



**THE RED VIOLIN**  
**Maria Bachmann, Violin**  
**Jon Klibonoff, Piano**

**2007 Endeavor Classics, a division of Allegro Corporation**

**Paul Moravec, Ariel Fantasy**  
**Aaron Copland, Ukelele Serenade / Nocturne**  
**John Corigliano, The Red Violin: Chaconne for Violin and Piano**  
**Maurice Ravel, Sonata for Violin and Piano**  
**George Gershwin, It Ain't Necessarily So / There's a Boat Sat's Leavin' Soon for New York / My One and Only / Rialto Ripples Rag**

Maria Bachmann's title choice for this recording, *Red Violin*, suggests not only the Chaconne of John Corigliano's *Red Violin Concerto* but also the brilliant color, energy, and lyricism that pervade every work on the disc. With her recital partner Jon Klibonoff, Maria Bachmann has achieved a statement that reflects both her own adventuresome personality and a mutual artistic vision the two have shared for twenty years.

Another driving force of this recording is Bachmann's long-time association with composer Paul Moravec, winner of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for his *Tempest Fantasy*, written for Maria Bachmann's and Jon Klibonoff's Trio Solisti (with cellist Alexis Pia Gerlach) and clarinetist David Krakauer. *Ariel Fantasy* began life as a solo piano piece but was transcribed by the composer for Maria Bachmann's 2001 Paris recital. She so loved the work that she asked Moravec to compose a longer work for Trio Solisti based on Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*. This led to the *Tempest Fantasy* and the Pulitzer Prize. *Ariel Fantasy*, however, stands on its own as a brilliant work for violin and piano. Together they run a high-energy and virtuosic race from start to finish. Within that race is an honoring of the elusive fantasy form which *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* defines as "generally a composition in which form is of secondary importance." *Grove's*, however, calls it "a term adopted in the Renaissance for an instrumental composition whose form and invention spring solely from 'the fantasy and skill of the author who created it. (Luis de Milan, 1535.)" It is this second definition that better describes Paul Moravec's *Ariel Fantasy*.

*Ariel Fantasy* work was given its world premier performance by Maria Bachmann and Paige Hoffman at the Paris Théâtre Athénée in 2001.

Moravec's ostensible reference in the title of the explosive *Double Action* is to the mechanism of the standard double action revolver. To the listener it might also refer to the equality of the violin and piano parts in the work. It is based on a solo piano piece Moravec wrote in 1994 for David (now Sara Davis) Buechner.

*Double Action* received its world premier performance by Maria Bachmann and Jon Klibonoff in August 2006 at the Moab Music Festival in Moab, Utah.

Paul Moravec composed *Evermore* as a wedding gift for Maria Bachmann and Josh Aronson in April 2004. The two gave its world premier in June 2004 at the Telluride MusicFest in Telluride, Colorado. A dedicated amateur pianist, Josh Aronson is a director of documentary films and a co-director, with Bachmann, of the Telluride MusicFest. In addition to being a lyrical tribute to the couple, *Evermore* is a moving love song that offers a contrast to the high energy of the other works included on the recording. At the same time, the work has the intensity that Maria Bachmann sought in her choice of works. Although written with an amateur in mind, the piano part is not without its demands.

Paul Moravec's awards and fellowships include the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, an NEA Composer Fellowship, a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship, and the Charles Ives and the Goddard Lieberman fellowships. He is a graduate of Harvard and Columbia and is currently Music Department Chair at Adelphi University.

The two Copland works of the disc, *Ukelele Serenade* and *Nocturne* reflect both Maria Bachmann's adventuresome spirit in her choice of repertoire and Copland's own spirit of adventure in his earlier period before he turned to American folklore for inspiration. Both works come from his Paris-in-the-Twenties days studying with Nadia Boulanger. *Ukelele Serenade*, in particular, suggests the well-known French love for American jazz which Copland would infuse into many of his early works. It also uses special string effects such as strumming pizzicato, slides, and quarter tones. The *Nocturne*, on the other hand, is as serious as the *Ukelele Serenade* is comic. This is another side of Copland with its implications of darkness and melancholy stated in blues chords and polytonality. The piece "burns with a slow-paced intensity," says Maria Bachmann. "I love how the Copland *Nocturne* ends and the Corigliano *Chaconne* starts in the same tonality and in a similar sound world," she states.

Among the indispensable American composer John Corigliano's numerous honors are the Pulitzer Prize (2001, Symphony No. 2) the Grawemeyer Award (1991, Symphony No. 1) the Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Composition (1991, Symphony No. 1; 1996, String Quartet). His orchestral, choral, and chamber works are played worldwide and his opera *The Ghosts of Versailles*, commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera for its centenary, is scheduled, at this writing, both for its Buenos Aires premiere at the Teatro Colon in 2008 and its second revival at the Metropolitan in the 2009-2010 season.

In 2000, John Corigliano won the Academy Award "Oscar" for the movie score of *The Red Violin*. In 2006, the Baltimore Symphony commissioned the Violin Concerto, developed from themes from *The Red Violin*. The work received its New York debut with Joshua Bell and the New York Philharmonic. Furthermore, the New York City Ballet opened its 2006 spring season with a new ballet on the Violin Concerto, choreographed by Peter Martins.

While the *Chaconne for Violin and Orchestra* is the first movement of the *Red Violin Concerto*, it remains a separate work both in its orchestral version and in the violin and piano adaptation. The reduction of the orchestral score for piano is also a singular achievement with its distinct pianistic qualities that are a far cry from mere accompaniment. The composer himself tells the interesting tale of its evolution:

*I was delighted to accept when asked to compose the score for Francois Girard's fascinating new film The Red Violin. I knew and admired his acclaimed Thirty-two Short Films About Glenn Gould: and how could I turn down so interesting a journey through almost three centuries, beginning as it did in Cremona, home of history's greatest violin builders? I also welcomed the producers' offer to create a separate violin and orchestra concert piece, to be freely based on motives from the film.*

*As usual in film, I wouldn't be required to write the underscore until the film was completed. But I did need to write a number of on-camera "cues," for occasions in which the film's characters themselves perform. So I then composed a singable theme, hummed by the violin master's wife Anna, which mutates into a solo violin melody. Underpinning the theme is an inexorable seven-chord chaconne, evoking the Tarot and the fate it signals; and several solo etudes, drawn from Anna's theme, for the two virtuosi of the Vienna and Oxford sequences.*

*Then plans changed. Filming, meant to conclude early that summer, was pushed back to the fall: the premiere of the concert piece, though, remained set for late November, with Joshua Bell and the San Francisco Symphony. Consequently the concert piece, the Chaconne, was built only on the materials I had—a good thing, as it turns out, because I now had the freedom, as well as the need, to explore these materials to a greater extent than I might have, had I been expected to condense an hour's worth of music into a coherent single movement. Thus, in a curiously backwards way, the film's underscoring drew much of its inspiration from the concert work.*

*I decided to use Anna's theme (the film's solo violin melody), manipulate it through stylistic variations, and adapt nineteenth-century techniques into the musical language of the twentieth century. The violin begins alone, with a double-stopped rising second, but in the third measure the orchestra joins in, surrounding the violin's slow gestures with a sort of mist derived from the free echoes of an expansion of Anna's theme. Then two bassoons introduce, in seven measures of quasi-Baroque dotted rhythms, the series of dyads (two-note chords) to which all the variations in this Chaconne refer, which are underlined first in trombones and once more with bassoons. At that point the solo violin returns and Anna's theme progresses from lyric arch through furioso etudes to mournful reminiscences, crowned at last by a virtuosic conclusion.*

Maria Bachmann has performed the full orchestral version of both Corigliano's *Red Violin Concerto* and *The Red Violin Chaconne*. Here she turns to the violin and piano version of the *Chaconne* with what she calls its "long architecture that is perfectly paced. Corigliano's masterful writing," she continues, "gives us the clues of how to bring many different colors and sounds to the score." She also comments that Jon Klibonoff's playing of the orchestral reduction, with its imitation of varied orchestra sounds, "makes it seem as if it were written for the piano." The listener will easily sense that. So, too, will he comprehend Maria Bachmann's call for intensity in her repertoire choice for this recording. The powerful crescendo for both piano and violin is nothing short of frightening in its intensity. The slow and mysterious high passages also add to the work's intensity, making full use of the sonorities of both violin and piano.

Bachmann's and Corigliano's admiration of each other's work is evident in the composer's words: "Maria Bachmann is an aristocratic marvel. She has perfect technique, but more importantly, she understands how to tell music to audience so that they understand what the composer really had in mind. This is a rare gift."

Mutual admiration, by the way, is almost another theme of this recording. John Corigliano has both a general admiration of Paul Moravec's music and a specific liking for the pieces on this CD. Paul Moravec, on the other hand, is a great admirer of John Corigliano's music. It is not difficult to understand why these two composers

should like each other's work. They are clearly both masters of compositional technique and style, each in his own way but not without a certain common ground of excellence.

The Ravel Sonata is an undisputed masterpiece in 20<sup>th</sup> century music. Written in 1927, it reveals both Ravel's honoring of Classical form and his own singular spirit of adventure. As in the other works on this recording, equality reigns between violin and piano. The first movement, in particular, reflects Ravel's Classical spirit yet does not neglect his Romantic nor his adventuresome side. At one point in the first movement, the piano repeats thirty-four parallel open fifths as a spare but shocking accompaniment for a more lyrical violin melody. The second movement, "Blues," evokes thoughts of the earlier performed Copland works. In true Classical spirit, it serves as a scherzo despite its obvious bow to American jazz. The third movement is literally a perpetual motion exercise for violin while the piano, in Maria Bachmann's words, "gets to rock out." For its premier, Ravel played the piano part with violinist/composer Georges Enesco.

Maria Bachmann's and Jon Klibonoff's inclusion of the Gershwin songs on their recording reflects their mutual interest in Gershwin as well as a continuity to a repertoire choice that suggests high energy, a certain "redness," if you will. "It Ain't Necessarily So," and "There's a Boat Dat's Leavin' Soon for New York" are two of Maria Bachmann's favorites from *Porgy and Bess*, which she has arranged using the Heifetz's models as a point of departure. Throughout both works, Jon Klibonoff offers us some improvisation in a true jazz club spirit. In the middle section of his arrangement of "My One and Only," Klibonoff tosses in Gershwin's "Rialto Ripples Rag." "We are both jazz lovers, and, maybe in another life, we'll be jazz musicians," Maria Bachmann quips.

Thus ends this high color adventure in unforgettable repertoire.

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