

Christine  
Walevska



Goddess of  
the Cello



## Christine Walevska

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## Album Credits

Christine Walevska, Cello  
Akimi Fukuhara, Piano

Recording Producer - Martha De Francisco  
Recording Engineer - Padraig Buttner-Schnirer  
Recorded at Pollack Concert Hall, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, June 2014.  
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Liner Notes - Fei-Wen Shieh, Nathalie Agostini, Christine Walevska

**Ferde Grofé** (1892-1972) was a well-known American composer in the 20th century who was a pioneer in adapting the classical tradition to Jazz. In the 1920s he joined Paul Whiteman's Jazz band as a pianist. The experience introduced him to the field of Jazz composition, and it provided him with the opportunity to arrange the orchestral version of *Rhapsody in Blue* by George Gershwin (1898-1937) in 1924. Grofé also composed works that expressed musically his ideas about American landmarks, such as the Mississippi Suite (1926) and Grand Canyon Suite (1931). In 1969 Grofé composed "Christine" especially for cellist Christine Walevska. He used the letters of her first name to compose the melody, as though the piece were meant to sound "like music, like Christine."

**Christoph Willibald Gluck** (1714-1787) was a key player in the reformation of the opera in the mid 18th century. His best-known opera *Orfeo ed Euridice* was premiered in Vienna in 1762 in its Italian version. The story of Orfeo ed Euridice follows the journey of Orfeo to the Underworld in the hopes of bringing back his beloved wife Euridice. One of the opera's best-known pieces is the *Melody*, also titled *Dance of the Blessed Spirits*, which is often performed on its own. This beautiful Melody mourns lost love and the desperation of Orfeo to bring his young love back.

**Piotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky** (1840-1893) was inspired to write this melody and adapt the text of *None but the Lonely Heart* from the novel Wilhelm Meister by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). The song line is played only on the A string of the cello.

**Enrique Granados** (1867-1916) is the most representative Spanish composer of the turn of the 20th century. This *Intermezzo* is from his opera *Goyescas*. The music for the opera *Goyescas* was inspired by the artistry of the Spanish painter Francisco Goya. When Christine was twelve years old and living in California, she knew the son of Granados, one of his five children. After attending the premiere of *Goyescas* at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, January 28, 1916, Granados and his wife were invited by the President of the United States to attend a dinner in his honor at the White House. Tragically his ship was torpedoed on their return voyage. He and his wife were in separate lifeboats, and survivors told that when Granados saw his wife's lifeboat capsize, he dove after her, and in an embrace they both disappeared in the waves of the ocean.

**Maurice Ravel** (1875-1937) was an influential French composer of the early 20th century. Cellist Maurice Marechal was active in Ravel's circle of French Impressionist composers. Many of the great cello compositions of these composers were premiered by Marechal. Christine Walevska feels privileged to have studied with Marechal who shared many of his experiences with these composers who were his friends. On the printed music of the Habanera, there is a drawing of a cigarette with a trail of smoke going up the title page. Marechal recalled to Christine that Ravel envisioned a smoke-filled bodega in Spain, the last customers having left earlier, the Flamenco dancer and her pianist sitting in the wings of the stage. One lone man descends the stone steps and sits at a rear table and the dancer begins to dance this Habanera.

The Polish composer **Frédéric Chopin** (1819-1849) left his hometown in 1831. He settled in Paris and he became friends with leading personalities of the arts there. In 1838 Paris saw Chopin and Aurore Dudevant, ("Georges Sand") established as lovers. For the benefit of escaping jealousies, and a warmer climate for Chopin's health, they lived in the deserted monastery of Valldemosa in Majorca Spain. Christine was the first cellist to play there, with pianist Eric Heidseick. They performed in concert the three original compositions written by Chopin for Cello and Piano. He composed twenty-one nocturnes for piano, two of which were published posthumously. Nocturne in C-sharp Minor was one of them, an early work by Chopin, composed in 1830 before he left Poland. In this Piatigorsky transcription for cello, the melodic right hand of the piano is played on the cello.

**José Bragato** (b. 1915) is a renowned cellist, composer, conductor and arranger. He was born in Italy and he moved to Argentina in 1927. He became the principal cellist of the Buenos Aires Philharmonic Orchestra in 1946 and helped found the Octeto Buenos Aires in 1955. He was the right hand man of Piazzolla and made countless arrangements for him. Bragato became a dear friend of Christine's after her first visit to Argentina when she performed three concerts in the Teatro Colon of Buenos Aires, when he was first cellist of the Philharmonic. The title *Milontani* is a mixture of Milonga and Tango. It was written for and dedicated to Christine Walewska.

**Ennio Bolognini** (1893-1979) was one of the most fascinating and charismatic figures in the musical world and one of the greatest cellists of his era. He was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina into a musical family - his mother a famous soprano in the Teatro Colon, and his father a cellist who was his first teacher. In the 1960's cellist Pablo Casals said "Bolognini was the greatest cello talent I ever heard in my life." The famous cellist Fuernmann was reputed to have said "it is not Casals, Piatigorsky or myself, but Bolognini who is the World's Greatest Cellist."

Bolognini's godfather was Arturo Toscanini, who taught him the art of conducting; he called him "Genio" (genius) Bolognini, instead of Ennio. He first heard Christine Walewska when she was 9 years old and taught her to play his compositions of his through her teenage years, some employing a guitar-like technique. At one time in Buenos Aires, he shared an apartment with pianist Arthur Rubenstein, and guitarist Andrés Segovia.

Bolognini wanted Christine to be the only cellist to perform his compositions beyond his lifetime, and this recording celebrates his wish. At Mrs. Bolognini's 90th birthday in 2013, she recalled how when she first heard the young Christine play, she whispered to her husband "this little girl is going to be a great cellist" and Bolognini whispered back "she already is."

**Giovanni Pergolesi** (1710-1736) was a composer who lived only a short life, but who left many important operatic works in his twenty-six years. His best-known work was *Il prigioner superbo* in 1733, written to honour the Empress of Austria on her birthday. The intermezzo in *La serva padrona* was one of the great examples of its kind in 18th century vocal music. The Nina aria is an independent vocal work with strong operatic character.



# Christine Walevska • Goddess of the Cello

*"She is the only cellist who takes  
my breath away..."*

*- Arthur Rubenstein*

*"She parallels on the cello the single  
persuasiveness of Fritz Kreisler  
on the violin...."*

*- Patterson Greene,*

*Los Angeles Music Critic*

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|---|------|
| 1. Granados: Intermezzo from Goyescas (arr. Cassadó)        | 4:40 |
| 2. Bolognini: Serenata del Eco                              | 4:15 |
| 3. Pergolesi: Nina  | 2:57 |
| 4. Bragato: Milontan  | 6:07 |
| 5. Bolognini: Adagio  | 2:54 |
| 6. Bolognini: Cello's Prayer                                | 5:04 |
| 7. Bolognini: Serenata del Gaucho                           | 3:19 |
| 8. Chopin: Nocturne in C-sharp Minor (arr. Piatigorsky)     | 4:16 |
| 9. Bolognini: Fiesta Basca                                  | 4:22 |
| 10. Tchaikovsky: None but the Lonely Heart                  | 3:18 |
| 11. Große: Christine  | 6:00 |
| 12. Gluck: Melody from Orfeo                                | 3:08 |
| 13. Piazzolla: Adiós Nonino (arr. José Bragato)             | 7:31 |
| 14. Ravel: Pièce en Forme de Habanera, M. 51                | 2:51 |
| 15. Chopin: Nocturne in E-flat, Op 9, No. 2 (arr. Walevska) | 4:46 |
| 16. Liszt: Liebestraum, S. 541 (arr. Walevska)              | 4:06 |
| 17. Bolognini: Ave Maria                                    | 4:05 |

**Christine WALEVSKA, Cello**  
**Akimi FUKUHARA, Piano**

To the memory of recording producer Volker Straus,  
producer of the Philips Legendary Walevska recordings.

**christinewalevska.com**

Anthony JALANDONI, Photography

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