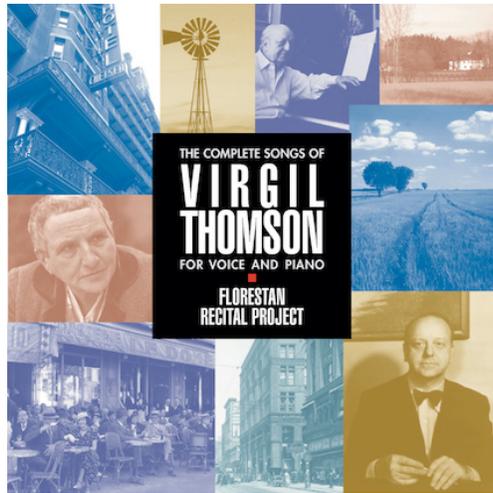


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Florestan Recital Project Releases *The Complete Songs of Virgil Thomson for Voice and Piano* Featuring Unpublished Works and Premiere Recordings



Release: February 26, 2016 (New World Records)

Composer: Virgil Thomson (1896-1989)

Florestan Recital Project: Aaron Engebretth & Alison d'Amato, Artistic Co- Directors

Performers: Sarah Pelletier, soprano; Lynne McMurtry, contralto; William Hite, tenor; Aaron Engebretth, baritone; Alison d'Amato, piano; Linda Osborn, piano; John McDonald, percussion
TRT: Disc I (71:20), Disc II (76:04), Disc III (50:57)

New York City, NY (For Release 2.22.16) — Marking the first complete recording of Virgil Thomson's songs that were originally composed for voice and piano, *The Complete Songs of Virgil Thomson for Voice and Piano* provides a more complete understanding of one of the most important composers of the 20th century. Featuring performances by the Florestan Recital Project, the three-disc recording offers a unique window into both Thomson's compositional evolution, and changing musical concerns throughout his remarkable career.

"There is no finer example of the depth and richness of American art song than the songs of Virgil Thomson. While several excellent recordings of Thomson's songs exist, until now there has existed no complete catalogue of his compositions for voice and piano," said Aaron Engebretth & Alison d'Amato, Artistic Co-Directors, Florestan Recital Project. "We are thrilled to present these works to the wide audience that Thomson deserves."

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The recording begins with two of Thomson's earliest songs: settings of Amy Lowell (*Vernal Equinox*) and William Blake (*The Sunflower*), written in his 20s, unpublished and never-before recorded. In addition to his known songs, the discs include unpublished songs that were obtained from The Virgil Thomson Papers at Yale University Library's Special Collections. Also included are Thomson's parallel versions of the *Song of Solomon* settings, as well as four of his many touching lullabies dedicated to close friends on the occasions of their children's births.

About Florestan Recital Project

Founded in 2001, Florestan Recital Project takes its name from the fiery character of Florestan, one of the creative alter egos of composer Robert Schumann, who wrote of a basic artistic mission: "*to be remindful of older times and their works and to emphasize that only from such a pure source can new artistic beauties be fostered.*" This message is at the center of our activities; generating projects that draw connections between art song of the past, present, and future while exploring the genre's rich collaborative possibilities. Since its inception in 2001, Florestan Recital Project has grown into a national art song force, engaging audiences and artists in art song performance, innovative collaborations, recording, and mentorship. For details, visit www.florestanproject.org.

About Virgil Thomson

Virgil Thomson (1896–1989) was a many-faceted composer of great originality and a music critic of singular brilliance. After studying at Harvard, he moved to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger, and remained in France for most of the next 15 years, meeting Cocteau, Stravinsky, Satie and the artists of Les Six. When he finally returned to the US in 1940, he became chief music critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*. Thomson composed in almost every genre, utilizing a style marked by sharp wit and overt playfulness, and produced a highly original body of work rooted in American speech rhythms and hymnbook harmony. Among his most famous works are the operas *Four Saints in Three Acts* and *The Mother of Us All* (both with texts by Gertrude Stein), scores to *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The River* (films by Pare Lorentz), and *Louisiana Story* (film by Robert Flaherty). In addition to his compositions, he was the author of eight books, including an autobiography. Included in his many honors and awards are the Pulitzer Prize, a Brandeis Award, the Gold Medal for Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the National Book Circle Award, and the Kennedy Center Honors. The 25th anniversary of his death was commemorated during 2014. www.virgilthomson.org

This recording is made possible in part with cooperation from the Virgil Thomson Foundation.

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