

 CHAMPS HILL  
RECORDS

Vol. 1

RÖNTGEN: STRING TRIOS NOs.1-4  
LENDVAI STRING TRIO



This wonderful project of discovering, performing and recording the complete string trios by Julius Röntgen has been a truly monumental and tremendous experience for us; to present this first disc is a dream come true. Our journey began in 2007 when we stumbled across Röntgen's first string trio (the only one published to date), and soon after discovered that there are fifteen more, carefully stored in handwritten manuscript form in the Netherlands Music Institute in the Hague. Intrigued, we began to investigate further, and to our astonishment realised that none of these wonderful works had been performed in public, let alone recorded. It has been a privilege to be the first ensemble to rediscover these string trios which have been archived in the library for over 80 years. Reading and playing from the old handwritten scores, instead of the usual computer-published sheet music we are used to, has added a very personal touch to the journey. Thanks to the Kersjes Prize and Champs Hill Records we have been able to record and bring to life this colourful and captivating music, which we hope you will enjoy as much as we do.

Nadia Wijzenbeek

Julius Röntgen

Henk Tel

Het Kersjes Fonds

## JULIUS RÖNTGEN (1855-1932)

### TRIO NO.1 IN D MAJOR, OP.76

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | Vivace e giocoso  | 05'42 |
| 2 | Un poco Andante   | 03'50 |
| 3 | Un poco Allegretto e scherzando ( <i>Alt-Holländisch</i> )  | 02'15 |
| 4 | Passepied ( <i>J.S. Bach</i> )  | 08'15 |
|   | Allegro - Andante molto tranquillo - Presto (non troppo) - Lento - Un poco moto e sempre lusingando - Adagio molto - Con moto e grazioso - Più vivace |       |

### TRIO NO.2 IN A MINOR, "DVOŘÁK"

(*Catrijp 8th-11th August 1918*)

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 5 | Allegro con brio (Dvořák)                                     | 04'42 |
| 6 | Andantino grazioso e con molta delicatezza - Lento affettuoso | 04'46 |
| 7 | Allegro sciolto   | 04'19 |

### TRIO NO.3 IN E MINOR

(*Catrijp 24th August 1919*)

- |    |  |       |
|----|--|-------|
| 8  | Allegro con spirito                            | 04'40 |
| 9  | Allegro vivace e furioso                       | 02'50 |
| 10 | 'Een Rondedans om de bruid naar bed te dansen' |       |
|    | Andante tranquillo et amabile                  | 04'30 |
| 11 | Allegretto                                     | 04'18 |

### TRIO NO.4 IN D MAJOR, "WALZER SUITE"

(*Catrijp 28th August 1919*)

- |    |                      |       |
|----|----------------------|-------|
| 12 | In Walzer tempo      | 01'25 |
| 13 | Piacevole            | 02'12 |
| 14 | Allegro marcato      | 01'11 |
| 15 | A tempo, teneramente | 01'56 |
| 16 | Animato              | 01'18 |
| 17 | Allegro marcato      | 02'36 |

Total playing time: 60'47

Produced by Matthew Bennett Engineered and Edited by Dave Rowell  
Recorded on 20th - 22nd March 2013 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK  
Cover and biography photographs of Lendvai String Trio by Sarah Wijzenbeek Booklet rear cover picture of Julius Röntgen at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam (1931) by Jan Boon (1882-1975)

Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen  
Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: John Dickinson



## ■ JULIUS RÖNTGEN (1855-1932): PASSIONATE MUSICIAN AND COMPOSER

There is a certain tendency towards irreverence in the Dutch spirit that causes Julius Röntgen's countrymen to refer to his great talent with gentle mockery. Röntgen's professional reputation enjoyed a noticeably higher regard in other countries, and he earned accolades abroad that eluded him in his home nation. One such distinction was the honorary doctorate conferred upon him by the University of Edinburgh in 1930, presented by the esteemed musicologist Sir Donald Francis Tovey. After Röntgen's death, *The Times* published a eulogy written by Tovey, who referred to Röntgen's works with praise: "Röntgen's compositions, published and unpublished, cover the whole range of music in every art form; they all show consummate mastery in every aspect of technique; even in the most facile there is beauty and wit; each series of works culminates in something that has the uniqueness of a living masterpiece." Besides his international reputation as a renowned pianist and composer, he was also in high demand as a teacher, turning down offers abroad in favour of staying in Amsterdam. Composers such as Grieg and Brahms respected him highly and sought his friendship. As a pianist, he enjoyed collaborations with some of the great musicians of his time: singer Johannes Messchaert, cellist Pablo Casals, and violinist Carl Flesch, among others.

Julius Röntgen came from a very musical family. His father Engelbert, a violinist, was born in the Netherlands (Deventer) and later emigrated to Leipzig, Germany, where he played in the Gewandhaus Orchestra. He married the pianist Pauline Klengel, who came from a family with a long musical tradition. Julius, the eldest child and only son, spent his youth in Leipzig. His parents were well connected within the highest musical circles, and regularly received musicians such as Felix Mendelssohn, Niels Gade and Joseph Joachim in their home. Julius Röntgen's grandfather taught him the fundamentals of piano and violin playing, and his parents themselves took



responsibility for his further training. Röntgen's exceptional musical talent was apparent at an early stage, but his father seems to have done his best to prevent his son from leading the typical life of a child prodigy. In addition to the training that he received from his parents, Röntgen studied for short periods of time with teachers such as Louis Plaidy, Carl Reinecke, Moritz Hauptmann and Franz Lachner. Within a few years, Röntgen gained a widespread reputation as a piano virtuoso, performing throughout Europe.

He began writing music at a young age, publishing his first composition in Germany in 1871. Only a few years later, he was invited to accept a teaching position in Amsterdam. After some hesitation, he settled there in 1877, making an immediate impact on the level of his students. In 1884, together with a number of colleagues, he founded the Amsterdamsch Conservatorium where he also served as managing director from 1913 until 1925.

Despite his busy career as a concert pianist, teacher, conductor and director of the Conservatory, Röntgen managed to write more than 600 compositions. Many of these works remain obscure, and even Röntgen himself admitted in an interview that he did not know all of his own compositions. As a fellow composer once recalled: "In the time it takes for someone to pick up a pen and paper, and to write down the keys and signs, Röntgen had probably already composed the beginning of a fugue." For Röntgen it was his usual practice, since the music was already completed in his head before he committed it to paper.

During Röntgen's lifetime, only one hundred of his compositions were published, the first thirty-one of them by the German firm Breitkopf und Härtel. Most of Röntgen's manuscripts are in the depots of the Netherlands Music Institute in The Hague. Recent years have seen a concerted effort to record the majority of his symphonic works and

solo concertos; however, much of Röntgen's chamber music is still lying in obscurity. This series of recordings by the Lendvai String Trio is therefore a wonderful opportunity to get acquainted with a rich and diverse corner of Julius Röntgen's oeuvre: the complete string trios.

### **THE STRING TRIOS**

Röntgen wrote sixteen String Trios, fifteen of which have never been published. For the most part, the Trios were also neither numbered nor named by the composer (an exception being the *Walzer Suite*), leaving the year of composition and key signature as the only means of their identification.

For someone who had starting composing in his teens, it is surprising that Röntgen came to the genre of String Trios only later in life, completing his first trio in 1915 at the age of 60 and the last trio in 1930, two years before his death. The reasons for this remain obscure, but it is clear that chamber music played an important part in Röntgen's life. In 1912, he formed a professional piano trio with two of his sons from his first marriage (Engelbert, a cellist, and Julius Jr., a violinist). With this ensemble, he gave concerts for years. However, Röntgen had another favourite instrument, the viola, and with two sons from his second marriage (Edvard and Joachim), he played string trios, presumably only at home, where he himself played the viola parts.

The four string trios on this first CD are short, varied and generally very playful, with a certain *joie de vivre*. The form of the individual movements is recognizably classical in structure with occasional contrapuntal episodes. A unique feature of these works is its numerous references to traditional Dutch tunes and dances. Röntgen's interest in folk music was largely due to his friendship with Edvard Grieg, with whom he travelled through Norway in search of Norwegian folk songs. For Röntgen it became important to do the same for the traditional music of Holland, and he considered the dissemination and popularization of his national music as one of his most important

tasks. The fact that traditional Dutch music had not yet won the public's appreciation was perplexing to him, as he considered these tunes to be representative of his nation's strongly individual character. In his later years, his interest led him to dabble in film music for what he called a 'national epos'. One such project was a collaboration with director Dirk Jan van der Ven (1891-1973) on a film about Dutch life in summer; it was shown in theaters with Röntgen providing accompaniment at the keyboard.

### **THE FIRST FOUR STRING TRIOS**

By 1892, Röntgen was spending most of his summer holidays in Fuglsang, Denmark, which remained one of his most beloved destinations. It was a meeting place for families, friends and musicians who gathered every evening to play chamber music together, something Röntgen also did on a regular basis at home with his children or with other musicians who happened to be passing by. With the outbreak of World War I, Röntgen and his family were unable to travel abroad for several years. Remaining in the neutral territory of Holland, they spent the summers of 1918 and 1919 at the coast of the North Sea in the small village of Catrijp, near Bergen. There, chamber music remained an important part of the Röntgen family holiday. Together with his sons Julius Jr., Joachim and Edvard, Röntgen spent many happy hours playing string quartets, and in this relaxed atmosphere also composed many new works.

### **FIRST STRING TRIO, OPUS 76**

Written in 1915, Röntgen's *First String Trio* was published in Germany nine years later, in 1924. Remarkably, it is the only one of his works in this genre to have been published to date. The impetus for composing this particular trio can be found in a letter to his friend Carl Flesch (1873-1944), the Hungarian-German violinist: "For my birthday I have made a jolly string trio; it is a protest against my 60 years." Indeed, in this four-movement work, cheerful musical ideas abound.

The first movement is a compositional exposition of polyphonic textures. In the second movement, the viola symbolizes a spinning wheel while the violin floats above the surface with a lonely, birdlike song: a melancholic intermezzo in this 'jolly' string trio. The third movement is a lively forum for Röntgen's love of Old Dutch dances. Röntgen acknowledges J.S. Bach at the beginning of the last movement, called *Passepied*, where polyphony becomes a focal point once more. This movement is composed of eight micro-movements, each with different time signatures and tempi. The shifting rhythms lend a feeling of humorous displacement, which Röntgen also exploits throughout the work with rambling three- and four-bar phrases. The trio's frequent use of staccato and pizzicato lends a remarkable lightness to the work's texture, enhancing its playful nature.

### **SECOND STRING TRIO**

The next three String Trios were composed during the summers of 1918 and 1919. Röntgen's natural surroundings were clearly a source of inspiration for him: in a letter to the singer Johannes Messchaert written in the summer of 1917, he extolled the beauty of the landscape around Bergen. During these summers, Röntgen lived with his family in a small cottage just behind the dunes where he made long daily trips on his bicycle, experiences that found their way into musical expression in a number of new compositions. The scenery of the polders (re-claimed land), dunes and the sea provided the composer with a creative burst of energy resulting in a remarkably prodigious output.

We find Dvořák's name, one of Röntgen's most beloved composers, written at the very opening of the first movement of the *Second String Trio*. A short and energetic motif from the introduction of Dvořák's Violin Concerto acts here not only as a starting point, but it dominates the whole movement. The second movement is uniquely beautiful, featuring an atmospheric duet between the violin and viola juxtaposed with

a mysterious intermezzo with the cello. The last movement begins with an exciting hunting motif, and ends with the return of Dvořák's motif to conclude this masterfully composed Trio.

### THIRD AND FOURTH STRING TRIOS

Despite the fact that Röntgen completed these two trios within four days of each other, the difference between these compositions is remarkable. The *Third String Trio* (completed the 24th of August 1919, Catrijp) begins with a *scherzo*, but eases into a lyrical and very intimate setting reminiscent of a fairy-tale. The second movement provides an abrupt contrast to this atmosphere, first with a flurry of activity as the instrumental lines chase each other, followed by a peasants' dance, full of passion and fire. The third movement symbolizes an Old Dutch wedding tradition in which it was customary to dance the bride to her bed. In Röntgen's hands, this takes the shape of a graceful lullaby. The trio ends with an innocent and intimate dance, disturbed only with a few unexpected, thrilling dissonances.

This series of Röntgen's first four String Trios is capped off by the *Walzer Suite* (dated the 28th of August 1919, Catrijp), a potpourri of peasant dances and Viennese Waltzes that tumble over each other in six short movements. The second waltz, for example, is gentle and melancholic with an underlying bourdon played by the cello. The following movement, with unexpected accents in a  $\frac{3}{4}$  meter, is reminiscent of a mazurka. Waltzes four and five are again very delicate, flowing into each other; and the work comes to an end with a rousing finale that begins with a fugal theme, but surprises us at the very end by returning to the theme of the first waltz.

Margaret Krill

### Lendvai String Trio

Since their Wigmore Hall debut in 2006, the Lendvai String Trio has had a busy schedule of concerts at major venues throughout Europe, including several re-invitations to Wigmore Hall, recitals at Kings Place, the Barbican and Purcell Room in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and Musikaliska in Stockholm.

In 2011 the trio was awarded the prestigious Kersjes Prize in Holland, as well as being selected for the Concertgebouw's Young Artist Series in Amsterdam; other previous successes include winning awards from the Kirckman Concert Society, the Worshipful Company of Musicians, Musician's Benevolent Fund, the Park Lane Group, and the Concert Promoters Network in the UK. In 2005 they were selected for the Holland Music Sessions 'New Masters on Tour', resulting in a series of concerts across Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Netherlands. The trio regularly perform at festivals in the UK, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Austria and Sweden and their concerts have been broadcast by Dutch Radio 4, Swedish Radio P2 and BBC Radio 3. Their debut CD 'Destination Paris' (2011, Stone Records) received international acclaim as well as their recent recording of the complete Beethoven String Trios (Stone Records) which was *BBC Music Magazine's* Chamber Choice in June 2013.

The trio enjoys regular collaborations with other artists and recent highlights have included concerts with oboists Alexei Ogrintchouk and Nicholas Daniel, and pianists Paolo Giacometti, Charles Owen, Alasdair Beatson and Martin Sturfält. As well as regularly commissioning new works, the Lendvai String Trio are also keen to uncover and revive 'forgotten' and lesser-known works for the genre.



**Nadia Wijzenbeek** ~ *violin*

Dutch violinist Nadia Wijzenbeek enjoys an international career as a concert master, chamber musician and soloist.

Nadia was appointed Concertmaster of The Radio Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra in the Netherlands in 2009. In 2013 she became concertmaster of the Dutch Radio Philharmonic Orchestra.

Besides the Lendvai String Trio, Nadia is also a member of the Aronowitz Ensemble, BBC New Generation Artists and the recipient of the Borletti Buitoni Trust special Ensemble prize.

Having started to play the violin at a very young age under the tutelage of her aunt Coosje Wijzenbeek, Nadia went on to study at the Amsterdam Conservatory with Elisabeth Perry and Herman Krebbers, graduating with distinction. She continued her studies in London at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with David Takeno, where she was awarded a Concert Recital Diploma.

Nadia is Artistic Director of the popular concert series 'Raadhuisconcerten' in her home town Hilversum.

Nadia plays a Joseph filius Andrea Guarneri violin.

**Ylvali Zilliacus** ~ *viola*

Swedish violist Ylvali Zilliacus has in recent years been the principal violist of the Musica Vitae chamber orchestra, and has also regularly worked with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra as well as with the Merel String Quartet in Switzerland. She is frequently invited to international chamber music festivals such as Ernen Musikdorf in Switzerland, Hague Chamber Music Festival in the Netherlands and IMS Prussia

Cove in England. Ylvali has previously played in the period instrument ensemble English Concert directed by Andrew Manze and she studied in London as well as in Berlin with Simon Rowland-Jones, Tabea Zimmermann and David Takeno. She plays on a viola by Lorenzo Storioni from 1767 kindly lent to her by the Swedish instrument foundation.

### Marie Macleod ~ cello

British cellist Marie Macleod has performed throughout Europe, USA and Australia as soloist and chamber musician, appearing with orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra. As well as being cellist in the Lendvai String Trio, Marie is also a member of the Phoenix Piano Trio and the Aronowitz Ensemble who are BBC New Generation Artists and Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award winners, and she records regularly for Stone Records, the BBC and Sonimage.

In 2013 Marie was appointed principal cellist of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. Between 2006 and 2008 she was principal cellist of the Västerås Sinfonietta in Sweden, after which she became the assistant cello teacher at the Yehudi Menuhin School and cellist in the Sheffield-based chamber group Ensemble 360. Marie's competition successes include winning the string section of the BBC Young Musician of the Year in 1998, and she studied with Louise Hopkins at the Yehudi Menuhin School, Steven Isserlis at IMS Prussia Cove, Frans Helmerson in Germany and David Takeno at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She plays a Matteo Goffriller cello from 1706.

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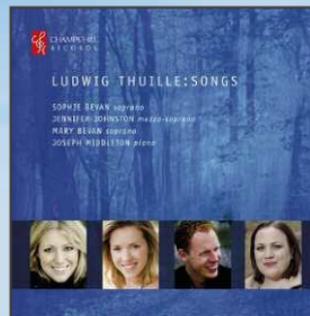
KSENIJA SIDOROVA - *accordion*

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### LUDWIG THUILLE: SONGS

A new Champs Hill Records release exploring the music of Ludwig Thuille (a close friend of Richard Strauss), this two-CD set includes a number of world-premiere recordings. Featuring rarely-heard songs (including Thuille's three winsome trios), some of the finest young voices in the UK - Sophie Bevan, Jennifer Johnston and Mary Bevan - are accompanied by the first-rate Joseph Middleton.

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