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ONGAKU RECORDS RELEASES “*RHAPSODIE FRANÇAISE*” CD FEATURING RENOWNED CLARINETIST JONATHAN COHLER AND PIANIST RASA VITKAUSKAITE IN HER DEBUT RECORDING

BOSTON September 22, 2008 — [Ongaku Records](http://ongaku-records.com/) announced the release of [*Rhapsodie Française*](#) (024-121), a CD featuring world renowned clarinetist Jonathan Cohler and multiple prize-winning Lithuanian pianist Rasa Vitkauskaite in her debut recording. The new release traverses many of the central virtuoso works of the “French School” of clarinet music including Camille Saint-Saëns’ *Sonata in E-flat Major, Op. 167*, Claude Debussy’s *Première Rhapsodie*, Henri Rabaud’s *Solo de Concours, Op. 10*, André Messager’s *Solo de Concours*, Charles Marie-Widor’s *Introduction et Rondo, Op. 72*, Ernest Chausson’s *Andante et Allegro*, Eugène Bozza’s *Bucolique*, and Louis Cahuzac’s *Cantilène*.

In addition to stunning performances by Cohler and Vitkauskaite, the CD features the award-winning engineering of Brad Michel, and it was recorded in the beautiful acoustics of the Rogers Center for the Arts at Merrimack College in North Andover, Massachusetts. Accompanying the CD is an in-depth 20-page booklet that traces the history of the “French School” in detail showing the numerous and interesting connections between these composers and the many varied styles of their music. This recording was produced using the latest in 24-bit digital recording technology, and was edited and mastered throughout in 24-bits to preserve the pristine audiophile quality sound for which Ongaku Records has become known.

Active as a duo, Mr. Cohler and Ms. Vitkauskaite are currently working on their next CD for Ongaku and plan to make several more recordings together in the coming seasons.

[Jonathan Cohler](#) is recognized throughout the world as “an absolute master of the clarinet” (International Clarinet Association’s *Clarinet Magazine*). Through his performances around the world and on record, he has thrilled an ever-widening audience with his incredible musicianship and total technical command. His technical feats have been hailed as “superhuman” and *Fanfare Magazine* has placed him in the pantheon of legendary musicians: “one thinks of Dinu Lipatti.”

A highly acclaimed recording artist, his recordings have received numerous accolades and awards including nomination for the **INDIE Award**, the **Outstanding Recording** mark of the *American Record Guide*, *BBC Music Magazine*’s **Best CDs of The Year** selection, and top ratings from many magazines and record guides including *Penguin Guide*, *BBC Music Magazine*, and *Listener Magazine*, which wrote, “Cohler possesses such musical integrity and taste that everything he touches seems like the last word”. *Gramophone* lauded Mr. Cohler’s expression of “the poetry that lesser artists miss.”

He has toured the United States, Canada, Europe, Japan, Taiwan, China, Venezuela, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Mexico and Cuba, and performed at many festivals including those of Tanglewood, Aspen, Domaine Forget, Campos do Jordao, Rockport, Newport, Martha’s Vineyard and the Hamptons. He has been a frequently invited performer at the International

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Clarinet Association’s annual ClarinetFest and many other clarinet festivals around the world. He has been featured on the prestigious Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concert Series in Chicago.

In addition to his work as soloist, Jonathan Cohler is an active chamber musician, chamber music coach, adjudicator, conductor, and pedagogue. He collaborates frequently with many well-known musicians and ensembles including members of the Emerson String Quartet, the Muir String Quartet, the Claremont Trio, the Lark Quartet, the Moscow Conservatory Trio, the Amadeus Trio, the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, the Boston Chamber Music Society, the Wavehill Trio, Boris Berezovsky, Ilya Kaler, Andres Diaz, Charles Neidich, Randall Hodgkinson, Judith Gordon, Andrew Mark, Janice Weber and Rasa Vitkauskaite.

Mr. Cohler is a member of the clarinet, chamber music and conducting faculties of the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, The Boston Conservatory, and the New England Conservatory in Boston. Jonathan Cohler is a Vandoren, Rossi, and Gao artist. For more information, see his web site at <http://jonathancohler.com/>.

[Rasa Vitkauskaite](#) has won top prizes at numerous prestigious international piano competitions including First Prizes at the Rubinstein Piano Competition (Paris), Les Rencontres Internationales des Jeunes Pianistes (Belgium), the competition in Taurisano (Italy), and the Mendelssohn Cup (Italy). In 2007, Ms. Vitkauskaite won a Kathryn Wasserman Davis grant that supported her tour promoting peace in Israel. In her native country of Lithuania, Ms. Vitkauskaite won six national competitions.

Ms. Vitkauskaite studied at the National M. K. Ciurlionis School of Arts in Vilnius, Lithuania, from which she graduated with honors. She won a scholarship to study at the United World College of the Adriatic in Italy. She also studied chamber music with members of the Trio di Trieste at the International Chamber Music School. Upon graduating, she was awarded the prestigious International Baccalaureate Diploma with the highest marks. She completed her Bachelor’s Degree at The Boston Conservatory with Michael Lewin, where she twice won the H. Wilfred Churchill piano scholarship competition, and where she is now pursuing a Master’s Degree.

Ms. Vitkauskaite has performed as soloist with the Kaunas, Latvian, Kaliningrad Philharmonic Orchestras and most recently with I Solisti di Perugia. She has played in many festivals around the world including ones in Kaunas (Lithuania), Moscow (Russia), Pyrénées (France), and the Music Fest Perugia (Italy), and she has given concerts in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, United Kingdom and the United States.

Ms. Vitkauskaite is also very active as a chamber musician having performed with violinist Yuliya Haurliuk (Belarus) and cellist Sebastian Plano (Argentina).

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