

CD REVIEW 96

FAIRY SONGS

Charlotte de Rothschild (soprano), Danielle Perrett (harp),
Marianne Olyer (violin).

Nimbus Alliance NI6193 (65.50)

Boughton: Faery Song

Brewer, H: The fairy pipers

Gibbs, C A: In the Faery Hills
You Spotted Snakes

Harrison, Julius: I Know a Bank

Harty: A Lullaby

Head, M: The Fairy Tailor
The Singer
The Fairies' Dance

Larchet: A Stoirin Ban
Padriac the Fiddler

Lehmann: There are fairies at the bottom of our garden

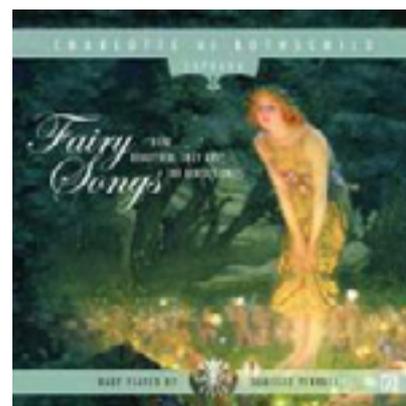
Quilter: Fairy Lullaby

Samuel, H: The Fairy Boat

Spross: Will o' the Wisp

Stanford: The Fairy Lough Op. 77 No. 2, from An Irish Idyll in Six Miniatures (1901)
La Belle Dame sans merci (John Keats) (1877)

trad.: A Leprechaun
arr. Nancy Calthorpe
The Lure of the Fairy Hill
A Garten Mother's Lullaby
arr. Danielle Perrett
A Fairy's Love Song
arr. Marjorie Kennedy-Fraser



Charlotte de Rothschild is a lyric soprano who has made a great impact throughout the world and is competent in many languages. She has a voice of enviable clarity. She excels in Bach cantatas, Brahms, a work by Geoffrey Bush, Britten, Fauré, Handel, Mendelssohn and Mozart. She specialises in unusual programmes such as A Japanese Journey available on Nimbus NI6190. She was lionised in Japan and deservedly so.

She has worked with the harpist Danielle Perrett for 19 years and made some welcome recordings, Perret is a virtuoso, has toured the world, played for royalty and her performances have been acclaimed as thoughtful, intellectual, unforgettable and elegant.

They make an accomplished duo.

The violinist makes one contribution with a sweet sound.

This is an important CD... but to listen to 21 songs of a similar style at one go is not recommended. Someone has suggested that you listen to them with a child present and others have said that the songs are magical.

There are treasures here and some composers you may not know. The two songs by John Larchet are especially welcome and I do point you to my essay about him on my site wrightmusic.net.

The final song is Liza Lehmann's There are fairies at the bottom of my garden, the words of which are often the subject of inane and sometimes bawdy jokes.

The two songs by Charles Villiers Stanford are most significant including his clever setting of Keats La belle dame sans merci showing his ability to write a substantial text in a comparatively brief time without losing any of its drama.

Stanford was a truly exceptional composer but somewhat despised because he was Irish and pushed aside to accommodate the arrogance of Elgar, whose followers today still dismiss Stanford... and so unfairly. He wrote some fine symphonies and string quartets; his choral music is truly of the highest quality yet he seems to be only known by his exquisite song The Bluebird and the famous Te Deum in B flat

Two songs by the underestimated Armstrong Gibbs are also welcome.

Michael Head is another neglected composer probably only remembered by his Christmas song The Little Road to Bethlehem or the fact that his sister Nancy married the composer Alan Bush.

Rutland Boughton's Faery Song has inspired many composers including my friend the late John Veale ([consult my essay about him on the aforementioned website](#)). As a child, this song haunted him and was very important to him and, in his own Violin Concerto, there is a veiled reference to it. You should buy the recording of this glowing concerto played by that expert performer Lydia Mordkovich on Chandos.

Roger Quilter wrote some sublime songs and is represented here by his Fairy Lullaby. Would that Ms de Rothschild would record all his songs, although the harp could not cope with the piano parts as it is not a chromatic instrument and therefore limited.

Many fairy songs or faery songs are associated with the suspicious Irish, some of whom believe in fairy wells to this day and that fairies and leprechauns live nearby and at the bottom of garden.

I know nothing about the Sprow composer. Brewer was the organist at Gloucester cathedral and worked with my great uncle Sir Ivor Atkins at the Three Choirs Festivals.

[\(See my essay on Atkins\)](#)

These 19th and 20th century songs are a joy to have and the singer has a lovely voice.

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