

# Hans Gál



*The Complete Piano Duos*

divine art  
the spirit of music

Goldstone and Clemmow

# Hans Gál: the complete piano duos

## Hans Gál (1890-1987)

### Three Marionettes, Op. 74, for piano duet (10.56)

1	I. Pantalone	3.07
2	II. Columbina	4.01
3	III. Arlecchino	3.44

### Serbische Weisen (Serbian Dances), Op. 3, for piano duet (20.43)

4	No. 1 in G major	2.52
5	No. 2 in C major	2.56
6	No. 3 in F sharp minor	4.11
7	No. 4 in E minor	3.27
8	No. 5 in B major	4.08
9	No. 6 in A minor	2.57

### Concertino, Op. 43, for two pianos (13.23)

10	I. Intrata. <i>Grave e maestoso</i>	4.16
11	II. Siciliano. <i>Andantino – A piacere, quasi cadenza</i>	4.52
12	III. Fuga. <i>Allegro ma non troppo</i>	4.12

### Three Impromptus (1940), for two pianos (10.00)

13	I. Entrée	2.10
14	II. Pastorale	3.22
15	III. Carillon	4.23

16	Pastoral Tune (1954), for six hands at one piano transcribed by Anthony Goldstone for four hands at two pianos	3.01
----	---	------

total CD duration 58.42

## The Music

In 1925 Rachmaninov wrote: “[Admirers of certain composers] learn that it is fashionable to admire ... what is called futurism. They like the pose of being ‘modern’, ‘up-to-date’, and they affect to like the works that no human being with a rational mind could possibly enjoy. Such a public rarely thinks for itself; it is much more comfortable for them to accept a fashion which others applaud, even if that fashion is altogether hideous... Time, however, decides between the permanent and the artificial and inevitably preserves the good, the true and the beautiful.” He has been entirely vindicated with regard to his own works, so long dismissed, and the time has now come for the music of **Hans Gál**, also the victim of ‘fashion’, to see the light of day. His flourishing career was first trampled by the Nazi jackboot and then, when he was in exile, starved of oxygen by ‘the shock of the new’, when the only living composers who were heard on the BBC, for instance, wrote atonal music. Tunes certainly did not help you breathe more easily in the 1960s!

Gál, whose large output included operas, cantatas, symphonies and concertos, was born near Vienna, of Hungarian Jewish extraction. He gained a scholarship to study with Eusebius Mandyczewski (with whom he later co-edited the complete works of Brahms) and enjoyed notable early recognition as a composer, culminating in the Austrian State Prize for Composition in 1915. The First World War left Austria economically and politically in ruins, but Gál was able to build an increasingly successful career in Germany during the 1920s and his operas, in particular, achieved considerable success.

In 1929 he became director of the Conservatory in Mainz, Germany, but after the rise to power of the Nazis in 1933 he was instantly dismissed and his works banned. He returned to Vienna and in 1936-37 wrote a moving monument to the tragedy that had still not fully unfolded, the great cantata *De Profundis (In Memory of This Time, its Misery and its Victims)*. In 1938 the Anschluss forced him to flee to England, with the intention of eventually emigrating to America. However, a chance meeting with Tovey led to an invitation to Edinburgh University, where he was to be a lecturer for many years. Just before he died at the age of ninety-seven he saw incipient recognition of his major compositional achievement. He was never self-seeking; his integrity never allowed him to abandon the Austro-German classic-romantic tradition or to adopt trends or ‘isms’, and the acclaim he received for his books, including studies of Brahms and Schubert, as well as his reputation as a loved and devoted teacher, eclipsed his work as a composer.

One gets to know the man through his music – warmly human but not histrionic, wise, at times ironic but never cynical, scornful of ‘effect’; it reveals itself gradually, has a personal harmonic language, and formal mastery is not obscured by superfluous emotionalism. Though a small part of Gál’s oeuvre, the piano duos show an important, intimate side of this lovable man.

Whether anyone asked Gál for a work for four hands around 1958 is unclear, but the *Three Marionettes* constitute a reminder by Gál that playing piano duets can and should be the source of enormous pleasure for professionals and amateurs alike. As he himself wrote, “When I was young, piano duet playing was a favourite pastime of music lovers. I am afraid this habit has very much diminished but I have always maintained my love for it. Here is a specimen, connected with the

*Commedia dell'arte*, with its traditional characters and improvised action [which] has always had an irresistible appeal for me, put together as a little suite: grave ceremonious *Pantalone*, graceful *Colombina*, and gay, sportive *Arlecchino*.” In this old Italian art form, Pantalone ‘was represented as a lean and foolish old man, wearing slippers, pantaloons and spectacles’ (OED), Colombina (‘Little Dove’) was a coquettish young girl; Arlecchino was ‘a mixture of childlike ignorance, wit, always in love, always in trouble, easily despairing, easily consoled’ (OED). Gál’s wry sense of humour is clear in the grumpy first portrait, there is a knowing seductiveness in the waltz-like second, and in the last the eager young man takes flight, occasionally pausing to ponder his love for Colombina. All three would make a delightful miniature ballet.

Gál had reason to be thankful for his poor eyesight, which had prevented him from serving on the front line in the Great War. While dealing with supplies in Belgrade he collected folk melodies, which he ingeniously assembled into six *Serbische Weisen* (literally ‘Serbian Tunes’) for piano duet in 1916. In the spirit of the genre that had begun with Brahms and Dvořák (Simrock, the publisher of both these masters, was later to take on Gál’s works), these attractive pieces, enriched with the young Gál’s sideslipping modulations, reflect the various peoples of the region: Slav Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Jews; indeed Gál did not hesitate to mix communities together in a single piece. Number four even strays towards the style of a Viennese waltz, if a melancholy one. The similarity of the beginning of number one to ‘Gaudeamus Igitur’ may or may not be coincidental! These concoctions were so popular that Gál orchestrated some of them to avoid piracy; they make a marvellous concert work and should definitely be better known by duettists.

A fine pianist (his teacher, Richard Robert, taught Serkin and Haskil), Gál composed copiously for piano including two concerted works - the *Concertino*, Op. 43, of 1934, with string orchestra, and the *Concerto*, Op. 57, of 1948, with full orchestra. From the 1920s into the 1950s many composers, among them Hindemith, Stravinsky, Tippett, Bloch and Martinů, found inspiration in the Concerto Grosso of the Baroque period, and in his *Concertino* Gál also tips his hat to the early eighteenth century, even allotting a subsidiary ‘solo’ role to a string quartet. In the version with string parts arranged by the composer for a second piano, while the textural variety of the juxtaposition of piano with massed and single strings is obviously sacrificed, the continual antiphony between the two pianos provides ample compensation, particularly in the contrapuntal finale, which comes across as a grittily powerful climax.

The stately *Intrata* begins in the style of a French Overture. Presently a new, chattering motif alternates with more lyrical moments before a final, more emphatic, statement of the opening paragraph. With its repeating two-bar accompaniment, the melody of the *Siciliano* creates an almost hypnotic effect, broken by an unexpected modulation announcing an expressive middle section, elements of which linger as a descant to the melody’s reprise. Now comes a rhetorical cadenza leading to the *Fuga*, whose pointed subject presents a syncopated (dare one say decorously jazzy?) slant on the Baroque, spiced by Gál’s typically piquant bitonality. A calmer section ensues, fragments of which are then tossed around in the fugal build-up to the apotheosis culminating in an affirmatory unison.

The following press review of the *Concertino*’s première shows the pride that Austrians took in Hans Gál’s art in the thirties. (Three and a half years later he was to be driven from his homeland into lifelong exile.)

“...the most distinguished composition brought by the Radio Festival: the first performance of the *Concertino for Piano and Strings*, composed in 1934, by Hans Gál. It can only confer honour upon Austrian Radio to have brought the première of a work by this distinguished native composer, who has also been long recognised abroad... Hans Gál’s musical language ... is by no means archaistic, but is thoroughly new and individual in its melodic and harmonic invention... Gál shows himself to be a musician with a sovereign mastery of counterpoint.” – *Tag*

The *Three Impromptus* for two pianos, thought to date from 1940, were inscribed “To Willie McNaughton and Johnnie McGregor [amateur musicians] as a humble contribution to their Saturday Entertainments”. They remained in manuscript until 1991, the first documented public performance being given by the present artists – appropriately in Edinburgh University’s Reid Hall – on 2nd November 1993. Always stimulated by writing for specific people, Gál produced a set of finely crafted pieces, incidentally of no mean difficulty. He had no truck with élitism: for him music was to be made, to communicate, to be enjoyed by active participation – for example in 1927 in Vienna he had founded the Wiener Madrigal-Vereinigung, the only *a cappella* choir in the city at the time. Quality, however, was paramount, and he was harshly self-critical, having discarded many early works, even withdrawing, before it could be performed, a symphony that in 1915 was awarded the newly created Austrian State Prize.

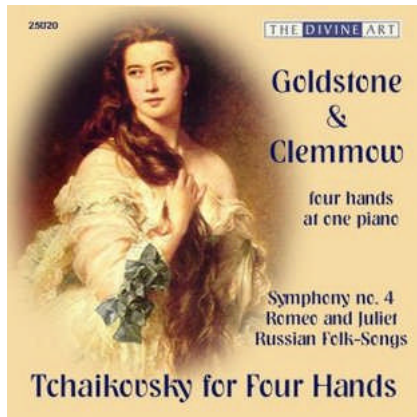
Belying their composer’s ‘humble’ intent, the *Impromptus* make a somewhat pompous *Entrée*, relieved by the gently mocking alternation of high tinkles and gruff bass voice in the quieter middle section of this first piece. The carefree lilt of the ensuing *Pastorale*’s graceful melody is supplanted by a darker episode before returning, embellished with snatches of the episode, and ending peacefully. A jaunty ostinato rhythm supports the merry peal of the concluding delicate *Carillon*, balanced later by a *dolce espressivo* episode. Playful modulations characterise the transition to the modified reprise, and with a farewell smile the music vanishes into the ether.

A final example of Gál’s gentle humour is the *Pastoral Tune*, a charming rustic *Ländler* written in 1954 for six hands at one piano and published in Curwen’s ‘Festival Series of Piano Trios’ for children. The composer’s daughter Eva recalls the great British pianist Clifford Curzon coming to the family home on one of his frequent concert visits to Edinburgh and making heavy weather of counting the treble part, while her father took the bass part and she, then around ten years old, played the middle part perfectly from memory. “I don’t have to count,” she scolded Curzon. For this recording the piece has been faithfully transcribed for four hands at two pianos.

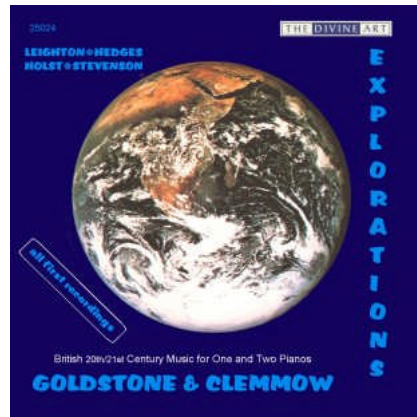
A postscript nicely placing Gál in the continuum of great musical tradition: Curzon and Gál were close friends and together performed four-hand masterpieces such as Schubert’s *Fantasia in F minor*. A recording of their 1952 Edinburgh Festival performance of Brahms’s *Liebeslieder-Walzer*, with Seefried, Ferrier, Patzak and Günter, has been preserved; Gál had earlier played this work with his spiritual father Mandyczewski, Brahms’s intimate friend (and latterly amanuensis), who must surely have done so with its composer.

We are grateful to Eva Fox Gál for her assistance. © 2001 Goldstone and Clemmow

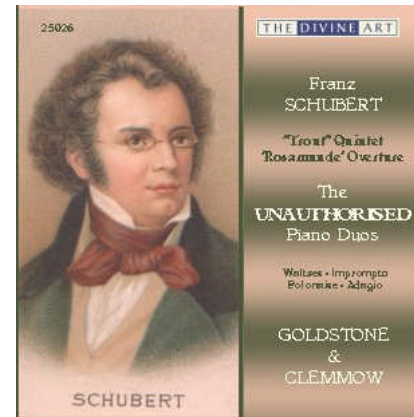
More delightful and innovative recordings from Goldstone and Clemmow



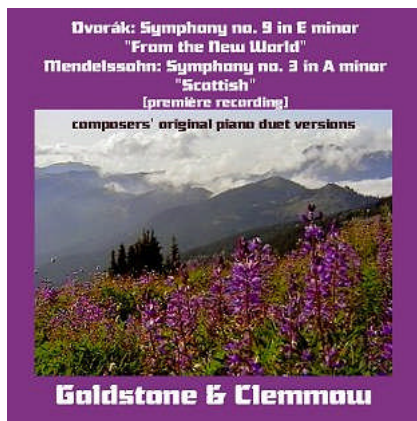
DDA25020  
Tchaikovsky for Four Hands  
"mind-blowing" – *Glasgow Herald*  
Symphony no. 4  
Romeo and Juliet  
Russian Folk-Songs



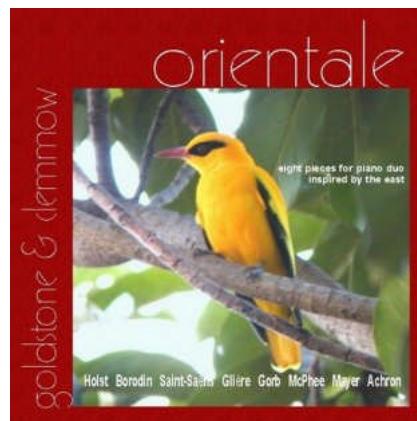
DDA25024  
'Explorations'  
"strongly recommended" –  
*Musical Opinion* "invaluable" – *Gramophone*  
Holst, Leighton, Hedges and Stevenson  
and many other gems



DDA25026  
Schubert – 'Unauthorised'  
Piano Duos, vol. 1  
Includes the 'Trout' Quintet



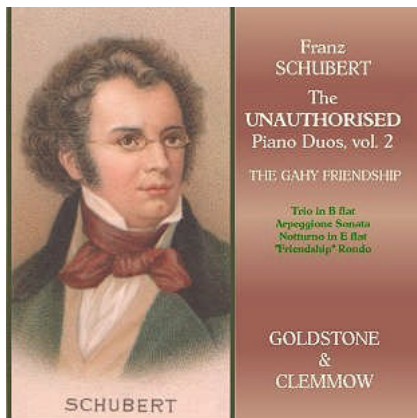
DDA25028  
Mendelssohn: 'Scottish' Symphony  
Dvořák: 'New World' Symphony  
"A real joy. Recommended" –  
*MusicWeb*  
First recordings of the piano  
duo versions by the composers'  
own hands



DDA25032  
'Orientale'  
Music inspired by the East  
"Startlingly effective" – *BBC*  
Many rare gems from Holst,  
Achron, Borodin, Mayer,  
Glière, Saint-Saëns, Gorb  
and McPhee



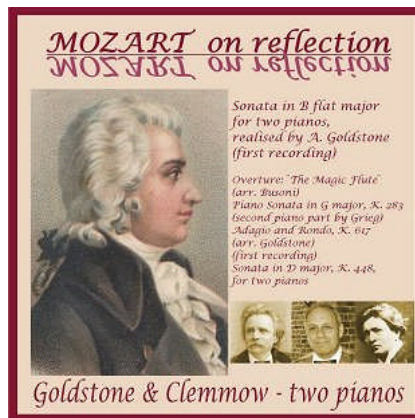
DDA25038  
Graham Whettam: music  
for one or two pianos  
"Exceptional performances"  
– *New Classics*  
Première recordings of fine  
music for solo and duo piano



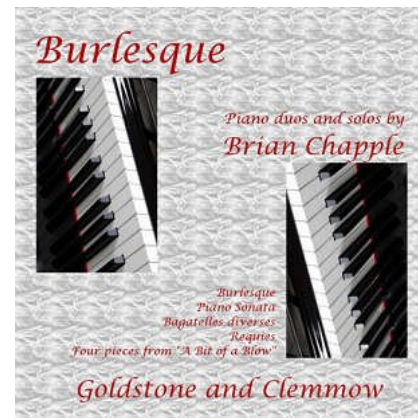
DDA25039  
 Schubert: 'Unauthorised'  
 Piano Duos, vol. 2  
 "No reservations" –  
*Musical Pointers*  
 Transcriptions by Schubert's  
 friend and duet partner Josef  
 von Gahy a Mozart sonata



DDA25042  
 Grieg for Piano Duo  
 "An outstanding recital" –  
*International Piano*  
 Includes Grieg's version of  
 the Piano Concerto for two  
 pianos and his arrangement of



DDA25046  
 'Mozart on Reflection'  
 "A valuable release" –  
*International Record Review*  
 Many incredible gems, with  
 a newly completed Sonata  
 for two pianos in B flat  
 of major importance



DDA25056  
 'Burlesque'  
 Piano duos and solos by  
 Brian Chapple  
 "Certainly a find" –  
*MidWest Record*  
 From jazz to atonality, works



DDA25070  
 Chopin for Piano Duo  
 "Fascinating ... dazzling  
 virtuosity and verve" –  
*New Classics*  
 Includes the first recording of  
 Piano Concerto in F minor in  
 the arrangement by Chopin & Mikuli



DDA25089  
 'The Jazz Age'  
 "Particularly impressive ...  
 a delightful new record" –  
*BBC*  
 Gershwin, Milkhaud, Hill,  
 Moyzes, Seiber: an  
 absolute festival of joy



DDV24154  
 Holst – The Planets  
 (original two-piano version)  
 and other British music by  
 Elgar, Holst, Bainton & Bury  
 "A wonderful recording of piano rarities, expertly the  
 performed." – *Classical Music Sentinel*

With CDs approaching forty in number and a busy concert schedule stretching back more than a quarter of a century, the British piano duo Goldstone and Clemmow is firmly established as a leading force. Described by *Gramophone* as ‘a dazzling husband and wife team’, by *International Record Review* as ‘a British institution in the best sense of the word’, and by *The Herald*, Glasgow, as ‘the UK’s pre-eminent two-piano team’, internationally known artists Anthony Goldstone and Caroline Clemmow formed their duo in 1984 and married in 1989. Their extremely diverse activities in two-piano and piano-duet recitals and double concertos, taking in major festivals, have sent them all over the British Isles as well as to Europe, the Middle East and several times to the U.S.A., where they have received standing ovations and such press accolades as ‘revelations such as this are rare in the concert hall these days’ (*Charleston Post and Courier*). In their refreshingly presented concerts they mix famous masterpieces and fascinating rarities, which they frequently unearth themselves, into absorbing and hugely entertaining programmes; their numerous B.B.C. broadcasts have often included first hearings of unjustly neglected works, and their equally enterprising and acclaimed commercial recordings include many world premières.

Having presented the complete duets of Mozart for the bicentenary, they decided to accept the much greater challenge of performing the vast quantity of music written by Schubert specifically for four hands at one piano. This they have repeated several times in mammoth seven-concert cycles, probably a world first in their completeness (including works not found in the collected edition) and original recital format. *The Musical Times* wrote of this venture: ‘The Goldstone/Clemmow performances invited one superlative after another.’ The complete cycle (as a rare bonus including as encores Schumann’s eight Schubert-inspired Polonaises) was recorded on seven CDs, ‘haunted with the spirit of Schubert’ – *Luister*, The Netherlands.

**Recorded in St. John the Baptist Church, Alkborough, North Lincs., England, in 2001**

**Piano technician: Philip Kennedy**

**A Maxim digital recording, issued under licence**

**Previously issued as Olympia OCD 709**

**© 2001 Goldstone and Clemmow**

**© 2011 Divine Art Ltd.**

**Booklet and packaging: Stephen Sutton (Divine Art)**

Cover photograph of Hans Gál by Lotte Meitner-Graf. Copyright image, all rights reserved.

Kindly supplied by Eva Fox Gál

**Music copyright:**

**tracks 4-9: Hans Gál/Universal Editions AG Wien/Alfred A. Kalmus Ltd.**

**tracks 10-12: Simrock**

**other tracks: copyright control**



## the divine art family of labels



A full list of over 350 titles, with full track details, reviews, artist profiles and audio samples, is on our website. All our recordings are available at any good record store or direct from our secure web stores.

Diversions LLC (Divine Art USA), 333 Jones Drive, Brandon, VT 05733, USA  
Tel: +1 802 247 4295 email: [sales@divineartrecords.com](mailto:sales@divineartrecords.com)

Divine Art Ltd., 3 Cypress Close, Doddington, Cambs. PE15 0LE, UK  
Tel: +44 (0)797 902 3121 email: [uksales@divine-art.co.uk](mailto:uksales@divine-art.co.uk)

**[www.divineartrecords.com](http://www.divineartrecords.com)**

Printed catalogue sent on request  
Most titles also available in digital download through iTunes, Amazon mp3, Classics Online  
and many other platforms

**WARNING:** Copyright subsists in all recordings issued under this label. Any unauthorised broadcasting, public performance, copying or re-recording thereof in any manner whatsoever will constitute an infringement of such copyright. In the United Kingdom, licences for the use of recordings for public performance may be obtained from Phonographic Performance Ltd, 1, Upper James Street, London W1R 3HG.



Caroline Clemmow and Anthony Goldstone