

Piccolo recitals are not so common that we can afford to turn our noses up at them. Jean-Louis Beaumadier began by studying the flute (with Jean-Pierre Rampal, and with Jean-Pierre's father Joseph). He soon was interested in the piccolo, and became one of the best players in the world, at least according to Skarbo's biographical note. The late Jean-Pierre Rampal's written testimonial, in which he calls Beaumadier 'the Paganini of the piccolo' is included in the booklet. I can't find his year of birth, but he evidently is not a newcomer, so if you have not heard of him before, it is because you have not been paying attention to the piccolo!

These recordings were made in 2004 and 2007. This appears to be a compilation of material from three earlier discs. One, *Brésil 1900*, reviewed by me in these pages in 2010 (*Fanfare* 33:5), accounts for half of the selections included here. At the time, I asked myself why this music was being performed on a piccolo. My assumption was that it was composed for the flute. Perhaps that was an erroneous assumption, and I will not make it for the other six works on this disc. However, I understand that the modern piccolo has most of the same fingerings as the modern flute, and the largest different is that it sounds an octave higher. That would mean that it is not difficult to play flute music on the piccolo, and that would reduce the demand for music composed specifically for that instrument. Why buy new clothes when your big brother's hand-me-downs are in good shape and fit you fine? In the three operatic fantasies, Beaumadier's piccolo duets with Shigenori Kudo's flute. For contrast and clarity, that was a smart choice on the part of the performers, if in fact that is what they chose; I do not think that two flutes would have been as effective.

All of these composers were active during the 19th century. Thus, the emphasis on salon music and on operatic fantasies is not surprising. While the music is not important, it is most entertaining. Beaumadier walks the musical tightrope with aplomb, and his tone, while firm, is not shrill. In works such as Joachim Andersen's *Moto perpetuo*, one wonders when he breathes. (I guess that is what circular breathing is for.) By any estimation, this is virtuosic playing, and also stylish. Beaumadier's partners are capable, but only flutist Kudo is in the spotlight enough to make an impression.

For listeners, I think the piccolo makes a nice change of pace from the flute. Unless I hear someone better, I am going to provisionally agree that Jean-Louis Beaumadier really does deserve his title of 'Paganini of the piccolo' ; 2019 *Fanfare* Raymond Tuttle