

Catherine Zeta-Jones
The Runaway Bunny

A Piano Trio with Reader
with Trio 21



Michael Douglas
The Story of Babar

Music by Francis Poulenc
Jason Wirth, Piano



Goodnight Moon

sung by

Mark Stone

Music by Glen Raven



Tracks

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---|--------------|
| 1. The Runaway Bunny | 20:58 | 2. The Story of Babar, The Little Elephant | 22:55 |
| Narrated by Catherine Zeta-Jones | | Narrated by Michael Douglas | |
| Music by Glen Roven | | Music by Francis Jean Poulenc | |
| Words by Margaret Wise Brown | | Words by Jean de Brunhoff | |
| Music performed by Trio 21 | | English version by Nelly Rieu | |
| Jeffrey Biegel, piano | | Jason Wirth, piano | |
| Kinga Augustyn, violin | | | |
| Robert deMaine, cello | | | |

For our younger listeners

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| 3. Goodnight Moon | 8:42 | 4. The Runaway Bunny | 10:55 |
| Mark Stone, Baritone | | 5. Goodnight Moon | 11:02 |
| Music by Glen Roven | | Performed by the GPR Festival Choir | |
| Words by Margaret Wise Brown | | | |
| Accompanied by the Composer | | | |

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L'Histoire de Babar, le petit éléphant

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The Runaway Bunny, The Story of Babar and Goodnight Moon

Produced by
Glen Roven
Peter Fitzgerald
Richard Cohen

Co-produced by Megan Henninger
Recorded by

Megan Henninger, Bob Hanlon and Seth Huling
Mixed and Mastered by

Peter Fitzgerald and Megan Henninger

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The Windward School

is an independent, co-ed day school focused exclusively on helping students in grades 1-9 with language-based learning disabilities. Their philosophy:



“We believe all children can succeed academically. The key to their success is language competency, which we believe is central to all aspects of academic, social, and emotional growth. Language proficiency means much more than basic reading and writing skills. It is also about understanding and following directions, organizing information, building general knowledge, solving problems, expressing ideas, making friends, assuming responsibility, and assessing social interactions and behaving appropriately.”



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Catherine Zeta-Jones is a multi-award winning actress whose talents range from film to theater. She garnered an Academy Award for her portrayal of the notorious Velma Kelly, in the screen adaptation of the Broadway musical “Chicago.” The film, which won the Oscar and Golden Globe for “Best Picture,” also starred Renee Zellweger and Richard Gere. Zeta-Jones was nominated for a Golden Globe and took home the Critics’ Choice Award, a Screen Actors Guild Award and the BAFTA Award for “Best Supporting Actress” for her performance.



She won the Tony Award for Lead Actress in a Musical for critically acclaimed debut on Broadway as Desirée Armfeldt in Stephen Sondheim’s “A Little Night Music.” The musical was a box office success co-starring the legendary Angela Lansbury.

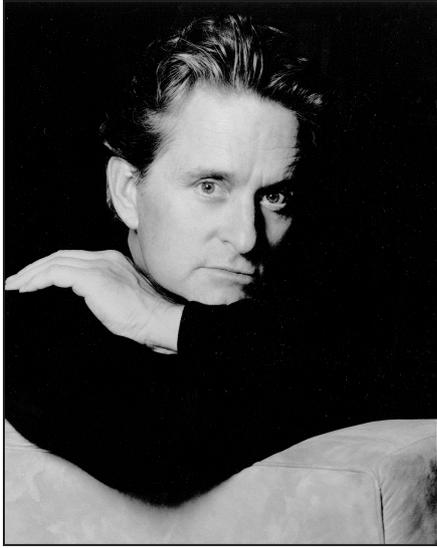
Zeta-Jones was most recently seen in the musical “Rock of Ages,” directed by Adam Shankman and co-starring with Tom Cruise, Russell Brand and Alec Baldwin. Upcoming she will be seen in “Playing the Field,” with Gerard Butler, Jessica Biel and Dennis Quaid; “Broken City” with Mark-Wahlberg and Russell Crowe and “Lay the Favorite,” with Bruce Willis and Vince Vaughn, which premiered at the 2012 Sundance film festival. Zeta-Jones also just wrapped production in Steven Soderbergh’s latest film “Bitter Pill” with Jude Law, Rooney Mara, and Channing Tatum.

In 2005, she reprised her role as Elena de La Vega in “The Legend of Zorro,” the sequel to the blockbuster film “The Mask of Zorro.” She starred in Steven Soderbergh’s “Ocean’s 12,” and prior to that appeared opposite Tom Hanks in Steven Spielberg’s “The Terminal.” Zeta-Jones also starred with George Clooney in the Coen Brothers’ comedy “Intolerable Cruelty.” Her recent films include the Warner Bros’ hit romantic comedy “No Reservations,” also starring Aaron Eckhart; and the romantic thriller “Death Defying Acts,” with Guy Pearce.

Zeta-Jones earned a Golden Globe nomination for her portrayal of the wife of a drug-runner in Steven Soderbergh’s “Traffic.” The cast of the critically praised film received a SAG Award for “Outstanding Performance by the Cast of a Theatrical Motion Picture.”

She first captured international recognition in the action adventure film, “The Mask of Zorro,” opposite Antonio Banderas and Anthony Hopkins. Zeta-Jones continued to captivate audiences in 1999, in Jon Amiel’s romantic-thriller “Entrapment” opposite screen legend Sean Connery. She also starred with Julia Roberts, Billy Crystal and John Cusack in the ensemble comedy “America’s Sweethearts.”

Born in Wales, Zeta-Jones began her career on the stage in London and following that was cast in the popular Yorkshire Television series, “The Darling Buds of May,” based on the novels of H.E. Bates. In 2010, Zeta-Jones was awarded a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List for her services to the film industry and charity.



Michael Douglas is an actor with over 35 years of experience in theatre, television and film. Douglas has appeared in such high profile works as “The Streets of San Francisco,” “Romancing the Stone,” “Fatal Attraction,” “The War of the Roses,” “Basic Instinct” “Disclosure,” “A Perfect Murder” and “The American President.” His performance as the ruthless corporate raider Gordon Gekko in “Wall Street” earned him an Academy Award as Best Actor. He received the prestigious American Film Institute’s Life Achievement Award in 2009.

Over his career, Douglas also produced and starred in such socially and politically influential films as “One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest” for which he won a Best Picture Oscar; “The China Syndrome” “Falling Down” and “Traffic.”

Michael Douglas most recently starred as Liberace in HBO Films’ “Behind the Candelabra” opposite Matt Damon and directed by Steven Soderbergh.

Douglas has long been a champion of social and environment causes. He has been actively involved in working with the United Nations and in 1998 was appointed a UN Messenger of Peace focusing on nuclear proliferation and the control of small arms.

Michael Douglas is the son of Hollywood legend Kirk Douglas and actress Diana Douglas and is married to Academy Award winning actress Catherine Zeta-Jones and they have a son and daughter and Douglas has a son from a previous marriage.

First Wonder at the World *The Runaway Bunny and Goodnight Moon*

Margaret Wise Brown (1910-1952) revolutionized writing for the youngest ages not only by lifting a seemingly trifling genre to the level of an art form but also by subtly absorbing into her varied work many of the key insights of modern progressive education. As a teacher trainee at New York’s progressive Bank Street School during the mid-1930s, Brown came to see children as resilient, creative, ever-changing beings with a deep-seated curiosity about their world. Children, she realized, learned best by doing, and in the books she began to write while still a Bank Street student, Brown continually devised fresh ways to enlist her young listeners’ active collaboration at story time, not least by providing them with the pattern for a ritual “goodnight” game that children the world over have embraced now for more than three generations. *Goodnight Moon* is the quintessential first book in the life of a child: a calming, comforting revelation of the world as a Great Green Room where all is well and a small child’s wants and needs are everywhere satisfied. *The Runaway Bunny* is another story altogether: a tale for the slightly older child who now feels ready, albeit with some trepidation, to sally forth from home for a taste of adventure. Brown found her inspiration for *The Runaway Bunny*--and for the book’s call-and-response structure—in a seemingly unlikely source: a Provençal love ballad, “Magali,” which she may have known from the 1933 French transcription by François Seguin. The result is arguably the most passionate picture-book narrative ever written, a lover’s magic quest tale transformed into an equally expansive story of a small child’s first burst of independence and a mother’s affirmation of her unconditional love.

It is thus wholly in the spirit of Margaret Wise Brown’s own protean creative project that composer Glen Roven now gives listeners of all ages these thrilling musical settings of *Goodnight Moon* and *The Runaway Bunny*. For each work, Roven has wisely taken his lead from the author’s text, aptly choosing a human voice as the centerpiece of his poignant exploration of the Great Green Room of *Goodnight Moon*, which at heart is a lullaby; and pitting a solo violin (the incorrigible bunny) against the full force of the piano and Cello (the loving, all-knowing mother, the universe at large) in the brilliantly variegated epic battle of wits that is *The Runaway Bunny*. There can be little doubt that Brown herself would have been pleased with what the composer has done. For everyone else, these companion works re-open two childhood classics we thought we knew, and invite us to re-experience them in all their eloquent simplicity, tenderness of heart, and joy in what Brown once called the “first wonder at the world.”

Leonard S. Marcus is the author of the biography *Margaret Wise Brown: Awakened by the Moon* and is one of the world’s leading writers about children’s books and the people who create them.

The Elephant in Spats *The Story of Babar*

What does a lullaby sound like? Many of us parents think we know; if forced, some night, we could probably make one up on the spot. But what does an *elephant's* lullaby sound like? And how does it sound to a dozing baby elephant as he is rocked to sleep by the gentle nudging of his mother's trunk on a warm jungle evening? Francis Poulenc's *L'Histoire de Babar* (1945) begins with this wonderfully tender and strange lullaby and proceeds through some of the loveliest, most imaginative music ever written for children. Based on the first of an immensely popular series of children's books written and illustrated by Jean de Brunhoff, first published in 1931, *The Story of Babar* recounts the adventures of a little elephant who flees to the city when his mother is killed by a hunter. There he is befriended by a kind old lady who introduces him to the pleasures of civilized life – clothes, cars, tea. His elephant cousins Arthur and Celeste find him, and after a grateful farewell to the old lady (a hymn, quite sublime, located at 11:08), he cheerfully returns to the jungle, where he is appreciated for his cultivated ways, and promptly elevated to King of the Elephants (the previous King having died from eating a poisoned mushroom). He weds his childhood sweetheart, Celeste (a solemn, elephantine march, located at 18:21), there is a party (a delightful Galop, 20:07) and the piece ends with a Nocturne that is a perfect setting of the lovely final illustration in the Brunhoff book: Babar and his bride standing side by side, gazing out upon a starry sky. All this Poulenc conveys with great charm, gentle irony and exactly the right degree of Gallic sophistication; Babar, after all, is the only elephant ever to wear spats. As Poulenc himself noted: "I am writing... with the hope of amusing grown-up children as well."

Ever since the books were first published, parents have debated whether to skip over the early and rather shocking death of Babar's mother. (For those wishing to avoid this incident, it is located at 03:44-04:33 on the present recording. However, be sure not to miss the brief but breathtaking moment in the music when Babar reminisces about his mother, 07:18.) The story does not linger on the horror, but deals with it quickly and frankly, and then passes on, paying tribute to the child's resiliency and healthy delight in life. It is significant that Poulenc first conceived of *Babar* in 1940 but actually composed it in a few inspired days ("I am working like an angel," he wrote) just after the end of World War II. In setting Brunhoff's story of the little elephant, Poulenc gave us a touching, optimistic fable about the necessity and the excitement of growing up and finding one's own place in the world – that magical transformation by which the child becomes adult.

The present recording is graced by narration from two-time Academy Award-winning actor and producer Michael Douglas. A father of young children himself, he knows exactly how children like to be read to: forthrightly, vividly, and always respecting their intelligence. His voice is full of fatherly confidence, but with a most inviting warmth around the edges. In him, Poulenc's little elephant has found his perfect narrator.

Herschel Garfein is a GRAMMY® award-winning composer and lyricist. He wrote the celebrated libretto for Aldridge's opera *Elmer Gantry*, and music and lyrics for the operatic adaptation of *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* (based on the play by Tom Stoppard).

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963), born in Paris, was as influenced by Stravinsky as he was by the French Vaudeville, although he was mostly a self-taught composer. He was a member of "Les Six" a group of French composers who's music was in direct contrast to late 19th century Romantic music, advocating instead clarity and simplicity. Extremely active in the Resistance movement during World War II, he composed his ballet *Les animaux modèles* using themes of French patriotic songs so that the Germans wouldn't notice its political implications, and his poems by Paul Éluard, with a song titled *Liberté*, were published in London and then dropped over French territory by the RAF. In 1940, Poulenc first improvised the ideas for a piece based on Jean de Brunhoff's *L'histoire de Babar, le petit éléphant* to delight his cousin's five children. In 1945, he composed and published the work, and his version of Babar was born. He wrote hundreds of songs, many instrumental pieces, his *Concerto for two pianos and orchestra*, being one of his most famous, and later in his life, many religious works including a *Stabat Mater* and *Gloria* for soprano solo, choir and orchestra. The famous Ballet Impresario, Diaghilev commissioned Poulenc to write a ballet, *Les Biches*. His three operas, *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, *La Voix Humaine*, and the sublime, *Dialogue of the Carmelites*, are staples of every opera house.



Born in Minneapolis, Pianist/Conductor **Jason Wirth** began studying piano at the age of 5 with Alexander Braginsky, and continued his studies after high school at Mannes the New School for Music (with Pavlina Dokovska) and Yale School of Music (with Boris Berman). As a solo pianist, he has performed with the Moscow Philharmonic and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and is a prizewinner from the Andorra International Piano Competition. While still at Mannes, he was awarded with the Newton Swift Piano Award, for excellence as a collaborative pianist, and has since worked as an accompanist and coach for numerous opera productions and vocal studios throughout New York City. He is currently a vocal coach at LIU Post, and regularly performs with singers and instrumentalists. In 2012, he was a guest conductor for the Monmouth Civic Chorus, and is now the assistant conductor for the prize-winning choir Cantori New York. He currently serves as music editor for the interdisciplinary magazine "Nomadic Sojourns." www.jasonwirth.com

Mark Stone is an English baritone who studied mathematics at King's College, Cambridge, and then singing and at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London.

On the operatic stages of his homeland he has sung for the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, Glyndebourne Opera, Opera Holland Park, Buxton Festival, Garsington Opera and Grange Park Opera, and overseas he has sung for La Scala Milan, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Cologne, Liceu Barcelona, Leipzig, Stockholm, Montpellier, Netherlands Reisopera, Santa Fe, Philadelphia, Opera Atelier Toronto, Israeli Opera and New Zealand Opera. His operatic roles include Marcello, Belcore, Sonora, Gianni Schicchi, Ashton, Ford, Germont, Don Carlo (Forza), Silvio, Rossini's Figaro, Don Giovanni, Almaviva, Guglielmo, Olegin, Yeletsky, Danilo, Eisenstein, Chou En-lai, Hector, Junius, Sid and Demetrius. He has sung with leading orchestras at many of the major European concert halls, and he is also busy as a song recitalist, specializing in the English song repertoire. He has performed in recital at London's Wigmore Hall and New York's Carnegie Hall, performing a program of songs by Glen Roven, with the composer accompanying – including *Goodnight Moon*.



Trio21 is becoming widely respected as one of the most prolific, new chamber ensembles of our time. Created in 2010 by pianist, Jeffrey Biegel, joined with violinist, Kinga Augustyn and cellist, Robert de-Maine, Trio21 has already recorded two World Premieres in the 21st century: Kenneth Fuchs' *Falling Trio*, as part of a trilogy of works based on Don DeLillo's novel, *Falling Man*, dedicated to Trio21 and released in April 2013 on the Naxos label and Glen Roven's *Runaway Bunny* on this recording. Trio21 makes an orchestral debut in 2012 performing Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* with the Glacier Orchestra in Montana, conducted by John Zoltek. More information about Trio21 can be found at their web site www.Trio-21.com, as well as each artist's individual web sites.



Glen Roven has won Four Emmy Awards. His Violin Concerto based on *The Runaway Bunny* and *Goodnight Moon*, a lullaby for Soprano and Orchestra, are two of the most programmed pieces of concert music in the US. Roven conducted them both at Carnegie Hall, where Glenn Close narrated *Bunny*. His twelve song cycles are regularly performed by singers all over the world. He has conducted the National Symphony, the Seattle Symphony, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, The Munich Philharmonic, The Radio Luxembourg Orchestra, as well as many others, and made his Israeli conducting debut in 2001 conducting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in two sold-out concerts honoring Leonard Bernstein. He has conducted for Renee Fleming, Placido Domingo, Jessye Norman and Kathleen Battle and was chosen to conduct four Presidential Inaugural Concerts, as well as America's Millennium Celebration, produced by Steven Spielberg. In addition to appearing hundreds of times on television, he has written songs for, conducted and produced popular artists Julie Andrews, Aretha Franklin, Whitney Houston, Michael Jackson, Quincy Jones, Kermit the Frog, Patti LaBelle, Liza Minnelli, Diana Ross, and many others. He conducted Frank Sinatra's last concert on television and Sammy Davis's final television appearance. Next season sees the opening of his Broadway Musicals, Dr. Seuss' *The 5000 Fingers of Doctor T* and *Pandora's Box*, with Maria S. Schlatter.



The GPR Festival Choir is comprised of some of the best singers in New York City, all of whom have participated in many of GPR's previous projects. Soloists in their own right, they have come together to lend their voices to this special CD for children of all ages. The group consists of Glenn Seven Allen, Douglas Carpenter, Ellis Gage, Blythe Gaissert, Matthew Garrett, Michael Kelly, Gilda Lyons, Hallie Silverston, Aaron Theno and Benjamin Wenzelberg.

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Goodnight
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GPRrecords
Presents



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