

Kaikhosru Sorabji - The Complete Songs for Soprano (2002)



Trois poèmes pour chant et piano 1. *Correspondances* (text by Charles Baudelaire) 2. *Crépuscule du soir mystique* (text by Paul Verlaine) 3. *Pantomime* (text by Paul Verlaine) 4. *Chrysilla* (text by Henri de Régnier) 5. *Roses du soir* (text by Pierre Louys) 6. *The Poplars* (text by Iovan Ducic) 7. *L'heure exquise* (text by Paul Verlaine) 8. *Vocalise pour soprano fiorituro* 9. *I was not sorrowful* (text by Ernest Dowson) 10. *L'étang* (text by Maurice Rollinat) 11. *Hymne à Aphrodite* (text by Laurent Tailhade) 12. *Apparition* (text by Stephané Mallarmé)
Trois Chants
13. *Le Faune* (text by Paul Verlaine) 14. *Les Chats* (text by Charles Baudelaire) 15. *La dernière fête galante* (text by Paul Verlaine)
Trois fêtes galantes de Verlaine
16: *L'allée* 17: *A la promenade* 18: *Dans la Grotte* 19: *L'irréremédiable* (text by Charles Baudelaire) 20: *Arabesque* (text by Shamsu'd-Din Ibrahim Mirza)
Elizabeth Farnum - Soprano (Vocal) Margaret A. Kampmeier – Piano

Notorious for his Brobdingnagian piano works, many hours long and of mind-numbing difficulty (most famous of all being *Opus clavicembalisticum*), Kaikhosru Sorabji was also an adept miniaturist. At the start of his extraordinary career, around 1915-20, he wrote many songs, plus a few later, almost all for soprano and mostly to French texts. (His mother was a professional singer; he himself was a connoisseur of the soprano voice and a friend of Blanche Marchesi, among other famous names.) By turns languid, ecstatic, capricious and texturally and harmonically spangled, the 20 songs on this disc, premiere recordings all, display a gifted songwriter whose rapidly forming style fits intelligibly into the company of such contemporary post-impressionist exotics as Scriabin, Szymanowski, Ornstein or Cyril Scott. Sorabji's favoured poets – Baudelaire, Dowson, Mallarmé, Verlaine, Louys – are pretty solidly fin de siècle, but his treatment of them borders at times on the Expressionist. The fantastic filigree of his piano parts will intermittently turn to a dancing mock-Baroque directness, as in the 'Dernière fête galante' from his last set of songs, written in 1941. The piano tone on Centaur's recording is sometimes a bit thin, and Elizabeth Farnum shows occasional strain in some of the cruelly high-lying passages in Sorabji's intricate and wayward vocal lines, but this is a very rewarding disc of totally unknown, highly individual and often very beautiful music. ---Calum MacDonald,

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