Louise Dubin

Cellist

CD & Concert Reviews from Print Media
+ Radio Broadcast Interviews and Honors
For Louise Dubin and
THE FRANCHOMME PROJECT

KDFC, San Francisco Classical

December 7, 2015: Chosen as a Favorite Recording of the Year for My Favorite Things Week, KDFC: https://web.archive.org/web/20160316191524/http://www.kdfc.com/pages/22244669.php

September 7, 2015: CD of the week.

"This week's featured CD is a tribute to the long-neglected French virtuoso cellist and composer, Auguste Franchomme. Franchomme was a close friend and musical partner of Frederic Chopin, who transcribed a number of Chopin's piano works for cello. Many of those transcriptions are included on this beautiful new disc, along with original works by Franchomme, performed by American cellist and Franchomme researcher, Louise Dubin."

November 3, 12, and 23, 2015 on WCLV, Cleveland

CD of the Day

*"*This is a labor of love from cellist and musical excavator Louise Dubin, sharing music by the most renowned French cellist of his age, Auguste Franchomme (1808-1884). It turns out that 1832 was a pivotal year in Franchomme's life: he was appointed solo cellist of King Louis-Philippe's new *Musique du Roi* chamber orchestra, and he met Frédéric Chopin, beginning a professional and personal relationship that lasted till the end of the pianist's life. Of the 14 selections recorded here, five are transcriptions of Chopin's music, including the famous Funeral March from the Sonata No. 2, scored for a quartet of cellos. The original pieces by Franchomme include Nocturnes for 2 Cellos and paraphrases on operas by Weber and Bellini. Hector Berlioz called Franchomme "the best cellist in the capital" but in the 21st century, it's "Auguste who?" Thank goodness Louise Dubin has come forward as his champion! "

http://wclv.ideastream.org/wclv/guide/2015-11-03#block-views-choice-cd-block

classicalMPR

American Public Media and Minnesota Public Radio: Julie Amacher's segment features The Franchomme Project on **New Classical Tracks**, broadcast on Minnesota Public Radio and later nationwide on syndicates of American Public Media.
http://www.classicalmpr.org/story/2015/11/18/new-classical-tracks-louise-dubin-the-franchomme-project

Performance Today

Live performance with Julia Bruskin of Franchomme's Nocturne Op. 14, No. 1 featured on Fred Child's **Performance Today**, American Public Media's nationally-syndicated radio program. The show was broadcast on MPR and affiliated stations nationwide on August 15th, 2017 and on the Performance Today website for the following month: complete playlist is at https://www.yourclassical.org/programs/performance-today/episodes/2017/08/15. In addition, The Franchomme Project was commended on Performance Today on November 8, 2106, when Fred Child said "...there's something of a Franchomme revival getting underway. A great deal of credit for that goes to American cellist Louise Dubin and her Franchomme Project" and placed a link to the project on the Performance Today web page.

CLASSICAL CLASSROOM
MOZART BACH BEETHOVEN BRAHMS

Houston Public Media: Week of December 7th, 2015: **Classical Classroom** with Dacia Clay: broadcast live and throughout the week of full-length interview (http://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/arts-culture/2015/12/07/130145/classical-classroom-ep-111-the-franchomme-episode-with-louise-dubin/), Google hangout and podcast on Houston Public Media.

SELECTED OTHER RADIO FEATURES:

WFMT, Chicago's Classical Radio Station: featured New Release, week of October 5th, 2015: http://blogs.wfmt.com/newreleases/2015/10/04/the-franchomme-project/

Featured on Tom Quick's Women in Music CKWR in Waterloo, Ontario on Monday Oct 19, repeat show planned.

Hour-long interview featuring album on WKCR-FM New York City about The Franchomme Project (see http://www.louise-dubin.com/press/ for recording)

France Musique/Radio France featured The Franchomme Project album on October 14th, on a nationally broadcast show called "En Pistes!" (The playlist is available at http://www.francemusique.fr/emission/en-pistes/2015-2016/itzhak-perlman-le-virtuose-au-stradivarius-3-5-10-14-2015-09-30.) Rodolphe Bruneau-Boulmier called it a "beau disque" (beautiful CD) and "on oublie que Franchomme est également un compositeur- voici un disque qui répare cette injustice." (We forget that Franchomme was also a composer- here's a CD that repairs this injustice).

Featured on many other radio stations throughout the world, including Alabama APR, WQED Pittsburgh New Classical Tracks, Maine MPR, WPRB Princeton, WWUH Hartford, WHQR Wilmington NC, and stations in France, Canada, Malta, etc.

STRINGS

April 2016

CD Review: Cellist Louise Dubin's 'The Franchomme Project'

By Cristina Schreil

Wrapping up her studies at Indiana University, cellist Louise Dubin delved into research on all things Auguste Franchomme, exploring the most complete assemblage of works by the French cellist and composer at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and even meeting his descendents. Listeners now

have a chance to crack open a door to times past themselves. The Franchomme Project presents some of these newly discovered works. Many, Dubin says, haven't been recorded before and offer a rare musical treat.

Dubin has conjured an informative listener's journey into Franchomme, and the Project seems to sing with this celebration. The album includes works for solo cello and piano (with Andrea Lam and Hélène Jeanney accompanying), for two cellos, and for four cellos, when cellists Julia Bruskin, Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir, Katherine Cherbas unite with Dubin in various iterations. The cello quartet works, in particular, and vibrates with robust, beautiful layers of sound.

In the album notes, Dubin champions Franchomme as an innovator. His intimate relationship with Chopin, famously his pal and collaborator, is especially foregrounded here, with five Chopin works included, arranged by Franchomme. In Chopin's Introduction et polonaise brillante, Franchomme revised the cello part "to make it more brilliant," Dubin writes, and indeed, her performance unfolds with radiant energy.

While it may seem he competes, Chopin hardly snags the spotlight. Franchomme's four nocturnes for two cellos are notably mesmerizing and melancholic. In Op. 15. No. 1, performed by Dubin and Thorsteinsdóttir, gentle triplets layer under long, velvety bow strokes. It is so easily likable many may wonder why it's not more popular, or at the very least recorded more often.

the Strad
ESSENTIAL READING FOR THE STRING MUSIC WORLD SINCE 1890

April 2016

Delightful rediscoveries of Chopin arrangements and original works

CD Review By Robin Stowell, April 2016

The Franchomme Project showcases some of the celebrated French cellist Auguste Franchomme's original cello compositions and Chopin arrangements, most of which have remained unpublished and unheard since the late 19th century. It represents the culmination of years of research by Louise Dubin, who also performs here as principal cellist.

Dubin is an artist of refined taste and musicianship, unconcerned with display or self-projection; indeed, there are times when she comes close to understatement, as, for example, in the operatic Caprice op.24 no.2 and the Bellini paraphrase, and the mix of lyricism and bravura in the op.18 Solo. She gives Chopin's C major Mazurka a more cavalier treatment and, sparked perhaps by pianist Hélène Jeanney, loosens her belt in Franchomme's embellished version of Chopin's *Introduction and Polonaise brillante.* She shapes her moving, lyrical lines in Franchomme's nocturnes with innate musicality – and her sparring in op.15 no.2 with co-cellist Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir is delightful.

Effective also are three of Franchomme's unpublished cello quartets and arrangements of Chopin, transcribed by Dubin from manuscripts preserved in Paris – the short Prelude op.28 no.9, expansively

realised, the rich-textured Ballade op.38 and the famous *Marche funèbre* from Chopin's Second Piano Sonata. The recording is warm and resonant.

September 25, 2015

The Franchomme Project in Review

by Anthony Aibel

The compositions of Auguste Franchomme are undergoing a huge revival, thanks to the cellist Louise Dubin. The first concert in New York which celebrated the Franchomme Project CD release was on September 19th. The second will be Sunday, September 27th at 2pm.

Auguste Franchomme (1808-1884) was the most renowned French cellist of his time. He studied both cello and composition in Lille, and he became an important musical figure in Paris, where he befriended Chopin. The two remained very close, and Chopin's late work, the Sonata for Piano and Cello, Op. 65, was dedicated to Franchomme. Until recently, most of Franchomme's compositions were out-of-print and have never been recorded. Cellist Louise Dubin's doctoral thesis on this 19th century cellist-composer has inspired several projects, including performances in France and the U.S., and music lectures at NYU and other universities. A volume of Franchomme's compositions introduced by Ms. Dubin is to be published by Dover in November, 2015. The Franchomme Project CD—the Delos/Naxos album being celebrated this month— features many premiere recordings of his works. The album was chosen by San Francisco's classical music station KDFC-FM as "CD of the week" in the week of its release (officially released on September 11, 2015). St. Paul's Chapel, which housed and aided many of the injured on 9/11, is the location for the next Franchomme concert on September 27th.

Ms. Dubin has done remarkably well with this project, shedding light on this important, influential musician. She is as fine a performer as she is a scholar. She plays with a robust, lush sound, yet blends impeccably with her co-artists, the excellent cellists Saeunn Thorsteinsdottir, Katherine Cherbas, Julia Bruskin, and the marvelous pianist Hélène Jeanney. They all gave stellar performances on September 19th at John Street Church; the intonation, balance, vibrato, voicing and interpretation were all unified. Although the entire program was enlightening and immensely enjoyable, the Chopin/Franchomme pieces for cello quartet—transcribed by Ms. Dubin from manuscripts—were special highlights of the evening. In these cello quartet arrangements, the full, glorious range of the cello is conveyed. Lucid details and ornaments are loyal to the originals. The Marche Funèbre from the second piano sonata was haunting and ominous as one usually hears in the piano original, but with four cellos, it was rugged, rich and lyrically soulful in a way that might persuade an individual to want to choose this sonority over the sound of the piano. The Ballade No. 2, Op.38 was given an elegant, lilting and sweet performance; it was repeated as an encore. The last harmonic, which Ms. Dubin slightly missed and could have been perceived as a grace note in the first rendering, was now perfect and recording-ready—in case the concert's live recording was one of the intentions for the repeat encore. The obvious reason for the

Ballade as an encore was that the audience loved it the first time. The tempo was more flowing when they repeated it, and I enjoyed it more the second time.

Go to the September 27th performance and get the recording. Justice has been served to both Franchomme and Chopin.

For more information about this upcoming concert, as well as Franchomme and the recording, visit https://www.louise-dubin.com/.

Time Out New York: "Critic's Picks." The Franchomme Project CD Release Concerts September 19th, 2015 at John Street Church and September 27th, 2015 at Trinity Church's St. Paul's Chapel.

ClassicAgenda.Fr (FRANCE) Concert Review, Violoncellenseine 2016, Salle Gaveau and CRR, Paris. Includes concerts by Louise Dubin featuring her transcriptions from manuscripts and other material from The Franchomme Project, performed with Tony Hewitt, Philippe Muller and Raphael Pidoux.

http://www.classicagenda.fr/violoncellenseine-ressurection-inedits/

NAXOS selects The Franchomme Project as a "Best 2015 Release from Classical Independent Labels."

Musicologie.org (FRANCE) May 9, 2016: CD Review of the Franchomme Project (http://www.musicologie.org/16/the_franchomme_project.html), by Strapontin du Paradis: "These interpretations, airy, elegant and above all intimate, bring to light these elements concerning the friendships between the two musicians, cello technique, and the ambiance of the time. If the Caprices, Nocturnes and transcriptions are often calm and bel canto, interpreted with great beauty, virtuosity is not forgotten; throughout the Introduction and Polonaise Brillante, Louise Dubin gives vent to long expressive inspirations with the very virtuosic complicity of Hélène Jeanney...."

CD review of The Franchomme Project, **Music Web International** (ENGLAND)

by Samuel Magill, March 2016

http://musicweb-international.com/classrev/2016/Mar/Franchomme_project_DE3469.htm

This CD is the brainchild of cellist Louise Dubin, who discovered previously unknown works by the famous virtuoso Auguste Franchomme. In addition, she arranged music for four cellos, hired the three other cellists, wrote the programme notes and performed the lion's share of the music on this disc. It is a brilliant achievement in every aspect.

Franchomme (1808-1884) was the most celebrated virtuoso cellist in France of the period from roughly 1830 to 1880. Like most star instrumentalists of his day, he wrote a large body of music for his instrument, and provided generations of students with wonderful cello studies which are still in use today. If he is at all known to the public, it is for his close friendship with Frédéric Chopin. The two men co-authored the Grand Duo Concertante sur "Robert le Diable" de Meyerbeer and later it was for Franchomme that Chopin wrote his masterful Sonata, op. 65. Franchomme also transcribed a large amount of the violin literature for the cello, including all ten of Beethoven's Sonatas for violin and piano, published in 1867. His version of the "Kreutzer" Sonata is monumentally challenging since he hardly allows for any limitations of the cello, basically altering almost nothing from the famously difficult violin part. If he was able to perform this himself, he must have been a formidable cellist indeed.

Given this close association with Chopin, Ms. Dubin arranged two works of Chopin's for 4 cellos and offers as a finale the Polonaise Brillante, op. 3, also written for Franchomme. This serves to offer a delightful balance between the two composers. In general I would say that Franchomme's music suffers from a lack of true inspiration, especially when compared to the master. Curiously, he does not follow in

Chopin's footsteps regarding the latter's revolutionary harmonic writing. The cellist's music is, rather, a throwback to an earlier age more akin to that of Mendelssohn and Weber. The cello writing is similar to his nearly exact contemporary, Adrian-Francois Servais. The music's main purpose is not to scale the heights but rather to please the ear and show the public what could be accomplished on the instrument.

Dubin exhibits total mastery of her instrument -her intonation is well-nigh perfect and her tone is always lovely and warm. The other three cellists are equally fine. They are sympathetic collaborators, showing much sensitivity in their ensemble work and match perfectly Dubin's sweet cello sound.

Additional CD review of The Franchomme Project, **Music Web International** (England)

by Jonathan Woolf, January 2016

http://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2016/Jan/Franchomme_project_DE3469.htm

August Franchomme was one of the most distinguished cellists of his time. Born in Lille he won the Paris Conservatoire's Premier Prix at sixteen and by his early twenties had established the template that was to last for the rest of his career: soloist, chamber player, orchestral cellist and teacher. His friendship with Chopin was a defining one; he was Chopin's cellist of choice and they co-wrote – Franchomme the cello part, Chopin the piano – the Grand Duo Concertant sur Robert le Diable de Meyerbeer. The Cello Sonata was dedicated to the French cellist, who prepared his friend's works for publication after Chopin's death. He made over fifty arrangements of Chopin's pieces.

This disc restores Franchomme's own compositions and arrangements to public hearing – in many cases in premiere recordings. There are three unpublished cello quartets which Louise Dubin - the disc's musical archæologist and principal cellist – has transcribed from the manuscripts. The four-cello arrangement by Franchomme of Chopin's Ballade, Op.38 is full of refined elegance, a characteristic feature of the majority of the cellist's pieces, whether original or borrowed. The Prelude Op.28/9 and the Funeral March movement from the Second Sonata complete the trio of quartets – the last named especially striking in the way it changes the character of the music; I liked the drone-like effect and the varied and sometimes sparing use of vibrato in this performance. It reminds one that Franchomme also arranged this for full orchestra.

The original works attest to the cellist's sense of modesty and apt lyricism. He was one of the first – if not the very first, the notes tell us – to write cello nocturnes and his Op.15 No.1, for two cellos, has a just parcelling out of lyricism to both instruments. It's an interesting work and sounds rather Slavic,

almost prefiguring Dvořák. The other Nocturnes are finely contrasted: No.2 is warm, whilst No.3 is quicker with a more agitato central panel to stimulate interest. There's a quiet gravity to the Op.14 No.1 Nocturne, a touch of melancholy too, and its memorable melody is graced by a care for vocalised beauty that fits perfectly with the milieu. A more extrovert side to the cellist can be savoured in the Caprice Op.7 No.1, again for two cellos, where one finds wit, unsullied as it were, by overt virtuosity. Showiness for its own sake, or indeed for any sake, was clearly alien to Franchomme's nature though Berlioz judged him the best cellist in Paris. The solo for cello and piano, Op.18 No.3, reflects the more salon-based requirements of his art though it's not lacking in technical accomplishment. The longest piece here is Chopin's Polonaise Brillante, Op.3, with Franchomme responsible for the revision of Chopin's cello part. It's played with spirit by Louise Dubin and Hélène Jeanney.

Dubin has written the invaluable booklet notes and her performances are elegantly and subtly shaped. Her cellistic and pianistic colleagues offer fine support and they have been sensitively recorded. If the aim of this disc was to help start the reclamation of Franchomme then I'd say this is mission accomplished. *-Jonathan Woolf*

Download News, **Music Web International**

By Brian Wilson, September 2015

Auguste FRANCHOMME (1808-1884). *The Franchomme Project* offers an attractive programme of newly discovered works by this renowned French cellist, together with transcriptions of music by Chopin, who chose Franchomme as his chamber music partner. The performances are by Louise Dubin (cello and research), with Julia Bruskin, Sæunn Thorsteinsdóttir and Katherine Cherbas, (cello), Hélène Jeanney and Andrea Lam (piano). (**DELOS DE3469**). It's due for release on 30 October but available to stream or download in advance, from Qobuz [http://player.qobuz.com/#!/album/0013491346922 – only available in certain countries] and in mp3, 16- and 24-bit download from eclassical.com [http://www.eclassical.com/labels/delos/the-franchomme-project.html]. Both come with booklet. My review copy came via press access in very good wav sound, so I can't comment on the quality from Qobuz and eclassical.com but I imagine that they sound fine, too.

CD review of The Franchomme Project, **ClassiqueNews.com** (France)

by Philippe Alexandre Pham, December 29, 2015 .

http://www.classiquenews.com/tag/franchomme/

CD, compte rendu critique. The Franchomme Project. Partitions récemment redécouvertes d'Auguste Franchomme (1 cd Delos). Né Lillois à l'aube du XIXè, Auguste-Joseph Franchomme (1808-1884) est ce violoncelliste et compositeur français, professeur au Conservatoire de Paris qui affirme une belle créativité aux côtés de son activité pédagogique tout au long du XIXè. En 1832, il fait partie de la Musique du Roi Louis-Philippe (qui le tenait en grande estime au sein de son orchestre) et rencontre Chopin dont il transpose plusieurs partitions comme en témoigne la première oeuvre du programme (Andantino de la Ballade n°2 opus 38) ; Franchomme, comme ce dernier a la passion de Bellini (écouter ici l'air inspiré de la Norma pour violoncelle et piano : où jaillit entre autres Casta diva….). Elément pilier de trois l'orchestre de trois opéras parisiens, le compositeur avait tout loisir d'enrichir sa connaissance du répertoire lyrique dans l'exercice de son métier. Franchomme cultiva une solide amitié avec Chopin dont il aida à publier les oeuvres après sa mort en 1845.

Le violoncelle de Franchomme ressuscite avec éclat

Le présent récital éclaire la personnalité pragmatique et carrée, simple et rassurante, sobre et très musicale de Franchomme, qui ne fut pas seulement l'ami de Chopin à Paris, mais un violoncelliste particulièrement adulé et estimé, un pédagogue avisé et admiré.

Sensibilité musicale d'envergure, Franchomme exprime plus précisément une certaine langueur nocturne et belcantiste que manifestent idéalement les deux partitions ici pour deux violoncelles (deux Nocturnes opus 15 et 14 n°1, emblématique des années 1838-1839 dans le genre fixé par John Field que Chopin transfigure et que Franchomme sublime lui aussi) d'une puissance ténue, à la fois tendre et virile. Une finesse que nous apprenons à redécouvrir et qui renseigne précisément l'exigence et l'élévation poétique d'un immense violoncelliste qui fonda aussi la très influente société de musique de chambre avec le violoniste Jean Delphin Alard, dont les lectures des quatuors et Sonates de Mozart et Beethoven furent particulièrement applaudies.

Ce que révèle le programme et la très subtile sélection de partitions choisies, c'est évidemment l'acuité d'une écriture instrumentale très influencée par l'opéra, où se mêlent l'esprit mélancolique de Schubert

et la séduction de Mozart (Solo pour violoncelle opus 18 n°3) mais aussi l'esthétique portée sur l'intériorité et la suggestion (cf cette réserve extrême dont parle Berlioz) incarnée par les affinités en dialogue entre les personnalités que Franchomme a su réunir autour de lui : Chopin donc, mais aussi Hiller, Berlioz, Mendelssohn…

La prodigieuse musicalité de Franchomme comme compositeur se lit sans réserve dans la transposition de la marche funèbre d'après Chopin pour 4 violoncelles et piano (élément central de sa Sonate n°2 opus 35); d'une acuité hypnotique. Sans omettre l'élégance suave et faussement insouciante de la Mazurka opus 33. Autant de qualités d'une invention constante et perfectionniste que le chant intérieur des interprètes de ce disque (majoritairement américains) en tout point convaincants, cultive avec une sensibilité ardente, dramatique, sensuelle. Superbe révélation.

Louise Dubin, Julia Bruskin, Sæunn Thorsteinsdottir, Katherine Cherbas, violoncelles. Hélène Jeanney et Andrea Lam, piano. 1 cd Delos. Durée : 1h07. Enregistrement réalisé en 2012 et 2014 au New Jersey.

Partial English Translation: **"A constant innovation and great perfectionism all coming from the inner voice of the performers of this album (who are mostly Americans), in all points extremely convincing, given with an ardent, dramatic and sensual sensibility. In all, a superb revelation."**

***Le Violoncelle*,** Magazine of Association Française du Violoncelle, Paris, France (The French Cello Association) (www.levioloncelle.com), featured Louise Dubin in three issues.

Selected Works for Cello and Piano by Auguste Franchomme, Edited and with Introduction by Louise Dubin (Dover Publications, 2017) headlines the recommended scores in *Le Violoncelle's* **September 2017** issue!

mai 2016 issue: interview by Philippe Muller (Professor of Cello, Conservatoire de Paris/Manhattan School of Music) of Louise Dubin: read the interview in French here: https://www.louise-dubin.com/s/2016-05-Le-Violoncelle-Louise-article.pdf.

décembre 2015 issue of Le Violoncelle, Revue No. 57

Magazine of Association Française du Violoncelle, Paris, France
Three page feature about The Franchomme Project album and research.

CD Review in **American Record Guide**, January 2016 by David W Moore

https://www.louise-dubin.com/s/DelosARGFranchommeRvw-1.pdf

CD Review in **ClassicalNet.com**

The Franchomme Project: Newly discovered works by Auguste Franchomme (1808-1884)
by R. James Tobin

Louise Dubin's research is responsible for discovering long-unavailable works by Franchomme and for the present recorded selection… Franchomme's works are quite appealing to me. All are melodic, often lilting. Two of the Nocturnes are gentle and pensive, the Opus 15: 3 & 4 are stronger and faster. Caprice Op. 7:1 shows Franchomme's familiarity with Bach's Cello Suites, I think. Op 7:9 has a much more varied tempo as played here. The piece based on Norma is beautiful, as one would expect.

Dubin's performances of these pieces—both by Franchomme and by Chopin—are generally excellent. The Franchomme's pieces are performed here in an appealingly warm manner; I find them luscious. The Chopin Ballade and Prelude, each arranged for four cellos, are both slow and lovely, with rich sound… I can enthusiastically and strongly recommend this CD.

Classical Music Sentinel (Canada) April 2016

CD Review of the Franchomme Project by Jean-Yves Duperron:

"Along with his original compositions, some of the works on this CD are ...cello transcriptions by Franchomme of famous pieces by Chopin that come across extremely well. In fact I feel the four cello rendition of the Funeral March from the Piano Sonata No. 2 is more expressive this way, especially when played as well as it is here by cellists Louise Dubin, Katherine Cherbas, Saeunn Thorstein[s]dottir, and Julia Bruskin. Louise Dubin, who spearheaded this recording project, researched every aspect of this music and has put an enormous amount of care in this production. Her playing is always warmly expressive, with just the right measure of dramatic weight when called for.... For people who love cello music, this recording is certainly worth its weight in gold, and even more so for people who love to explore new musical territory."

La Folia, July 2016 (Boston)

CD Review of the Franchomme Project (http://www.lafolia.com/string-theory-19-mostly-cello/) by Grant Chu Cowell:

"Of Franchomme's own music, the cello duets are especially durable, specifically the Nocturnes…Cello ensembles can be rare, and it is wonderful to hear such gorgeous mellowness."

TransCentury Communications, InfoDad.com

October 1, 2015

Review by Mark Estren

Louise Dubin, lead cellist and prime mover of what is called on this Delos CD "The Franchomme Project," offers five Chopin arrangements and nine of Franchomme's compositions….

... This is music that serves a particular purpose, that of combining performer challenge with listener enjoyment…it is highly enjoyable to hear and filled with small touches of stylistic piquancy. Dubin and the other performers play with relish. In intimate settings and as encores, Franchomme's works definitely deserve a place. And his arrangements of well-known Chopin pieces provide a new way to hear familiar music and bring out some beauties even beyond those that these works are already known to possess…the four-cello arrangements [included on the album]… are serious, warm, expressive and surprisingly effective at getting to the emotional heart of the music."

EricEdberg.com

September 23, 2015

Louise Dubin's The Franchomme Project: "Marvelous"

September 11 brought the release of the marvelous cellist Louise Dubin's Delos album The Franchomme Project, which reintroduces the world to a wide array of music, most out of print for many decades, composed or arranged by August Franchomme (1808-1884), the greatest and best known French cellist of his day.

Many of my fellow cellists will be inspired to explore some of this fascinating repertoire for themselves. Franchomme's 12 Caprices, Op. 7 have sat in my library for years, but I haven't played or taught many of them. Having heard the album, now I will–and I look forward to playing, and hearing some of my students play, his Chopin transcriptions (which the composer found delightful), "Mélodies Italiennes," Nocturnes for 2 Cellos, Caprices for Cello and Piano, and other works, most of which have not been available in print. (A Dover performance edition of sheet music of the works on the album is being released later this year.)

Ms. Dubin's playing (and that of her collaborators, the cellists Julia Bruskin, Saeunn Thorsteinsdóttir, and Katherine Cherbas, as well as the pianists Hélène Jeanney and Andrea Lam) is both warm and meticulous; the impeccable intonation, beautiful sound, and elegant phrasing will surely delight other listeners as much as they did me. These marvelous performances are inventive and creative, yet never overstated. They are what one of Dubin's teachers, Janos Starker, would surely have described as tasteful (very high praise for him, indeed). I'm certain they would have also pleased Prof. Franchomme, the beloved pedagogue at the Conservatoire du Musique, who, as the extensive notes in the CD booklet explain, was as renowned for his lack of histrionics as he was for his extraordinary technique. (The notes, which provide a fascinating biography of Franchomme as well as a thorough background of each piece, make this an album worth buying a physical copy rather than listening via a streaming service.)

Louise Dubin is, among many things, an excellent role model for young musicians. She is developing a performing career in part with this project which is expanding the repertoire of our beloved instrument. Many of us are commissioning and creating new music; with this endeavor she is bringing delightful gems of the mid-nineteenth century to light. The works she's brought to light are the fruits of significant labors of research, detective work, and serendipitous meetings with Franchomme's descendants. Who knows what other delicious tidbits remain to be discovered by another enterprising musician/scholar/researcher? Let's follow her example.