

## **Maurice Emmanuel (1862-1938)**

Cello Sonata Op.2 (1890)

Sonata for clarinet, flute and piano, Op.11 (1907)

Symphony No.2 in A,

Op.25 *Bretonne* (1935)

String Quartet No.2 in B flat major, Op.18 (1897)

Suite on Greek Folk Songs, Op.10 (1907)

Maurice Maréchal (cello), Jeanne-Marie Darré (piano)

André Boutard (clarinet), Jacques

Castagner (flute), Janine Saggier (piano)

Orchestre radio-symphonique de

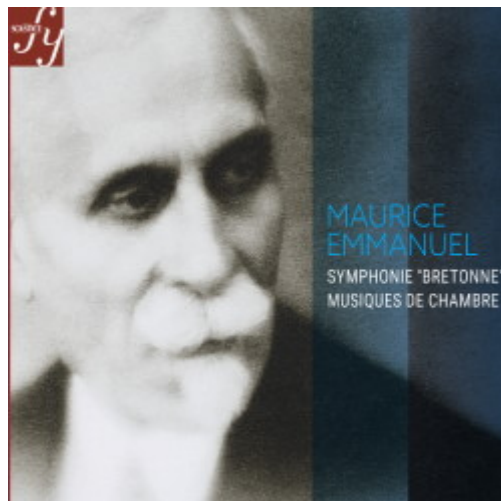
Strasbourg/Charles Bruck

Parrenin Quartet

Maurice Fueri (violin), Jean Hubeau (piano)

rec. 1959, 1962 (quartet)

**SOLSTICE SOCD397** [74]



**Availability**

**Solstice Music**

Solstice enjoys a good reputation for its historical restorations and this release is no exception. It presents a series of 1959 broadcasts – and one from 1962 – that preserve performances by some distinguished artists of the music of Maurice Emmanuel. Time was when I found myself reviewing nothing but his Six *Sonatinas* – or at least, it felt like that – but this broad-based conspectus offers five different works ranging from sonatas to a symphony. Something, indeed, for everyone.

It opens with the Op.2 Cello Sonata, an early-ish work written when Emmanuel was 28 or so and premiered by Paul Bazelaire as late as 1921. It's played by my favourite cellist, Maurice Maréchal, and accompanied by Jeanne-Marie Darré. Maréchal had taken it into his repertoire by 1923 so he had known it for over 35 years by the time he played it in November 1959. It's a busy work with folkloric and dance impulses – lovely rustic cello drones included – and with a yearning, sublimated intensity in the Larghetto. The finale is an eventful Gigue full of busy interplay between the two instruments. It would be idle to suggest that the cellist retains those tonal qualities and the technical supremacy he displayed in the late 20s and 30s. By 1959 he was past his prime and soon to retire but it's still a privilege to hear him play, with such assurance, and with such sensitivity, a work he had known so well and with Darré he forms a wonderful team.

The Sonata for clarinet, flute and piano is rather typically French in its clarity, directness and beauty but it is also lissom and frolicsome, adding a calm reflective impression in its slow movement. Ebullience returns, redoubled in the finale, which is negotiated with finesse by the formidable team of André Boutard (clarinet), Jacques Castagner (flute) and Janine Saggier (piano). Charles Bruck and the Orchestre radio-symphonique de Strasbourg perform the Symphony No.2 in A, Op.25 *Bretonne* in January 1959. It's a compact 17-minute work in four movements. It opens in a martial way with skirling strings and vivid winds but rather tinny sounding percussion. The Scherzando is all deftness, sinuous and evocative, and the slow movement deepens the music's diaphanous quality – sultry too. The finale's dancing theme is full of brio and seems comprehensively to turn the tables on the opening's implacability. Some of the themes are rooted in local Breton folklore, hence the work's subtitle.

The Quartet No 2 is played by the Parrenin Quartet in the only broadcast made in 1962. It had been premiered by the Charot Quartet back in 1912, whose cellist

had been none other than Maréchal, another happy example of the ties that bound cellist and composer. There's a rhapsodic fluidity to the work that ensures engagement throughout and in the sparkling *alla zingarese* finale Emmanuel gives his inner Gypsy self a free rein. Finally, Maurice Fureri, second violin of the eminent Loewenguth Quartet, joins Jean Hubeau for the Suite on Greek Folk Songs, Op.10, four deft and imaginative little studies that take in Bulgarian rhythms and a kind of compound setting which presents two songs.

Not only are these perfectly serviceably recorded for their time, these broadcast performances cast a strong light on significant performers of the time. They come from the INA archives and provide important historical evidence of performances of Emmanuel's music. Yvette Carbou of Solstice pays special thanks to the composer's granddaughter, Anne Eichner, for her work in disseminating Emmanuel's music. Though all these works have been recorded much more recently and in better sound, the performers and the nature of the performances gives this disc a special cachet.

***Jonathan Woolf***