



**REGER**

DDD

8.550932

**Piano Music**

**Six Pieces for Piano, Op. 24**  
**Silhouetten • Blätter und Blüten**

**Jean Martin, Piano**



## Max Reger (1873-1916)

### Piano Music

Six Morceaux pour le piano, Op. 24

Silhouetten, Op. 53

Blätter und Blüten

Max Reger owed his early musical leanings to the example and enthusiasm of his father, a schoolmaster and amateur musician, and his early training to the town organist of Weiden, Adalbert Lindner. Reger was born in 1873 at Brand in the Upper Palatinate, Bavaria. The following year the family moved to Weiden and it was here that he spent his childhood and adolescence, entering a course of teacher training. Lindner had sent examples of Reger's early work as a composer to Riemann, who accepted him as a pupil, initially in Sondershausen and then, as his own assistant, in Wiesbaden. Military service, which affected Reger's health and spirits, was followed by a period at home with his parents in Weiden and a continuing series of compositions, in particular for the organ, including a monumental series of chorale fantasias and other compositions, often, it seems, designed to challenge the technique of his friend Karl Straube, a noted performer of his organ music.

In 1901 Reger moved to Munich, where he spent the next six years. His position in musical life was not without difficulty, since he was seen as a champion of absolute music and as hostile at this time to programme music. He was, however, successful as a pianist and was gradually able to find an audience for his music. The period in Munich saw the composition of his *Sinfonietta*, of chamber music and of his important *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of J. S. Bach* for piano, and the *Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Beethoven*, the latter later orchestrated. In 1907 he took up an appointment as Royal Saxon Professor of Composition at the Conservatory of Leipzig. His music now found a still wider international audience, supported by his own distinction as a performer, with concert appearances in London, St. Petersburg, the Netherlands and Austria and throughout Germany.

The year 1911 brought an invitation from the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen to accept the position of conductor of the court orchestra, an ensemble established by Hans von Bülow and once conducted by Richard Strauss at the outset of his career. Reger held this position until the beginning of the war, when the orchestra was disbanded, an event that coincided with his own intention to resign. He spent his final years based in Jena, but continuing his activities as a composer and as a concert performer. He died in Leipzig in May 1916 on his way back from a concert tour of the Netherlands.

Reger was a prolific composer, continuing the tradition of Bach, Mozart, and the great German composers of the nineteenth century, with a technical mastery and a command of harmonic and contrapuntal resources that allowed him to expand the bounds of tonality in chromatic exploration. His organ compositions, in particular, represent a very significant addition to the repertoire of the instrument. There is an equally extensive body of chamber music, with songs, choral works and orchestral compositions.

Reger completed the piano pieces that form his *Opus 24* in 1898. These provide music of considerable charm, opening with a waltz-impromptu, followed by a waltz-like *Menuet* and a more extended *Rêverie fantastique*. If these have overtones of Chopin, through the perspective of Brahms, the fourth piece, *Un Moment Musical*, echoes Schubert not only in its title. *Chant de la Nuit* provides a dynamic climax, in a generally peaceful night-scene. The *Six Morceaux* end with an extended *Rhapsodie* that has about it something of Brahms, a composer who had died a year earlier.

*Silhouetten, Opus 53*, date from the year 1900 and at times make considerable technical demands on the player. The first of the short pieces here provides a contrast with the relatively sombre *Rhapsodie*, bursting out with all the agility of Mendelssohn and framing a more reflective central section. There follows a gently meditative piece, solemn in its descending contrapuntal figuration, with a more turbulent central section to it. An expressive third piece, its lower voice melody charmingly accompanied in the opening section, a mood to be broken briefly before the return of the music of the first section. A livelier

fourth piece, with music of great charm, leads to a rapid fifth, typically chromatic in its modulations. This gives way to a melancholy sixth piece and a whimsical and varied conclusion to the set.

The leaves and blossoms of *Blätter und Blüten* were written mainly between 1900 and 1902. These twelve pieces, designed for students, are simpler in character than the *Silhouetten*, with their contrapuntal and chromatic complexities. Nevertheless the set is not without its technical difficulties. The delightful *Albumblatt* (Album-Leaf) is followed by a lively *Humoreske* and a more extended *Frühlingslied* (Spring-Song). An *Elegie* makes some technical demands on the performer and is succeeded by a *Jagdstück* (Hunting-Piece), replete with the horn-calls of convention. The sixth piece is a simple and tender *Melodie*, leading to two short and contrasting pieces with the title *Moment Musical*, separated from the more elaborate two *Romanzen* by a contrapuntal *Gigue*. The final *Scherzino* again calls for some element of virtuosity in the performance, providing a brilliant conclusion to the set of pieces.

### Jean Martin

Jean Martin, a pupil of Yves Nat, Pierre Pasquier, Pierre Kostanoff and Guido Agosti, divides his time between concert engagements and teaching, the latter as a member of the staff of the Versailles Conservatoire, after several years at the National Regional Conservatoires of Grenoble and of Lyon. His recordings include the music of Brahms and Schumann as well as the complete piano music of Weber, and, with his *Trio*, the *Piano Trio* of Lalo. His interest in contemporary music is represented by performances and recording of the work of the composer Claude Ballif.

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STEREO

DDD

# Max REGER

(1873 - 1916)

## Piano Music

Jean Martin, Piano

Playing  
Time:  
79'18"

### Six Pieces for Piano, Op. 24

- |   |                     |         |
|---|---------------------|---------|
| 1 | Valse impromptu     | (2:26)  |
| 2 | Menuet              | (4:39)  |
| 3 | Rêverie Fantastique | (6:20)  |
| 4 | Un Moment Musical   | (2:57)  |
| 5 | Chant de la nuit    | (5:21)  |
| 6 | Rhapsodie           | (13:53) |

### Silhouetten, Op. 53

- |    |                               |        |
|----|-------------------------------|--------|
| 7  | Äusserst lebhaft              | (3:13) |
| 8  | Ziemlich langsam              | (2:53) |
| 9  | Sehr bewegt und ausdrucksvoll | (3:09) |
| 10 | Sehr schnell und anmuthig     | (1:40) |
| 11 | Ziemlich schnell              | (2:14) |
| 12 | Langsam, schwermütig          | (3:59) |

- |    |                                     |        |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 13 | Äusserst lebhaft und mit viel Humor | (3:30) |
|----|-------------------------------------|--------|

### Blätter und Blüten, Op. 58

- |    |                      |        |
|----|----------------------|--------|
| 14 | Albumblatt           | (0:52) |
| 15 | Humoreske            | (1:20) |
| 16 | Frühlingslied        | (3:20) |
| 17 | Elegie               | (2:34) |
| 18 | Jagdstück            | (1:12) |
| 19 | Melodie              | (2:02) |
| 20 | Moment Musical No. 1 | (1:18) |
| 21 | Moment Musical No. 2 | (1:47) |
| 22 | Gigue                | (1:08) |
| 23 | Romanze No. 1        | (3:08) |
| 24 | Romanze No. 2        | (2:43) |
| 25 | Scherzino            | (1:40) |

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from 25th to 27th May 1994.  
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Music Notes: Keith Anderson

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