

# VIKTORIA MULLOVA

THE MAKING OF

## The Peasant Girl



onyx

DVD  
VIDEO



## **Documentary: The Making of The Peasant Girl**

### **Recording sessions for The Peasant Girl CD**

Bi Lovengo (3.07)

Bratsch – arr. Barley

For Nedim (For Nadia) (5.59)

DuOud – arr. Barley

Django (6.50)

John Lewis/Bratsch – arr. Barley

Dark Eyes (Les Yeux noirs) (6.23)

Florian Hermann/Coco Briaval – arr. Barley

Er Nemo Klantz (6.39)

Bratsch – arr. Barley

The Peasant (8.56)

Weather Report (Joe Zawinul) – arr. Barley

Duos for violin and cello (with interpolated improvisations from piano, drums and marimba) (11.02)

Béla Bartók – transcr. Barley

Life (4.53)

Youssou N'Dour – arr. Barley

Pursuit of the Woman with the Feathered Hat (5.57)

Weather Report (Joe Zawinul) – arr. Barley

Yura (5.03)

Barley (on a traditional theme)

**Viktoria Mullova** violin

**Matthew Barley** piano

**Julian Joseph** piano

**Paul Clarvis** drums/percussion

**Sam Walton** marimba, vibraphone and percussion

## The Peasant Girl

The initial criterion for music to be included in this programme was simply that we loved it. However, we found as the programme took shape that certain themes were emerging – obviously Hungary was there with Bartók, as was the world of the gypsy, and several of the jazz pieces seemed to point in that direction too. It soon became clear that almost all the music in some way reflected the phenomenal influence that the gypsies have had on swathes of music in the 20th century.

The world of jazz is represented in John Lewis's *Django* as well as the Weather Report tracks, and of course the presence of the magnificent Julian Joseph in the line-up. And yet besides, there seemed to be something more in there, something that lay in Viktoria's basic aesthetic of how she relates to the world, and more importantly to the music she loves and plays. She loves simplicity, emotional directness and power, as well as virtuosity that comes from the heart and aims for the heart (as opposed to showing off). While I was musing on all this, we listened to 'The Peasant' by Weather Report, and it occurred to me that this was another thread connecting this ragtag collection of pieces that seemed to fit together so well.

Just two generations ago, Viktoria's ancestors were living off the land in a tiny hamlet in the Ukraine, and this peasant quality is very much inside her, in the sense of a calm honesty and simplicity – the kind of 'peasantness' that John Berger portrays so brilliantly in his trilogy *Into Their Labours*. Add those qualities to those that have enabled Viktoria to conquer one of the most sophisticated of European art forms in its core repertoire of Bach and Beethoven, and that's an interesting combination. While this latter area of her life has been represented onstage around the world for 30 years, this programme shares something of her other side.

The word 'peasant' has its roots in the French *pays*, meaning country or land. We have looked for music that has the simplicity and beauty of the land, or that has come from the land in some way, like Bartók's magical series of 44 duos, the themes for which he collected on ethnomusicological expeditions in the fields of Eastern Europe. It is music that is blissfully free from the misleading shackles of genre – music is music.

*The Peasant Girl* is also an expression of the relationship between Viktoria and myself. As a married couple we are constantly in touch with each other's musical worlds (Viktoria's is more classical and baroque, whereas mine moves on to include non-classical and improvised), and looking to expand our own horizons and skills. The process is rewarding – in many ways an end in itself – and the programme is the result of the positive collision of our two musical spheres.

The love of all good music, and the passion for lifelong learning, is what connects all the players in this project: Julian, Paul and Sam have brought a huge amount to the rehearsal process, helping to shape the arrangements and infusing the music with their skill and sounds – we work as five equal musicians, all contributing different threads from our different backgrounds, both musical and cultural, to make a whole that feels greater than the sum of our parts.

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Music

Recorded at Abbey Road Studios, London

Camera JOHN HOWARTH & ANDY LEE

Narrator & interviewer BENEDICT TAYLOR

Location sound DAVE BRABANTS

Music recording & mixing ANDY DUDMAN

Dubbing mixer SAM OKELL

Graphics & animation JONAS CUNNINGHAM

Colourist ROSS BAKER

Production assistant MATARR SAMBA

Directed and edited by

RICHARD TAYLOR

Orpheus Productions


Executive producer for ONYX: Matthew Cosgrove

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Producers: Matthew Barley and Viktoria Mullova

Balance engineers: Andrew Dudman and Paul Pritchard

Photography: Nick White

Design: Shaun Mills for WLP Ltd 

**[www.onyxclassics.com](http://www.onyxclassics.com)**

**[www.matthewbarley.com](http://www.matthewbarley.com)**

**[www.viktoriamullova.com](http://www.viktoriamullova.com)**



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