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Embracing the modern: Madeleine Mitchell is a champion of new and overlooked music

colleagues I managed to get together for the recordings, including David Owen Norris, John Anderson, Bruce Nockles, Roger Chase and Joseph Spooner.

I formed the London Chamber Ensemble for my very first recording in 1994 – Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time*. The Vale of Glamorgan Festival director heard me play for Lampeter Music Club and asked if I could get together a group to do the Messiaen. So I asked the clarinetist who I'd been in the Fires of London with and then I had an instinct about asking Chris van Kampen, who was a marvellous chamber music player. Then it was actually pianist Stephen Kovacevich who suggested I ask Joanna MacGregor to play piano.

## I'D LIKE ANOTHER GO AT... **Bridge Morceau Caracteristique**

Madeleine Mitchell (violin),  
Andrew Ball (piano)  
*Divine Art DDA25063 (2007)*

This was on an album called *Violin Songs*. Having recorded a number of pieces that were written for me, for example on *In Sunlight* for NMC, I thought I would really like to record some personal favourites that I absolutely love to play. So the idea was to record song-like, short, melodic pieces, like Prokofiev's *Cinq mélodies*, which are songs without words, Elgar's *Salut d'amour* and Massenet's



*Méditation*, which I've played hundreds of times all over the world. I also arranged Berg's *Die Nachtigall*, which had just come out

of copyright, and ended the album with Richard Strauss's 'Morgen'.

I'm actually happy with this recording, but there are a couple of tracks where I'd only just got the music, such as Frank Bridge's *Morceau Caracteristique*, which was thought lost for 100 years. It's very virtuosic and we were lucky to discover the manuscript, which was in the RCM library, just before the recording. So I hadn't really had a chance to play it much and I'd like another go, because you then play it loads of times all over the place.

It's a lovely collection of pieces that I enjoy playing, though, so I'd always be happy to do it again.

*Madeleine Mitchell's new album 'Violin Conversations' is out on 23 June on Naxos*



Breaking barriers: Rubinstein's impact was huge

## MyHero



Conductor **Lidiya Yankovskaya** tells us why she thinks **Anton Rubinstein** deserves

to be a more celebrated figure

A pianist, composer and conductor, Anton Rubinstein had a huge and underappreciated impact on the development of Russian music. Perhaps most obviously, he founded the St Petersburg Conservatory – he was its first director and recruited many of its early teachers. Since then, the Conservatory has given us the likes of Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky, as well as Serge Diaghilev, Jascha Heifetz, Mariss Jansons and many others.

Rubinstein also managed to become a major musical figure, despite being Jewish at a time when Jews were discriminated against in Russian culture. As a composer, for example, he has a massive output – concertos, symphonies and some fantastic but rarely performed operas.

Most importantly of all, Rubinstein really believed in creating, in making things, and in ensuring a future for music – and not just music in general, but Russian music in particular. He found ways to incorporate truly Russian sounds, even though indigenous Russian music was seen as backwards, folksy or not 'good enough' for the German classical tradition.

He's not given enough credit for this, but I think it's thanks to him that we have this great tradition of Slavic music. He really broke through barriers and supported the next generation of composers. In particular, the so-called 'Mighty Handful' (including Borodin, Musorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov) were able to do what they did thanks to the barriers he broke down and the support and mentorship he offered.

*Yankovskaya conducts Rusalka at Santa Fe Opera this July-August*

## MY FONDEST MEMORY

### **Grace Williams Chamber Music**

Madeleine Mitchell (violin);  
London Chamber Ensemble  
*Naxos 8.571380 (2019)*

This is music which had never been recorded, indeed most of it was unpublished, so I was very pleased to do it. Grace Williams was a fine composer, but very self-critical. When I performed the Violin Sonata, people said, 'You should record this'. And I thought, 'What else is there?' It led me on a voyage of discovery through the National Library of Wales. There's some really interesting works; she loved the trumpet,

so the Sextet is an interesting combination of oboe, trumpet and piano quartet. There's also the Suite for Nine

Instruments and some solo pieces. It had such a good reception. I've also chosen this because of the marvellous

