



Music Noel Mengel

CLASSICAL

Ben Jacks (horn), Barry Tuckwell (conductor)
Rhapsodie: Fantasie: Poeme
(Melba)

★★★



YOU can't help wondering at the cover image of this CD, an enigmatic girl, elegantly dressed, eyes hooded by hat, sitting with one hand holding a poodle of the kind favoured by Parisians, the other supporting a French horn. What is it telling us about this music for horn and orchestra by one English and five French composers and its performance by Australians, one item of which Barry Humphries commissioned from Jean-Michel Damase after hearing one of his pieces which Humphries perceived as being in the Francis Poulenc-Jean Francaix tradition he favoured? Whatever the image conveys, the package forges a strong French-Australian link. In 1987 Barry Tuckwell gave the first performance of Damase's *Rhapsodie*. Its first recording here features another Australian, Ben Jacks on horn, Tuckwell conducting Orchestra Victoria. A slight wisp of romanticism flavours the music, piquant and spare, a little less ironic than Damase's *Concerto for horn and orchestra* that opens the program, Tuckwell conducting The Queensland Orchestra. With Orchestra Victoria, Tuckwell shows how well British composer G.W.L. Marshall-Hall's *Phantasy* fits the Gallic bill. Another Australian Paul Terracini re-orchestrated *Villanelle*, a charming morsel from Paul Dukas recorded here in this version for the first time. Our Queensland band also features in the three-movement *Poeme* of Charles Koechlin and *Morceau* by Saint-Saëns which highlights the technical facility with which Jacks makes the whole project shine.

Patricia Kelly