# Kapalenski, Kakakis, Kakaher, Kakaher, Land Colombian Skokki, Lanker, Lanker, Ch. Kakaher, Ch. Kakaher, Lanker, Ch. Kakaher, Ch. Kakah the virtuoso violin Piet Koornhof, violin Bernarda Vorster, piano

## ON FIRE the virtuoso violin

**CD 1:** 

Wieniawski: Polonaise de Concert

Polonaise Brillante ♦ Scherzo Tarantelle

**Glazunov:** Meditation

**Kroll:** Banjo and Fiddle

**Dvarionas:** Elegy

**Skoryk:** Melody ♦ Spanish Dance

Kabalevsky: Rondo

Taneyev: Romance

**Kreisler:** Tambourin Chinois

Rota: Improvviso

Karayev: Waltz

**CD 2:** 

**Eduard Toldrà:** Six Sonnets

Soneti de la Rosada ♦ Ave Maria

Les Birbadores ♦ Oració el Maig

Dels Quatre Vents ♦ La Font

Eugene Ÿsaye: Ballade

Total Time: 30:21

Total Program Time: 1:40:55

Piet Koornhof, violin Bernarda Vorster, piano

Total Time: 70:34

## On Fire

#### DISC 1

- 1. **Henryk Wieniawski:** Polonaise de Concert in D major, Op. 4 (7:07)
- 2. **Alexander Glazunov:** Meditation, Op. 32 (3:41)
- 3. William Kroll: Banjo and Fiddle (2:59)
- 4. **Balys Dvarionas:** Pezzo Elegiaco (Elegy) (6:21)
- 5. **Henryk Wieniawski:** Polonaise Brillante in A major, Op. 21 (10:11)
- 6. **Myroslav Skoryk:** Melody from the film *The High Mountain Pass* (3.37)
- 7. Dmitri Kabalevsky: Rondo, Op. 69 (7:39)
- 8. **Sergei Taneyev:** Romance, Op. 26, No. 6 (4:01)
- 9. Fritz Kreisler: Tambourin Chinois (3:55)
- 10. Myroslav Skoryk: Spanish Dance (4:31)
- 11. Nino Rota: Improvviso (6:24)
- 12. **Kara Karaev:** Waltz from the ballet *The Seven Beauties* (4:04)
- 13. **Henryk Wieniawski:** Scherzo Tarantelle, Op. 16 (5.02)

#### DISC 2

#### **Eduard Toldrà: The Six Sonnets**

- 1. Sonetí de la Rosada (Sonnet to the Dew) (4:24)
- 2. Ave Maria (5:36)
- 3. Les Birbadores (The Gleaners) (2:37)
- 4. Oració al Maig (Supplication to the Month of May) (4:25)
- 5. Dels Quatre Vents (From the Four Winds) (2:00)
- 6. La Font (The Spring) (4:15)
- 7. **Eugene Ÿsaye:** Sonata for solo violin No. 3, Ballade (6:36)

#### Piet Koornhof, violin Bernarda Vorster, piano

Total playing time: Disc 1: 70:34

**Disc 2:** 30:21

#### **ARTIST'S PREFACE**

The title of this CD, **On Fire**, refers to the rousing virtuoso showpieces included in the collection, as well as to the energizing effect of discovering works of striking beauty. Finding "unknown" musical gems and delighting in their surprising qualities have always lit my musical fire, and sharing that excitement with an audience has been a source of immense satisfaction.

My own subtitle for this CD, *music not-worth playing*, was inspired by a music critic's unfortunate response to his first hearing of some of the music in this program. Sadly, that is an all-too-common reaction to unfamiliar music. It results from the assumption that if music is any good — however "good" is defined — it will necessarily be well-known, and therefore if it isn't familiar, it cannot be worth listening to. Often coupled with that misconception is the mistaken notion that "classical" music written since the early twentieth century is mostly inaccessible to the uninitiated.

We hope this CD proves both ideas wrong. All works presented here, except those by Wieniawski and Glazunov, were composed in the twentieth century. A lot of excellent music, from all eras, is generally unknown, though it is surprisingly accessible, even on a first hearing.

The "showpieces" by Wieniawski, Kreisler and Kroll, included here, are more familiar, at

least to the violinistic fraternity, and tend to provoke some measure of apprehension in those who dare to face their challenges. For example, the **Scherzo Tarantelle** by Henryk Wieniawski, the great Polish virtuoso violinist and composer, carries the nickname Scary Tarantula, for obvious reasons. Actually, the musical term *tarantella*, usually denoting highly energetic music, has its roots in the frenzied dancing that could supposedly save a victim from dying after being poisoned by the fearsome tarantula spider. On fire, indeed!

I have a confession to make: For many years, though I periodically engaged with showpieces of the Wieniawski variety in my practice room, I (rather conveniently) thought them "not worth playing," as a way of avoiding formal performance. But I finally realized that if I was to accept the challenge to make the results public, I had better do so now, while youth is still a faint memory. To my surprise, despite the challenge — or perhaps because of it — the scary tarantulas turned out to be delightful playthings. And they did actually make me feel "on fire" for a while.

We sincerely hope that you, the listener, will share the fire of virtuoso violin music and the delight of new musical discoveries. It was (and is) music worth playing, and if you give it half a chance, I think you'll discover it is worth hearing as well.

Thank you for listening.

Polish-born **Henryk Wieniawski** (1835-1880) was one of the greatest violinists of all time, and is credited with founding the so-called Russian School of violin playing, having taught in St. Petersburg for more than a decade. He studied at the Paris Conservatoire, toured internationally as a virtuoso, composed some of the most important pieces in the violin repertoire, and was a professor of violin, first in St. Petersburg and later in Brussels.

His **Polonaise de Concert in D major, Opus 4** is an early work and, like many of his bravura pieces, shows a fascination with the range of technical means available to him as a virtuoso violinist. Like the later Polonaise Brillante in A major, the D-major Polonaise was composed in two versions, one with piano and one with orchestra. The manuscript of the D-major Polonaise was later dedicated by the composer to King William III of the Netherlands.

The **Polonaise Brillante in A major, Opus 21** is also a typical virtuoso-style piece, where the solo violin decisively plays a dominant role. It is more expansive than the earlier Polonaise, and contains a lyrical middle section where the piano joins the violin in a dialogue that is much more equal than in the bravura passages, where the piano's role is more supportive. This Polonaise was also dedicated to royalty, this time to King Charles XV of Sweden.

The **Scherzo Tarantelle, Opus 16** ("Scary Tarantula" to violinists) is a bravura show-piece second to none. It was dedicated to Lambert Massart, the famous professor at the Paris Conservatoire, who had been Wieniawski's teacher. It combines the Italian tarantella dance form, vivaciously fast, with the idea of a scherzo that is light and playful, full of brilliance and gusto.

Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936), born in St. Petersburg, was a leading Russian composer of the generation after Tchaikovsky. He showed precocious musical talent at an early age and studied with Rimsky-Korsakov from the age of fifteen. Glazunov later became director of the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. Being dissatisfied with political developments and their impact on colleagues and friends, Glazunov left the Soviet Union in 1928. He then toured internationally for a while, before finally settling in Paris, France.

While some of his contemporaries experimented with and embraced various modernisms, he remained faithful to the nineteenth-century musical idiom. His mastery of form and his keen grasp of counterpoint led him to being described as a Romantic Classicist. At heart he was definitely a Romantic composer, and the spirit of his music is unmistakable in his beautiful **Meditation** for violin and piano.

**William Kroll** (1901-1980) was an American violinist and composer. He studied in Berlin and later at the Institute of Musical Arts in

New York. He was active as a soloist, chamber musician, and a teacher, having held positions at various illustrious institutions, including the Institute of Musical Arts, the Peabody Conservatory, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. His most famous composition is **Banjo and Fiddle** for violin and piano.

Lithuanian composer Balys Dvarionas (1904-1972) embodied a synthesis of talents in piano, teaching, conducting and composing. After formal studies in piano and composition in Leipzig and Berlin, he became one of the most famous and influential personalities in Lithuanian music. His works are abundant with romanticism and much influenced by folk song. In 1971 the composer said of his style: "My aesthetic ideals were formed under the influence of 19th-century romanticism, and I believe in the musician's vocational call to spread beauty, good, harmony, to educate people and to raise them above the routine." His Pezzo Elegiaco (Elegy), subtitled "By the Lake," is known in versions for violin and piano, and violin and orchestra, as well as for cello in the same combinations.

Myroslav Skoryk (born in 1938 in Lviv, Ukraine) initially entered the conservatory in his native city in 1948, but his studies were interrupted by the deportation of his family to Siberia for having criticized the Soviet regime. He resumed his musical studies in Lviv in 1955, when he and his family were finally allowed back into the city. In 1960 he

enrolled for postgraduate studies with Dmitri Kabalevsky at the Moscow Conservatory. He later joined the faculties of the Lviv and Kiev Conservatories. Skoryk's oeuvre, often drawing from the rich lore of Ukrainian folk music, is diverse, spanning classical concert music, jazz, pop music, and film music. His melancholy **Melody** is from the film *The High Mountain Pass*. **Spanish Dance** is a transcription for violin and piano by Skoryk of the third movement of his *Stone Host Suite* for symphony orchestra.

**Dmitri Kabalevsky** (1904-1987) was born in St. Petersburg and studied composition and piano at the Moscow Conservatory. In Russia he is most noted for his songs, cantatas, and operas, while overseas he is better known for his orchestral music. Kabalevsky was less avant-garde than some of his contemporaries and preferred a more conventional musical vocabulary interlaced with chromaticism and major-minor interplay. Kabalevsky is especially honored for his outstanding contribution to music education. He composed excellent music for children and set up a pilot program of music education in many Soviet schools. A collection of his writings on this subject, Music and Education: A Composer Writes about Musical Education, was published in the United States in 1988. The Rondo, Opus 69 for violin and piano, a virtuoso piece par excellence, is not as wellknown as his fun-filled violin concerto, but deserves much wider exposure.

**Sergei Tanevev** (1856–1915) was a Russian composer, pianist, teacher of composition, music theorist and author. He studied the piano with Nicolai Rubinstein and composition with Tchaikovsky at the Moscow Conservatory, and was the first student in the history of the conservatory to win the gold medal for both piano performance and composition. His specialized field of study was counterpoint, and eventually he became one of the greatest known contrapuntalists. He published a gigantic two-volume treatise, Convertible Counterpoint in the Strict Style, the result of twenty years of labor. Taneyev's mastery of the classical forms of composition, and his insistence that the composition process be both deliberate and intellectual, reflect the European, and especially German, orientation, rather than the Russian nationalist outlook. However, there is no lack of beauty and expressiveness in his music, as is evident in the bittersweet Romance, Opus 26, No. 6 ("Stalactites"), arranged by L. Feigin for violin and piano.

The endearing **Fritz Kreisler** (1875-1962), the inimitable violinist and composer of such staple violin "bonbons" as *Liebesleid*, *Liebesfreud*, and *Schön Rosemarin*, probably needs no introduction. Austrian by birth, trained in Vienna and Paris, he was one of the greatest violinists of all time, characterized by his unique sound and expressive phrasing. He served in the Austrian army in World War I and was honorably discharged after having been wounded in battle. He spent the rest of

the war in the United States, after which he moved to Berlin, and later to France, before returning to the US to become a naturalized citizen. He composed many works for the violin, some in the ostensible style of earlier composers, and originally ascribed these works to composers such as Pugnani, Tartini, and Vivaldi. When Kreisler revealed in 1935 that they were actually written by him, some critics regarded it as scandalous, but Kreisler maintained that the compositions had already been deemed worthy. "The name changes, the value remains," he said. **Tambourin Chinois** is a vivacious piece, echoing Far Eastern sentiments. It remains a firm favorite of virtuoso violinists.

Nino Rota (1911-1979) was an Italian composer and academic who is best known for his film scores, notably for the films of Federico Fellini and Luchino Visconti. He also composed the music for two of Franco Zeffirelli's Shakespeare films, and for the first two films of Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* trilogy, receiving the Academy Award for Best Original Score for *The Godfather Part II* (1974). Besides his prolific output of film scores (150 scores for Italian and other international films), Rota composed ten operas, five ballets and dozens of other orchestral, choral and chamber works. He remarked, "When I'm creating at the piano, I tend to feel happy; but - the eternal dilemma - how can we be happy amid the unhappiness of others? I'd do everything I could to give everyone a

moment of happiness. That's what's at the heart of my music." His **Improvviso** for violin and piano has all the hallmarks of his best music: fine technical command, provocative sonorities, and irresistible positive energy.

Kara Karayev (1918 - 1982) was a prominent Azerbaijani composer of the Soviet period. He first studied music at the Azerbaijan State Conservatory in Baku, and later at the Moscow Conservatory with Dmitri Shostakovich. Karayev returned to Baku to teach at the Azerbaijan State Philharmonic Society. He became the Chair of the Union of Composers of Azerbaijan and the rector of the Azerbaijan State Conservatory, and he also headed the Music Department at the Azerbaijan Architecture and Art Institute. The Waltz featured here is from Karayev's ballet The Seven Beauties. Incidentally, his other ballet, Path of Thunder, was dedicated to racial conflict in South Africa.

Eduard Toldrà (1895-1962) was a Spanish Catalan violinist, conductor and composer. He played an important role in the culture of Barcelona, founding the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra in 1944. His Sis Sonetos (Six Sonnets) for violin and piano, inspired by sonnets by Catalan poets, reveal a warm lyricism and wonderfully idiomatic writing for both instruments. It certainly is a joy to both play and hear, and deserves a firm place in the violin concert repertoire.

### The Six Sonnets in original (corrected Catalan) text

English translations by Dr. Eric Koontz

#### Sonetí de la Rosada

—Trinitat Catasús (1887-1940)

Queda l'hora extasiada de veure el món tan brillant, i es fa tota palpitant en el si de la rosada.
Cada gota un diamant on retroba sa mirada la joia meravellada del que li és al voltant.
Mars, muntanyes, firmament, ço que mou i frisa el vent, ço que res no mou ni altera. Tot quant amb l'hora somriu s'encanta, s'irisa i viu dintre una gota lleugera.

Sonnet to the Dew [Septenary form]

Now remains the hour of ecstasy in seeing the world so brilliant, everything trembles with emotion in the bosom of the dew.
Every drop a diamond wherein her gaze is once more found, the marvelled joy of those who are near her.
Seas, mountains, earth,
That which moves and hastens the wind, That which nothing moves or alters.
Everything, smiling in this hour,

is enchanted, reflects the hues of the rainbow, and lives in a sole, light drop.

#### Ave Maria

—Joan Alcover (1854-1926)

Miràvem el crepuscle d'encesa vermellor: més un secret desfici tos ulls enterbolia, cercant en el silenci que terra i mar omplia un so per exhalar-s'hi la fonda vibració. I, rodolant, llavores del bosc a l'horitzó, baixà de l'ermitatge el toc de Ave-Maria. Sa veu trobà natura, i el cor sa melodia, expandiment de l'hora prenyada d'emoció. Jamai d'un vas més tendre, la plenitud de vida,

el plor de l'inefable defalliment vessà; jamai fores tan bella, o dona beneïda! Jamai en el món nostre ni el món d'allà, d'allà,

mon llavi, qui eixugava ta galta esblanqueïda, un glop de més divina dolçura fruirà.

#### Ave Maria

We watched the burning red sunset: but a secret yearning clouded your eyes, searching through the silence that filled earth and sea a sound to exhale the profound vibration. And then, rolling from the forest to the horizon, the chime of the Ave Maria came down from the hermitage.

Its voice was natural, and its heart was melody,

expansion of the moment, pregnant with emotion.

Never from a vessel more tender spilled over the plentitude of life,[or] the cry of an ineffable swoon;

Never were you more beautiful, O blessed woman!

Never in this world of ours, nor in the later world of heaven,

will my lips that dried your blanched cheek enjoy a taste of more divine sweetness.

#### Les Birbadores

—Magí Morera i Galicia (1853-1927)

Les he vistes passar com voleiada de cantaires ocells quan trenca el dia, i del tendre llampec de sa alegria ne tinc l'ànima alegre i encisada. Al cap i al pit, roselles; la faldada entre herbatges i flors se'ls sobreixia, i en cara i ulls i en tot lo seu lluïa del jovent la ditxosa flamerada. Passaren tot cantant!...La tarda queia... i esfumant-se allà lluny encara les veia, lleugeres, jovenils, encisadores... com si am llum de capvespre cisellades sobre marbre boirós, les birbadores fossin el fris d'algun palau de fades.

#### The Gleaners

I've seen them go by like a cloud of busily singing birds at daybreak, and from that tender lightning bolt of their cheerfulness my soul is happy and bewitched. On their heads and at their bosoms, poppies; their aprons between herbs and flowers, flowed over, and in face and eye and everything theirs shone the joyful flame of youth. They went by singing in full voice!... Evening fell... and disappeared in the distance even though I still saw them. *light, young, and enchanting...* as if, chiseled by sunset light in cloudy marble, the gleaners were the frieze of some fairy's palace.

#### Oració al Maig

—Josep Carner (1884-1970)

Fes, Maig (que potser jo no gosaria d'anar-li en seguiment pel corriol), que per grat de l'atzar la trobi un dia tot arran de mon cor que vol i dol, que hi hagi molts d'ocells damunt la via (tots cantadissos, amagats del sol) que ofeguin mon batec, i a ma agonia ofreni un glop de pau al fontinyol, que, sense veure'm ella ni escapar-se, jo em trobi als dits sa cabellera esparsa,

a frec del meu el llavi seu rogenc, i que ella estigui amb les parpelles closes i, encara, dins l'encanyissat de roses. (Tot perquè jo no sigui temorenc.)

Supplication to the Month of May

Grant, May (because perhaps I wouldn't dare to follow her into the alley), that by grace of luck I find her one day ever so close to my vacillating heart, that there be many birds above our way (all singing, hidden from the sun) so that they suffocate my heartbeats, and for my agony offer a bit of fresh peace by the spring, and that, with neither her noticing nor

escaping,
I find at my fingertips her hair let down,
and my lips brushing her red ones,
and that she remain with her eyes closed
and still beneath the rose arbor.

(All to keep me from timidity.)

#### **Dels Quatre Vents**

—Mossèn Anton Navarro (1867-1936)

Dia fervent d'agost era aquell dia..., sota la volta de l'atzur serena, com una copa d'or d'hidromel plena la vall de Lys de llum se sobreixia. Flama dels camps, la palla refulgia com l'escuma del mar damunt l'arena i l'eral ple de fruits de tota mena tota sa glòria al vent serè expandia. Ella'm mostrava les triomfals monteres de la flor del forment, com nova Ceres sorgida allí per art de meravella, i allà d'enllà cantaven les cigales, passaven dos coloms de blanques ales i sonaven remors d'ègloga vella.

Fervent day in August, that day...

#### From the Four Winds

beaneath the return of serene azure, like a full cup of golden hydromel the valley of Lys overflowed with light. Flame from the fields, the hay shone like sea foam on sand, and the threshing floor, full of harvest of all sorts, opened all its glory to the wind. She showed me the triumphal capes made up of the best of grains, like new Ceres come forth by marvelous magic, while further afield the cicadas sang, and two white-winged doves passed by, rustling with the sound of antique pastoral song.

#### La Font

—Joan Maria Guasch (1878-1961)

Recó tranquil, recó guarnit de molsa, recó dels arbres vells, mig desmaiats, la font que hi veig té una naixença dolça, no té el dolor dels naixements forçats. Brolla gentil i alegrament devalla; la filla de la neu mai defalleix;

meitat cançó i altra meitat rialla és una vida en flor que resplandeix. Jo quan baixo dels cims a l'hora santa, cerco el recó tranquil, la font que canta el misteri sagrat del fill del glaç i veig d'un tros lluny que ja m'espera com una dona fresca i riallera portant el càntir ple sota del braç.

#### The Spring

Tranquil niche, moss-dressed retreat, recess of old trees half-swooning, the spring I see is sweetly born and knows no pain of forced birth. It bubbles gently and cheerfully rolls downward; the daughter of snow is never discouraged. Half song and other half laughter, this is a blossoming life that bursts brilliantly. I, when I descend the peaks at the holy hour, search for that tranquil corner, the font that sings the sacred mystery of the son of ice and I see from far off that it awaits me like a woman, fresh and tittering,

Belgian violinist, composer, conductor and teacher, **Eugene Ÿsaye** (1858-1931), is one of the biggest stars in the violin firmament, often referred to as the "king of the violin" or "the Tsar," as virtuoso Nathan Milstein called him. After his graduation from the Royal Conservatory of Liège, where he studied with

carrying her full water jug under an arm.

Henryk Wieniawski and Henri Vieuxtemps, Ysaye became principal violin of the Benjamin Bilse beer-hall orchestra, which later developed into the Berlin Philharmonic. In addition to his active concert career spanning all of Europe, Russia and the United States (where he was appointed music director of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra from 1918 to 1922), Ysave was professor of violin at the Brussels Conservatory with a class of stellar pupils, several of whom became influential figures in the violin world. Many prominent composers dedicated major works to him, including Claude Debussy, Camille Saint-Saëns, Ernest Chausson, and César Franck, whose famous sonata for violin and piano was a wedding gift to Ysaye and his wife. The Ballade is the third in a set of six fiendishly difficult sonatas for solo violin that Ysaye reputedly conceived and outlined in one single, sleepless night. Needless to say, the result has been countless sleepless nights for violinists attempting to master the intricacies involved!

—Piet Koornhof

#### **Piet Koornhof**

South African violinist Piet Koornhof has performed in South Africa, Europe, North America, Russia, Singapore and New Zealand. He has recorded CDs for Koch Discover International and Delos, including the complete J.S. Bach trio-sonatas for flute, violin and piano with Raffaele Trevisani and Paola Girardi, and the Hendrik Hofmeyr

double concerto for flute, violin and string orchestra with Trevisani and the Moscow Chamber Orchestra led by Constantine Orbelian.

In addition to the standard repertoire, Piet has a special interest in surprisingly accessible twentieth and twenty-first century chamber music. He has been responsible for the first South African performances of works by, among others, Schnittke, Pärt, Vasks, Sviridov, Bolcom, Babadjanian, Chebodarian, Kupkovic, Gliére, Medtner, Taneyev, Loeffler, Martinu, Ben-Haim, Schulhoff, Piazzolla, Schoenfield, Toldra, Karaev, Skoryk, Dvarionas, Hofmeyr, Watt and Klatzow.

Piet was born in South Africa in 1961. He made his concert debut at the age of nine while he was a student of Alan Solomon. As a young artist, he twice represented South Africa as violin soloist with the South African National Youth Orchestra on tours to Europe and Israel with conductors Alberto Bolet and Avi Ostrovsky. He was also awarded scholarships by, among others, The Southern African Music Rights Organisation, Anglo-American Corporation, The Aspen Music School and The Juilliard School, where he studied with Dorothy DeLay. His additional study includes taking part in master classes with Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman and Sergiu Luca.

Piet is an associate professor at the School of Music of North West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa. He is married to Esmie, a violinist and school teacher, who is the exquisite mother of their three children, Gerhard, Hannes and Elrie.

#### **Bernarda Vorster**

South African pianist Bernarda Vorster studied with Adolph Hallis, Walter Panhofer and Joseph Stanford. After completing her BMus degree at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, Bemarda continued her piano studies at the Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna, Austria. On her return to South Africa, she was appointed piano lecturer at the University of Pretoria and was subsequently appointed senior lecturer at North West University in Potchefstroom, where she obtained a DMus in piano performance.

Bernarda is a keen chamber musician, regularly performing with top South African artists as well as participating in chamber music series in Switzerland and Italy.

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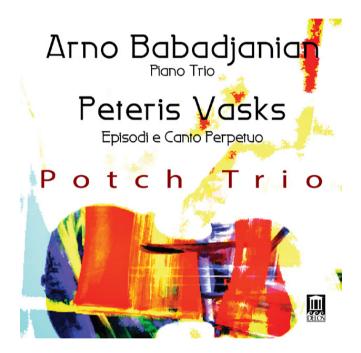
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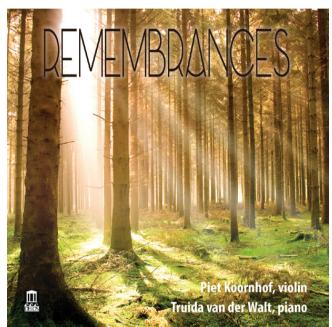
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