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CLASSICS

Beethoven

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 4

Mendelssohn

DOUBLE CONCERTO

MIN-JUNG KYM *piano*

ZSOLT-TIHAMÉR VISONTAY *violin*

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

CLEMENS SCHULDT *conductor*



BEETHOVEN
PIANO CONCERTO NO. 4
MENDELSSOHN
DOUBLE CONCERTO

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58

Ludwig van Beethoven

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|---------|
| 1 | I. Allegro Moderato | [19.38] |
| 2 | II. Andante con moto | [4.51] |
| 3 | III. Rondo: Vivace | [10.28] |

Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Orchestra in D Minor

Felix Mendelssohn

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|---------|
| 4 | I. Allegro | [19.06] |
| 5 | II. Adagio | [9.48] |
| 6 | III. Allegro molto | [9.33] |

Total timings: [73.28]

MIN-JUNG KYM PIANO
ZSOLT-TIHAMÉR VISONTAY VIOLIN
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA
CLEMENS SCHULDT CONDUCTOR

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INTRODUCTION

Why the fourth Beethoven Piano Concerto? There are so many recordings of this concerto that I admire, from Emil Gilels, Claudio Arrau and Wilhelm Kempf from one generation to Lars Vogt and Leif Ove Andsnes to another. The simple answer is that I wanted to record something that I enjoyed playing, and this concerto – one of my favourites – has always intrigued me. The moment the piano opens with this passage almost from nowhere, the association in the second movement of the tale of Orpheus taming the Furies at the gates to Hades to the jubilant Rondo third movement, I took to the concerto immediately when I first began studying it and I have travelled with the work having performed it several times over the years, and recently with the culmination of this recording.

Pairing it with the Mendelssohn Double Concerto was a very natural choice for me, because Zsolt is a regular duo partner and I wanted to have something on the disc that demonstrated both solo and duo repertoire.

With Clemens we really explored both the complexities of both concertos, the two requiring

sometimes very different approaches, but both allowing the dialogue between the soloists and orchestra to come through. We learnt so much together and had a lot of fun.

Recording this disc is a realisation of the many people who have supported me throughout my musical years. I am so grateful that this has been achieved.

Min-Jung Kym



LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

b. Bonn, baptized December 17, 1770; d. March 26, 1827, Vienna

Piano Concerto No. 4 in G Major, Op. 58 (1804–06)

In 1803, Beethoven famously declared: “I am not satisfied with what I have composed up to now. From now on I intend to embark on a new path.” The same year saw the completion of the *Eroica* Symphony, unofficially launching the composer’s celebrated ‘heroic’ period. Over the following decade, Beethoven produced music of unprecedented magnitude. It was also during this time that his worsening deafness became a personal crisis. Beethoven responded with music that was epic and defiant.

The breadth and ambition of the *Eroica* are echoed in the works surrounding it in other mediums: the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* Piano Sonatas, the *Razumovsky* Quartets (“They are not for you,” Beethoven said to the violinist Felix Radicati, who found the *Razumovskys* incomprehensible, “but for a later age!”). It was moreover a period of furious productivity. In 1806, Beethoven completed, in addition to the *Appassionata* and *Razumovskys*, his Fourth Symphony, Fourth Piano Concerto, and Violin Concerto; in 1807, the Third Cello Sonata, the

iconic Fifth Symphony, the Mass in C; 1808: the Opus 70 Piano Trios and the *Pastoral* Symphony.

The famous solo piano introduction to the Fourth Piano Concerto immediately sets it apart from other signature ‘heroic’ statements. In contrast to the vigorous opening salvos of the Fifth Symphony, *Appassionata*, et al., the Concerto begins with a gentle utterance: *piano, dolce*, searching yet at peace. This opening gesture ends in the dominant key of D major; the orchestra replies in distant B major, presaging the harmonic nuance that colors the entire work.

Despite the serenity of the opening, a close listen reveals the four-note, ‘Fate knocking at the door’ rhythmic motif of the Fifth Symphony embedded into this first theme, three times in succession – the peaceful yang to the Symphony’s stormy yin. But in characteristically Beethovenian fashion (in this regard, sharing the Fifth’s genetic code), the material presented in these first five measures will be mined exhaustively. Those four repeated notes course through the movement.

The piano serves as the clear protagonist throughout, but the precise nature of the

journey is elusive. The hero is strong in his stillness, somehow lacking – transcending – the visceral thrust of the Fifth. Indeed, the seemingly bemused, stream-of-consciousness quality of Beethoven’s hypervirtuosic writing, aided by the delicate shading of his orchestration, is one of the Concerto’s miracles.

The pithy Andante con moto is an equally extraordinary creation to the first movement, but of a starkly different character. It is often described as depicting Orpheus in Hades, with the piano again the mythic hero, taming the Furies at the gates of hell. The soloist, alone, presents the movement’s turbulent climax: an anguished trill above descending chromatic cries.

From here, the Concerto proceeds posthaste to the galloping refrain of the bright Rondo finale, three-dimensionalized by a series of vivid episodes. The subtle refinement of Beethoven’s harmonic sensibility is on further display: the movement begins in C major, arriving at the home key of G barely in time for the work’s conclusion. Despite what seemed, at the Concerto’s outset, an unlikely heroic journey, the emergence from the tortured slow movement to this triumphant finale fully epitomizes Beethovenian heroism.

Though critically lauded in the May 1809 *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* as “the most admirable, singular, artistic, and complex Beethoven concerto ever,” Beethoven’s Fourth Piano Concerto went largely ignored in the years following the composer’s death. Felix Mendelssohn, the same music-historical hero who rescued Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion* from neglect, revived interest in the Fourth Concerto, performing it on his final concert in London in 1846.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN

b. February 3, 1809, Hamburg; d. November 4, 1847, Leipzig

Concerto for Violin, Piano and String Orchestra in D Minor (1823)

In the decades following his death in 1750, Bach’s music fell, if not quite into obscurity, into some measure of neglect. But in 1824, the 15-year-old Felix Mendelssohn received from his grandmother what would be a gift of great historic consequence: a copy of the score to Bach’s *St. Matthew Passion*. Five years later, Mendelssohn’s obsession with Bach and his particular affinity with this work culminated in a celebrated performance of the *Passion* at the Berlin Singakademie. The

performance – conducted by the 20-year-old Mendelssohn – revitalized interest in Bach's music throughout Western Europe, thus crediting Mendelssohn as the author of the modern Bach revival.

Mendelssohn composed his Concerto in D minor for Violin, Piano, and Strings in 1823, as a fourteen-year-old prodigy. The well-to-do Mendelssohn family regularly staged Sunday morning musicales at their home throughout Felix's youth as a vehicle for his (and his sister Fanny's) blossoming gifts; the Double Concerto was composed for and premiered at one of these events. Though composed during Mendelssohn's adolescence, the Concerto exhibits the craftsmanship of a tremendously precocious composer. Not surprisingly, the prodigious young Mendelssohn caught the attention of Western Europe's musical community through these musicales and came to be regarded by many as the second Mozart. Astonished at his rapid development, Mendelssohn's teacher Carl Friedrich Zelter noted, "He is growing beneath my eyes."

At the time of the Double Concerto's composition – one year prior to his discovery of the *St. Matthew Passion* – Mendelssohn

was very much under the spell of Bach, as much as he was absorbing the musical innovations of his own time, particularly the late works of Beethoven. The Double Concerto reflects this dichotomy between the Baroque influence on Mendelssohn's music and the emerging Romantic energy that would come to define the nineteenth century. Moreover, in addition to the synthesis of Baroque and Romantic elements, another striking element of the work is Mendelssohn's treatment of the two soloists: the violin, a brilliant, melodic instrument, generally entrusted with music of soaring lyricism; the piano, Mendelssohn exploits for its massive sonority, combining powerful chordal textures with dazzling runs up and down the keyboard.

Also noteworthy about the Concerto is its sheer youthful exuberance. One can hear in this work how much music the young, insatiably curious Mendelssohn has swirling around in his head – and it all comes out, unapologetically, in this no-holds-barred concerto. The work begins with the strings issuing a contrapuntal theme, reminiscent of a Bach fugue, but infused with the spirit of Romantic *Sturm und Drang*. As the theme unfolds, the contrapuntal texture grows increasingly intricate.

Mendelssohn introduces a long-breathed second theme, in F major – a markedly Romantic contrast to the compact first theme. The orchestral exposition ends with a return to the Bachian counterpoint of the opening measures; but the piano's furious entrance rips the music from its Baroque reverie back into the era of Beethoven.

The soloists unite the Baroque and Romantic idioms, with the piano presenting the Bachian first theme in its left hand, as a foundation for the overt Romantic gestures in the right hand and the violin. The rest of the ensemble follows suit. The soloists soon take over the lyrical second theme; the strings answer with a fragment of the Bachian theme, which, in short order, and seemingly out of nowhere, plunges the music into showy salon fare. One of this movement's greatest delights lies in discovering how the young and, at times, cheeky Mendelssohn inventively wed together all of these elements: Baroque counterpoint with Romantic *Sturm und Drang*, profundity with showmanship, heroism with salon music.

Later in the movement, Mendelssohn introduces another dramatic turn: a declamatory recitative in the violin, theatrically set above piano

tremolando. It's easy to imagine this music, in another era, as the soundtrack to a love scene in a silent film. This dreamy music segues abruptly back to the frenetic energy that came before – from which Mendelssohn steers the first movement to its final measures.

Mendelssohn follows the fireworks of the Concerto's expansive first movement with a heartfelt Adagio. After the initial tutti statement of the theme, most of the movement is given over to an intimate dialogue between the two soloists. The full ensemble comes together again only for the movement's magical conclusion. The warm texture of the strings, playing *sotto voce*, surround the soloists with an ethereal glow.

The final movement begins with an impassioned statement, uttered first by the piano, then joined by the solo violin. The full ensemble responds with emphatic terseness. The fiery energy of this music is countered by brighter, elegant second theme. Throughout the proceedings, whether tempestuous or calm, Mendelssohn spotlights the soloists throughout with passages of pyrotechnic virtuosity.

MIN-JUNG KYM

Steinway Artist Min-Jung Kym is quickly establishing herself as an innovative and musically-insightful artist. She has performed with leading orchestras and musicians from across the world including Barry Wordsworth, Nicholas Collon, Pierre Amoyal, Alison Balsom, Nicholas Daniel and the Haffner Wind Ensemble, Mark van de Wiel, Mats Lidström, Leon Bosch, Joy Farrall, Andrew Haveron, Thomas Carroll, Sergey Levitin, Adrian Brendel and the sopranos Ailyn Pérez and Susan Bickley. Min-Jung was the 'pianist of choice' of the legendary violinist Ruggiero Ricci, with whom she collaborated between 2002 and 2005.

Min-Jung has appeared at many leading venues including the Barbican Centre, Wigmore Hall, Cadogan Hall, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room, St. John Smith's Square, De Montfort Hall, Brighton Dome, the Queen's Theatre, Abbaye de Fontfroide, Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, Jascha Heifetz Society in Los Angeles, Cheltenham Festival, Holders Festival (Barbados), Broadwood International Festival, Albeniz Festival (Comprodon, Spain), as well as the Chichester Festival. Other venues include performances at the Emilie Bustani



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Hall in Al Bustan, Lebanon, the Salerno Opera House (Italy), the Auditorio Alfredo Kraus in Gran Canaria, Palais de Chaillot, Salle Gaveau and UNESCO in Paris, the Princess Galyani Concert Hall in Thailand and the National Museum of Korea in Seoul, South Korea.

In 2008, Min-Jung was invited to perform with the world renowned Philharmonia Orchestra,

which was received with such acclaim that she was immediately invited to perform with them again the following season.

A former Purcell School scholar, Min-Jung made her London solo concert debut at the age of 12 at the Royal Festival Hall. She went on to study as a scholar at the Royal Academy of Music, graduating with the Eric Brough and Elsie Horne prizes. Her professors have included Maria Curcio-Diamond (Schnabel's protégée), and Petras Geniusas. Min-Jung took regular masterclasses with Lev Naumov who hailed from the famous Heinrich Neuhaus School, and was lauded as the "Godfather of Russian piano school". In 2004 Min-Jung was honoured with the Freedom of the City of London and elected a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. Further recognition was given when Min-Jung was awarded the Associate of the Royal Academy of Music (ARAM) – bestowed to alumni of the Royal Academy of Music who have distinguished themselves in the music profession and have made significant contribution in their particular field.

Min-Jung's performances have led to fruitful collaborations with international designers, notably Zuhair Murad, Schiaparelli, Lie Sang

Bong and Gustavo Lins who have all sponsored dresses for her.

Min-Jung is also a dedicated teacher and is regularly invited to give masterclasses in many parts of the world. She is also in demand as a jury member of many piano and chamber music competitions.

ZSOLT-TIHAMÉR VISONTAY

German-Hungarian violinist Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay began playing in 1988, taking lessons at the music school in Magdeburg, and went on to study under Professor Jost Witter at the Schloss Belvedere Music School and the Franz Liszt Music Academy in Weimar. Laureate of several international solo prizes, including the International Louis Spohr Violin Competition and the International Henry Marteau Violin Competition, Zsolt's solo engagements include performing with a number of German orchestras. In 2005 he became Leader of the European Union Youth Orchestra (EUYO), performing under conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Bernard Haitink and Sir Colin Davis, and a year later he also became Concert Master of the Philharmonic Orchestra in Altenburg-Gera. He has led orchestras such as the Radio



Symphony Orchestra Berlin, Deutsches Sinfonie Orchester Berlin, Hamburg Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Orchestra Nacional de Porto, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, touring throughout Europe, Russia, Asia and the US.

In 2007 he became Joint Concert Master of the Philharmonia Orchestra. Since then his solo engagements with the Orchestra have included performing *The Lark Ascending* under both David Hill and Sir Andrew Davis. He has recorded the John Jeffreys Violin Concerto with the Philharmonia and Paul Bateman. In addition he has acted as violinist/director with the Philharmonia and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

Established as a sought-after chamber musician, he has performed and recorded Bartók's *Contrasts* with Mark van de Wiel and Yefim Bronfman for Signum. The Beethoven Septet with the European Chamber Players for the Austrian Label Gramola. The Rachmaninov and Shostakovich piano trios with Mats Lidstrom and Vladimir Ashkenazy on Decca.

Collaborating with those artists already mentioned as well as many others including Min-Jung Kym and Jamie Walton, he performs in major venues such as the Mozartsaal, Vienna; Salle Gaveau, Paris; and Wigmore Hall, London.

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

The Philharmonia Orchestra is a world-class symphony orchestra for the 21st century. Led by its Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Philharmonia has a pioneering approach to the role of the modern-day symphony orchestra, reaching new audiences and participants through audience development, digital technology and learning and participation programmes.

The Orchestra's home is Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall in the heart of London, where it presents a Season of over 50 performances each year. The Orchestra is committed to presenting the same quality of live music in venues throughout the UK, especially at its residencies: in Bedford, Leicester, Canterbury, Basingstoke, at the Three Choirs Festival and Garsington Opera. Internationally, the Philharmonia is active across Europe, Asia and the USA.

As one of the world's most recorded orchestras, the Philharmonia's international recognition and reputation in part derives from its extraordinary recording legacy, which in the last 10 years has been burnished by digital

and technological innovation. Most recently the Philharmonia and Salonen have forged a new path with Virtual Reality. *360 Experience*, produced with 3D audio and video, has been presented at Southbank Centre and other venues internationally, and is sold through the *PlayStationVR* store.

The Philharmonia was founded in 1945. It has been self-governing since 1964 and is owned by its 80 members. Finnish conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen has been Principal Conductor & Artistic Advisor since 2008. Jakub Hrůša and Santtu-Matias Rouvali are Principal Guest Conductors and honorary conductor positions are held by Christoph von Dohnányi and Vladimir Ashkenazy.

The Philharmonia's Principal International Partner is Wuliangye.

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1st Violin

Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay ^{1 2}
Duncan Riddell ¹
Fabrizio Falasca ^{1 2}
Eugene Lee ^{1 2}
Karin Tilch ^{1 2}
Victoria Irish ^{1 2}
Eleanor Wilkinson ^{1 2}
Adrián Varela ^{1 2}
Glesni Roberts ^{1 2}
Soong Choo ¹
Eunsley Park ¹
Cassandra Hamilton ²
Cindy Foster ²
Ann Criscuolo ²
Gwyneth Barkham ²

2nd Violin

Miranda Dale ^{1 2}
Nuno Carapina ^{1 2}
Julian Milone ^{1 2}
Jan Regulski ^{1 2}
Gideon Robinson ^{1 2}
Helen Cochrane ^{1 2}
Teresa Pople ^{1 2}
Emanuela Buta ¹
Samantha Reagan ²
Susan Hedger ²
Helena Buckie ²

Viola

Yukiko Ogura ¹
Amanda Verner ^{1 2}
Cheremie Hamilton-Miller ¹
Pamela Ferriman ^{1 2}
Louise Hawker ^{1 2}
Meghan Cassidy ^{1 2}
Nicholas Bootiman ²
Stephanie Edmundson ²
Richard Cookson ²
Graeme McKean ²

Cello

Karen Stephenson ¹
Ella Rundle ^{1 2}
Anna Beryl ^{1 2}
Toby Turton ^{1 2}
Coral Lancaster ²
Timothy Walden ²
Richard Birchall ²
Victoria Simonsen ²

Double Bass

Neil Tarlton ^{1 2}
Christian Geldsetzer ^{1 2}
Michael Fuller ^{1 2}
Gareth Sheppard ²

Flute

Karen Jones ²

Oboe

Henry Clay ²
Eugene Feild ²

Clarinet

Jennifer McLaren ²
Katie Lockhart ²

Bassoon

Luke Whitehead ²
Shelly Organ ²

Horn

Kira Doherty ²
Fabian van de Geest ²

Trumpet

Jason Evans ²
Mark Calder ²

Timpani

Adrian Bending ²

¹ = Mendelssohn Concerto

² = Beethoven Concerto

CLEMENS SCHULDT

Clemens Schuldt is the Principal Conductor of the Munich Chamber Orchestra, and is widely praised for his innovative interpretations of classical and romantic Germanic repertoire, often using his creativity to include lesser known and contemporary repertoire in his programmes. Winner of the renowned Donatella Flick Conducting Competition London in 2010, Clemens Schuldt was the Assistant Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra for one year, working with distinguished conductors such as Sir Colin Davis, Valery Gergiev and Sir Simon Rattle.

Schuldt has appeared with such orchestras as the Philharmonia Orchestra London, BBC Philharmonic and Scottish Chamber Orchestras, WDR Sinfonieorchester Cologne, Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, Radio-Symphonieorchester Wien, Netherlands Philharmonic, Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, Norwegian Opera Orchestra, Helsingborg Symphony, Swedish Chamber Orchestra, Orchestre Philharmonique de Strasbourg, Orquesta Sinfonica de Radio Television Espanola Madrid, Orquesta Simfónica de Barcelona. Yomiuri Nippon Orchestra Tokyo,



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New Japan Philharmonic, and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

Soloists he works with include Daniil Trifonov, Ingrid Flitter, Augustin Hadelich, Baiba Skride, Alina Ibragimova, Håkan Hardenberger, Francois Leleux, Steven Isserlis, Sally Matthew, Lisa Batiashvili, Renaud Capucon

Opera is a central part of Clemens Schuldt's music making, and he has conducted new productions of Bellini's *Norma*, Gluck's *Armide*, Gounod's *Faust* and Verdi's *Rigletto* as Conductor in Residence with the Staatstheater

Mainz. Elsewhere he led a new production of Gounod's *Faust* at the Tiroler Landestheater Innsbruck, Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* at the Theatre Osnabrück and Dvorak's *Rusalka* at the Theater Gelsenkirchen. In 2019 Schuldt leads a production of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* with the Munich Chamber Orchestra in the Prinzregententheater in Munich, and 2020 he will make his debut at Garsington Opera with Mozart's *Mitridate, re di Ponto*.

Steinway & Sons are delighted to be associated with Min-Jung Kym, and wish her every success in the future.



For Daniel

Thank you to everyone at Steinway & Sons. It's a privilege to be part of the Steinway family and I am truly grateful for your continuing friendship and support.

My thanks also to everyone who contributed through Opus Piano, and especially Sir Sydney and Lady Lipworth, David, Stéphanie, Charlotte, Brian and of course Julien.
This project has been achieved through your generosity and support.

Min-Jung Kym

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Producer & Editor – Tim Oldham
Recording Engineer – Mike Hatch
Recording Assistant – Michael Gerrard

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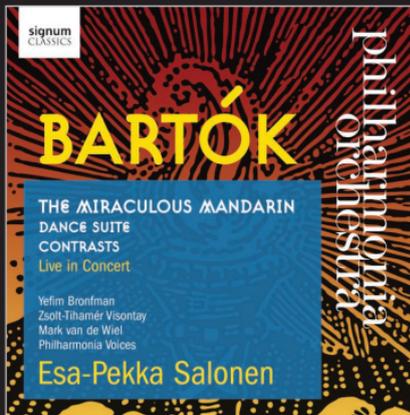
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Philharmonia Orchestra
Christoph von Dohnányi *conductor*
SIGCD169

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International Record Review



**Bartók: The Miraculous Mandarin,
Dance Suite, Contrasts**
Zsolt-Tihamér Visontay *violin*, Mark van de Wiel *clarinet*
Yefim Bronfman *piano*
Philharmonia Orchestra, Esa-Pekka Salonen *conductor*
SIGCD466

"the now-or-never concert adrenaline is palpable ... it's all delivered with that unnervingly meticulous, steely focus that conductor Esa-Pekka Salonen gets from the Philharmonia."

The Guardian