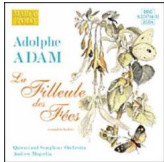


Adolphe-Charles Adam – La filleule des fées (2002)

Written by bluesever

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CD 1 1. Prologue (Gullaume's Farm - House): No. 1 2. Prologue (Gullaume's Farm - House): No. 2 3. Prologue (Gullaume's Farm - House): Nos. 3, 4 and 5 4. Prologue (Gullaume's Farm - House): No. 6 5. Prologue (Gullaume's Farm - House): No. 7 6. Prologue (Gullaume's Farm - House): No. 8 7. Prologue (Gullaume's Farm - House): No. 9 8. Prologue (Gullaume's Farm - House): No. 10 9. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 1 10. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 2 Pas de cinq 11. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 3 12. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 4 13. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 5 14. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 6 15. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 7 16. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 8 17. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 9 Divertissement 18. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 9a (No. 10) Pas de cinq 19. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 9b (No. 11) 20. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 9c (No. 12) M. Petipa 21. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 9d (No. 13) 22. Act I - Tableau 1 (The Countryside): No. 10 (No. 14) Après le divertissement CD 2 1. Act I - Tableau 2 (Ysaure's Chamber): No. 1 Marche olintaine (Nos. 1, 2 and 3) 2. Act I - Tableau 2 (Ysaure's Chamber): No. 2 (No. 4) 3. Act I - Tableau 2 (Ysaure's Chamber): No. 3 (No. 5) 4. Act I - Tableau 2 (Ysaure's Chamber): No. 4 (No. 6) 5. Act I - Tableau 2 (Ysaure's Chamber): No. 5 (No. 7) 6. Act I - Tableau 2 (Ysaure's Chamber): Entr'acte 7. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 1 8. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 2 9. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 3 10. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 4 11. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 4a (No. 5) 12. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 4b (No. 6) 13. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 4c (No. 7) Mme Taglioni (The Pink Fairy) 14. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 4d (No. 8) Mme Taglioni (Flute Variation) 15. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 4e (No. 9) Mlle Carlotta Grisi (Ysaure) 16. Act II - Tableau I (A Wooded Park): No. 5 17. Act II - Tableau 2 (A Deep Cavern): No. 1 Mouvement de Valse 18. Act II - Tableau 2 (A Deep Cavern): No. 2 19. Act II - Tableau 2 (A Deep Cavern): No. 3 20. Act II - Tableau 3 & 4 (The Fairies' Judgement and Paradise): No. 4 Queensland Symphony Orchestra Andrew Mogrelia - conductor

The title will mean little to most people. Few of us have had the privilege of being exposed to many of Adam's fine theatre works and few performances or recordings have existed. Giselle is

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the obvious exception - a ballet that still enjoys a place in the international repertoire.

Adolphe Adam always considered his music to sparkle and be comprehensible to the listener. In his own words. ... My only aim is to write music which is transparent, easy to understand and pleasing to the public."

He received his musical training at the Paris Conservatoire, initially as an organ scholar, having been prepared by his pianist and composer father. Boieldieu communicated a love for the theatre to Adam and pointed out the lucrative returns that composers such as he could receive. Adam set out on a musical career that resulted in around forty lyric works and some twenty vaudevilles, ballets and opéra-comiques. He is best remembered for his opéra-comiques: *Le Postillon de Longjumeau* and *Si j'étais Roi*; and the ballet, *Giselle*. When *Giselle* was composed in 1841 it became a lasting success, still appearing in today's international repertoire. He went on to write the ballet, *La jolie fille de Gand* (1842) which has been recorded on Marco Polo 8.223772-3. *La Filleule des Fées* followed in 1849.

La Filleule des fées is a full-length ballet which lasts for two hours and five minutes. The story calls for complex staging which must have been difficult to achieve. If staged well this would have added to the spectacle of the piece. Its stage directions call for a cottage wall which becomes invisible when a wand is waved, a mirror which grows in size in front of the observer's eyes, words written in fire appear in a black cloud, mist which envelops and recedes, and an on-stage hut which disappears then reappears on a distant hill. Could it be that the expensive staging has been the reason why the work has not been revived? Clearly, such trickery would lend itself ideally to the medium of television. Exposure of the superb score in this recording could well stimulate such a revival.

The work was based on a book by Jules-Henri Vernoy, Marquis de St. Georges and Perrot, and was first staged at the Paris Opéra in October 1849. The notes tell us that the ballet's settings, with décor by Cambon, caused a sensation through its innovative use of electric lighting and fountains.

In its fantasy story, the prologue opens with a newly baptised child, Ysaure, visited by two old women who beg for hospitality which is granted. After supper when all have retired the two old women transform into good fairies who secretly bestow gifts of beauty on the child. A third old woman who was earlier turned away now appears and transforms into a black evil fairy who declares she will keep her gift until the child's fifteenth year.

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Act I, set in the countryside, shows the villagers dancing and preparing for the spring festival. Ysaure, now fifteen, goes indoors to dress for the celebration while a village boy who has been admiring her is left outside. The black fairy appears and promises to provide the boy with happiness if he will kiss her. They leave together and a young huntsman arrives: he turns out to be a Prince. The two old women now appear, begging, and on receipt of gold tell him he will fall in love, and point to Ysaure's hut. Both the boy and huntsman are separately urged by the evil and good fairies respectively to pursue their love for Ysaure, which they do behind each other's backs. The Prince wins her affections and asks for her hand in marriage, which she accepts. The black fairy now gives her present, telling the other fairies they have made her so beautiful that any man who looks at her will go out of his mind. The girl realises she must keep her face covered from the Prince to avoid this and runs to hide. An Entr'acte links Acts I & II

Act II takes place in a woodland park with lake and fountain, and statues dotted around. The statues come to life and Ysaure enters, conveyed by a swan. As the sun rises she wishes to see the Prince she has hidden her face from and finds him sleeping. The village boy returns under the black fairy's spell and on touching Ysaure tries to turn her into a statue. However, one of the good fairies has managed to grasp the girl's arm and breaks the spell. The fairies decide to turn the Prince blind so that he can be comforted by his beloved without going mad. Though the black fairy has been avenged, she relents to the wishes of Ysaure and the good fairies if the prince can recognise Ysaure among all the girls. This happens and clouds of mist disperse to reveal fairyland and the marriage now takes place.

This music was composed during a period when Adam was at the height of his creative talents. This is no second-rate Adam: the music is uplifting and quite delightful, containing charming melodies with much bright orchestral colour. Adam is not short of melodic ideas and these melt like chocolate into a choreographic flow which makes most enjoyable listening. At times I wonder if I can detect Verdi and Rossini both of whom must have made some impression on Adam. Sample CD1 tks 14, 21, 22 or CD2 tks 4, 5.

The composer gives all sections of the orchestra opportunity to display their skills and this they do admirably. The strings are particularly crisp (so vital in ballet music) and the brass modulate sensitively. The wind and strings sound perfect in the reverberation provided. Where knocking effects are cued, care is taken to make sure this does not interrupt the pianissimo figures, and the producers of this set did well to dispense with the thunder effects.

The notes give good background notes on Adam and a full and detailed synopsis takes the

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listener through the ballet's development track by track. The booklet by Keith Anderson is written in English, French and German.

This is an issue Marco Polo must be proud of and makes me now want to hear La jolie fille de Gand on Marco Polo 8.223772-3. ---Raymond Walker, musicweb-international.com

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