

Messiaen - Catalogue d'Oiseaux (2018)

Written by bluesever

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CD1 Catalogue d'oiseaux, I/42 01 No. 1, *Le chocard des alpes* 02 No. 2, *Le loriot* 03 No. 3, *Le merle bleu* 04 No. 4, *Le traquet stapazin* 05 No. 5, *La chouette hulotte* 06 No. 6, *L'alouette lulu*
CD2 01 No. 7, *La rousserolle effarvatte* CD3 01 No. 8, *L'alouette calandrelle* 02 No. 9, *La bouscarle* 03 No. 10, *Le merle de roche* 04 No. 11, *La buse variable* 05 No. 12, *Le traquet rieur* 06 No. 13, *Le courlis cendré*
Pierre-Laurent Aimard - piano

Renowned French pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard kicks off his exclusive engagement to PENTATONE with a recording of Olivier Messiaens *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* (1956-1958). The pianist had intimate ties to the composer himself and his wife, Yvonne Loriod, for whom Messiaen wrote the *Catalogue*. Praised by *The Guardian* as one of the best Messiaen interpreters around, this is Aimard's first recording of Messiaen's most extensive, demanding and colourful piano composition. The luxurious release set contains an accompanying bonus film, on which Aimard shares his vast knowledge of and love for Messiaen's work from behind the piano. Due to its radical naturalism, the *Catalogue d'Oiseaux* is exceptional within the repertoire for solo piano. It is the grand hymn to nature from a man who never ceased to marvel at the stupefying beauty of landscapes or the magic of bird song. With his *Catalogue*, Messiaen tried in his own words to render exactly the typical birdsong of a region, surrounded by its neighbours from the same habitat, as well as the form of song at different hours of the day and night, suggesting an almost scientific approach to his subjects. The idea of reproduction may have been central to Messiaen's conception of the *Catalogue d'Oiseaux*, but in the finished work we hear a great composer at work, a master of innovative structures who finds an astonishing range of piano sonorities. In a world that is increasingly being destroyed by man, Aimard views this cycle as a musical refuge that resonates with an audience ever more concerned, expanded and affected. --- Editorial Reviews, amazon.com

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Unsurprisingly, Pierre-Laurent Aimard's interpretations are anything but tame. His dynamic range is formidable, his voicing of chords scrupulously faithful, his clarity unimpeachable. It's hard to imagine the textures having greater impact or precision, or the continuity and discontinuity being projected with greater concentration. Nigel Simeone's essay for Pentatone is exceptionally informative on factual background. One can only salute this outstanding achievement. ---Gramophone, arkivmusic.com

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