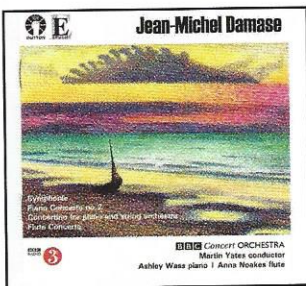


CDS

JEAN MICHEL DAMASE

Anna Noakes (flute) with
BBC Concert Orchestra
Dutton Epoch/BBC Radio



Jean Michel Damase composed his only flute concerto in 1992 for Jean Pierre Rampal. Sadly Rampal was by the then too ill to perform it and the concerto lay dormant until recently, when conductor and composer Martin Yates had the idea of putting together a CD of little known and neglected works by Damase, including a Symphony, his 2nd Piano Concerto, the *Concertino* for Piano and Orchestra and his utterly glorious flute concerto. Anna Noakes is the soloist in the Flute Concerto accompanied by the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Martin Yates, with recording producer Mike Dutton at the helm.

The orchestration and character of this concerto is generally very light hearted, and left me smiling from from the very first bar. It is delicately scored for strings, single woodwind, horn, trumpet, harp and percussion. The style is, of

course, very French, with strong influences from Fauré and Poulenc evident. Beautifully written for the flute, the programme notes for the disc describe it as undemanding. For the listener it is undemanding musically, but for the flautist it is technically challenging and extremely demanding.

Anna Noakes was one of Damase's favourite flautists and rightly so. She plays throughout this concerto with a beautifully rich, generous sound and a fine tonal palette of colours. Damase had the knack of writing a really good tune and the opening phrase of this concerto is really no exception; I found it whirling round my head for days afterwards. The first movement dances around mostly between 5/8 and 3/8, keeping the listener engaged at all times. Once you have been persuaded that this is a truly enchanting movement, it starts to get tricky, and with much triple tonguing required over almost the entire compass of the flute leave, it is clear that Jean Pierre Rampal asked for a technically challenging piece. Anna plays the first movement with great virtuosity and playfulness, which belie the demands on both technique and breath control.

The second movement opens with a limpid clarinet solo, beautifully played,

which leads into a haunting and ethereal flute melody accompanied by the harp. This is the only place where I felt the balance could have favoured the harp a little more, as Damase writes so well for this instrument here. Just as you start to lie back and enjoy the sumptuous and refulgent sounds of the flute, harp and strings, the flute part suddenly commands centre stage again with some very demanding arpeggio work. This very acrobatic section is then followed by beautifully phrased interjections from woodwind, horn and muted trumpet which eventually lead to a brilliant cadenza. The cadenza is played with total commitment and a wonderful breadth and depth of sound over all three octaves.

The final movement segues from the slow movement and has the flute knitting in semi quavers almost throughout. This is truly a movement to rival the pyrotechnics of the first movement of the Ibert flute concerto. Anna and the BBC concert orchestra make it all sound very easy, however, and whenever you feel it is all getting a bit too serious, Damase slips in a little ditty to make you laugh - and the whole orchestra can breathe again. The last section of this final movement is a tour de force for the flute, finishing with a three octave run from

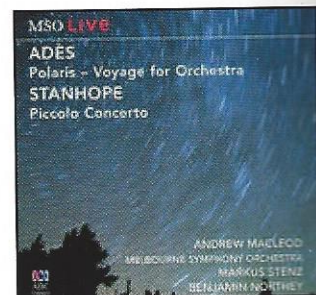
D flat to \bar{D} flat, immaculately executed and accompanied by pizzicato strings. I cannot recommend this recording highly enough; Jean Michel Damase would have loved it.

DEBORAH DAVIS

PAUL STANHOPE
PICCOLO CONCERTO

Andrew Macleod (piccolo)
with Melbourne Symphony
Orchestra

MSO Live/ABC



This is a hugely enjoyable performance of an excellent work scored for solo piccolo with a large orchestra including heavy brass, percussion and harp. Although the concerto was written as recently as 2013, the music is very accessible and I thoroughly enjoyed listening to it twice in quick succession. The only use made of extended technique is reserved for the cadenza where a little flutter tonguing is employed.

The performer in this premier recording is Andrew Macleod for whom the concerto was written. He is playing an Anton Braun piccolo with a D foot and demonstrates a fine control of the instrument, playing with a warm, expressive