

The latest CD from Mark Morton features the complete works of Koussevitzky and Glière as well as pieces by Massenet, van Goëns, and Rimsky-Korsakov.

In 2003 I reviewed volume I, Thresholds, and many of my original comments hold true for volume II. His playing is astoundingly accurate and musical. The vibrato is one that all bassists aspire to - warm and expressive without being operatic. And Morton has obviously done his research with thoughtful and deliberate musical decisions. And Dianne Frazer Cross' accompaniment complements both Morton and the music with musicality, subtlety, and artistry.

And, once again, I believe this CD is a must for all bassists, educators, and music school libraries.

My last review commented on some levels issues. On this recording the production and mixing between the bass and piano is great.

Morton's playing and instrument has a beautiful bass sound, although to my ears there's something about it that sounds a bit covered. Maybe it's the personality of his centuries old bass. The lower end of his bass gets a tad boomy and *occasionally* caused my speakers to rattle - in my car, home stereo, and headphones.

Alright, the details...

His intonation is impressive. The clarity and articulation are astounding The bow control on Chanson Triste is amazing.

The interpretation of Valse Miniature is fantastic - subtle and conservative yet perfect.

And just like the first CD, the concerto is accompanied by piano. I feel obligated to say that this is a conscious, deliberate, and *correct* decision by Morton as most students will perform it with piano and it makes for cleaner listening and study.

His version of Flight of the Bumble-bee may not be the fastest but is one of the most bee-like I have heard. Morton captures the true bee-ness of the piece and makes it musical and fun rather than just a gratuitous show of speed.

This CD, as with his first should be a required purchase for every bassist - just like Simandl, Sevcik, and Zimmerman.

A note to Mark - I would love to have this CD in both solo and orchestral tuning. ☺

Russian Rendezvous is available at his website, <http://www.asodb.com> .