

Op. 48 and *Quintet in B-flat Major*, Op. 34; L. Bernstein: *Sonata*; G. Jacob: *Miniature Suite for Clarinet and Viola*; J. Weinberg: *Dance and Song for Two Clarinets*; W.A. Mozart: *Quintet in A Major*, K. 581, *Divertimento No. 2*, K. 439B and *Trio in E-flat Major*, K. 498; B. Martinů: *Sonatina*, H. 356; A. Szalowski: *Sonatina*; L. Weiner: *Csárdás*; A. Bax: *Sonata*; P. Boulez: *Domaines*; C. Debussy: *Petite Piece* and *Première Rhapsodie*; P. Hindemith: *Variations*; A. Prinz: *Discussion*. Clover Field Recordings CFR 4231-4235. Total time: 6:11:32. Amazon.com

Prominent American clarinetist Stanley Drucker has enjoyed a performance career of over seven decades. As one of the longest-serving members of the New York Philharmonic, Drucker performed with the orchestra for over 60 years, serving in the capacity of principal clarinetist for 49 years under world-renowned conductors for an estimated 10,200 concerts. Drucker was also a celebrated soloist, appearing

with the Philharmonic on nearly 200 occasions and with other major orchestras across the United States and Europe. In addition to his accomplishments as an orchestral musician and soloist, Drucker was also a very active chamber musician, performing in illustrious recital halls and around the region in which he lived in locales such as schools, libraries, places of worship, and similar venues. **Heritage Collection Live in Concert** celebrates the legacy of Drucker in this capacity featuring recordings of works collected from live performances from a span of over 30 years.

Producer Jerome Bunke worked closely with Drucker to select recordings for release from hundreds of hours of audio captured during live performances. Each of the five compact discs in the set includes a variety of solo and chamber works for clarinet. Drucker is joined by a multitude of outstanding collaborative musicians, including his wife Naomi Drucker, a fine clarinetist in her own right. Each disc included in the collection could stand on its own; the repertoire is varied and each work compliments the next. Selections included on each disc represent a wide range of historical periods and styles including masterworks of the repertoire, contemporary music, and forgotten gems.

An abundance of bonus material is included with the set. A separate booklet contains a foreword and information about the project from Mitchell Estrin and Jerome Bunke, as well as program notes for works included on each disc written by Jennifer Fraley, Joshua R. Mietz and Katrina Phillips. The booklet also

contains many photographs of Drucker with friends and colleagues throughout the years. Inserts for each disc in the set provide anecdotes and reflections from composers and musicians who worked with Drucker along with additional photographs. The disc liners indicate recording dates for works included on the disc and credits. The aforementioned materials provide valuable insight into the music, life, and career of Stanley Drucker.

Each performance included in **Heritage Collection Live in Concert** is exceptional. The musicianship exhibited by Drucker and all collaborators is truly remarkable with great energy and spontaneity captured in each live performance. Drucker's playing boasts immense technical command and precision, but also sensitivity and subtleties that blend seamlessly with the other musicians. When one considers the fact that some of these performances took place in less-than-ideal acoustic environments and before the advent of digital technology, the recordings are all the more impressive. Only the occasional room noise such as a cough or shuffling serves as a subtle reminder that these recordings were created on location rather than in the studio.

Stanley Drucker's artistry is presented here in its purest form; these live recordings transport the listener to share in the legacy of this prominent clarinetist. This would be a welcome addition to the collection of any clarinetist and serve as a valuable reference to a variety of compositions performed by a legendary musician. Highly recommended.

– Karl Kolbeck

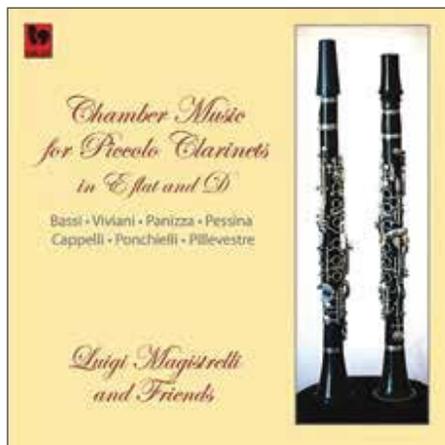
AUDIO NOTES

by Christopher Nichols

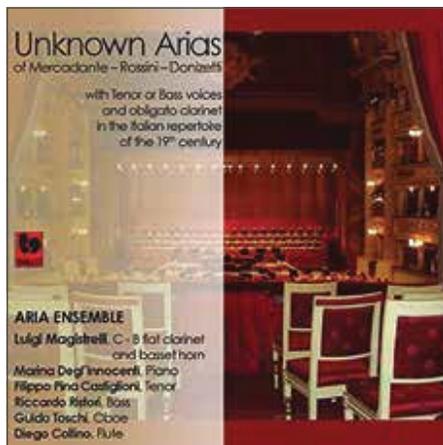
Italian clarinetist Luigi Magistrelli is among the most recorded clarinetists of our time, with over 55 recordings on 18 labels representing every imaginable medium. He currently serves as professor of clarinet at the Conservatory of Milan and maintains an active performance and teaching schedule of international scope. Of special note is his personal

collection of over 260 clarinets, which range from the chalumeau to modern Boehm and Deutsche System instruments. Magistrelli's scholarly research centers on obscure literature for clarinet, clarinet and piano and various chamber ensembles with a special focus on Italian 19th century literature. His exhaustive research efforts have resulted in critical scores of many

such works, published by Eufonia, Musica Rara and Accademia Italiana del Clarinetto, among others. His recording activities and these editions disseminate his findings internationally. Detailed information about his recording activities, instrument collection and publications is available on his professional website: www.luigimagistrelli.it.



Chamber Music for Piccolo Clarinets in E-flat and D, Gallo CD-1487 was recorded between 2002 and 2015. This disc features Luigi Magistrelli on the title instruments, along with a variety of collaborators: clarinetist Laura Magistrelli; clarinetist and pianist Sergio Del Mastro; piccoloists Elena Cecconi and Flavio Alziati; flutist Marco Zoni; pianists Claudio Bracco, Marina Degl'Innocenti, Riccardo Caramella and Vsevolod Dvorkin; and oboist Gianfranco Bortolato. Solo and chamber music recordings featuring high clarinets are fairly rare, although a few such notable recordings have emerged in recent years. Magistrelli's chosen program, exclusively consisting of 19th century Italian literature, includes two standards: Ponchielli's *Quartet in E-flat Major*, Op. 110, for flute, oboe, E-flat clarinet, B-flat clarinet and piano (in fact a quintet), and Luigi Bassi's *Gran Duetto Concertato on Bellini's "Sonnambula"* for E-flat clarinet, B-flat clarinet and piano. All other works are world premiere recordings. Particularly unique are works featuring piccolo and E-flat or D clarinet: Giacomo Panizza's *Gli Innamorati (The Lovers)* and Giuseppe Pessina's *Gli Usignoli (The Nightingales)*. As one might expect with such a combination of instruments and virtuosic literature, there are occasional intonation discrepancies. Beyond those two tracks, excellent intonation, idiomatic phrasing, musical conviction and beautiful sonorities are enjoyed throughout this disc. Those interested in E-flat clarinet solo recital literature with piano will be particularly interested in Luigi-Maria



Viviani's *Solo from the ballet "Il Fausto"* and Giuseppe Capelli's *Fantasy on "I Due Foscardi,"* after Verdi. The closing track, Jules Pillevestre's *Les Anches rebelles*, is a charming programming alternative for the same instrumentation as Bassi's aforementioned staple.

Unknown Arias of Mercadante – Rossini – Donizetti, Gallo CD-1499, also includes some standard literature and a number of world premiere recordings. Magistrelli delivers convincing and enjoyable performances of Gioachino Rossini's revered *Introduction, Theme and Variations* and the less frequently performed *Variations in C*, initially designated for oboe, both with piano reductions of the orchestration. Other instrumental features on this recording include the world premiere recording of Saverio Mercadante's *Potpourri* for the unique instrumentation of flute, oboe, clarinet, basset horn (originally for English horn) and piano (originally for orchestra) and an arrangement of Rossini's mezzo aria *Se il vuol la Mulinara* for clarinet and piano. Especially intriguing, however, are the arrangements by Nico Bertelli of popular opera arias by Rossini, Donizetti, and Mercadante for tenor or bass, clarinet obbligato and piano. These enhance the limited available repertoire and are published by Nico Bertelli Edition. Pianist Marina Degl'Innocenti, tenor Filippo Pina Castiglioni, bass Riccardo Ristori, oboist Guido Toshi and flutist Diego Collino collaborate with Magistrelli in an exquisite manner for this fine disc.

Unknown Classical Clarinet Sonatas, Gallo CD-1476, presents sonatas by



Xavier Lefèvre, Samuel Friedrich Heine, François Baissière, Paul Friedrich Struck and Carl Arnold. Magistrelli collaborates with pianist Chiara Nicola and cellist Elisabetta Soresina for this recording. Lefèvre's *Sonata No. 3*, Op. 12, is perhaps most familiar to clarinetists because of Georgina Dobrée's continuo realization for piano. However, here the continuo is performed with cello alone, which provides a unique and convincing rendition of this early repertoire for our instrument. Baissière's *Sonata*, Op. 3, No. 1, also adds cello to the continuo texture, but with piano in this instance. Each work found on this recording demonstrates an exceptional mastery of the classical style. Magistrelli performs on instruments previously owned by the late clarinetist Dieter Kloecker built by L. Warschewski, c. 1920. An intellectual, artistic and inspired approach to these works is evident. These interpretations revel in the charm, simplicity and effervescence of this period and are a joyful experience. The clarity of Magistrelli's articulation is particularly notable and enhances the overall effect of this repertoire.

Magistrelli's three recent releases on the Gallo label disseminate a remarkable variety of obscure literature, both original and transcribed, with much of it recorded for the first time. Beyond increasing the awareness of this unusual repertoire, this is inspiring clarinet performance with musical conviction. Magistrelli has an especially notable command of the extended clarinet family, whether historic or modern. I hope you will pursue these fine discs! ❖