

A black and white photograph of two pianists, Inna Faliks and Daniel Schlosberg, looking off-camera to the right. Daniel Schlosberg is in the foreground, wearing glasses and a dark quilted jacket over a collared shirt. Inna Faliks is slightly behind him, her face in profile, wearing a patterned top and a large earring. The background is dark and out of focus.

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MAHLER / ZEMLINSKY
SYMPHONY NO. 6

INNA FALIKS & DANIEL SCHLOSBERG
PIANO 4-HANDS

By the mid-19th century, the burgeoning piano industry was in full flower, incorporating many developments and improvements in design. This led to increased consumer demand and mass production. Consequently the piano evolved from being a luxury item to home entertainment center. Until the advent of radio and recordings, this was how you experienced music at home. Apart from traveling to concerts, the only way to get to know, say, a new Brahms Symphony or the latest Wagner or Verdi opera was to play them at the piano, more often than not in arrangements for one piano four hands.

Glancing through myriad music catalogs (not to mention IMSLP), it seems that nearly every symphony, string quartet, choral work and opera had once been available in duet arrangements. Most publishers employed staff arrangers for this task; indeed, one could find certain works in more than one or two editions, such as the Beethoven Symphonies. Composers like Liszt, Brahms, Smetana and Dvorak either made their own four hand arrangements or else supervised others to do so. In essence, the piano duet medium represented the most viable way to disseminate new orchestral works, particularly those for which concert performances were few and far between. One case in point concerns Bruckner's 1877 reworking of his Symphony No. 3. Although it had little success, that didn't stop the 18-year-old Gustav Mahler from transcribing it for piano duet for what is considered to be Mahler's first publication. In turn, Mahler's disciple Bruno Walter arranged Mahler's First and Second Symphonies for four hands. And Alexander von Zemlinsky, another close member of Mahler's inner circle, unveiled his four-hand version of the Sixth in 1906.

Born in Vienna on October 14th 1871, Zemlinsky played both piano and organ from a young age, and was admitted to the Vienna Conservatory in 1884 where he studied piano and composition. Brahms apparently was impressed by Zemlinsky's Clarinet Trio (1896), while Mahler himself conducted the premier of Zemlinsky's opera *Es war einmal...* at the Vienna Hofoper in 1900. That same year he made the acquaintance of the 21-year-old aspiring composer Alma Schindler. Their initial teacher/student relationship soon evolved into a turbulent love affair that lasted until the following year when Alma met Mahler, whom she eventually married.

Mahler composed his Sixth Symphony between 1903 and 1905, but continued to make adjustments until his death in 1911. He conducted its world premiere at Essen on May 27th 1906. Out of all of his purely instrumental symphonies, the Sixth is scored for the largest and most varied assortment of instruments. Although Mahler did call this symphony "Tragic," he did not designate an official title. Yet the music indisputably embodies the classic Greek idea of tragedy in the futility of one's heroic striving against an inevitable fate. As such, it's the only one of Mahler's symphonies that concludes neither happily nor peacefully.

The opening bars introduce the driving march rhythm that loom large throughout the symphony. A chorale-like theme leads into the passionate F Major second theme that Alma claimed to describe her. Not all conductors (nor Faliks and Schlosberg) observe Mahler's indicated exposition repeat, a convention that had long been considered as optional. The development section subjects the themes to elaborate and compact contrapuntal interplay. While one misses the spatial impact of cowbells against soft celesta chords accompanied by high triple-piano violin tremolos, Zemlinsky compensates with equally compelling keyboard textures and pedal effects.

Mahler never made up his mind about the order of the two middle movements. His manuscript and first published score places the Scherzo before the Andante, although his performances opted for Andante-Scherzo, which is reflected in the 2003 critical edition. In any event, listeners can program this release to suit their own preferences. In addition to reiterating the motto march motive, the Scherzo stands out for its quirky and highly original dance sequences. The Trio, marked "Altväterisch" ("in an old-fashioned style"), features irregular rhythms and off-beat accents that, according to Alma's memoirs, represent "the arhythmic games of (our) two little children, tottering in zigzags over the sand." Somehow the third section dance's woodwind squeals and col legno string effects prove just as grotesque and menacing via Zemlinsky's piano scoring.

By contrast, the Andante provides the Symphony's only sustained point of respite, alternating between two of Mahler's longest and most heartfelt melodies. As writer David Hurwitz astutely explains in his Mahler Symphonies "Owner's Manual," the Finale's ambitious dramatic trajectory takes place in four distinct musical zones, each with its own specific atmosphere: 1) the familiar march elements, 2) the surging lyrical tunes, 3) the introspective pastoral passages and 4) a "twilight zone" full of terror and mystery.

With Mahler's encouragement, both Zemlinsky and Schoenberg founded the Vereinigung schaffender Tonkünstler (Alliance of Creative Musicians) in Vienna in 1904 to promote and disseminate new works. One outcome of the organization was Zemlinsky's four-hand arrangement of the Sixth, which he and Mahler played in Schoenberg's presence. The performance may well have planted the seeds for Schoenberg founding his Verein für musikalische Privataufführungen (Society for Private Musical Performance) in 1918. Under Schoenberg's supervision, Zemlinsky's arrangement was performed twice at the Society by pianists Eduard Steuermann and Ernst Barich. In his biography of Mahler, Erwin Ratz wrote that "The performance.... was a highlight in the concerts of the Society. In about thirty rehearsals Schoenberg had prepared the performance with loving care. In retrospect it may be said that the four-handed rendition bears equal comparison with the performance of the original version."

Naturally 88 piano keys cannot replicate the visceral impact of Mahler's unprecedented orchestration and his genius for instrumental color. However, since Mahler's orchestral original is ubiquitous in concert and via recordings, one should welcome this opportunity to experience Mahler's Sixth in a relatively unfamiliar yet fresh and authentic light. As Inna Faliks and Daniel Schlosberg cogently reveal in this remarkable recording, the music works well on the piano. In purely keyboard terms, Mahler's contrapuntal acumen and rich harmonic language make a pointed, intimate and idiomatic impact, losing little in translation. Moreover, two pianists sharing one

bench can respond with unusual flexibility and immediacy to the music's harrowingly wide emotional gamut, channeling the spirit of Zemlinsky and Mahler hovering over the keyboard when the ink had barely dried on the page.

- Jed Distler





INNA FALIKS

Described by *The New Yorker* as “adventurous and passionate,” Ukrainian-born pianist Inna Faliks is recognized as one of the most poetic and versatile artists of her generation. Known for commanding performances of the standard repertoire as well as innovative interdisciplinary projects, she has built a music life defined by passion, sincerity, intellectual depth and creative curiosity.

Faliks has performed thousands of recitals throughout the United States, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. She has appeared at many of the world’s leading venues including Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall, National Gallery of Art, Salle Cortot in Paris, Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Hall, Beijing Center for the Performing Arts and other major halls across China, Oji Hall in Japan and major festivals such as Ravinia, Verbier, Gilmore, Newport Classical.

Since her acclaimed debut with the Chicago Symphony, Faliks has remained a sought-after concerto soloist with leading orchestras in the US and abroad in a variety of works spanning from Beethoven’s complete piano concerti to Clara Schumann, Florence Price, Paul Schoenfield, and Rachmaninoff.

Her interdisciplinary performances include her one-woman show, the monologue-recital “Polonaise-Fantasie, the Story of a Pianist” and her long-running poetry and music project, Music/Words, which features living poets. She is a committed chamber musician, collaborating with major artists such as Rachel Barton Pine, Gilles Apap, Wendy Warner, Hila Plitmann and many others.

A defining element in her artistry is her commitment to contemporary music. Numerous composers have written works specifically for her, and she has given many world premieres. In 2024, she premiered Clarice Assad’s “Lilith” Concerto, which Assad wrote for her. In the 2025-26 season, she gave the world premiere of Gabriel Prokofiev’s Concerto for Minimoog Synthesizer and Orchestra with Orquestra

Sinfonica do Porto Casa da Musica – the first and only concert pianist in the world to appear on stage as a virtuoso of the Minimoog Synthesizer in a concerto format.

She is a prolific recording artist, with albums ranging from Schumann, Beethoven and Rachmaninoff to innovative projects such as *Reimagine Beethoven and Ravel*, 9 premieres and the most recent *Manuscripts Don't Burn*, featured on NPR's Morning Edition.

Faliks is an acclaimed author, with a recently published memoir *“Weight in the Fingertips: A Musical Odyssey from Soviet Ukraine to the World Stage”* (Bloomsbury, 2023) and articles in *The Washington Post* and *The Los Angeles Times*.

She serves as Professor of Piano and Head of Piano at UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, mentoring the next generation of artists. A Yamaha Artist and internationally respected performer, Inna Faliks continues to shape today's piano landscape with vision, depth and expressive power.

www.innafaliks.com

DANIEL SCHLOSBERG

Praised for his “passion and intellect” by the Washington Post, Grammy-nominated pianist Daniel Schlosberg leads a kaleidoscopic musical life.

He has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as featured soloist (in subscription performances of Messiaen's *Trois Petites Liturgies*) and in numerous chamber music concerts.

He is deeply involved in contemporary music, collaborating frequently with Eighth Blackbird, Third Coast Percussion and Picoso. He also has played with the Fonema Consort, International Contemporary Ensemble, and Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, among others. He has given the world premiere solo works of Augusta Read Thomas (“Starlight Ribbons”) and several sets of piano pieces by Stanley Walden, and the US premiere of Kaija Saariaho's “Calices” for violin and piano. He was a founding member of *Yarn/Wire*, the lauded two piano/two percussion group.

He has recorded for the Albany, Bridge, Centaur, Divine Art, Jacaranda Live!, Navona, New World, Nimbus, and Permelia labels. His latest solo release is *Gaul Me Maybe: French Baroque Keyboard Music*, consisting of works by Royer, Rameau, d'Anglebert and Bach.

In the art song realm, Schlosberg was on staff at Ravinia's Steans Music Institute vocal program, and he was the director of the Baltimore Lieder Weekend, held each October for 13 years, with consistent support from The Hampsong Foundation. He maintains a duo with soprano Laura Strickling; he received a GRAMMY nomination for their recent album of new American song, “40@40.” His latest release is of art song by Doug Lofstrom, with longstanding duo partner baritone Ryan de Ryke.

Other notable appearances include multiple chamber performances at the National Gallery of Art and Phillips Collection, and solo recitals at Bargemusic and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

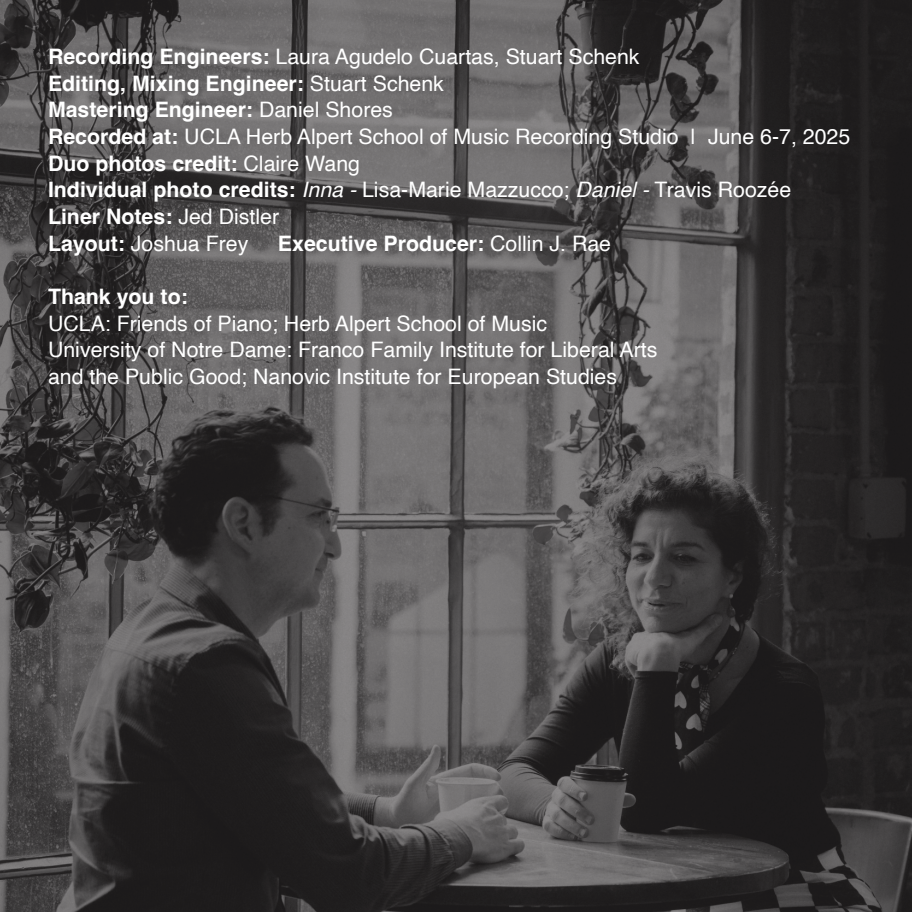
In recent years, he has turned to conducting and recently led the Illinois Modern Ensemble at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign in two concerts.

He is also a frequent pre-concert lecturer and program annotator, and is a Steinway Artist.

Schlosberg is a longstanding faculty member at the University of Notre Dame, where he is also faculty advisor to the Table Tennis Club. He has given masterclasses around the country and adjudicates competitions frequently. Outside of university and music, he enjoys making espresso among other pursuits.

www.danielschlosberg.com





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