

ORIGINAL
TRANSCRIPTIONS
FOR TRUMPET



BRAHMS SCHUMANN SCHUBERT

JOHN WILSON

ANDREW BALIO





MERC AEROSPACE

The album you are listening to is a culmination of many years of determination, long hours of practice, sound engineering and some luck! The compositions of Brahms are noted for being the basis of Western Civilization. He was considered the last of the composers whose works are in the tradition and form of Beethoven, Mozart, and Johann Sebastian Bach. Had his life not been cut short, Schumann would also have been notable in this tradition, as would Schubert, a prolific song writer who died at such an early age.

The art of transcribing works has been around for centuries but the most notable figure in recent times – and indirectly related to what we tried to produce here – was Maurice André (1933–2012). His transcriptions for piccolo trumpet of many of Bach's works for violin have entered the standard repertoire. In some respects, the new sonic experience rejuvenated many of Bach's compositions and made them accessible for a younger audience. In his own original transcriptions for trumpet recorded here, Andrew Balio shares the same goal of making Brahms, Schumann and Schubert available for a larger public.

We at MERC Aerospace loved being part of this project and we hope you enjoy this album and the tremendous music experience it brings. The musicians Andrew Balio, John Wilson and Nicholas Phan, and producer David v.R. Bowles together with the rest of the crew at Skywalker Sound in Marin County California, deserve a heartfelt "thank you" for the hours of hard work in bringing this to fruition.

Enjoy, Dave and Terri Miller

BRAHMS SCHUMANN SCHUBERT

Original transcriptions for trumpet by Andrew Balio

After Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's magnificent, angelic trumpet lines in his cantatas and Second Brandenburg Concerto, one would think that trumpet had a bright future. Alas, trumpet was relegated to a military signal role with timpani until the later Romantic period, leaving us out of the golden age of chamber music. I hope that my transcriptions in this album will invite trumpeters out of the cold and into the cozy world of Brahms, Schumann, and Schubert. My previous album for Delos, *Soli Deo Gloria* – my own transcriptions of Bach's music – was my way of going much further into this composer through his flute, violin, and organ works. This new album represents a continuation of the same Germanic tradition of writing and transcription by highlighting Bach's lineage and offspring. As Brahms said, 'Study Bach, there you will find everything.' His close friend Robert Schumann said of the master, 'Music owes as much to Bach as religion to its founder.'

The two Clarinet Sonatas, Op. 120, of Johannes Brahms, arranged here, were written at the very end of his life, for a clarinet virtuoso, Richard Mühlfeld, who pressed the aged Brahms to write yet again, despite his self-imposed retirement. This turnabout yielded two of Brahms's greatest works, a grand claim indeed given his monumental achievements in every genre other than opera. It would appear that Brahms did not have much love or even use for the trumpet, judging from his sparing use of it in his symphonies and its utter

absence from his ample and legendary body of chamber music. While Bruckner, Wagner, Mahler, and Strauss were awarding it soaring and intimate melodic lines, trumpet for Brahms was just an occasional bright color that dotted his landscapes here and there, and of course held back until ultimate climaxes. He instead lavished every romantic opportunity upon the horns, yielding some of that instrument's most memorable moments. His concerns about the abilities of the trumpet were expressed when he hastily scribbled a set of twelve etudes in the popular keys for his pub mate at the Red Hedgehog, whom he was trying to prod into practicing, to finally get a handle on it. While there is doubt as to their authenticity (though not to my ears), the way they were written is further testament to his skepticism about trumpet. He wrote a version of his Clarinet Sonatas for viola with many adaptations for that instrument, which has made these works even more widely played. To musicians, when a work is transcribed for viola by its original composer, it is universally known as code for 'anything goes.' It is in this spirit and with tacit permission from history that I have played all the works in this album, none of which were written for trumpet.

Originally written for viola, Schumann's *Märchenbilder* (Fairy Pictures) was also played on violin, taking an unusual direction upstream instead the usual flow. I was inspired not only by the lush melody of the first movement, basking

in the middle register for the trumpet, but also by the two inner movements, seemingly more trumpet-like in their fanfares and powerful statements than a string instrument could readily furnish. The last movement harkens back to the simple *Lied* for voice and piano, challenging the trumpet to be kinder and gentler than usual.

Schumann's brassy Adagio and Allegro was originally for horn, yet he simultaneously published it for viola, violin, cello, and double bass. This adds weight to the assertion that music written in this Germanic tradition can often be correctly understood to be pure compositions consisting of notation, with multiple possible applications of instrumental assignment. His wife, Clara Schumann, remarked, 'Just the sort of piece that I like: brilliant, fresh and passionate.'

Penning and inking an Olympian six hundred songs with piano before he died at age thirty-one, Franz Schubert included an extra instrument only a few times. His song 'Auf dem Strom' ('Nimm die letzten Abschiedsküsse'), D. 943, Op. 119, originally for voice with horn and piano, is an opportunity for trumpet to participate melodically and intimately with one of history's most profound composers, who otherwise never wrote much beyond Mozartian fanfares in his symphonies and masses.

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ANDREW BALIO TRUMPET

Wisconsin native Andrew Balio was appointed as Principal Trumpet of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in 2001 by Yuri Temirkanov. Prior to his arrival in Baltimore, he had been principal trumpet of the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta from 1993 and the Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de México since 1990, as well as the Boston Philharmonic. He recently served as principal trumpet of the Oslo Philharmonic concurrently with his BSO duties in 2014/15. Just prior to the pandemic, he was guest principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2014, he launched with philosopher Roger Scruton and architect Léon Krier what was to become the Foundation for the Future of Classical Music, a research institute to examine the complexities of making classical music institutions financially viable while preserving their artistic mission. For his work in this area, he was invited into the Academy of Philosophy and Letters as a board member and has presented papers during its conferences.

Among his acclaimed solo recordings, *Soli Deo Gloria*, are transcriptions of the music of J. S. Bach for trumpet and organ. *Fanfare Magazine* wrote of his album: 'This is, hands down, the most magnificent, eloquent, communicative trumpet playing I have ever heard in my life, and I have a whole shelf full of trumpet CDs by virtuosos past and present against which I am comparing it.' His first solo recording was issued from Russia with the St. Petersburg Symphony, that of the Weinberg Trumpet Concerto, which he played with Jonathon Heyward in the United States and throughout Germany in 2024.

As a soloist, throughout his career, Balio has appeared in Europe, South America, Asia, and the United States under such conductors such as Mehta, Temirkanov, Rozhdestvensky, Herbig, Venzago, Stenz, McGeegan, Bergman, Orbelian, and Lintu. His Carnegie Hall solo debut was with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra in a special concert for victims of Hurricane Sandy, many of which were Soviet émigrés.

Andrew Balio is a Yamaha Artist.

JOHN WILSON

PIANO

American pianist John Wilson has performed extensively in North America, and Europe. In 2022 Wilson released his solo debut album on Avie Records which featured the premiere of Michael Tilson Thomas's three-movement suite for piano, *Upon Further Reflection*. In 2019, he premiered a portion of *Upon Further Reflection* that was broadcast live on medici.tv to an audience of over 50,000. As a soloist he has performed with the San Francisco Symphony, New World Symphony, Chamber Orchestra of New York, Chamber Orchestra of San Antonio, Napa Valley Symphony Orchestra, and both the New Amsterdam Symphony Orchestra and Camerata Notturna in New York, NY.

He won first prize in the 2019 International Respighi Prize Competition, first prize in the American Competition 2021 and in 2023, their foundation awarded him the Ernst Bacon Memorial Award for the Performance of American Music for his world premiere recording of *Upon Further Reflection*. Wilson has had the pleasure of being a part

of numerous world premieres, performing works by Michael Tilson Thomas, John Adams, Samuel Adams, Timo Andres, Judith Lang Zaimont, Steve Reich and many others.

Wilson is pianist at the San Francisco Symphony, Principal Keyboard of Marin Symphony, San Diego Symphony, and Oakland Symphony, and has performed as Guest Principal Keyboard of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. His second album, *Rachmaninoff; Gershwin: Transcriptions by Earl Wild*, on Avie Records was received to high critical acclaim.





NICHOLAS PHAN TENOR

Described by *The Boston Globe* as 'one of the world's most remarkable singers,' American tenor Nicholas Phan is increasingly recognized as an artist of distinction. With an incredibly diverse repertoire that spans nearly 500 years of music, he performs regularly with the world's leading orchestras and opera companies. An avid recitalist and a passionate advocate for art song and vocal chamber music, in 2010 Phan co-founded Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, an organization devoted to promoting this underserved repertoire.

A celebrated recording artist, Phan's album *A Change Is Gonna Come* was released to critical acclaim in May 2024. His album *Stranger: Works for Tenor by Nico Muhly* was nominated for the 2022 GRAMMY Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album. His albums *Clairières* and *Gods and Monsters* were nominated for the same award in 2020 and 2017. He is the first singer of Asian descent to be nominated in the history of the category, which has been awarded by the Recording Academy since 1959.

Sought after as a curator and programmer, in addition to his work as Artistic Director of CAIC, Phan is the host and creator of BACH 52, a web series examining the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. He has created programs for broadcast on WFMT and WQXR and has also served as guest curator for projects with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Bravo! Vail Music Festival, San Francisco Opera Center, and San Francisco Performances, where he served as the vocal artist-in-residence from 2014 – 2018. Phan's programs often examine themes of identity, highlight unfairly underrepresented voices from history, and strive to underline the relevance of music from all periods to the currents of the present day.

DAVID V.R. BOWLES

PRODUCER

David v.R. Bowles founded Swineshead Productions, LLC, a classical recording production company, in 1995. His recordings have been GRAMMY- and JUNO-nominated and twice won the Just Plain Folks Awards as "Classical Orchestral Album". Bowles's engineered audio has also appeared on Telly-winning videos, as well as on videos for Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, Voces8's, Chanticleer, The San Francisco Early Music Society and Stanford Live.

In collaboration with New York University's Music Technology program at Steinhardt School of Music, Bowles researches and teaches 3D audio recording for their Tonmeister Seminar. He has sat on panels at several Audio Engineering Society (AES) conventions, and presented his papers on 3D height microphone arrays at AES conferences in São Paulo, San Francisco and Boston.

As an educator, Bowles has been a guest lecturer for Tonmeister programs at New York University, The Royal Danish Academy, and

Peabody Recording Arts & Sciences (John Hopkins University). He was Visiting Professor of Recording Arts at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music.

Bowles was elected by his peers as Vice President, Western Region, USA/Canada of AES for 2023–24. He has also served twice on the Board of Governors, has been on several convention committees, and presently serves on the San Francisco AES section committee. He is a voting member of NARAS (National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences) and active in their Producers & Engineers Wing.





Recorded at Scoring Stage,
Skywalker Sound, California, USA,
in January & July 2023

Executive Producers

Andrew Balio,
David W. Miller

***Recording production, Engineering,
Editing, Mixing and Mastering***

David v.R. Bowles (Swineshead
Productions, LLC)

Assistant Engineer

Dann Thompson

Atmos Authoring

Margaret Tobin (Dolby Labs,
San Francisco, California, USA)

Label Manager

Timothée van der Stegen

Design

Pragma Création

Images

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Trumpets

Yamaha Bb Generation III NY
Yamaha Generation III CH

Piano

Fazioli Concert Grand 278



BRAHMS SCHUMANN SCHUBERT

Original transcriptions for trumpet by Andrew Balio

Andrew Balio *trumpet* | John Wilson *piano*

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 – 1897)

Clarinet Sonata in F minor, Op. 120 No. 1

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|------|
| 1. | Allegro appassionato | 7:51 |
| 2. | Andante un poco adagio | 5:15 |
| 3. | Allegretto grazioso | 4:33 |
| 4. | Vivace | 5:25 |

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810 – 1856)

Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70

- | | | |
|----|---------|------|
| 5. | Adagio | 4:19 |
| 6. | Allegro | 4:46 |

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797 – 1828)

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------|------|
| 7. | Auf dem Strom, D. 943 | 8:22 |
|----|-----------------------|------|
- with Nicholas Phan, tenor*

JOHANNES BRAHMS

Clarinet Sonata in E flat major, Op. 120 No. 2

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|------|
| 8. | Allegro amabile | 8:34 |
| 9. | Allegro appassionato | 5:03 |
| 10. | Andante con moto – Allegro | 7:14 |

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Märchenbilder, Op. 113

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|------|
| 11. | Nicht schnell | 3:29 |
| 12. | Lebhaft | 4:00 |
| 13. | Rasch | 3:10 |
| 14. | Langsam, mit melancholischem Ausdruck | 4:45 |

Total Running Time: 76:46

