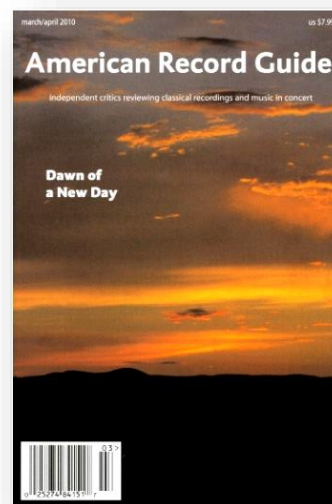


British Piano 4-Hands

WALTON: *Duets for Children*; **VAUGHN-WILLIAMS:** *Wasps Overture*; **ELGAR:** *Introduction & Allegro*; **McCartNEY:** *Appaloosa-Meditation*; *A Leaf, Singalong Junk*

Duo Caron, p. XXI1603—57 minutes



Canadian sister and brother Josee and Martin Caron, playing a gorgeous sounding Italian Fazioli piano in the Historic Chapel of the Bon-Pasteur in Montreal, offer an engaging program of British music for piano four hands. I must admit to a certain pleasure, as a child of the 1960s who has always been a fan of the Beatles, to see Paul McCartney's music played alongside names like Walton, Elgar, and Vaughan Williams. The very effective duet arrangements are by Martin Caron (one by Frederic Brunel), and they made me wonder now much of what I was enjoying was Caron and how much was McCartney. In the case of *A Leaf*, it is very much McCartney, who composed it in 1994 as a seven-sectioned solo piano piece. It has been published (18 pages) and is readily available. The song 'Junk' was originally written in 1968 while the Beatles were in India. It was considered, but rejected for both the White Album and Abbey Road. Both a vocal and instrumental version ('Singa-long Junk') can be found on McCartney's first solo album (1970). Here we have the idiomatic and enjoyable four-hand arrangement by Brunei, which follows the original quite closely. McCartney used piano, acoustic, electric, and bass guitars, plus a mellotron for the sustained string sound.

Martin Caron also did the arrangements of the Vaughan Williams *Wasps Overture* and the Elgar *Introduction and Allegro*. Walton's two books of children's duets were arranged for piano four hands by their composer, and they are a great find. Walton originally wrote nine of these as solo piano pieces and then orchestrated them with the title *Music for Children*. Ranging in time from 43 seconds to a little over 2 minutes, they are inventive and charming, with modal colors and irregular rhythms. Duo Caron captures the essence of each piece quite admirably.

Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro* was originally for string ensemble and although mostly lyrical, it includes a dramatic fugue section that puts the Carons to the test. It's an effective closing number on a most enjoyable program. However you may feel about a pop composer being treated equally with more luminary names among British classical composers, I must admit that after a number of hearings of this wonderful release, it is the McCartney tunes that I catch myself humming.

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