

A portrait of Camiel Boomsma, a young man with curly brown hair and green eyes, wearing a grey suit jacket, a white shirt, and a striped tie. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a soft expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN
FRANZ SCHUBERT

Musings

Camiel Boomsma - piano



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FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810-1849)

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| [1] Nocturne Op.9, No.1: Larghetto in B-flat Minor | 6:48 |
| [2] Impromptu No.3, Op.51 | 7:25 |
| [3] Nocturne Op.62, No.1: Andante in B Major | 7:37 |
| [4] Nocturne Op.48, No.1: Lento in C Minor | 6:08 |

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Piano Sonata No.21 in B-flat Major, D.960

- | | |
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| [5] I. Molto moderato | 15:49 |
| [6] II. Andante sostenuto | 10:23 |
| [7] III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace con delicatezza | 4:17 |
| [8] IV. Allegro ma non troppo | 9:10 |

total time 67:39

Musings

Did the two composers represented on this CD actually know of each other's existence? When Franz Schubert died in Vienna in 1828, the then 10-year-old Frédéric Chopin was still at the very start of his career. He had already achieved his first successes in his native country, but he was scarcely known anywhere else. In August 1829, he was making one of his first foreign trips to Vienna. Schubert had died just one year previously and, while not entirely unknown, his reputation was certainly not so great that Chopin would have been bound to hear his music during his stay in the city.

Also, while their lives were chronologically very close, they were on different sides of a musical time shift. Despite his admiration for the progressive young Beethoven, Schubert was to a large extent still under the influence of the 18th century. From the very outset of his career, however, Chopin was steeped in the Romantic movement, which he wanted to exploit to the full on the basis of his extraordinary pianistic talent.

Singing

But Camiel Boomsma has deliberately opted to juxtapose these two composers, and with good reason. "Despite the major differences in musical background, these two composers are remarkably close in spirit. The most important aspect here is their ability to create beautiful, balanced melodies on the piano. They make the instrument sing more than anyone else. This was perhaps an obvious way forward for Schubert. As the composer of more than 600 songs, the art of the song was intrinsic to his very being. But he also had

the gift to translate this aspect into his instrumental music. You can hear this in his chamber music, symphonic works and of course his piano music, which is so important to me. This is immediately noticeable when listening to the themes he used in his *Piano Sonata, D. 960*. The best way to experience this is not just to play the melodies but also actually to sing them. However, Chopin was on a par with this in his own way, since much of his music is fundamentally vocal in conception. While Schubert based his work on the German *lieder*, Chopin was inspired by Italian opera from the early 19th century. There – for instance in the great dramatic arias of the likes of Bellini – you can hear beautifully extended ‘endless’ melodies that are highly romantic in nature, often accompanied by simple chord figures. I get a strong impression of the same thing in Chopin’s nocturnes, certainly the early ones. They also contain long, melodic phrases in the right hand, with a simple but subtle accompaniment in the left hand.”

Technique

But there are differences, too, of course. For Schubert, the piano was one of many ways in which he expressed himself musically. But he also composed a large body of work where the piano’s role is either modest or non-existent, such as his string quartets, symphonies and operas. On the other hand, Chopin wrote almost exclusively for the piano. He was entirely at one with the instrument. The music he wrote for piano was in many cases a reflection of what he would play at the keyboard on a daily basis while studying or performing recitals. Playing and composing were, one might say, natural extensions of each other as far as he was concerned. Camiel Boomsma elaborates: “You feel this instantly. I get the sense of a clearly traditional approach in Schubert’s

music. The structure of Schubert’s music, particularly the late sonatas, is almost perfect, but this is never at the expense of the melodies that were so dear to him. I get the same experience when I play his sonata. For him, technique is entirely subservient to the much more important structure and the story he is telling. He was an outstanding player, albeit not a great concert pianist, unlike Chopin, who was a true virtuoso with no technical limitations. He applied technique as a creative element in itself. You can see that he is continually seeking the limits of what he can draw from the instrument, thinking up new techniques and incorporating them in his compositions. For example, he frequently includes rapid leaps across the various registers of piano, generating a broad sound spectrum. You can find another excellent example in his *Nocturne, Op. 62 No. 1*. In this, he encapsulates the melody in a series of trills, creating a quite unique sound effect. The remarkable thing is that he never lost sight of musicality. While some of the piano giants of his day, such as the young Liszt or Thalberg, occasionally let their virtuosity descend into what could be described as pianistic circus acts, Chopin never gave in to this. This may also be one reason why he preferred to give recitals in the intimacy of a salon, where *bravura* was less at home than in a large concert hall. Yet another affinity he had with Schubert, who also sought the confines of a smaller room for his popular Schubertiades”.

Feeling

So, does Schubert need an entirely different approach than Chopin? Camiel Boomsma thinks that this is only partly the case. “Of course there are differences. Schubert demands a certain discipline. One must learn to

understand his music gradually. One also needs a certain maturity for this. Chopin flows from the fingers much more directly but at the same time demands an enormous awareness of sound. He also gives the pianist a great deal of scope for interpretation, as long as the music is played with feeling. This is what I care about most, because at the end of the day this feeling is the most important factor. It remains the starting point for everything you play and, in that respect, Schubert and Chopin are not so very different."

This brings us finally to the title of the CD: *Musings*. "It signifies dreams, reveries, being immersed in thought. It's the process that the composer experiences while writing the work and also what I experience when studying and performing this music. As I play, I try in turn to pass on this process, this quest for insight, to my audience."

Translation: Bruce Gordon/Muse Translations



Camiel Boomsma's musicianship is described by press and public as highly sensitive and profound. In his playing the emphasis lies on telling the musical story. Boomsma has performed at many major national and international venues including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, Teatro la Fenice in Venice, De Doelen concert hall in Rotterdam, De Philharmonie in Haarlem, Shanghai City Theater, Nanjing Arts Center and Chengdu Concert Hall to name a few. Camiel Boomsma distinguishes himself as a pianist with a sound of his own. He aims for traditional as well as original repertoire. When preparing for a recital he likes to look beyond the literature's horizon and, and does not avoid unusual programming. An excellent example is Boomsma's love for transcriptions, most notably those of the music of Richard Wagner.

Noteworthy concerts in 2017 and 2018 are recitals at the Klavierfestival and Wagner Festspiele in Bayreuth and The Concert series at Schloss Elmau in Krün. Furthermore there will be numerous solo recitals in the Netherlands and abroad, and duo recitals dedicated to Debussy and Wagner for 2 pianos with world renowned pianist Severin von Eckardstein.

Boomsma has received great critical acclaim for his Wagner journey. Through solo transcriptions Wagner's music becomes transparent and speaks to us in a refreshing and revealing way. His recordings for EtceteraRecords, Wagner transcriptions and Porazzi, published in 2015 and 2016, received raving reviews in BBC Music magazine (5 stars), Diapason (4 stars), Trouw, NRC, De Volkskrant, Luister Magazine, Classica and many more, and have been broadcasted extensively by France Musique, Radio 4, Hr2Kultur and ORF.

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