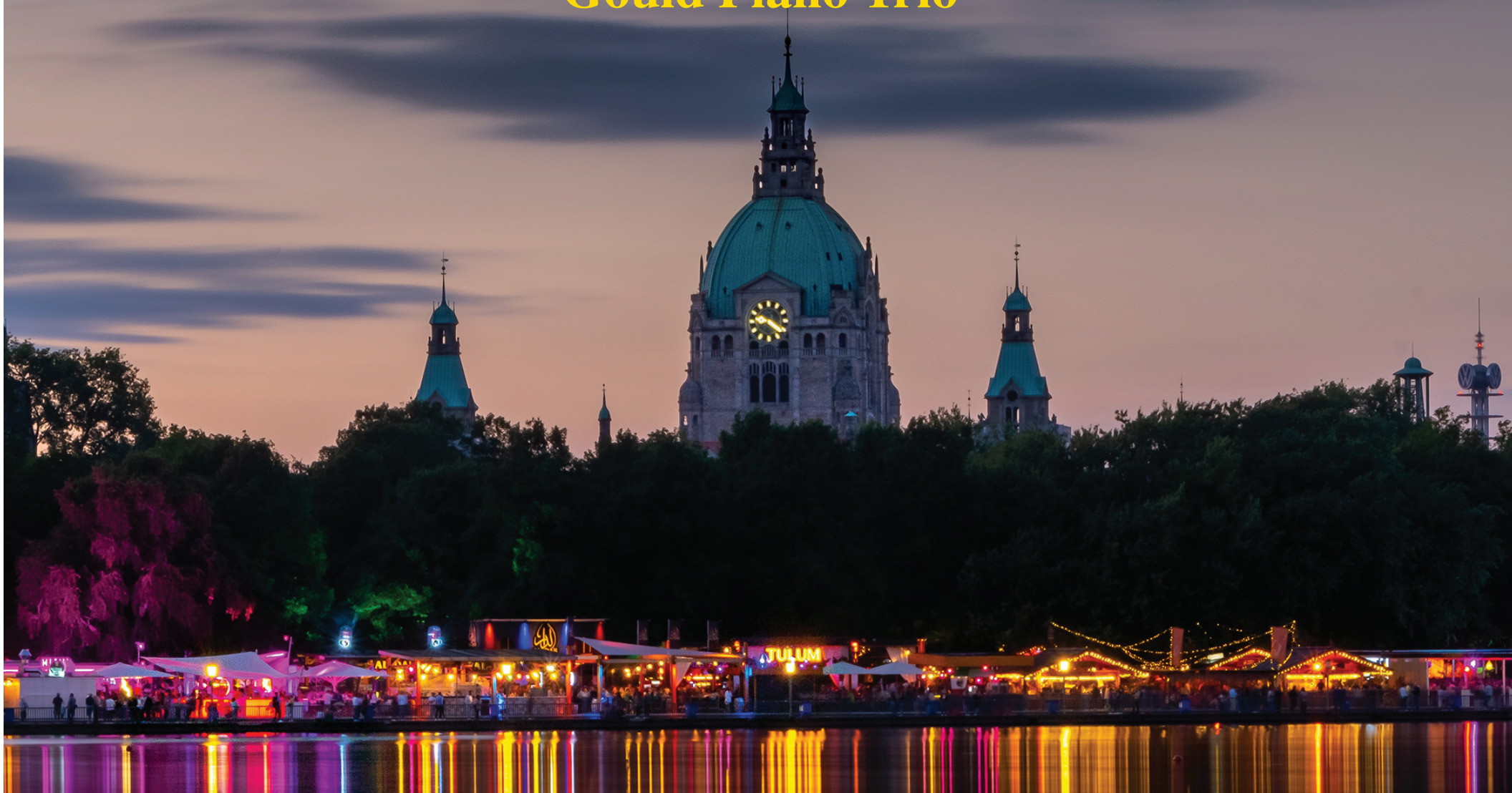


# MARSCHNER

Piano Trios • 2

No. 2, Op. 111 and No. 6, Op. 148

Gould Piano Trio





## Heinrich August Marschner (1795–1861)

### Piano Trios • 2

Heinrich August Marschner, born on 16 August 1795 in Zittau, Germany, is widely considered the most important exponent of German Romantic opera in the generation between Weber and Wagner. He made significant contributions to German opera and additionally composed incidental music, chamber music, and numerous songs. He composed his first theatrical work, the ballet *Die stolze Bäuerin*, in 1810, which was successfully premiered in Zittau. Marschner then ventured to Prague and later Leipzig, where he initially studied law but developed a passion for opera through his friendship with the publisher Friedrich Hofmeister, the music critic J.A. Wendt, and Johann Friedrich Rochlitz, founder of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. In 1815, he visited Vienna, where he met Beethoven and found work as a music teacher in Pressburg (today Bratislava). His early operas were typically Singspiels and achieved little success; however, once he turned his attention to writing 'rescue operas', such as *Heinrich IV and D'Aubigné*, he became more exposed in the musical mainstream.

In 1823 Marschner became conductor for the municipal theatres in Dresden, replacing Carl Maria von Weber who was ill with tuberculosis. When his tenure ended in 1826, he briefly worked in Gdansk before moving to Magdeburg, the hometown of his brother-in-law Wilhelm August Wohlbrück. It was there that Marschner and Wohlbrück decided to collaborate on their first successful opera, *Der Vampyr*, which capitalised on the popular *Schwarze Romantik* ('Dark Romantic') literary movement. Encouraged by their initial triumph, Wohlbrück and Marschner went on to create two more operas together, *Der Templer und die Jüdin* and *Des Falkners Braut*. In 1830, Marschner relocated to Hannover with his family and became Hofkapellmeister. During this period Marschner partnered with Eduard Devrient to compose the opera *Hans Heiling*, which became his most popular work and is often considered his greatest achievement. While he continued to compose operas and incidental music through the 1840s and 1850s, only a few of his theatrical works, such as *Waldmüllers Margret* (1855) and *Der Goldschmied von Ulm* (1856), achieved moderate success. In 1859, he was forced to retire from his position in Hannover against his wishes, and he passed away in 1861 at the age of 66.

Marschner is probably best known today, if at all, for his operas, and his chamber works have not received much attention. He composed piano trios throughout his career, indicating his high regard for the genre even if his own trios achieved little commercial success. Marschner titled each of these compositions for piano, violin, and cello 'Grand Trio'. Diary records reveal that he had a close relationship with Robert and Clara Schumann, who held a particular fondness for Marschner's Lieder and piano trios, and Marschner visited the couple and performed in their private salons several times at the homes of Carus and Wieck. The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* refers to Marschner and his chamber works as having 'an uncommon talent for discovering melodies that are always interesting and never ordinary. The harmony is full, yet not overpowering.' Although Marschner composed his *First Piano Trio*, Op. 29, in 1823, he did not return to the genre until the 1840s, when he completed his *Second Piano Trio*, Op. 111, while living in Hannover. Dedicated to Sophie Cohen (née Gleisdorfer), the trio was first announced in 1841 in the *Musikalisch-literarischer Monatsbericht*, published by Hofmeister in Vienna. This work marks the beginning of Marschner's 'mature' piano trios, as he composed six of his seven trios between 1840 and 1855. The *Sixth Trio*, Op. 148, also written during his Hannover years, was published by Hofmeister in 1850.

### **Piano Trio No. 2 in G minor, Op. 111**

The first movement of Marschner's *Second Piano Trio* opens in striking contrast to his earlier, more light-hearted *First Trio* of 1823. Beginning ominously in G minor, the theme is punctuated by alternating episodes between the violin and piano. A brief *con anima* passage introduces a more lyrical exchange between violin and cello, yet the movement remains agitated almost entirely throughout. The development section brims with tension, wavering climaxes, and a particularly delightful extended piano solo over pizzicato strings. As the movement moves towards its conclusion, the main theme returns, this time reinforced by chromatic flourishes in the piano, later giving way to forceful octave passages. The coda builds with wavering crescendos and diminuendos before a dramatic *presto* ending.

The second movement, in A flat major, offers a striking contrast to the brooding first movement, its melody brimming with optimism. The violin introduces a lyrical theme, with answering phrases in the cello creating a Romantic, song-like dialogue. Its flowing lines and harmonic warmth recall the early 19th-century Romanticism of composers such as Mendelssohn. The melody later shifts to F minor, yet retains its warmth, with a deeply moving cello solo supported by expressive thirds in the piano. A brief cello cadenza leads back to the main theme, as the violin reemerges in delicate unity.

A playful *Presto* in G minor, the third movement flows with relentless energy, its drama heightened by sharp forzandos and surging crescendos. The three instruments take turns carrying the melodic line, weaving seamlessly through the movement's lively textures. Dynamic contrasts and rhythmic drive create a sense of exhilaration throughout.

The finale opens in G minor, mirroring the ominous, dark energy of the first movement. Its *Allegro vivace* theme is closely related to the lively second subject of the third movement, though here, the minor tonality dominates. Early on, there is elegant melodic interplay between the violin and cello, while the piano provides a rippling scalar accompaniment. Yet despite its bouncy, almost dance-like feel, an underlying tension lingers. Sharp forzandos, also reminiscent of the third movement, punctuate the texture, adding drama. The development section sees the anxiety and sense of urgency intensify, with a *con anima* violin melody offering a fleeting respite before a cadenza-like piano passage leads swiftly into tremolos supporting the violin and cello lines. This soon builds toward a triumphant recapitulation of the opening theme, driving headlong into a fiery *con fuoco* and an electrifying *furioso* conclusion.

### **Piano Trio No. 6 in C minor, Op. 148**

Written less than a decade later, Marschner's *Sixth Piano Trio* shares much with his *Second*: both are cast in a minor key, rich in agitated melodies, and full of inventive interplay between the three instruments. The first movement of Marschner's *Sixth Piano Trio* opens with fiery intensity in the key of C minor, driven by urgent, offbeat piano accents. This turbulence is soon countered by a flowing, lyrical second theme in E flat major. The development section then introduces an entirely new atmosphere – hushed and suspenseful, as violin and cello exchange ghostly lines over the piano's subdued chords. This spectral interplay returns in the coda, before the movement hurtles to a dramatic close, recapturing the restless energy of its opening.

The second movement begins with cadenza-like piano chords, soon giving way to rippling arpeggios over sustained violin and cello lines. This seamlessly transitions into a dotted-rhythm theme in the piano – an unmistakable product of mid-19th-century Romanticism –occasionally disrupted by unexpected dynamic outbursts. A graceful cello melody in B flat major follows, supported by the violin's octave leaps, before the strings take over the melodic lead against the piano's fluid accompaniment. The movement closes on a dominant seventh chord, propelling the music straight into the energetic *Scherzo*.

The *Scherzo* is a whirlwind of relentless motion, with the piano's chromatic lines driving the energy while the strings alternate between pizzicato and arco accompaniment. The contrasting trio introduces bold piano chords over delicate pizzicato violin, before the cello enters with undulating chromatic figures, adding a sense of intrigue. Returning to C minor, the finale maintains a relentless, buoyant 6/8 momentum. Its generally jovial spirit is punctuated by sudden bursts of agitation, while the middle section brims with trills in piano and violin. With each reprise, the main theme gains ever more elaborate accompaniment, driving the movement to a spirited conclusion.

## Gould Piano Trio



Photo: Dan Reid

The Gould Piano Trio has remained at the forefront of the international chamber music scene for over a quarter of a century. Launched by winning First Prize at the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition, it was European Concert Hall Organisation 'Rising Stars', making a highly successful and critically acclaimed debut at New York's Weill Recital Hall. Its many appearances at London's Wigmore Hall have included the complete piano trios of Dvořák, Mendelssohn, Schubert and Beethoven. Tours of North America, the Far East, Europe and New Zealand have been interspersed by adventurous recording projects. In addition to its highly praised recordings of the standard works, the Trio has thrown light on long neglected gems from late-Romantic British repertoire, such as trios by Charles Villiers Stanford and John Ireland, plus fascinating works by Arnold Bax, Robin Milford, York Bowen and Cyril Scott. The Trio's passionate belief in the importance of developing new repertoire has resulted in commissioning works from many leading contemporary composers. It also maintains a lively relationship with promising young chamber players by giving masterclasses worldwide, particularly in association with the Guildhall School of Music & Drama and the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama.

[www.gouldpianotrio.com](http://www.gouldpianotrio.com)

*The instrumental parts and scores of the following works are available from:*

**www.artaria.com**

### *Sources*

The sources upon which the editions used in this recording have been made are:

#### **Piano Trio No. 2 in G minor, Op. 111**

Edited by Sam Girling – Artaria Editions AE669  
Hofmeister edition (Leipzig, 1841)

#### **Piano Trio No. 6 in C minor, Op. 148**

Edited by Sam Girling – Artaria Editions AE670  
Hofmeister edition (Leipzig, 1850)



Heinrich Marschner was the leading German operatic composer between Weber and the rise of Wagner, but he also wrote prolifically for chamber forces. His *Piano Trios No. 2* and *No. 6* share similar qualities: both are in a minor key, they are rich in agitated melodies, and are full of inventive interplay between the three instruments. In contrast to the earlier light-hearted *Trio No. 1* (available on 8.574612), *No. 2* is a darker, more tension-filled work, albeit with Mendelssohnian grace. *No. 6* also embodies elements of mid-19th-century Romanticism conveyed in music that ranges from the turbulent to the spectral.



Heinrich August  
**MARSCHNER**  
(1795–1861)

**Piano Trios • 2**

**Piano Trio No. 2 in G minor, Op. 111 (pub. 1841) 32:22**

- |          |   |              |
|----------|---|--------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>I. Allegro con spirito</b>           | <b>10:36</b> |
| <b>2</b> | <b>II. Romance: Andantino</b>           | <b>7:20</b>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>III. Scherzo (Humoreske): Presto</b> | <b>4:44</b>  |
| <b>4</b> | <b>IV. Allegro vivace</b>               | <b>9:42</b>  |

**Piano Trio No. 6 in C minor, Op. 148 (pub. 1850) 30:27**

- |          |  |             |
|----------|--|-------------|
| <b>5</b> | <b>I. Allegro risoluto ed appassionato</b> | <b>9:53</b> |
| <b>6</b> | <b>II. Andante sostenuto –</b>             | <b>8:12</b> |
| <b>7</b> | <b>III. Scherzo: Molto vivace</b>          | <b>6:59</b> |
| <b>8</b> | <b>IV. Finale: Allegro</b>                 | <b>5:23</b> |

**Gould Piano Trio**

**Lucy Gould, Violin • Richard Lester, Cello**  
**Benjamin Frith, Piano**

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