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<th>Title</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>O, Cease Thy Singing Op.4, No.4</td>
<td>(1982 - NYC)</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>To the Children Op.26, No.7</td>
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<td>The Muse Op.34, No.1</td>
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<td>In the Silent Night Op.4, No.3</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Dreams Op.38, No.5</td>
<td>(1982 - NYC)</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>In the Silent Night Op.4, No.3</td>
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<td>Where Beauty Dwells Op.21, No.7</td>
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<td>In the Silent Night Op.4, No.3 Live</td>
<td>(1983 - Montreal)</td>
<td>4:06</td>
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**Total Time - 77:45**

Remastering Producer: Michael Rolland Davis
Remastering Engineer: Ed Thompson • 24-Bit Remastering
Without a doubt, Sergei Rachmaninoff was among the most versatile professional musicians of the twentieth century. Today he is recognized, even by the most casual classical music listener, as being one of the most important figures in the last one hundred years. His music has even reached such a high level of popularity as to be included in notable examples of American cinema. Strangely his compositional output is among the most ‘selectively known’ for such a highly successful musician. At the mere mention of his name, even well-attuned listeners or musicians will first and foremost remark about his

“Whether success in the world was a deep desire of Sergei Rachmaninoff I do not know, but success was his in a way that musicians seldom experience it. It came to him in his own lifetime, moreover, and through the practice of three separate musical branches. As a composer, as a conductor, and as a touring virtuoso of the pianoforte he received world-class acclaim. The professional career of Sergei Rachmaninoff was that of a major talent. His natural gifts of ear and hand were impeccable; his training was nowhere short of completeness; recognition in professional life came early. There is no question about Rachmaninoff’s mastery.”

Virgil Thomson, New York, 1949
second and third piano concertos, and then they will extol the astounding virtuoso writing for the instrument in the preludes or the second piano sonata. It is less likely, however, that they will mention his Symphonies and even less likely they will remember his vocal and choral output. Should one also mention that he wrote twelve operas and projected stage works? The point is that sixty-one years after his death, Rachmaninoff is widely remembered, but unfortunately many of his compositions are not.

It could be said that of all his ‘forgotten’ works, the biggest sense of shame has befallen upon his many songs. In terms of quantity, only in the genre of piano music did Rachmaninoff compose more works than for the voice and the motivation for such dedication is obvious. Rachmaninoff composed eighty five songs and, like his piano works, they offer a clear picture of his development as a musician. Rachmaninoff’s gifts are surely heard at their widest and most varied expression in his catalogue of piano repertoire but they are heard at their most focused intensity in his song cycles. Rachmaninoff’s seven sets of songs for solo voice span his most prolific period as a composer from 1893 to 1916 and all were written before he left Russia for a new life in the United States in 1917 (interestingly, he did not become an American citizen until just a few weeks
before his death in 1943). It is curious that, after an intense period of writing which produced almost all of his songs within twenty-three years, he should suddenly abandon the form altogether. The texts for most of his songs were chosen from the works of prominent Russian Romantics. Did Rachmaninoff, after his exile, simply find no poems that struck him with sudden inspiration or did a feeling of loss for his native country inhibit his creativity?

Rachmaninoff began composing orchestral and piano works in his early teens but did not attempt to write his first song until the age of seventeen. That first song was *At the Gate of the Holy Abode*, a setting of the poem *The Beggar* by Lermontov. Only a few days later he would compose *I Shall Tell You Nothing* to a poem by Afanasy Fet, an author whose works Rachmaninoff would use several times during his most mature writing and also in the writing of *In the Silent Night*. This song was published in the first set of six songs of Opus 4 and went on to become one of his most beloved. Some of Rachmaninoff’s early songs show the influence of Tchaikovsky, but while they
display creative melodies as well as an understanding of writing for the voice, the piano accompaniments lack the wonderful contrast of his later songs. He was also just beginning to develop the skills to fully penetrate the meanings of the texts. The melodies were beautiful but the word-painting which communicates the poet’s message through the music was just forming.

As a direct result of the success of his one-act opera Aleko (which used a libretto based upon a poem by Pushkin, a poet whom Rachmaninoff would use time and time again), Rachmaninoff’s publisher A. Gutheil purchased the six songs that would become the Opus 4 collection. Published in 1893, these songs can be considered the first notable works in Rachmaninoff’s catalogue. In fact, two of the songs, In the Silent Night (When Silent Night Doth Hold Me) and O, Cease Thy Singing (Oh, Never Sing to Me Again), are so well constructed and show Rachmaninoff’s enormous potential so clearly that they match the mature works of Opus 26 and Opus 34 in quality. The accompaniment for In the Silent Night 7 14 16, hints at the style which will govern many of his later songs; it is a style of accompaniment that stands on the verge of being its own

Sergei Rachmaninoff with Igor Sikorsky (left) and Barron Nicholas Solovioff (right)
composition, embedded with its own motifs and phrases which are developed during the course of the piece. High craftsmanship is also present in the melody; the last line of the song is sure to stay with the listener long after the song has ended. The text (“I loudly cry to thee, that night may know thy name.”) is spread over six measures and ends with an ethereal, quiet high D that sustains the last word. *O, Cease Thy Singing*, Rachmaninoff’s first song to use a text by Pushkin, has a folk-like simplicity that recalls Borodin. It is a beautiful setting that tells the story of a poet asking his loved one to cease singing the traditional songs of Georgia; when she sings these songs he only feels sorrow.

The songs of Opus 14 offer a considerable step forward for Rachmaninoff in terms of conveying the poets’ message through his music. These twelve songs, written between 1894 and 1896, make it clear that he has matured beyond an ‘experimental stage’; in fact some of the songs show a departure from traditional style. The second song of the set, *The Little Island* (*Small Island*) [1], written on a Konstantin Balmont text, is captured in a carefully restrained manner that could have easily been overpowered by an overly-complex accompaniment. Instead, Rachmaninoff knows to keep the melody gentle and the accompaniment tranquil, depicting the scenes of nature in the text. The accompaniment for *Midsummer Nights* (*These Summer Nights*) [2],
however, is of enormous proportions. This, the fifth song of the set using texts by Daniil Rathaus, continues to show the growing independence of the vocal line as well as the dramatic pacing. Rachmaninoff waits for just the right moment at the end of the song for its beauty to reach full bloom. A passionate outpouring of emotion, *O, Do Not Grieve*, uses a beautiful poem by Alexei Apukhtin, and Rachmaninoff treats the text appropriately. For the first time he uses a distinct rhythmic pattern in the accompaniment (a practice which he would employ frequently in the future and one that would come to mark his sense of style) and the melody exemplifies almost every characteristic of his vocal style. It is important to note that the melody moves through very small intervals and only at the climax does Rachmaninoff allow the singer to spread her wings. *Floods of Spring* (*Spring Waters*) is a
Rachmaninoff with his grandchildren Sophinka (Sophia Volkonsky) and Sasha (Alexander Conun) c.1940

Rachmaninoff with cigarette working on a composition
remarkable tonal picture of the poem by Fyodor Tyutchev. Heralding the onset of spring, Rachmaninoff perfectly sets every suggestion of the text. It features a buoyant, happy theme supported by fleet and colorful passages from the piano. This was obviously an instance wherein the images proved so strong for Rachmaninoff that his creative outpouring led to the piano being used as his true means of expression.

Three of Rachmaninoff’s finest, most mature settings can be found in the twelve songs of Opus 21 which were composed between 1900 and 1902. The seventh song in the cycle, *Where Beauty Dwells (How Fair This Spot)*, features a most extraordinary dialogue between the vocalist and pianist. The melody often falls into short phrases which are then picked up and extended
by the piano. It is in a truly natural manner which the piano takes over the part of the singer and then proceeds to develop into an independent accompaniment, almost serving as a study of the poem’s sentiment in its own right. One could argue that while the songs of Opus 21 are generally less tautly constructed than those in the later sets, they each have moments of greatness. There is such a moment in the eighth song, *On the Death of a Linnet*. During the last two lines of the poem by W. Shukovsky (“His comrade died, my linnet too, no wish to long survive the other”), one feels that the composer is actually communicating from within the poem himself rather than functioning as an impassionate observer. The final song of the set is perhaps the most moving. The melody in *Sorrow in the Springtime*, enhances in the most perfect way Galina’s text.

One of Rachmaninoff’s loveliest songs can be found in the cycle of fifteen songs of Opus 26. Though he was only thirty-three years of age at the time of their composition, he was a master of the vocal realm, having already produced four operas. These songs, all written to poems by Russian poets, are dedicated to the lawyer and his wife, Monsieur and Madame Kerzin, as a
gesture of thanks for their sponsorship of various concerts in and around Moscow that featured music by Russian composers. The most widely performed and most loved song of this set is, without question, *To the Children*. Written to a poem by Alexei Kholmyakov, the song is a mother’s lament on the growing-up of her children; at first she recalls the days of their childhood and her love of watching over them, but later the music grows more tense as she weeps over her loss when the children move on with their own lives. The charm of the song lies in its musical simplicity as well as in the text, tinged with the sadness of a reality every mother must eventually face.

The fourteen songs of Opus 34 were composed in June of 1912 and reflect one of the most successful and rewarding periods of Rachmaninoff’s life. This translates to a set of songs which lacks the usual gloomy affect of some of Rachmaninoff’s music. The music is tranquil and peaceful and the poems are of the highest quality, ideal for song setting. The first song of the set, *The Muse*, is written to a poem by Pushkin and is conceived on a rather large scale. The melodic line is rich
and expressive; the harmonically advanced piano accompaniment is full of implied and actual modulations that mask the song’s tonal center until a delayed return to the original E minor. The last song is perhaps Rachmaninoff’s most well-known vocal work, his *Vocalise*, and was dedicated to Antonina Nezhdanova. With an intoned, textless vocal line it is a remarkable example of Rachmaninoff’s gifts as a melodist. *Vocalise* continues to be his most widely performed vocal work ... even when it is being performed without a vocalist. There are countless arrangements of the piece for various ensembles with or without a singer and Rachmaninoff himself even orchestrated it. A 1929 recording of Rachmaninoff conducting his own orchestration is still available today.

Rachmaninoff’s last set of songs was written in September of 1916, and for the first time in his career, he chose texts exclusively from the works of contemporary poets. These songs also mark a distinct change in style as the piano accompaniments are notably more economical than in previous songs. The fifth song, *Dreams*, expresses a highly imaginative poem by Sologub through very delicate musical textures.
Rachmaninoff masterfully creates the image of the elusive subject of the poem by using very limited thematic material. One could almost mistake the identity of the composer.

Despite Rachmaninoff’s sudden abandonment of the song as a means for creative outpouring, the seven cycles he completed are a remarkable representation of the growth he underwent as a composer. Perhaps with the emerging popularity of chamber music concerts in the United States, his songs will find not only new performers to advocate them, but also a new audience who will recognize their significance thus ensuring their survival.

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Kensico Cemetery, Valhalla, Westchester County, New York, USA
“I was only six when I first heard Rachmaninoff perform, and I attended his concerts regularly for the next twenty-two years until his death in 1943. I heard him play not only his most of his own compositions, but the entire standard repertoire that he chose to perform in public. I also had the good fortune to hear him in the role of conductor. Sergei Rachmaninoff has been the most important musical influence of my life. His sheer presence commanded a respect which was formidable. The simplicity of his approach to the keyboard was a model of perfection which I have strived to emulate.”

Earl Wild

Without a doubt, Earl Wild is among the most versatile professional musicians of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Today at eighty-eight years of age he is recognized, even by the most casual classical music listener, as being one of the most remarkable pianists alive. He has reached such a high status as to have performed for many American Presidents beginning with Herbert Hoover, to have been the first pianist to perform a solo recital live on television in 1939, and to have been the first to perform a solo recital streamed live on the internet in 1997. His virtues have been extolled by the most respected names in journalism. Strangely his musical accomplishments are among the most ‘selectively known’ for such a highly successful musician. At the mere
mention of his name, even well-attuned listeners or musicians will first and foremost remark about his seemingly unparalleled ability to perform even the most ferociously difficult piano works by composers such as Franz Liszt, and then they will comment on his affinity for playing with the gifts of the grandest pianists of the nineteenth century. It is less likely, however, that they will mention the numerous transcriptions he has composed (despite the fact that his sole Grammy award in 1997 was for a CD devoted entirely to piano transcriptions, nine of which were his own) and even less likely that they remember his original compositions. Should one also mention that he has also conducted many respected orchestras or shared double billing with legendary conductors such as Igor Stravinsky?

It could be said that Earl Wild’s transcriptions represent not so much an evolution of the genre as a continuation in the very best of the Romantic tradition, looking back as far as Franz Liszt’s transcriptions of Schubert’s songs. In the same tradition as Liszt was Rachmaninoff himself, whose transcriptions are legendary in their own right. These pieces were not simple arrangements for piano, but display the composer’s instincts at every turn. This instinct may be observed in his own distinctly individual renditions of the standard repertoire. One recalls Rachmaninoff’s interpretation of Schumann’s Carnaval, featuring a dazzling virtuoso improvisation on the Sphinxes, or Liszt’s Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C sharp minor in which he adds a considerable amount of his own newly composed fioratura passage-work to heighten the drama.

Earl Wild’s transcriptions fall squarely within the Liszt / Rachmaninoff tradition and are certainly equal to the work of those composers in quality. Much like Rachmaninoff himself, who placed importance on transcriptions his entire career and well into the twentieth century, Wild, singularly in his generation,
refused to let the importance of the genre diminish. Earl Wild’s transcriptions of Rachmaninoff’s songs are essentially new works that are composed using the original songs as a starting point. Earl Wild has masterfully reworked each song, using Rachmaninoff’s materials as a building block and, instead of constructing a song, creating a unique and highly individualized work for piano. The outcome is not unlike that which Rachmaninoff might have produced had he composed ‘songs without words’ for solo piano with the poet’s texts serving as inspiration.

Earl Wild first became enamored of Rachmaninoff’s many songs during his student years. While accompanying a fellow student who was singing To The Children and The Muse, he was so deeply moved that his memory of the songs would always remain. It was the enduring beauty of the songs which gave Wild the only motivation he needed to transform his favorite ones into new works for solo piano. He also had the good fortune to be a friend of the great Russian soprano Maria Kurenko, who had performed in public on occasion with Rachmaninoff as her accompanist. Her interpretations of Rachmaninoff’s songs were an emotional experience that Wild would always remember. He was able to take away from her performances a great deal of knowledge regarding the authentic interpretations of how Rachmaninoff’s songs should be performed. In making his piano transcriptions, Mr. Wild has deliberately written within Rachmaninoff’s style but has freely developed the musical ideas much as Rachmaninoff might have done.

Twelve of Rachmaninoff’s songs were transcribed by Earl Wild during the summer of 1981 while he resided in Santa Fe, New Mexico. They were written as a birthday gift and dedicated to Michael Rolland Davis, his longtime friend, record producer, business manager, and Ivory Classics President who
shares his love of Rachmaninoff’s beautiful songs. The thirteenth piano transcription, *Do Not Grieve*, was written several years later and is dedicated to Clair van Ausdall.

Transcribing Rachmaninoff’s songs is certainly no easy task, but Earl Wild has experience as his aide. His reputation and unquestioned abilities aside, he has the music of his predecessors to guide him. Rachmaninoff himself left two fine examples of piano transcriptions of his own songs, *Daisies Op.38, No.3* and *Lilacs Op.21, No.5*. Mr. Wild has even heard Rachmaninoff himself perform these piano transcriptions, along with many others, in public.

It may be said that Earl Wild’s thirteen song transcriptions add thirteen very authentic works to Rachmaninoff’s catalogue, thus not only letting us see Wild’s interpretation and exploration of the songs, but also providing a window into Rachmaninoff’s music through different eyes, perhaps clarifying some possibilities yet unexplored.

Today Earl Wild is the Elder Statesman, the Dean of the Piano, and he has continued the grand tradition of the Golden Age of the Piano wherein the virtuoso pianist / composer reigned supreme. He has been one of the few pianists of his generation to embrace the art of transcription, a tradition that had fallen by the wayside during the middle of the twentieth century. Hopefully his extraordinary artistic contributions will breathe new life into this tradition well into the twenty-first century.

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**Earl Wild’s Thirteen Legendary Rachmaninoff Song Transcriptions**

Published by Michael Rolland Davis, ASCAP

Available online: [www.earlwild.com](http://www.earlwild.com)

by e-mail: [mrdavisprod@sprintmail.com](mailto:mrdavisprod@sprintmail.com)

or by Telephone: 614.761.8709
O, Cease Thy Singing, Op. 4, No. 4  
Text by A. Pushkin  
English version by Edward Agate

Oh, never sing to me again  
The songs of Georgia, fair maiden,  
Their tones recall to me in vain  
Far distant shores with sorrow laden.  
Alas! Those songs remembrance stir,  
Full many memories round me gather,  
The steppes at night, in vision clear  
The form and features of another!...  
This image, fatal yet so true  
At sight, of thee will surely vanish,  
But at thy voice to rise anew,  
That all my striving fails to banish.  
So never sing to me again  
Those songs of Georgia fair maiden,  
Their tones recall to me in vain,  
Far distant shores with sorrow laden.

To the Children, Op. 26, No. 7  
Text by A. Khomiakov  
English version by Rosa Newmarch

How often at midnight in days long since fled,  
Dear children, I’ve watched with deep joy by your bed;  
How often your brows have I signed with the cross,  
And prayed there: God keep you from sorrow and loss;  
The love of the Father protect you.  
While calmly you slumbered to keep you in sight,  
To watch you and know that your souls were snow white,  
To wish for you gladness, and long happy years  
Untainted by evil, unbroken by fears,  
How sweet, and how dear were those vigils!  
But now, in the nursery, reigns stillness and gloom,  
Gone, gone the glad voices, no sound in the room;  
No lamp lights the icon that hangs by the door...  
My heart aches...  
The children are children no more!  
What anguish to lose them forever!  
O, children! At midnight to old days be true,  
And pray then for one who prays nightly for you;  
Who oft on your brows made the sign of the cross,  
And asked God to keep you from sorrow and loss,  
The love of the Father protect you.
Do Not Grieve,  Op. 14, No. 8
Text by A. Apoukhtin
English version by Rosa Newmarch

O, do not grieve for me!
For there, where ends all sadness,
My past, with all its pain, shall be as vanished dreams;
But may your memories be like those bright days of gladness
That come, with Springtide’s earliest gleams.
O, do not pine for me!
This parting cannot sever
My soul from yours;
It may return and hover near.
Just as in days gone by, my love and care shall ever
Protect your life from grief and fear.
O live!
It is your part!
And should some force be given,
Renewing strength and comfort, joy and peace,
Then know, ‘tis I am sent,
A messenger from Heaven,
To dry your tears, and bid them cease.

On the Death of a Linnet,
Op. 21, No. 8
Text by W. Shukovsky
English version by Edward Agate

My linnet lies within his grave,
A bird so tender, blithe and pretty;
His gift of life he gladly gave,
Sinking to rest, pining thro’ pity.
My dainty bird I held too fond,
What joy to hear his simple singing,
When lightly perched upon my hand
Banished my care, new gladness bringing!
Misfortune soon my songster knew:
A feathered friend he took for brother,
His comrade died, my linnet too,
No wish to long survive the other.
The Muse,  Op. 34, No. 1
Text by A. Pushkin
English version by Edward Agate

From childhoods early days, her grace she gladly showered,
To play the seven fingered flute my hands empowered;
She listened smiling to the measure in surprise,
The simple piping notes my cunning could desire,
What time, to clumsy touch, no method would surrender,
The ancient Hymn of Gods, with artistry to render,
Or some poor peaceful shepherd’s song in Phrygian mode.
From morn till eve in sheltered Paradise I stood,
Informed with quick desire to profit by her schooling;
And when my spirit flagged, to rouse my ardour cooling,
She brushed her hair aside that on her brow was blown,
Reached forward for the pipe, and gave me of her own.
With breath of Life endowed, in melting tones resolving,
The reed subdued my heart, my soul to tears dissolving.

In the Silent Night,  Op. 4, No. 3
Text by Afanasy Fet
English version by Edward Agate

Oh, how I still can hear, when silent night doth hold me,
Thy timid artless words, and feel thy glance enfold me,
Thy tresses closely intertwined, yet full obedient to my hand,
The empire of thy smile now languish, now command.
And vaguely I recall the troubled thoughts unspoken,
Forgotten tender vows, of faltering hearts to token;
Then rapture fills me, my being all aflame,
I cry aloud to thee, that night may hear thy name,
I loudly cry to thee, that night may know thy name.
Then, with my soul one flame, my being filled with rapture,
I loudly cry to thee, that night may know thy name.
**Floods of Spring, Op. 14, No. 11**
Text by Fyodor Tyutchev  
English version by Rosa Newmarch

Tho’ still the fields are white with snow,  
The rushing of spring floods draws near,  
The banks are sunny where they flow  
They sparkle as they run more clear;  
Their voice the icebound fallow stirs:  
“The spring is here! The spring is here!  
We are the young spring’s messengers,  
The heralds, we of her advance.  
The spring is here! The spring is here!”  
The bright, soft Maydays come again  
And moving in a rosy dance  
They gladly haste to join Spring’s train.

**Dreams, Op. 38, No. 5**
Text by F. Sologub  
English version by Edward Agate

Say, oh whiter art bound,  
Rare enchantment of dreams,  
Wrapped with silence around,  
Robed in mantle of gleams?  
On their features may rise  
Never laughter or pain,  
Yet those glances shall prize  
Wells of comfort serene.  
Shining wings do they bear,  
Far outspreading, so light,  
As they float through the air  
In the shadowy night.  
Though their pinions be still,  
Yet they follow their quest,  
Wander freely at will  
Soul and spirit at rest!

**Sorrow in the Springtime, Op. 21, No. 12**
Text by G. Galina  
English version by Rosa Newmarch

How? My heart aches! And yet I would live,  
Now that spring with its fragrance is here!  
Nay! I have not the strength to seek death  
Once for all in the sleepless blue night.  
Would that age could come swiftly to me,  
Would my brown locks were silvered with time!  
Were I deaf to the laugh of the breeze,  
To the nightingale’s passionate voice  
As he pours out his heart in a song,  
Far away where the lilac trees bloom!  
Would to Heaven that the silence and dusk  
Were not filled with such pain and despair!
**Midsummer Nights, Op. 14, No. 5**  
Text by D. Rathaus  
English version by Edward Agate

Oh these midsummer nights all in splendor set,  
Steeped in wonder of moonlight that reigns serene,  
They awaken the promise of ecstasy,  
And rekindle the passion of love’s desire.  
From the sorrowful heart, they will lift the load,  
Weight of woe unto mortals by life decreed,  
And the borders of happiness open wide,  
The spell obeying, that silent it’s work is weaving...  
And the gates of the spirit are barred no more,  
For its regions are flooded with waves of love,  
Oh, these midsummer nights all in splendor set,  
Clad in magic of moonlight that reigns supreme.

**Where Beauty Dwells, Op. 21, No. 7**  
Text by G. Galina  
English version by Rosa Newmarch

How fair this spot! I gaze to where  
The golden brook runs by.  
The fields are all inlaid with flowers,  
The white clouds sail on high.  
No step draws near,  
Such silence reigns,  
Alone with God I seem;  
With Him, and with the hoary pines,  
And thee, my only dream!

**The Little Island, Op. 14, No. 2**  
Text by K. Balmout (Schelly)  
English version by Edward Agate

A little island set in sea,  
To keep her maiden shores inviolate,  
Did plant them round with laurel tree,  
With roses, and the violet.  
And thus in shade of green repose,  
The waters lulled this quiet haven,  
The dreaming woodland trees arose  
Like images engraven.  
Each single breath of air is mild,  
From sovereign rule of tempest severed,  
The island sleeps like any child;  
So tranquil, peace delivered.
Tracks 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 were recorded in New York City, July, 1982

Tracks 3, 6, 8 and 14 were recorded in Fernleaf Abbey, Columbus, OH. 1991

Tracks 16, 17 and 18 were recorded in concert in Montreal November 4, 1983

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