

Guillame Connesson - Musique de Chambre (2018)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Techno-Parade (Pour flûte, clarinette et piano)* de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour;Paul Meyer 4:13 2. *Initials Dances: Initials Dances: R. Dance* de Eric Le Sage 2:35 3. *Initials Dances: Initials Dances: S. Dance* de Eric Le Sage 4:00 4. *Initials Dances: Initials Dances: F. K. Dance* de Eric Le Sage 1:55 5. *Double quatuor (Pour clarinette, clarinette basse, hautbois, flûte, deux violons, violoncelle et alto)* 7:21 de Quatuor Parisii;Paul Meyer;François Meyer 6. *Le rire de Saraï: Le rire de Saraï: La plainte d'Agar* de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour 6:40 7. *Le rire de Saraï: Le rire de Saraï: Bénédiction de l'alliance* de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour 2:46 8. *Disco-Toccata (Pour clarinette et violoncelle)* de Paul Meyer;Xavier Phillips 1:39 9. *Sextuor: Dynamique* de Eric Le Sage;Paul Meyer;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii 3:44 10. *Sextuor: Nocturne* de Eric Le Sage;Paul Meyer;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii 6:09 11. *Sextuor: Festif* de Eric Le Sage;Paul Meyer;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii 2:43 12. *Toccata-Nocturne (Pour flûte et violoncelle)* de Mathieu Dufour;Xavier Phillips 2:30 13. *Jurassic Trip: Jurassic Trip: Paysage Marécageux (Tutti)* 1:41 de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour;Paul Meyer;Frank Braley;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii;François Miquel; Dominique Desjardins;Emmanuel Curt;Fabrice Coccitto 14. *Jurassic Trip: Chasse Marine Du Plésiosaure (Flûte, Clarinette, Synthétiseur, Quintette)* 2:27 de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour;Paul Meyer;Frank Braley;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii;François Miquel; Dominique Desjardins;Emmanuel Curt;Fabrice Coccitto 15. *Jurassic Trip: Jurassic Trip: Attaque Des Raptors* 2:49 de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour;Paul Meyer;Frank Braley;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii;François Miquel; Dominique Desjardins;Emmanuel Curt;Fabrice Coccitto 16. *Jurassic Trip: Petit Carnivore (Hommage A Pierre Boulez - Flûte, Clarinette Et Violon)* 1:01 de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour;Paul Meyer;Frank Braley;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii;François Miquel; Dominique Desjardins;Emmanuel Curt;Fabrice Coccitto 17. *Jurassic Trip: Jurassic Trip: Vol En Rase-Mottes Des Ptérodactyles (Tutti)* 2:53 de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour;Paul Meyer;Frank Braley;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii;François Miquel; Dominique Desjardins;Emmanuel Curt;Fabrice Coccitto 18. *Jurassic Trip: Jurassic Trip: Déjeuner Du Brontosauure (Violoncelle, Clarinette Basse, Synthé, Deux Pianos)* 3:00 de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour;Paul Meyer;Frank Braley;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii;François Miquel; Dominique Desjardins;Emmanuel Curt;Fabrice Coccitto 19. *Jurassic Trip: Jurassic Trip: Combat Des Tyrannosaures (Tutti)* 2:27 de Eric Le Sage;Mathieu Dufour;Paul Meyer;Frank Braley;François Meyer;Quatuor Parisii;François Miquel;Dominique Desjardins;Emmanuel Curt;Fabrice Coccitto 20. *Les chants de l'Agartha: Les chants de l'Agartha: Sous le désert de Mongolie* de Jérôme Pernoo;Jérôme Ducros 4:30 21. *Les chants de l'Agartha: La bibliothèque des savoirs perdus* de Jérôme Pernoo;Jérôme Ducros 3:43 22. *Les chants de l'Agartha: Les*

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chants de l'Agartha: Danse devant le roi du monde de Jérôme Pernoo; Jérôme Ducros 3:31 de Jérôme Pernoo; Jérôme Ducros 23. Constellation de la couronne Boréale de Jérôme Ducros; Lise Berthaud 8:26 24. Constellation de la couronne Australe de Jérôme Ducros; Lise Berthaud 4:22 25. Les chants de l'Atlantide: Les chants de l'Atlantide: Au-delà des colonnes d'Héraclès de Jérôme Ducros; Sergey Malov 5:38 26. Les chants de l'Atlantide: Les chants de l'Atlantide: Le temple de Poséidon de Jérôme Ducros; Sergey Malov 7:01 27. Les chants de l'Atlantide: Les chants de l'Atlantide: Le jugement des dix Rois de Jérôme Ducros; Sergey Malov 3:45 28. Adams Variations de Jérôme Ducros; Sergey Malov; Jérôme Pernoo; Florent Héau 3:13 29. Disco-Toccata de Jérôme Pernoo; Florent Héau 1:54 30. Quatuor à cordes: Quatuor à cordes: Très calme de Sergey Malov; Jérôme Pernoo; Lise Berthaud; Ayako Tanaka 4:52 31. Quatuor à cordes: Quatuor à cordes: Furioso de Sergey Malov; Jérôme Pernoo; Lise Berthaud; Ayako Tanaka 3:37 32. Quatuor à cordes: Quatuor à cordes: Triste de Sergey Malov; Jérôme Pernoo; Lise Berthaud; Ayako Tanaka 6:03

Jean-Michel Berrette Violin
Philippe Berrod Clarinet (Bass) Lise Berthaud Alto Frank Braley Piano Fabrice Coccitto Clavier, Harpsichord Guillaume Connesson Artistic Director, Composer, Liner Notes, Primary Artist Emmanuel Curt Percussion Dominique Desjardins Contrabass Jérôme Ducros Piano Mathieu Dufour Flute Marcia Hadjimarkos Liner Note Translation Florent Héau Clarinet Dominique Lobet Alto Sergey Malov Violin Jean-Philippe Martignoni Cello François Meyer Hautbois Paul Meyer Clarinet François Miquel Clarinet (Bass) Jérôme Pernoo Cello Xavier Phillips Cello Quatuor Parisii String Quartet Virginie Reibel-Escoffier Flute Eric le Sage Piano Ayako Tanaka Violin Arnaud Vallin Violin

After being completely captivated by Connesson's Techno-Parade, played by the spectacular Berlin Counterpoint (as seen on YouTube and recorded for CD by Geniune Records), I decided to seek out more by this fabulous French composer.

I remember being mightily impressed by a 2010 Chandos SACD of some of his orchestral music some time ago. Listening to it again, I am becoming obsessed with this composer's music! The Chandos disc contains his Cosmic Trilogy and his absolutely magnificent Piano Concerto entitled The Shining One, with my favorite of french pianists, Eric Le Sage, soloist.

What a find, then, is this 2018 SONY 2-disc set of his chamber music. This is a compilation of 2 previously released discs, neither recorded by SONY itself. The first (again featuring pianist Eric Le Sage) originated in 2004 from AIM (Association Internationale de Musique de Chambre, Radio France), and the second in 2011 from CPB (Collection Pierre Berge).

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First up on Disc 1 is the Techno-Parade, which prompted me to buy this set in the first place. Comparing it with the aforementioned recording is fascinating. Le Sage and company play it much faster. And it is nearly unimaginable that anyone can play it at this speed (how Le Sage manages all those repeated notes on the piano is a thing to behold). While it is certainly impressive and enormously invigorating, it does not have quite the same WOW factor as does the recording by Berlin Counterpoint. That group brings to it a combination of mesmerizing, irresistible, danceable exhilaration, plus a dramatic weight and substance, making it an absolutely riveting experience. The SONY version comes close; but at this speed, it is more fleet, and it whisks by so quickly it loses just a touch of drama. However, make nothing of these observations. Both performances are completely valid, incredibly fabulous and utterly spellbinding.

Unbelievably, the disc continues this level of musical inventiveness and captivating involvement. Connesson is far from being a "one-hit wonder"! The Double Quartet and Sextet are very much from the same mold, and sound unmistakably from the same compositional pen. What makes them even more unique is their scoring. The Double Quartet, cast in one single movement, is scored for clarinet, bass clarinet, oboe, flute and string quartet; the Sextet, in the more-traditional 3-movement structure, is for clarinet, oboe, flute, viola, bass viol and piano. Both are magnificently crafted (and played). The Sextet has a more "minimalist" feel, reminding me very much of John Adams (more on this below). And, incidentally, the recording session for many of these pieces can be found on YouTube.

Also included on Disc 1 is Jurassic Trip, a 21st-Century take on Carnival of the Animals - this time depicting dinosaurs. Similarly scored as that of Saint-Saens's masterpiece, it is clever and fascinating, and not for an instant "cutesy". There are differences in scoring - this one includes a bass clarinet and a synthesizer. Don't be put off by the inclusion of a synthesizer - it is used very sparingly and amounts to background sound-effects such as the tide splashing onto the shore and bird sounds. Also worth noting, the duo pianists play a much less prominent role than in the more familiar Animals.

The pieces for soloist and piano are also enjoyable. Le rire de Sarai for flute begins with a rather bleak first part, then part two bursts with the unbridled energy we have come to expect from this composer. The Disco-Toccata for clarinet is an exhilarating romp, but is over much too quickly, lasting just 1'40". Incidentally, it is also included on Disc 2, but played a little less successfully (at a slower speed) by a different clarinetist.

Disc 2 contains essentially 3 Sonatas (in all but name) for string instrument and piano - one each for cello, viola and violin. Les chants de l'Argartha, for cello and piano, is in 3 movements,

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the first two of which exhibit a similar sound-world as the first movement of the flute piece on disc 1. And as in that piece, the final movement positively LEAPS from the speakers with energy and virtuoso demands nearly impossible to imagine for a cello. I came away from this movement exclaiming, "WOW!" - not only for the piece itself, but for the overwhelmingly impressive playing of cellist Jerome Pernoo. Constellations, for viola and piano, is more lyrical, atmospheric and richly colorful, as one might expect for composing for the viola. It is a lovely thing. Les chants de l'Atlantide is a 3 movement work for violin and piano, and is actually less overtly "virtuosic" than I had anticipated (at least until the 3rd movement, which is a workout!). Full of melodic inspiration and atmospheric writing, it is imaginative and expertly written for the instrument, with many sound-effects not often heard (glissandi, quarter-tones up and down, scooping/sliding, etc.). It is gorgeously played, although SONY does not specify which of two violinists listed (for the Quartet) plays it.

Next comes an interesting discovery - Adams Variations. This sounded instantly familiar, so I checked the booklet and learned it was a piece originally written for clarinet, violin, cello and piano, and was later re-scored and used as the first movement of the Sextet. Mr. Connesson tells us it was written "about" John Adams; no wonder it sounds so much like his music!

Last, but not least, is the String Quartet. This piece sounds the most unlike the rest in this collection, and I would be hard-pressed to hear it as being from the same composer. It has some of the bleakness of the (more approachable) Bartok quartets. It is neither as dissonant or atonal as Bartok's quartets, yet it has some of that same desolate landscape. The second movement, though, jumps off the pages (in much the same way Shostakovich uses a single movement of a concerto, for instance) to provide a stark contrast. This group of players certainly complies with the marking "Furioso" in this movement, prompting yet another "wow" from me.

All of this music is played with complete conviction, effortless virtuosity, and thorough involvement. Connesson could not possibly have received more persuasive - or accomplished - advocates to bring his music to life. Both discs are very well recorded, especially the first, which is superbly clean, airy, spacious and dynamic. The second is transferred at a higher volume level and is a bit thicker, darker and more forward, affording the music a touch of extra gravitas. This seems to suit the smaller ensembles featured just fine.

A couple of quibbles about SONY's booklet. It is a rather minimalist production (as is some of this music). We get only a short couple of sentences from the composer about each piece, and that's it. It's interesting; but for so many works which will be new to many of us, I would have liked more. Also, while there is a nice biography about Connesson, there is not a word about the performers. This is a pity, as many of them (at least on disc two) are completely unknown. And

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they are all absolutely fantastic. Finally, SONY makes several errors listing the instrumentation for each track of Jurassic Trip. They omit the instrumentation entirely for the 3rd movement (it is in fact for clarinet, strings and duo pianos); the 4th movement is for flute, bass clarinet and violin (SONY lists it as a clarinet); and the 6th movement is an interesting combination of cello, bass viol and pianos (SONY lists it as cello, bass clarinet and pianos). If you're going to go to the trouble of listing it at all, it's important to get it right. Connesson uses the cello and bass viol playing in unison to achieve a fascinatingly unique sound for the brontosaur. There is no bass clarinet here, which would have quite spoiled the exquisite atmosphere.

This is a thoroughly worthwhile exploration of this composer's chamber music. I have gained hours of enjoyment and musical discovery from it. This and the splendid Chandos release ("Cosmic Trilogy") are both very highly recommended. ---davidsclassicalcds.com

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