus Track</i>	
	ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992)	
17	OBLIVION (arr. John Lenehan) (with Thomas Gould ~ violin)	4'25

Total playing time: **68'38**

‘What I like about mixing transcriptions with repertoire written specifically for the accordion, is that the audience has a fresh perspective on the so-called ‘old stuff’ after hearing the unexpected and unique sounds of the new. I think it aids an understanding of the contemporary repertoire too. As an accordionist you sort of have to carve your own path, so I consider it my mission in this way to introduce the instrument to a wider audience.’

Thus speaks the classical accordion’s latest and most passionate knight in shining armour, the rising Latvian star Ksenija Sidorova. And to help her here in her avowed mission of popularization, she has chosen a varied group of pieces to show off the full range and emotional power of her chosen instrument. From the quick-fingered whippy virtuosity of Mendelssohn’s familiar *Scherzo* from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, via the pulsing energy of Petr Londonov’s *Scherzo–Toccata* (a popular piece with accordionists, but little-known to wider concert audiences), to the deceptively naive and charming melodies of the *Fairy Tales* concerto by Vaclav Trojan, Sidorova has devised a programme full of humour and excitement. ‘I had an enormous amount of fun over the days of recording,’ says the accordionist.

Her recital includes two nineteenth-century showstoppers. The first of them, *Caprice Espagnol*, was composed for the piano in 1885 by Moritz Moszkowski (1854–1925), and arranged for the accordion by the Russian performer and teacher Friedrich Lips (1948–). Since, like many of the other arrangers on this disc, Lips writes for the bayan, which has rows of buttons on both sides rather than a piano keyboard for the right hand, Sidorova herself has ‘transcribed the transcription’ for her own preferred piano-accordion.

This brings us to a brief digression on the subject of her instrument. Sidorova confesses to a passion for the instruments made by the Pignini factory in Castelfidardo, Italy, and calls each of her Pigninis her ‘babies’. ‘I consider them to be the Rolls-Royce of accordions,’ she says. ‘Every instrument is handmade, and each performer can choose the features that they would like. What I particularly enjoy about the instrument I am using on this recording is its clear, bright sound.’

Now back to Moszkowski, a composer who led a rather sad life. After a meteoric early career as a performer, he suffered a series of health problems and established himself instead as a teacher and composer: the lively *Caprice Espagnol* (op.37) dates from the height of his fame and wealth. In later life he became increasingly reclusive and died in poverty. His music is now more likely to be found on library shelves than concert platforms, but a handful of light piano duets and virtuosic concert items, of which the *Caprice* is the most famous, have retained their foothold in the repertoire. Full of rat-a-tat-tat repeated notes – suggestive of the strumming of a guitar – and faux-Andalucian harmonies, the work fits comfortably into the popular late nineteenth-century tradition of exotic Iberianism.

The other showpiece in the recital is by Mendelssohn (1809–1847), who composed some incidental music for a German production of Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in 1842 (incorporating the famous Overture that he had written many years earlier as a teenager). The quicksilver orchestral *Scherzo*, with its fluttery soundworld and scampering rhythms, was intended to come between Acts 1 and 2, when the play moves from the flesh-and-blood worlds of the court and the mechanicals, to the mysterious realm of the fairies.

In 1933 Rachmaninov transcribed the piece for piano as a bravura addition to his own recital programmes. This was, in its turn, transcribed for the bayan by the Russian virtuoso Alexander Sevastian (1976–), who reclaimed Mendelssohn’s musical contrast between long-held notes (difficult to achieve on the piano) and gossamer semiquaver passages – a contrast which Rachmaninov’s adaptation had had to sacrifice. ‘In my opinion there’s one major thing which makes any transcription good. It is if the piece achieves something fresh and new because of the instrument that is playing it. And ideally it should sound as though it had been written for that instrument,’ says Sidorova, who has adapted Sevastian’s work for piano accordion.

She says of these two crowd-pleasing musical dazzlers: ‘They are both flashy showstoppers – but it was a completely different experience to record them, rather

than play them as encores at the end of a concert, when I'm usually in a hyper mood.'

Also included on her recital is the short and energetic *Scherzo–Toccata* (1980) – a breathless triple-time jig somewhat in the manner of early Shostakovich – by the Russian composer Petr Petrovich Londonov (1928–1981). Londonov had already written a large number of works for the bayan, including a sonata, contrapuntal studies and a concerto, by the time he received a commission in 1979 from Friedrich Lips (also the arranger of the *Caprice Espagnol* on this disc) to compose a test piece for the following year's Grand Prix accordion competition in Geneva. Unlike many obligatory works, the *Scherzo–Toccata* has subsequently secured its place in the repertoire of accordionists all over the world. 'I have been performing it for a while now, and I was keen to put it on record. Works like this, and Vaclav Trojan's *Fairy Tales* have become very popular amongst accordionists, but at last they are 'filtering out', and gaining wider popularity.'

The most recent work on the disc is another lively and playful triple-time piece, written specially for Sidorova and dedicated to her. *Who's the Puppet?* (2008) is by Russian composer Artem Vassiliev (1974–), who began his studies in Moscow and completed them at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where Sidorova herself also studied. 'I think we came up with the idea of a new piece in the canteen, or possibly the Royal Academy bar,' she says.

Vassiliev specializes in electro-acoustic music, but here drops the former part of that hyphenation in favour of the latter. He writes: 'Sometimes composing a piece of music becomes similar to the art of puppetry. One sketches some little characters as musical images in different moods. Suddenly the puppets break the strings and either start living their own lives, or they die.'

Back to the transcriptions. *The Holberg Suite* op.40 (1884) by Grieg (1843–1907) is a collection of dances composed to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of

the Danish-Norwegian dramatist Ludvig Holberg. The suite, which affectionately pastiches the music of the early eighteenth century, was originally written for piano, but Grieg adapted it for string orchestra in 1885, and it is in this form that it is best known today. The transcription here is by the Norwegian accordionist and music professor Jon Faulstad (1944–), who returned to Grieg's piano score as the basis for his work. Once again, his version for bayan has been adapted to the needs of the piano accordion.

After an introductory *Praeludium*, full of forward-driving arpeggios, there follows a gently flowing *Sarabande* and then a stately *Gavotte*. After a touchingly plaintive minor-key Air, the suite finishes with a jokey *Rigaudon*, reminiscent of a hornpipe.

Fairy Tales (1959), a concerto for accordion and orchestra by the Czech composer Václav Trojan (1907–1983). Trojan, who was awarded the Czech National Prize for his children's opera *Kolotoc* ('The Merry Go Round') in 1940, is perhaps best known for the film scores he composed to accompany the popular and award-winning puppet animations of his friend and colleague Jirí Trnka.

The seven-movement concerto, depicting familiar fairy-tale characters such as the Sleeping Princess, the Handsome Prince and a Dragon, is written in a graceful and approachable style that draws on Czech folk music for its snap and bounce. The first movement sets out its stall with a cheerful, major-key fanfare for the orchestra that quickly leads into passages of mercurial work for the soloist. The second movement contrasts this ebullience with a silky and seductive nocturne for The Sleeping Princess. A spiky little dance with a spinning-top accompaniment follows in the quick third movement, before the mood changes dramatically. After some chromatically slippery chords have created an air of suspense at the beginning of the fourth movement, the soloist makes an appearance with growl-like rumbles from the bass of the instrument. These rumbles slither upwards, getting louder: the effect suggests a dragon waking up and getting ready to leave his cave. A

military burst of trumpets and drums seems to scare him for a moment, before he slouches away.

The fifth movement returns to the cheerful spinning-top idiom of the third, throwing in irreverent raspberry-like interjections for the orchestra and some comically tipsy passages for the soloist. 'This caused much laughter during the recording session,' confesses the soloist. The sixth begins in the manner of a palm-court waltz, but the mood imperceptibly shifts into something more improvisatory and reflective – and this is how the movement ends. Things instantly pick up again with the finale, a fleet-footed *moto perpetuo* that builds to a rousing climax.

'The classical accordion definitely deserves more recognition,' says Sidorova. 'I want to preserve and enhance its identity by working with orchestras, different soloists, and new composers.' This entertaining recital, with its variety of musical colours and dramatic emotions, surely pushes her mission another step closer to completion.

Warwick Thompson

I KSENIJA SIDOROVA

“an amazingly accomplished artist”

Classical Source

Born in Latvia in 1988, Ksenija Sidorova was encouraged to take up the accordion by her grandmother, who has roots in the folk tradition of accordion playing. Ksenija started to play the instrument aged five in her home town of Riga, under the guidance of Marija Gasele. Wanting more exposure to both classical and contemporary repertoire and also more concert opportunities, her studies took her to London where she was a prize-winning undergraduate and subsequently received Masters Degree with Distinction at the Royal Academy of Music, where she studied with Professor Owen Murray. Outside the RAM her awards include a Philharmonia Orchestra Martin Musical Scholarship Fund Award and Philharmonia Orchestra Friends Award.

In February 2009 Ksenija was a joint winner of Friends of the Royal Academy of Music Wigmore Award, which led to her Wigmore Hall debut on May 18, 2009. The same year she was made a Recommended Artist under Making Music's Philip & Dorothy Green Award scheme. Ksenija was selected to appear in Park Lane Group Young Artists New Year Series, 2009, and was described by *The Times* as 'one of the real finds of the series'. She is a recipient of the Worshipful Company of Musicians' Silver Medal, Maisie Lewis Award and was the first accordionist to win the prestigious WCoM Prince's Prize.

Ksenija is a winner of international competitions including a national talent competition in Latvia, the International Accordion Competition in Novosibirsk (Russia), St. Petersburg (Russia), Citta di Montese (Italy) and Siauliai (Lithuania). She has also worked with such composers as Stefano Gervasoni, Nirmali Fenn, Samantha Fernando, Carlos Duque, Elspeth Brooke and Patrick Nunn.



Ksenija has collaborated with the Brooks String Quartet, reaching the final of the 2008 Royal Academy of Music Club Prize and the Royal Overseas League in March 2009, where they were awarded the Elias Fawcett Award for outstanding ensemble.

Recent engagements have included a performance with the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Sinfonietta Riga, performance of Prokofiev's *Cantata for the 20th Anniversary of the October Revolution Op.74* with Orchestra of the Mariinsky Theatre and CBSO under Valery Gergiev, recitals at the Royal Festival Hall and Purcell Room (Southbank Centre), Colston Hall (Bristol), debut recital at the Lucerne Festival and other festivals in UK, France, Switzerland, Italy and Latvia. In June 2009 Ksenija was invited by Dame Felicity Lott to appear in her Carte Blanche in the programme *Un Mardi idéal* on Radio France Musique. She has also appeared on the radio in UK and her native Latvia.

More highlights include a collaboration with the Belcea Quartet, recording with the Sacconi Quartet, tour of Switzerland with Milos Karadaglic (guitar), solo recital at the Purcell Room, concerto with Sinfonietta Riga at Cesis Arts Festival, debut recital at the Lucerne Festival and concerts in the UK at North Norfolk Festival and Two Moors Festival.

Future engagements include a concerto performance with Sinfonietta Riga, Vienna Chamber Orchestra, recitals at the Bergen International Festival (Norway) and Lingotto Musica in Turin (Italy).

Ksenija is a keen promoter of her instrument and she often does outreach work at primary schools across the UK with the support of the Worshipful Company of Musicians.

Ksenija is generously supported by Mr and Mrs David Bowerman and the Hattori Foundation.

BBC NATIONAL ORCHESTRA OF WALES

BBC National Orchestra of Wales occupies a special role as both a national and broadcasting orchestra, acclaimed not only for the quality of its performances but also for its importance within its own community.

The work of BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales is supported by the Arts Council of Wales.

As well as an outstanding ability to refresh core repertoire, the Orchestra is proud of its adventurous programming and continuously demonstrates artistic excellence in new or rarely performed works.

As part of this commitment to contemporary music, the orchestra appointed Mark Bowden as Resident Composer in June 2011.

BBC National Orchestra of Wales is Orchestra-in-Residence at St David's Hall, Cardiff, and also presents a concert series at the Brangwyn Hall, Swansea.

As well as international touring, including a tour to China in July 2012, the Orchestra performs every year at the BBC Proms and biennially at BBC Cardiff Singer of the World.

The Orchestra is based at its state-of-the-art recording and rehearsal base, BBC Hoddinott Hall at Wales Millennium Centre.

It enjoys close working relationships with radio and television programme-makers and records numerous soundtracks, including BBC Cymru Wales' *Doctor Who* and the BBC's *Human Planet* series.

The Orchestra continues to record highly regarded CDs, including the 2011 Grammy nominated *Ivanhoe* by Arthur Sullivan on Chandos; the critically acclaimed cycle of Stravinsky's three scores for Diaghilev's Ballet Russes, conducted by Thierry Fischer; a live recording of Havergal Brian's *Gothic Symphony*, performed at the BBC Proms 2011 with the BBC Concert Orchestra; and David Matthews' symphonies 2 and 6, recorded on Dutton Epoch, which won Premiere Recording BBC Music Magazine Award 2011.

CLARK RUNDELL

Contemporary music specialist Clark Rundell is Director of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra's award-winning new music group, Ensemble 10/10. Under Rundell's leadership, Ensemble 10/10 have won two RPS awards for 'most outstanding ensemble' and 'most outstanding concert series' and they broadcast regularly on BBC Radio 3. In addition to his frequent appearances with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Ensemble 10/10, Rundell guest-conducts widely, and has developed relationships with many leading orchestras including the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, City of London Sinfonia, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the ASKO Schoenberg Ensemble. Other orchestras Rundell works with include St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (Minnesota), Northern Sinfonia, Britten Sinfonia, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Luxembourg Philharmonic and Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra.

Deeply committed to the performance of new music, Rundell has given world premières of works by composers such as Louis Andriessen, Django Bates, Sir Richard Rodney Bennett, Judith Bingham, Martin Butler, Tim Garland, Adam Gorb, Edward Gregson, Steve Mackey, James MacMillan, Roger Marsh, Martijn Padding, Gwilym Simcock, and Mark-Anthony Turnage, amongst others.

A specialist in cross-genre collaboration, Rundell has conducted extensive orchestral projects with artists such as Elvis Costello, Amal Murkus and the Wayne Shorter Quartet. A highly versatile musician, Rundell held the title of Director of Jazz Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music, and has performed with artists such as John Dankworth, Victor Mendoza, Guy Barker, Julian Argüelles, Cleo Laine and Michael Gibbs. Still committed to education, Rundell is currently Director of Contemporary Music and Head of Conducting at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

Rundell studied at the Northwestern University, Chicago, studying conducting with John P. Paynter and trombone with Frank Crisafulli of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and was subsequently awarded a Junior Fellowship to study conducting with Timothy Reynish at the RNCM. Rundell now lives just outside Manchester with his wife and family.