



ROMANTIC DUOS

BRIDGE, GRIEG, LISZT

Benjamin Schmid & Ariane Haering

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The clear-cut division of labour in Western music is something of an anomaly when one considers human musical behaviour in general. By far, the majority of the world's music is collaborative, interactive and participatory, blurring distinctions between composer, performer, and audience. The Western art tradition, as well as several other art traditions such as Arabic and North Indian art music, feature far clearer delineations between differing roles in the musical 'assembly line'. In Western art music, for instance, there is a class of musicians who are composers; these individual composers produce their own 'works'; these works are then performed by an expert class of performers for consumption by a passive, receptive audience.

However, even within the apparent strictures of Western art music, there are instances of collaboration amongst composers and composer-performers, forgoing the tradition of singular authorship and solitary expression. This practice was certainly not uncommon during the 19th century, when composers were often professional performers themselves. For example, Frederic Chopin and the cellist Auguste Francomme collaborated in writing the Meyerbeer-inspired Grand Duo Concertant for piano and cello, with Francomme assuming responsibility for the cello parts. The following

year, Felix Mendelssohn and his close friend and one-time piano teacher, Ignaz Moscheles, teamed up to write the Fantasy and Variations on the "Gypsy March" from Carl Maria von Weber's La Preziosa, for two pianos and orchestra. Robert and Clara Schumann, at the time of their marriage in 1840, both contributed to what would become the song collection Gedichte aus Liebefrühling ('Love's Spring', published as op. 37 for Robert and op. 12 for Clara). Another famous case is that of the F-A-E Sonata (1853), written as a gift to Joseph Joachim by Albert Dietrich, Robert Schumann, and Johannes Brahms. As with the Chopin-Francomme collaboration, composers would often solicit the assistance of a renowned instrumentalist in joint-composition, usually when there were doubts as to the technical capabilities of particular instruments. Sometimes the contribution of the instrumentalist didn't warrant inclusion as a formal composer of the piece, as with Mendelssohn's lengthy (1838-1845) correspondence with Ferdinand David during the writing of the famous E minor Violin Concerto. In the case of Mendelssohn and David, the latter was seen as a creative consultant, rather than a fully-fledged partner in composition.

Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was no stranger to such practices. In 1837, he organised a collaboration to create a solo piano work for a charity concert, later published as Hexameron, Morceau de concert (S. 392). This set of variations is based on the 'March

of the Puritans' from Bellini's *I puritani*, and includes contributions from Liszt, Chopin, Carl Czerny, Henri Herz, Sigismund Thalberg, and Johann Peter Pixis. Some time later, in 1879, Liszt collaborated with several other composers including Alexander Borodin, César Cui and Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov in writing paraphrases on the tune commonly known as 'Chopsticks'.

Featured on this disc is a collaborative effort that is usually solely attributed to Liszt: the Grand Duo Concertant sur la Romance de M. Lafont, 'Le Marin', S. 128. The co-composer in this instance was the violinist Charles-Philippe Lafont (1781-1839), a pupil of Rodolphe Kreutzer and celebrated rival to Niccolò Paganini. The Grand Duo concertant is a duo in the true sense of the word, with equal parts for both performers. The Duo consists of a statement of the principle theme (based on a melody from Lafont's song 'The Sailor'), four variations, and a finale. It was written around 1835, with an early version being performed by Liszt and Lafont in Geneva in October of that year, at a concert in aid of soldiers and refugees involved in the fight for Italian reunification. (The composition was actually written in Paris, but a Parisian performance was not possible due to the scandalous elopement of Liszt and the married noblewoman Marie d'Agoult, which triggered the European-cultural 'Pilgrimage' phase of Liszt's career between 1835 and 1839. Liszt and d'Agoult's first destination was Switzerland,

inspiring the Swiss-themed first volume of *Années de Pèlerinage*.) The Duo would later be revised by Liszt in Weimar around 1849. It was eventually published in 1852 by B. Schott, with Liszt cited as the composer and Lafont as the editor.

Liszt certainly considered the piece to be a full and proper collaborative effort. Correspondence from Liszt to both Marie d'Agoult and Joachim Raff exists (the latter from 1849, during revision of the work), attesting to the fact that Liszt considered the creative labour to have been equally shared between himself and Lafont. The initial concert was billed as featuring a jointly composed piece, and both names appeared in a publicly published program. In addition, there was mention in the musical and mainstream press at the time that the Grand Duo concertant was a piece created by two artists, not one. Despite all this, it is still common for the piece to be solely attributed to Liszt, following the Schott edition.

A collaboration of a different kind characterises the version of Liszt's *Consolation No. 3* featured here. Originally written for solo piano, the present recording is of an arrangement for violin and piano by the 20th century virtuoso violinist Nathan Mironovich Milstein (1904-1992). Milstein was a Ukrainian-born American violin virtuoso, who together with Vladimir Horowitz immigrated to Europe in 1925. Milstein became a citizen of the

United States during the Second World War. He spent his life as a performing musician, his career only halted by a broken hand when he was 80 years of age. Milstein was, as a youngster, a pupil of the fabled Pyotr Stolyarsky, who also taught David Oistrakh, Boris Goldstein and Elizabeth Gilels. Stolyarsky's influence lives on due to his founding of the School of Stolyarsky in Odessa, an establishment aimed at training children to become virtuoso performers. Later in life, Milstein could claim the Hungarian violinist Leopold Auer as a teacher as well. Auer was the original dedicatee of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto and teacher of Jascha Heifetz amongst others. (Incidentally, Auer was sceptical about Tchaikovsky's violin parts, and the musical worth of the Violin Concerto as a whole. His suggestions for various alterations were rejected angrily by Tchaikovsky, who re-dedicated the work to eventual debutant Adolph Brodsky instead. Brodsky would later premiere Grieg's Violin Sonata, also featured on this programme.)

The choice of the Consolations as fertile ground for the writing of transcriptions is apt, as the original pieces are marked by a somewhat uncharacteristic abandonment of instrument-specific virtuosity by Liszt. As a result, Milstein did not have to concern himself with translating pianistic fireworks onto an alien instrument. The Consolations were not the result of a commission, nor were they subject to the demands of a concert tour requiring adherence

to the principles of virtuoso 'showstopper' programming. Instead, it would seem the Consolations were simply written for their own sake. All six were published together in a single collection in 1850, with all but one written between 1849 and 1850. (The odd one out is No. 5, which was written in 1844.) The Consolations were probably inspired by a similarly-titled book of poems by Charles-Augustin Saint-Beuve (published 1830). Saint-Beuve was well known to Liszt, as the two moved in the same social circle (which included, amongst others, the writer Victor Hugo). By the time the Consolations were composed, the affair with Marie d'Agoult—who bore Liszt three children—was over. Liszt's lover at the time was another noblewoman, Princess Carolyne Sayn-Wittgenstein. In a situation similar to that which arose with d'Agoult, Princess Carolyne was ostracised for her extra-marital involvement with Liszt. As a result, she had become estranged from her husband and family, as well as the family wealth. Marriage was not possible, as Princess Carolyne was Roman Catholic, and would technically have to have her marriage declared invalid by the Church. Later, an attempt at having an annulment of marriage declared was opposed by both her husband and Tsar Alexander II. Liszt had even more than his domestic life to occupy his mind: this was also around this time that he chose to champion the work of the exiled Richard Wagner, in spite of the latter's ill-fated participation in the Dresden Uprising. Perhaps it is this turmoil and strife in

Liszt's personal life that is reflected in the subtle emotionality and delicate nature of the Consolations. Despite being marked *Lento placido*, Consolation No. 3 is probably the most emotionally pronounced piece in the collection.

In recent years, the music of Frank Bridge (1879-1941) has become better known to the art music world. This is no doubt in part due to the recent resurgence of interest in 20th century British composers, particularly in the Anglophone countries. At the height of his career, Bridge was known as both an instrumentalist and a composer. A professional violist by trade, Bridge was a member of the Grimson Quartet and the English String Quartet, the latter when it was at the height of its significant powers. However, Bridge also enjoyed renown as a composer of significant musical sensibility, helped immensely by having many of his works promoted by the chamber ensembles in which he played. Despite Bridge's mastery of compositional technique, he only ever had one composition student. This student, however, was destined to leave a great impression on not just British art music, but the art music world at large. This student was Benjamin Britten.

The Suffolk-born Britten was heavily influenced by Bridge's early orchestral work, *The Sea*, which he heard as a child. When Britten first heard it, he was awestruck: while this music wasn't as modernist as

what was already being produced on the Continent, it was a world away from the music to which the young boy had hitherto been exposed, and had mimicked in his own compositions. Britten's piano teacher saw to it that the precocious composer was introduced to Bridge. Bridge was immediately impressed by Britten's musical talent, and suggested that he become the boy's musical tutor. The eventual result was a series of strenuous, lengthy composition lessons in London, bookended by long train trips to and from the capital to the Suffolk coast. Bridge saw in the boy potential for genius, and immediately instilled a concentration on technique that slowed the young composer's output to a trickle. However, the intense scrutiny to which every bar was subjected served to instill a level of attention to detail that remained with Britten throughout his career. Britten is quoted in Humphrey Carpenter's *Benjamin Britten: A Biography* (Faber & Faber, 1992):

"[Bridge] would play every passage slowly on the piano and say, 'Now listen to this—is this what you meant?' And of course I would start by defending it, but then one would realize... as he went on playing this passage over and over again—that one hadn't really thought enough about it. And he really taught me to take as much trouble as I possibly could over every passage, over every progression, over every line..."

Later, when Britten was a student at the Royal College of Music, he continued to have private composition lessons with Bridge. The mature Britten

would remain in contact with Bridge until the elder composer's death. Britten's Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge (1937), based on a theme lifted from Bridge's Three Idylls for String Quartet (1906), is a fitting tribute.

Bridge's musical style did not fit in with the somewhat conservative, folk-influenced Romanticism displayed by his immediate peers. Furthermore, Bridge's style as a composer changed markedly after the First World War, looking more to modernist developments on the European continent: impressionism, serialism, and post-tonality. It has been noted that this change in expressive technique may have had much to do with the calamitous humanitarian impact of the War, as Bridge was a committed pacifist. (Incidentally, Britten was a pacifist as well, although he attributed this to his reaction to the frequent beatings that were commonplace at his boarding school.) This change in style had another effect: Bridge shunned and even suppressed performance of his pre-War music.

The intimacy of the chamber idiom appealed to Bridge, and as a result, he wrote many songs and works for small instrumental forces. Despite this, he only completed and published one violin sonata in his career, in 1922. However, a pre-War sonata exists, comprised of a first movement and an incomplete second movement. It is this work, written around 1904, that is recorded here. The second movement has been completed by British

arranger, conductor, and writer Paul Hindmarsh (b. 1952), also known as a music producer for the BBC and a champion of modern composition for brass ensemble. Hindmarsh is widely considered an authority on the music and life of Frank Bridge, and this early sonata formed part of a project to publish 16 of Bridge's earlier, unissued chamber works. The two-movement Sonata is accompanied by the miniature Romanze, also composed in 1904. The Romanze, together with the early sonata, invites us to consider Bridge's post-War stylistic change in light of the third work by Bridge featured on this program: Heart's Ease. This piece exists in both solo piano and violin and piano arrangements, post-dating the end of the First World War by three years. Heart's Ease forms part of a two-piece publication entitled Two Lyrics (the partner piece is Dainty Rogue).

It would not be wandering too far into the field of hyperbole to describe Edvard Grieg (1843-1907) as Norway's most celebrated musical export. His name is often mentioned in the company of other national cultural heroes, such as Henrik Ibsen the dramatist and the poet Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. Despite a musical education that was partly received in Leipzig, Grieg felt a close affinity to the folk music of his native land. Indeed, much of Grieg's idiosyncratic musical language seems to have

stemmed from his interest in the folk traditions of Norway. Grieg was to become a Norwegian musical nationalist at a time when many Romantic composers turned their attentions toward national musical identities, whether real or imagined. In this respect, Grieg owed musical debts to at least two important national figures. The first was folk music collector Ludwig Lindemann (1812-1887), who was instrumental in providing Grieg with transcriptions of Norwegian music to study. The second was Rikard Nordraak (1842-1866), best remembered as the composer of the Norwegian national anthem. Grieg was a nationalist at heart, but it was Nordraak that convinced him that his career should be aimed at promoting a national musical style.

Excluding solo piano works, the entirety of Grieg's chamber music output consists of only three violin sonatas, two string quartets, and a cello sonata. These are all works of high quality, but two stand out as landmark pieces: the String Quartet No. 1 in G minor, op. 27 (admired and closely studied by Debussy), and the popular Violin Sonata No. 3 in C minor, op. 45, featured on this program. The C minor Sonata was written in 1886, and was published the following year. Grieg himself sat at the keyboard to debut the work in Liepzig, with Adolf Brodsky on violin. (As mentioned earlier, Brodsky had been responsible for the premiere of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, after Milstein's teacher, Auer, disagreed with Tchaikovsky about

corrections to the work.) Grieg was largely inspired by the style and substance of Norwegian folk song in the thematic material comprising this sonata. From the very opening bars, the core ideas of thematic development are stated, and are thereafter treated in the characteristic manner of musical organicism championed by the Romantic movement at large. The second movement is heartfelt and musically honest, but it is with the third, cast in a brilliant but ethereal tonal and melodic language, that the uniqueness of Grieg's music is apparent. Of Grieg's violin sonatas, the Third is the most popular and the most striking in conception.

Barry Ross

"We dedicate this recording to our four children - they are an endless source of inspiration for our music-making"



BENJAMIN SCHMID

Benjamin Schmid, originally from Vienna, won the Carl-Flesch and other competitions in 1992 in London, where he was also awarded the Mozart, Beethoven and audience prizes. Since that time he has performed at leading venues all over the world with famous orchestras such as the Vienna Philharmonic, The London Philharmonia Orchestra, the Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Tonhalle Orchestra Zürich directed by conductors such as Ch.v.Dohnányi, V. Gergiev, D. Zinman, S. Ozawa and I. Metzmacher. His quality as a soloist, the exceptional spectrum of his repertoire – besides traditional works, the violin concerts of Hartmann, Gulda, Korngold, Muthspiel, Szymanowski, Weill, Lutoslawski, Reger, for instance - and in particular his improvisational ability in jazz make him a violinist with an incomparable profile.

Benjamin Schmid's CDs, around 40 in number, have been awarded the Deutsche Schallplattenpreis, the Echo Klassik music prize, Grammophone Editor's Choice, the Strad Selection and other such prizes. He plays concerts with a Stradivari violin ex 1731, is a lecturer at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and holds master classes at The Academy in Bern.

Several films have been made about Benjamin Schmid which have captured the outstanding artistic character of the violinist in worldwide TV broadcasts. In 2006 Benjamin Schmid received the 'Internationaler Preis für Kunst und Kultur' (International Prize for Arts & Culture) in his home town of Salzburg, where he lives with his wife, the pianist Ariane Haering, and their four children.

In June 2011 Benjamin Schmid accepted the repeated invitation from the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, this time with a Paganini/Kreisler violin concerto, at the open air concert 'Sommernachtskonzert', which, like the New Year's Concert, is broadcast live on TV and appeared as a DVD and a CD released by the record label Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft.

www.benjamin Schmid.com

A close-up portrait of a woman with dark hair pulled back, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark, off-the-shoulder top, a thin necklace with a pendant, and earrings. The background is dark and out of focus.

ARIANE
HAERING

The Swiss-born Pianist Ariane Haering started taking lessons at the age of six in her hometown of La Chaux-de-Fonds. Her major impulse for choosing the piano was led by an early wish to accompany her older sister Carole, a talented violinist. Moving on to complete her studies at the Conservatory, she received her Diploma with Honours at the age of 16. A year of intensive studies at the North Carolina School of the Arts opened up her musical and personal horizons. After returning to Switzerland to complete her Masters at the Lausanne Conservatory, and parallel to her solo concerts, she discovered the richness of chamber music repertoire. Through her many encounters with exceptional musicians, such as Dimitri Ashkenazy, Clemens Hagen, Matthias Schorn, Martin Fröst, Veronika Hagen, Ramon Jaffé, Sylvia Viertel, Sebastian Hess, Patricia Kopatchinskaya, Peter Martens, the Brodsky-, St-Petersburg-, Stadler-, Mozarteum-, Petersen-, Sine Nomine- and Casal-Quartets, she has had the opportunity to play in numerous festivals and venues throughout Europe, North America and Asia.

Her appearances with Orchestras such as the Tonhalle Orchester Zürich, the Houston Symphony, the Mozarteum Orchester Salzburg, the Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, the Tonhalle Orchester St-Gallen, the Akademisches Orchester Zürich, the National Symphony Kuala Lumpur, the OENM, the Berner Kammer Orchester, the Orchestre de Chambre Neuchâtelois, the Johannesburg Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre Symphonique de Genève, the Salzburg Orchester Solisten and the Kammer Orchester des Bayerischen Rundfunks have established her reputation as virtuoso soloist.

She has won many prizes and awards, including the Eurovision Competition, the Concours Suisse de Musique pour la Jeunesse, the Concerto Competition

of the University of North Carolina, Prix de Jeune Soliste de la Communauté des Radios Publiques de Langue Française (CRPLF), Prix Miéville, Prix L'Express, Prix du Lyon's Club, Prix Rotary International.

Her encounter with Benjamin Schmid has been by far the most inspiring and fertile, in more ways than one. Not only have they toured Europe, North and South America, Japan and South Africa together, playing at venues such as the Salzburg Festspiele, the Mozart Woche Salzburg, the Klavier Festival Ruhr, the Moritzburg Festival, the Middelburg Kammermusikfest, the Risor Chamber music Festival, the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, in Tokio, Osaka, Kyoto, Bogota, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Stellenbosch, at the Musikverein Vienna, at Schloss Engelberg in Graz, at the Brucknerhaus in Linz, at the Salle de Musique de La Chaux-de-Fonds, exploring a vast duo repertoire, they also joined their destinies by becoming husband and wife and the overjoyed parents of four children.

Now living in Salzburg and investing as much time and energy in pursuing her career as a pianist and a mother, Ariane Haering will never be thankful enough to those who have encouraged her along this musical path; Cécile Pantillon, Catherine Courvoisier, Clifton Matthews, Brigitte Meyer, Gerhard and Inge Schmid, Maestro Hans and Rita Graf, Johannes Schläefli, Jean-Philippe Bauermeister, Martin Kelterborn, the friends and colleagues who stood by no matter what; Esther Walker, Daniel Alfred Wachs, Samaela and Erik Bilic-Éric, Olivier Linder, Ilya Bregenzler, Etienne Frey, Nabila Irshaid and Fridolin Schaller.

Above all, it is the never-failing presence of her family, Roland(t) and Rose-Marie Haering, Carole and Louis Pantillon-Haering, that have made this journey worth living.

ROMANTIC DUOS

BRIDGE, GRIEG, LISZT

Benjamin Schmid, Violin
Ariane Haering, Piano

FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)

GRAND DUO CONCERTANT, S. 128

- 1 02:51 Lento assai - Animato, quasi Allegro
- 2 01:48 Andantino
- 3 01:26 Variation I (un poco più animato)
- 4 01:44 Variation II
- 5 03:06 Variation III. Allegretto pastorale
- 6 01:49 Variation IV. Tarantella. Presto
- 7 01:44 Finale. Animato marziale

CONSOLATION NO. 3

- 8 03:51 Lento placido (arr. Nathan Milstein)

FRANK BRIDGE (1879-1941)

SONATA FOR VIOLIN AND PIANO (1904)

- 9 08:29 Allegro
- 10 07:10 Andante con espressione (completed by Paul Hindmarsh)
- 11 04:03 ROMANZE
- 12 01:53 HEART'S EASE

EDWARD GRIEG (1843-1907)

VIOLIN SONATA IN C MINOR, OP. 45

- 13 08:58 Allegro molto ed appassionato
- 14 06:13 Allegretto espressivo alla Romanza
- 15 07:40 Allegro animato

TOTAL TIME: 63:32

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Artists: Benjamin Schmid (Violin) & Ariane Haering (piano)

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Benjamin Schmid plays the „Lady Jeanne“- Stradivarius, 1731.

Ariane Haering plays Steinway & Sons D.

Piano tuner: Franz Nistl

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