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JOHANNES BRAHMS
ROBERT SCHUMANN
FRANZ SCHUBERT
KARL PILSS



Heartfelt
Romantic Works for Horn
Rob van de Laar
Thomas Beijer piano



SUPER AUDIO CD

JOHANNES BRAHMS | ROBERT SCHUMANN
FRANZ SCHUBERT | KARL PILSS

Heartfelt

Romantic Works for Horn

Rob van de Laar French horn

Thomas Beijer piano

Mathieu van Bellen violin

Karin Strobos mezzo-soprano

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

Horn Trio, Op. 40 (1865)

[1] I Andante	7:58
[2] II Scherzo. Allegro	6:46
[3] III Adagio mesto	8:08
[4] IV Finale. Allegro con brio	6:01

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

[5] Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70 (1849)	8:47
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FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

[6] Auf dem Strom, D. 943 (1828)	9:52
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KARL PILSS (1902-1979)

Tre pezzi in forma di Sonata

[7] I Sinfonia	8:42
[8] II Intermezzo	8:21
[9] III Rondo alla caccia	7:54

total time 72:35

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) – Horn Trio, Op. 40 (1865)

During his own lifetime, Brahms enjoyed a reputation as an outstanding pianist and a most important composer. It is probably less well-known that he also learned to play the cello and horn as a youngster. His mother seems to have greatly enjoyed her son's horn playing. It is therefore no great surprise that he started work on the composition of his *Horn Trio* just a few months after his mother passed away in 1865. He spent the summer of that year at the holiday home of his great supporter and advocate Clara Schumann, near Baden-Baden in the Black Forest, where he could find the peace and inspiration he needed in order to compose. Two years later, he took his friend Albert Dietrich to the spot where the theme of the *Horn Trio*'s first movement had occurred to him. "I was out walking one morning and when I arrived at this spot the sun started to glow; the theme came to me in an instant." The first and third movements are to some degree nostalgic in nature and the work as a whole contains a number of references to the composer's childhood.

The trio section of the Scherzo movement is an arrangement of an early fragment he scribbled in a guest book, as thanks for staying with the Director of Music in Göttingen in 1853. The Adagio mesto can be regarded as an *in memoriam* for his mother, who had died in 1865. The final movement is based on the folk song "*Es soll sich ja keiner mit der Liebe abgeben*"; Brahms was to remain single throughout his life.

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) – Adagio and Allegro, Op. 70 (1849)

The *Adagio and Allegro* is one of a series of miniatures for different solo instruments and piano written by Schumann in Dresden in 1849. Schumann was among the first to explore the expanded possibilities offered by the new valve horn in this two-part work. The instrument had been under development by the Viennese instrument maker Leopold Uhlmann (1806-1878) since 1835. This three-valve horn was an instant success in Berlin and rapidly spread from there throughout the remainder of Germany and Austria. The new instrument offered many more possibilities than the natural horn, including much easier playing of the chromatic scale, a clearer sound, a wider range and greater expressive powers. All of these qualities can be heard quite clearly in this work by Schumann. Even as the piece was still being written, Clara Schumann played it through a number of times with Schumann's musical copyist, the horn player Julius Schlitterlau.

Clara wrote in her diary "The piece is delightful, fresh and passionate, just the way I like!" At its premiere on 26 January 1850, the work was performed on violin, as Schumann had misjudged the degree of difficulty the work required of the valve horn. Even to this day, the work has the reputation of being extraordinarily demanding.

The two sections are entitled "Adagio. Langsam, mit innigem Ausdruck" and "Allegro. Rasch und Feurig" (*Slow, with sincere expressiveness and Lively, fast and fiery*). The *Adagio*, which the composer initially described as a "Romance", sounds like a poetical, lyrical lullaby, almost a Song without

Words in the manner of the composer's close friend Mendelssohn. The drawn-out duet between horn and piano is a perfect example of the horn's lyrical qualities. What we hear in the second *Allegro* section is more the blare of the hunting horn. But, on closer scrutiny, what we actually hear throughout the entire work is an impression of the impulsive Florestan and the contemplative Eusebius, Schumann's two alter egos.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) – Auf dem Strom, D. 943 (1828)

Schubert wrote his song *Auf dem Strom* in 1828, the final year of his short life, to a text by Ludwig Rellstab (1799-1860). It was written for a concert at the *Wiener Musikverein*, marking the first anniversary of the death of Ludwig van Beethoven on 26 March. The programme, for the first time in the composer's life, was confined solely to works by Schubert himself. We know from a covering letter that has survived that Rellstab had sent some poems to Beethoven a few years earlier, hoping to prompt the famous composer 'into composition'. However, nothing more came of this. Schubert, who was a great admirer of Beethoven, saw his opportunity to compose a special song as an ode to the master. He added a dazzling horn part here, but would also go on to add a different obligato instrument (a clarinet) to his later masterpiece *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*. The song *Auf dem Strom* is a farewell to a beloved as she crosses the river through death's dark veil. The horn represents the shade of the departed, with which the singer performs a notional duet. It is assumed that the work was written *in memoriam* Ludwig van Beethoven, who had died one year previously, as the second theme closely resembles the funeral march from the *Eroica* Symphony. Schubert wrote this song with *obligato* horn for the tenor

Ludwig Tietze and horn player Josef Rudolf Lewy, the first true virtuoso of the valve horn. The song, lyrical and virtuosic in equal measure, was an instant success, featuring on further concert programmes within a month after its premiere. It rapidly gained in popularity and soon appeared in print.

Karl Pilss (1902-1979) – Tre pezzi in forma di Sonata

The composer Karl Pilss is perhaps best known among brass players, having written concertos for trumpet, horn and bass trombone, as well as a number of works for brass ensemble. His most frequently performed works are the *Trumpet Sonata* from 1935 and these *Three Pieces*. The composer, who was also a choral and orchestral conductor, music teacher and piano accompanist, spent most of his life in and around Vienna, where he studied piano, music theory and composition with Franz Schmidt. He also studied conducting under Robert Heger. Pilss was known in his day as a leading music teacher, choral trainer and musical assistant to several famous conductors. He worked, for instance, with the *Wiener Singakademie* and as assistant choral conductor at the Vienna State Opera and the Salzburg Festival. In Salzburg, he worked closely alongside such conducting luminaries as Arturo Toscanini, Bruno Walter, Wilhelm Furtwängler and Herbert von Karajan. He enjoyed painting in his free time and wrote a large number of musical works, including dozens of pieces for wind, brass, orchestra and choir as well as 19 songs. The influences of Richard Strauss, Gustav Mahler and his composition teacher Franz Schmidt can be clearly heard in his music.

Translation: Bruce Gordon/Muse Translations



The Dutch horn player **Rob van de Laar** (1987), began learning the horn at the Fontys Conservatorium in Tilburg. He subsequently studied with Herman Jeurissen at the Royal Conservatory in the Hague, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 2009. Rob then continued his studies with Wolfgang Vladar at the University for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna.

Rob was a member of the Hague Philharmonic Orchestra from 2008 until 2013, when he was appointed Principal Horn of Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2016, he became Principal Horn of the Mozarteumorchester, Salzburg. As a guest principal, he has worked with many leading orchestras, including the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra of Europe, Seoul Philharmonic, KBS Symphony Orchestra Seoul and Brussels Philharmonic, under esteemed conductors such as Bernhard Haitink, Mariss Jansons and Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

As soloist, Rob has appeared with het Brabants Orkest, the South Netherlands Philharmonic, Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra, the Anhaltische Philharmonie Dessau, Youth Orchestra of the Netherlands and the Orchestra of the Royal Conservatory in The Hague, playing concertos by Joseph Haydn, W.A. Mozart and Richard Strauss.

Rob has a great passion for chamber music and has played at many national and international festivals, including the Orlando Festival, Grachtenfestival Amsterdam and the Tblisi International Wind Festival. He has appeared with various ensembles such as Camerata Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and the

Netherlands Winds Ensemble. In January 2017, Rob received the Nederlandse Muziekprijs (Dutch Music Award), which is the highest accolade that can be awarded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) to a musician working in the field of classical music. The prize is awarded upon recommendation by the Advisory Committee Dutch Music Award, which is hosted by the Performing Arts Fund. Rob has received financial support for his musical education from the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds and the Stichting Eigen Muziekinstrument.

Thomas Beijer (1988) is a young pianist and composer praised for his excellent technique and artistic integrity. A clear and profound musical insight is evident in his performances and compositions.

Born and based in the Netherlands, Thomas Beijer enrolled at the Conservatory of Amsterdam, where he studied with Jan Wijn. He took masterclasses with Jorge Luis Prats, Emanuel Ax, Menahem Pressler, Murray Perahia, Pascal Devoyon, Jacques Rouvier and Elza Kolodin. Thomas Beijer concluded his Master's study in 2011 by graduating with the Highest Distinction.

By winning the prestigious Young Pianist Foundation National Piano Competition in 2007, Thomas Beijer positioned himself at the top of a new generation of pianists in the Netherlands. The international jury characterized Beijer as a "very interesting musical personality, with distinctive ideas about music. A true artist".

From the age of ten Thomas Beijer performed recitals in Europe and Asia. As a soloist he played piano concertos by among others Mozart, Beethoven, Grieg, Brahms, Franck, Ravel, Gershwin and Adams, with orchestras such as The Hague Philharmonic Orchestra, het Brabants Orkest, Amsterdam Sinfonietta and the Netherlands Student Orchestra. He worked with conductors like Neeme Järvi, Nicholas Milton, Ed Spanjaard and Bas Wiegers.

His repertoire ranges from seventeenth-century music to contemporary compositions. Thomas has a special affinity with Spanish music; works by Albéniz, Granados and De Falla are often part of his recital programmes.

Thomas Beijer is a multitalented musician. Besides his performances as a concert pianist he is also a composer and a passionate chamber musician. Thomas is a member of the Amsterdam Chamber Soloists and a regular guest of Camerata Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

Thomas Beijer's debut CD with compositions by Johannes Brahms was released in 2008. In 2012 he presented his second CD with works by Rachmaninoff. Thomas was signed by Lyrone Records in 2013 which resulted in the release of Canción y Danza and the preparations for his fourth CD. His recordings are available in over 40 countries worldwide. Thomas receives support from a trust provided by the Young Pianist Foundation.

Mathieu van Bellen (1988) was born in the Netherlands and started studying the violin in Belgium with Nico Baltussen. He continued with Jan Repko, first at the Amsterdam Conservatory and at Chethams School of Music in Manchester, for which he was awarded a scholarship by The VandenEnde Foundation. He continued at the Royal College of Music in London with Itzhak Rashkovsky and at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, with Ulf Wallin.

Laureate of Yehudi Menuhin Competition, Wieniawski Competition, Prinses Christina Competition and Oskar Back Competition he is also a recipient of MBF, RPS Emily Anderson Prize, Philharmonia Martin Musical Scholarship Fund Awards and Making Music Awards. He was also awarded the Bach Prize and the String Player of the Year 2008 at the Royal College of Music. He has given concerts in Europe, Asia and the USA, playing in major music festivals like Festspiele MV in Germany, and Chamber Music Festivals all over Europe. He has appeared several times on television and radio, and he performed in halls like the Purcell Room at the Southbank Centre, Royal Festival Hall London, Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Tel Aviv Opera House, and Megaron in Athens, performing with orchestras such as the National Orchestra of Belgium, Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra, Holland Symfonia, Southbank Sinfonia, and Camerata Athena.

Violinist of the Busch Trio, Mathieu is an active chamber musician, having played chamber music concerts with artists like Shlomo Mintz, Miguel da Silva, Michael Collins and Bruno Giuranna. With the Busch Trio he has performed in Europe and Asia, having played in the Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Wigmore Hall London, BOZAR Brussels and NCPA Beijing.

His first CD was released in November 2014, with solo works by Bach, Blaha and Bartók. In the same year he was concertmaster of the European Union Youth Orchestra, working with Vasily Petrenko and Vladimir Ashkenazy with concerts in the London Proms and the Royal Concertgebouw Amsterdam.

In 2015 Mathieu won the Grachtenfestival Prize, resulting in a residency during the 2016 Grachtenfestival.

Mathieu plays on the ex-Adolf Busch G.B. Guadagnini violin (Turin, 1783), as well as a Dominique Peccatte bow, both on loan to him thanks to private sponsorship, for which he is most grateful.

Karin Strobos studied with Henny Diemer at the Utrecht Conservatory, where she gained her master's degree with distinction in 2009. While working on her degree, she was a member of Opera Studio Nederland.

In 2011 she had a chance to substitute in the role of Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* by Richard Strauss with the Dutch National Opera, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. Her successful performance received lavish praise, with Dutch daily newspapers NRC and de Volkskrant even calling it a dream debut. From then on, Karin's career continued to gain momentum.

From 2009 to 2011 Karin was a member of the permanent ensemble of Opera Zuid, where she sang a variety of roles. She returned there in 2015 to sing the title role in *La Cenerentola*. Since 2014 she has been a soloist in the opera house of Essen, Germany, where she has performed roles such as Cherubino, Charlotte, Suzuki and Zerlina, Idamante, Dorabella, Amando, Rosina, Siebel, Octavian and Sesto.

With the Dutch National Opera, in addition to *Der Rosenkavalier*, Karin has performed Flora in *La Traviata*, Phenice in *Armide* by Gluck and the world premiere of *The New Prince* by Mohamed Fairouz. In 2016 she returned to the Netherlands to take the role of the composer with the Nederlandse Reisopera in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. She has been a guest soloist with Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Flemish Philharmonic, the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra,

the Hague Philharmonic, the Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra, the North Netherlands Symphony Orchestra and the South Netherlands Philharmonic.

In his first symphony, composer Willem Jeths wrote two movements especially for Karin. It was in this role that Karin made her debut in the Saturday Matinee of the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam with the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Edo de Waart.

Karin has a particular passion for chamber music, and she and pianist Else Sterk work together as a duo. She regularly performs with her trio, consisting of pianist Daria van den Berken and flutist Felicia van den End. She has performed with the duo Sax en Stix and the Cello8ctet Amsterdam. Karin has won a number of prizes, including the festival prize of the Grachtenfestival, the Gouden Viooltje (a Dutch award for outstanding musical talent) and, together with her trio partners, the Debuut Publieksprijs.

This High Definition Surround Recording was Produced, Engineered and Edited by Bert van der Wolf of NorthStar Recording Services, using the 'High Quality Musical Surround Mastering' principle. The basis of this recording principle is a realistic and holographic 3 dimensional representation of the musical instruments, voices and recording venue, according to traditional concert practice. For most older music this means a frontal representation of the musical performance, but such that width and depth of the ensemble and acoustic characteristics of the hall do resemble 'real life' as much as possible. Some older compositions, and many contemporary works do specifically ask for placement of musical instruments and voices over the full 360 degrees sound scape, and in these cases the recording is as realistic as possible, within the limits of the 5.1 Surround Sound standard. This requires a very innovative use of all 6 loudspeakers and the use of completely matched, full frequency range loudspeakers for all 5 discrete channels. A complementary sub-woofer, for the ultra low frequencies under 40Hz, is highly recommended to maximally benefit from the sound quality of this recording.

This recording was produced with the use of Sonodore microphones, Avalon Acoustic monitoring, Siltech Mono-Crystal cabling and dCS - & Merging Technologies converters.



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**This production is also available as High Resolution digital download
at www.spiritofturtle.com**

Executive producer: Rob van de Laar & Bert van der Wolf

Recording location: Galaxy Studio, Mol, Belgium

Recording dates: 4, 5, 11, 12 June 2016

Recording: Northstar Recording Services BV

Producer, Balance engineer, editing & mastering: Bert van der Wolf

Assistant Recording engineer: Martijn van der Wolf

A&R Challenge Records International: Anne de Jong

Liner notes: Wouter Schmidt & Rob van de Laar

Translations: Bruce Gordon/Muse Translations

Booklet editing: Boudewijn Hagemans & Johan van Markesteijn

Photography: Gisela Schenker

Product coordination: Boudewijn Hagemans

Graphic Design: Natasja Wallenburg & Juan Carlos Villarroel, newartsint.com

Art direction: New Arts International

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