

The Naxos logo, featuring the word "NAXOS" in white capital letters on a blue rectangular background, with a stylized classical building facade above the text.

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The background of the cover is a detailed oil painting of a rugged coastal landscape. On the left, a steep, dark, and craggy cliff rises from a rocky shore. The sea is a deep blue with white-capped waves breaking against the base of the cliff and further out. In the distance, a range of mountains is visible under a vast, pale sky. A single, bright sun or moon hangs low in the sky, casting a soft glow. The overall mood is dramatic and atmospheric.

Carl NIELSEN

Complete Works
for Violin Solo and
Violin and Piano

Hasse Borup, Violin
Andrew Staupe, Piano

Carl NIELSEN

(1865–1931)

Violin Sonata No. 1 in A major, Op. 9, CNW 63 (1895)

- 1** I. Allegro glorioso
- 2** II. Andante
- 3** III. Allegro piacevole e giovanile

Violin Sonata No. 2, Op. 35, CNW 64 (1912/1919)

- 4** I. Allegro con tiepidezza – Più moderato – Agitato – Tempo I – Poco meno mosso
- 5** II. Molto adagio
- 6** III. Allegro piacevole

Prelude, Theme and Variations, Op. 48, CNW 46 (1922–23)

- 7** Prelude
- 8** Theme: Andante
- 9** Variation 1. Più mosso
- 10** Variation 2. Andantino quasi Allegretto
- 11** Variation 3. Andante espressivo
- 12** Variation 4. Poco allegro, molto ritmico
- 13** Variation 5. Più mosso
- 14** Variation 6. Tempo giusto
- 15** Variation 7. Presto
- 16** Variation 8. Poco adagio –
- 17** Tempo di tema

Preludio e Presto, Op. 52, CNW 47 (1927–28)

- 18** Preludio: Con fantasia
- 19** Presto

Violin Sonata in G major, CNW 62 (1881–82)

- 20** I. Allegro
- 21** II. Andante grazioso
- 22** III. Scherzo

23 Romance in D major, CNW 61 (date unknown)

24 Romance in G major, CNW 60 (1888)

25 Polka in A major, CNW 44 (?1873)

26 Grüss ('Greeting'), CNW 45 (fragment) (1890)

20:32

8:44

6:27

5:16

19:22

7:51

7:07

4:18

18:48

4:30

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1:39

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7:52

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2:30

3:02

3:58

0:42

0:26

Carl Nielsen (1865–1931)

Complete Works for Violin Solo and Violin and Piano

Carl Nielsen was both a professional violinist and a conductor; at the music conservatoire in Copenhagen he studied with Denmark's leading violin teacher of that time, Valdemar Tofte, whereas as a conductor he was mainly self-taught. In addition, he studied piano at the conservatoire without getting all too far as a pianist, although – according to his own statement – he would compose much of his music at the piano. He was probably not capable of playing his own major piano works, and there are no sources to testify to his ever performing as a pianist neither in private nor in public. In fact, there is one exception to this statement – there exists a recording from 1922 of Nielsen performing two short works: the song *There is a Fleet of Floating Islands*, CNW 237 (1921) and the piano piece *Puppet March*, CNW 83 (1897). Even though the acoustic quality of the recording is very poor and it was made at a private get-together where the equipment may not have been of the best quality, the performance does not reveal impressive pianistic skills. Such an impression is confirmed by the assessment in the examination books of the conservatoire, where it is briefly stated that Nielsen, at the third-year piano examination, played Schubert's *Impromptu in E flat major* 'distinctly and clearly. Comparatively steadily'.

Nielsen's relation to the violin, however, was more serious. Already as a boy he would accompany his father, Niels Maler, who as an amateur fiddler was often invited to play at weddings or other feasts among the local farmers. At one occasion, according to his memoirs *My Childhood on Funen* from 1927, he composed a modest *Polka* for solo violin at the age of seven or eight years (CNW 44), which admittedly his father did not like, but which in spite of this he published in facsimile in the memoirs 50 years later. A few years later, as a young regimental musician in Odense, he composed a number of movements for string quartet (CNW 49, 50, 51 and 54) and for violin and piano (CNW 61, 62), which were highly admired among his friends, and can be heard on this

album. Finally, it was as a violinist in 1883 that he applied for admittance to the conservatoire in Copenhagen, and to which Niels W. Gade, head of the conservatoire and the then 'king' of Danish musical society, offered him a free place after having studied one of the violin works which the young applicant had brought with him.

After three years at the conservatory (1884–86) Nielsen obtained his first permanent job as second violinist in the Royal Orchestra in Copenhagen, where he became familiar with the current repertoire of instrumental works and operas both as an orchestral player and occasionally as conductor.

Finally, it should be mentioned that during certain periods Nielsen would eagerly take part in the music life at the estate of Fuglsang at Lolland, not least as *primarius* in the various string quartets who would play here in connection with the social life at the estate. It seems that he only appeared as a soloist proper at a public concert on one occasion, playing the violin part in his own *Romance in G major* for violin and piano (CNW 60), performed as an encore at a concert in Odense in 1888, after having conducted his *Suite for String Orchestra*, CNW 32.

The most important factor when it comes to Nielsen's relation to the violin and its expressive possibilities was his encounter in 1913 with the Hungarian violinist Emil Telmányi, who was later to become his son-in-law. He soon became a close friend of the composer and an important support in matters concerning both the composition and the performance of his music for the violin. To this should be added that Telmányi – due to his status as an international violin virtuoso – was the most important musical ambassador for Nielsen's violin music in Denmark and abroad, both while Nielsen was still alive and after his death.

The significance of this friendship appears strongly in Nielsen's touching words to his son-in-law in a letter of 22 November 1925:

'[...] Yes, we two understand one another, my friend, and when I die, I shall place my soul into your hands and ask that you alone be the true champion and judge of my works. Well, we shouldn't get so solemn – yet still, I mean it from the bottom of my heart.'

Works in Chronological Order

Polka in A major, CNW 44 (c. 1873)

Whenever Nielsen was asked about his former career, he would mention this modest 16-bar composition as his earliest composition, and in his memoirs from 1927, *My Childhood on Funen*, he presents a facsimile reproduction of the work in toto (one of the two known sources for the work, both of which were written down almost 60 years after the time of composition). Nielsen was not absolutely consistent in fixing the actual date of the work; his indications vary between 'seven-year-old' and 'nine-year-old', as the occasion differs! In his memoirs he tells how he had entered the dancing hall a little earlier than his father and started playing the *Polka*: 'It was at the very moment when my father went into the dancing hall that this masterpiece was given its first performance. I could see from his face that he did not like it; however, he came up to me carrying his violin and started to second me. But when the dancing had finished, he said: "You should rather stop such old pranks, one cannot dance to music like that".'

Violin Sonata in G major, CNW 62 (1881–82)

As a 14-year-old boy Carl left his childhood home in Nr. Lyndelse on the island of Funen to become an army musician in the nearby city of Odense. Here, for the first time, he began taking formal tuition in violin and music theory, and joined a group of amateur musicians with whom he played chamber music – both his own works and works by Classical masters like Haydn and Mozart. Nielsen's *Violin Sonata in G major* and the two *Romances* for violin and piano (CNW 60 and 61) go back to this period.

The manuscript of the *G major Sonata* carries the year

1881, and about 20 years later musician and composer Olfert Jespersen, who later became music director of the Copenhagen Zoo, remembered how he was introduced to the *Sonata* in Odense '...and how I did my humble best to play the piano part – not to a March or a Polka, which I thought would be the case – but to a *Sonata* (in G) by a young man, with a scent of Mozartian youth.'

Romance in D major, CNW 61 (date unknown)

The D major *Romance* as well goes back to the time before the conservatoire years. Apart from the composer's autograph manuscript, no other sources concerning the work or its further fate are known.

Romance in G major, CNW 60 (1888)

The G major *Romance* is dedicated to Nielsen's first violin teacher from the years in Odense, Carl Larsen. The work was performed a dozen times during his lifetime, of which Nielsen himself played the violin at the two earliest performances (as mentioned above, one of the occasions as an encore at a concert at the Odense Music Society, on this occasion followed by a review in *Fyens Stiftstidende* that explicitly mentioned the piece).

Grüss ('Greeting'), CNW 45 (fragment) (1890)

The tiny four-bar *Grüss* ('Greeting') for solo violin, dated 1890, was included in a book of messages and well wishes from friends belonging to the then 15-year-old Agnes Bauditz, with whose parents Nielsen had lodged from 1885 to 1887 in a hired room in their flat in Copenhagen. In return, the young daughter took piano and violin lessons with Carl Nielsen. The pupil-teacher relation appears from the very first known letter ever in Carl Nielsen's hand: 'Agnes! My God! How I have been waiting for you. With sultry tears and with cramps in my tormented ventricle, I fling myself into the lap of the Matthisson-Hansen family. You, my lady, you have let me down by not arriving for the music lesson. O!!! Yoursss Carl Nielsen.'

Violin Sonata No. 1 in A major, Op. 9, CNW 63 (1895)

The *First Violin Sonata* was written in 1895, shortly after

the premiere of his *First Symphony*. Both at the first performance, and at later performances in Nielsen's lifetime, the reviews were highly critical, and as late as in 1925 the work was characterised as a token of the composer's 'glorious self-assertiveness and juvenile expansiveness'. Contrary to this, the Czech writer and composer Max Brod showed great admiration for the *Sonata*, when he happened to study it in 1910, later becoming an eager advocate for Nielsen's music in Germany and Austria. Brod's acquaintance with the *Sonata* led to a long-lasting friendship with Nielsen, which is documented in the letters between the two friends.

The same goes for Emil Telmányi, whose eyes and ears were opened for Nielsen's mastery by this very work when he came to Denmark for the first time in 1912. In his memoirs Telmányi wrote about the thematic concentration of the first movement: '... how could it be possible to write such a rich motivic elaboration of a sixth-four chord and its solution'.

Violin Sonata No. 2, Op. 35, CNW 64 (1912/1919)

The G minor *Sonata* is probably the most frequently performed violin work by Nielsen abroad, not least thanks to Telmányi's dedication to the piece, which he called 'A work unparalleled in the sonata literature'. Both he and Nielsen himself considered the second movement as especially unique. Ten years after its premiere Nielsen wrote in an unpublished programme note about the movement: 'It has a melancholy expression, which now and then brightens, especially in the middle part, and which at the end has a weaker and weaker pulsation and at last settles completely.'

The somewhat strange tempo indication of the first movement, *Allegro con tiepidezza*, ('with tepidity') was added in connection with the printed edition of the work, and in fact only covers the first 20 bars of the movement; in the original autograph sources the indication was just *Allegro*.

The *Agitato* passage of the first movement, bars 116 to 118, were also changed in connection with the printing of the *Sonata* in 1919. The change was made at the initiative of the Austrian pianist Artur Schnabel, who felt that the piano part of the passage needed a pianistic

tightening up in a more virtuoso direction. Even if Carl Nielsen later regretted this correction, it has been kept in all later editions of the *Sonata*. This is just one of a number of changes in Nielsen's music based on more or less good advice from friends and colleagues.

Prelude, Theme and Variations, Op. 48, CNW 46 (1922–23)

The two works for solo violin, *Opp. 48 and 52*, both belong to the time after 1922, when Nielsen had embarked on a more experimental and modernistic style. The year after having finished his large *Fifth Symphony*, with its strident interference of side drum and woodwind instruments at the end of the first movement, he started working on *Prelude, Theme and Variations*, aiming to have it performed at a concert as part of his planned visit to London in June 1923 together with his son-in-law Emil Telmányi. The work was dedicated to Telmányi, who duly gave its first performance at the aforementioned concert. In fact, the last page with *Variation 7* was composed in a London hotel room three days before the concert. Nielsen himself stressed that the work was inspired by Bach's *Chaconne* from his *Partita* for solo violin. With its plain style and regular metres, the theme itself bears the mark of Nielsen's preoccupation with composing songs for communal singing, which in those years was just as important to him as the work with his large orchestral works.

Preludio e Presto, Op. 52, CNW 47 (1927–28)

In December 1927 the newspaper *Politiken* celebrated the 60th birthday of the Danish composer Fini Henriques with a number of greetings from his friends and colleagues. Nielsen's contribution consisted of the beginning of a *Preludio for Solo Violin* followed by a short homage, containing – among others – the following words: 'I shall never forget – my friend – when I first heard your playing of Bach's G minor *Prelude*.' At the request of Emil Telmányi, Nielsen continued working on the composition, and a couple of months later the work appeared in its final version as *Preludio e Presto*. The many technical details connected with the playing of the work, including the use



Carl Nielsen with his violin, painted by his daughter, Anne Marie Telmányi (1893–1983)

© The Carl Nielsen Museum

of harmonics, were introduced in close collaboration with Telmányi. Nielsen even prescribed a special *sordino* for the performance of the work, which could be operated with the left hand concurrently with the musician playing on the open A string.

The work was highly appreciated at its premiere in 1928. *Politiken* wrote: 'New music that lives, although somewhat retired [Danish: '*indgetogen*'], last night stressed its existence with an 'oops-a-daisy'. The man who really meant it to be, was *Carl Nielsen*, the invincible [...]'.

What a change in the reviewer's attitude, compared with the one with which his violin music had been met 30 years earlier.

Niels Krabbe

Andrew Staupe



Photo: Cody Bess

Pianist Andrew Staupe has emerged as one of the distinctive voices of a new generation of pianists. Staupe has performed with major orchestras and acclaimed conductors across the globe in distinguished concert venues including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Rachmaninov Hall in Moscow, Schumann-Haus in Leipzig and the Salle Cortot in Paris. An avid chamber musician, he has jammed with legendary vocalist Bobby McFerrin and played tangos with the Assad Brothers. Staupe has a keen interest in new music and has collaborated with composers Howard Shore, Augusta Read Thomas, Yehudi Wyner, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Pierre Jalbert and Christopher Walczak among others. Deeply committed to teaching, he is an assistant professor of piano at the University of Houston. He is artistic director of the Young Artist World Piano Festival in Minnesota, and gives frequent masterclasses and lectures around the United States. A native of Saint Paul, Minnesota, he earned his Doctorate at Rice University with Jon Kimura Parker, and also studied at the University of Minnesota with Lydia Artymiw.

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Hasse Borup



Hasse Borup is professor of violin and head of string studies at the University of Utah School of Music. Dr Borup has released critically acclaimed recordings on the Centaur, Naxos and Innova labels. Solo performances include appearances in Vienna, Beijing, Washington, D.C., Venice, Cremona, Paris, Copenhagen and Miami. He was a founding member of the award-winning Coolidge Quartet, has performed live on radio in Denmark, Slovenia, Australia and Hong Kong, and has been featured on NPR's *Performance Today*. Dr Borup has written articles for *The Strad* and *American String Teacher* on topics ranging from violin acoustics to intonation. He directed the Chamber Music Institute at the Music@Menlo Festival and is a frequent guest professor at the Saarburg Festival in Germany. Dr Borup's main teachers included Arnold Steinhardt, Philip Setzer, David Takeno, Almita Vamos, David Salness, Isaac Stern and Hatto Beyerle, and members of the Guarneri, Emerson and Juilliard Strings Quartets. He holds degrees from the University of Maryland, the Hartt School of Music and the Royal Danish Academy of Music.

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The music of Carl Nielsen holds a very special place for Danes, defining the nation's musical voice for over a century and reflecting the soul of Denmark. Nielsen was a violinist from childhood, his early *Sonata in G major* having 'a scent of Mozartian youth', while the newly published *Romance in G major* was dedicated to his first teacher. Mature works include the *Second Violin Sonata*, 'a work unparalleled in the sonata literature', and the *Prelude, Theme and Variations* inspired by Bach's *Chaconne* for solo violin. This collection represents the first ever recording of Nielsen's complete music for violin solo or with piano.

Carl NIELSEN

(1865–1931)

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18–19	Preludio e Presto, Op. 52, CNW 47 (1927–28)	11:45
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*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Hasse Borup, Violin

Andrew Staupe, Piano 1–6 20–24

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

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