

Legends

Enescu: Sept chansons de Clément Marot; **Wieniawski:** Légende; Valse-Caprice; **Ysaÿe:** String Quintet in B minor; **Wieniawska:** Caledonian Market - excerpts; Tango
 Rachel Harnisch (soprano), Kirill Troussov, Gwendolyn Masin (violin), Alexandra Trousova, Jan Philip Schulze (piano)
Orchid Classics ORC100210
 60:31 mins



Inspired by the great virtuoso violinist and composer Henryk Wieniawski, this intriguing programme devised by the violinist Gwendolyn Masin borrows its title from one of his most famous works, *Légende*, which opens the recording in a soulful performance by the violinist Kirill Troussov and Alexandra Trousova. The line-up of musicians includes two pairs of siblings, and familial as well as pedagogical links between the composers provide the main theme here, though the city of Brussels is another unifying thread: the Lublin-born Wieniawski was appointed violin professor there towards the end of his life.

Eugène Ysaÿe, one of Wieniawski's pupils in Brussels, is represented by his little-known String Quintet in B minor, a single-movement work by turns striving and rapturous; it receives a beautifully wrought performance. In turn, Ysaÿe was one of George Enescu's mentors, and Enescu features with his *Sept Chansons de Clément Marot*, a cycle of reflective, chaste simplicity; it is warmly sung by Rachel Harnisch. Wieniawski's younger brother, the pianist-composer Józef Wieniawski, is also heard (the *Valse-Caprice* for piano), but the recording ends on an spikier note with the music of Henryk Wieniawski's youngest daughter, the Brussels-born Irène Wieniawska (pseudonym: Poldowski). Her *Caledonian Market* suite for piano (1923) is played with character by Jan Philip Schulze, and Gwendolyn Masin is the bold violinist in her *Tango*. Bringing the programme full circle, it's worth noting too that Irène Wieniawska's mother Isabella Hampton was *Légende's* dedicatee.

John Allison

PERFORMANCE

★★★★

RECORDING

★★★★