

CD REVIEW 112

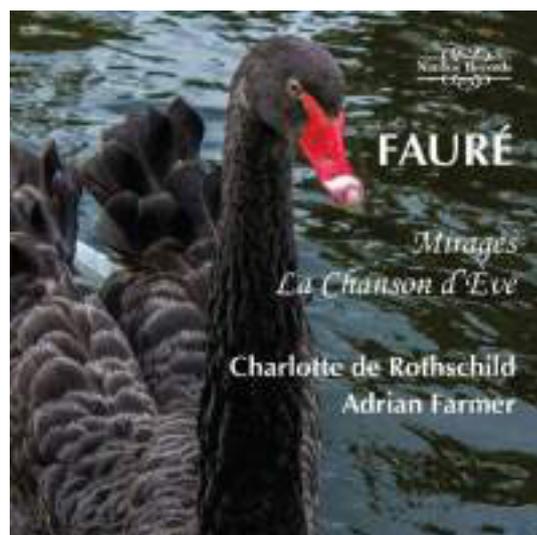
FAURÉ *Mirages* and *La Chanson d'Eve* and other songs.

Charlotte de Rothschild, soprano, and Adrian Farmer, piano.

Nimbus NI5915 (69.12).

It is a pleasure to review another of Charlotte's discs.

Her previous discs are a delight and are published by Nimbus although I have yet to hear her Schumann CD.



A Japanese Journey	N16190
Fairy Songs	N16193
Songs of Mathilde de Rothschild	N15903
Schumann an intimate recital	N15908
Christmas Lullabies	N17095

As I have said, I have not heard the Schumann CD. In my opinion, he wrote some of the most gorgeous songs you will ever hear.

It is strange that some composers' songs are somewhat overlooked in favour of their larger works. The songs of Liszt and Tchaikovsky are very special.

I do not write reviews based on what others have written or said or any publicity to promote any recording.

I have not warmed to Fauré in his Requiem or his piano works. I regard the works largely of his old age to be his best such as the chamber works, the Piano Quartets, the Piano Quintets, String Quartet and the Piano Trio and, of course, his songs.

I have always regarded the French language to be the most suitable language for songs and many share that view.

Charlotte has travelled the world and, as well as being a very fine singer, she has the enviable attribute of being a genuine and likeable person. She is very particular in her performances as all good singers are. Her accompanist, Adrian Farmer, is very able indeed and has the skill and concentration for many of the accompaniments which he manages with consummate ease.

Mirages Op 113 of 1919 are four songs, Swan on the river, Reflections in the water, Nocturnal Garden and Dancer sung superbly and the last song has an infectious rhythmic piano part. The ultra-fussy will point out that the songs are all very slow but they have an atmosphere and, on what may be a trivial note to some, Fauré is excellent at modulation and his musical grammar is perfect. Charlotte's diction and phrasing is crystal clear.

I do not have a score of Cinq melodies de Venise (Five Venetian Songs) Op 58 but the songs are more varied. Mandoline is a serenade and has life in it and En sourdine is profoundly beautiful and is an exquisite love song. Green has some welcome movement. It is another love song where the lovers heart only beats for the one whom he loves. To Clymene is another love song describing the physical attributes of the one he loves and the final song, It is rapture, is of languorous ecstasy and speaks of the fatigue of love.

These songs are nothing short of wonderful and the CD is worth its price just for these five gems drawn from Paul Verlaine, a poet admired by the composer. Both performers are superlative in this set but that excellence pervades the whole recital.

La Chanson d'Eve is a series of ten songs about the first woman, Eve. and, among other things, her appreciation of God and His radiance. The majority of the songs are again slow and the first song Paradis is often sparse in texture. The third song, Prima Verba, has more movement and is attractive and songs four and five have an ethereal beauty. Two songs that follow are marked allegretto with fine accompaniments.

Some have said that there is little variation in these songs and they have no melismata. Others have said that they are mainly the songs of Fauré's old age and that they are tired compositions. This may well be, but it does not dim the quality of the performances.

Two songs from Op 85 follow. Dans le foret de September is a very fine song telling of autumn in an aged forest. Accompagnement again takes us to the trees with the scent of a summers night in another choice song performed with sensitivity and the required sadness. Le Don silencieux is the first of three single songs that conclude this important disc.

This duo is a wonderful partnership and lovers of French song, the voice and those interested in a lesson in accompaniment will find this on this CD.

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