

NAXOS

**Johan
HALVORSEN**

Sarabande

Passacaglia

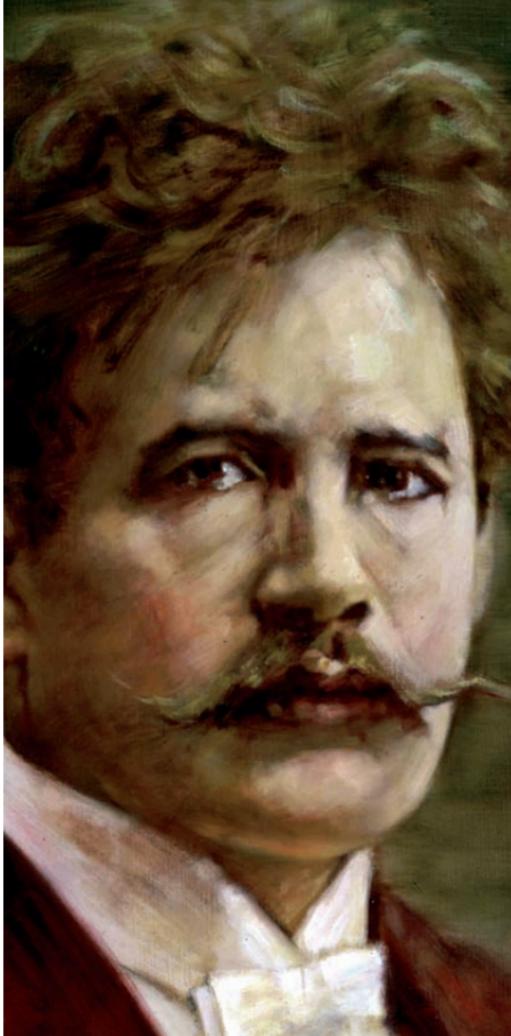
**Concert Caprice on
Norwegian Melodies**

**Antonio
BRUNI**

Six Duos Concertants

Natalia Lomeiko, Violin

Yuri Zhislin, Viola/Violin



**Johan
HALVORSEN**
(1864-1935)

- | | | |
|----------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Sarabande con variazioni (on a theme of Handel) for violin and viola | 8:53 |
| 2 | Passacaglia in G minor for violin and viola
(after Handel's <i>Keyboard Suite No. 7 in G minor, HWV 432: VI. Passacaille</i>) | 6:44 |
| 3 | Concert Caprice on Norwegian Melodies for two violins * | 6:01 |

**Antonio
BRUNI**
(1757-1821)

Six Duos Concertants for violin and viola, Book IV

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| | Duo No. 1 in E flat major | 9:10 |
| 4 | I. Allegro moderato | 4:29 |
| 5 | II. Allegro assai | 4:41 |
| | Duo No. 2 in G minor/major | 9:14 |
| 6 | I. Allegro con moto | 3:55 |
| 7 | II. Andante | 5:19 |
| | Duo No. 3 in B flat major | 9:14 |
| 8 | I. Allegro moderato | 4:52 |
| 9 | II. Menuetto: Moderato | 4:22 |
| | Duo No. 4 in D major | 7:49 |
| 10 | I. Allegro maestoso | 4:06 |
| 11 | II. Allegretto scherzando | 3:43 |
| | Duo No. 5 in C major | 9:33 |
| 12 | I. Adagio – Allegro | 5:27 |
| 13 | II. Andante sostenuto | 4:06 |
| | Duo No. 6 in F major | 8:27 |
| 14 | I. Adagio | 4:03 |
| 15 | II. Finale: Allegro scherzando | 4:24 |

**Natalia Lomeiko, Violin
Yuri Zhislin, Viola / Violin ***

Johan Halvorsen (1864-1935) • Antonio Bartolomeo Bruni (1757-1821)

Violin and Viola Duos

Born in the small town of Drammen, Norway on 15th March 1864, Johan Halvorsen became one of the most prominent figures of Norwegian musical life during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. At the age of seven he started studying the violin, and was soon learning other instruments too, playing in local bands. When he was just fifteen, he travelled to Oslo, where he earned money playing the violin in theatre orchestras. Halvorsen was largely self-taught as a musician, although he did study with both Jakob Lindberg in Stockholm from 1884–85, and with Adolph Brodsky in Leipzig (1886–88). In 1885 he was appointed leader of the *Musikskelskabet Harmonien* (now the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra) in Bergen. It was also around this time that he met his compatriot and fellow composer Edvard Greig, soon to become a lifelong friend. In 1888 he travelled to Aberdeen, but moved to Helsinki just one year later. There he was appointed professor of violin at the Helsinki Music Institute, meanwhile also remaining active as a performer. It was during this period that he began to compose, encouraged by, among others, Ferruccio Busoni. In 1893 Halvorsen returned to Bergen, this time as the principal conductor of the *Musikskelskabet Harmonien* and the local theatre. He continued to compose while his reputation as a conductor grew steadily. In 1899 Norway's new National Theatre was founded in Oslo, and, owing in part to Grieg's support, Halvorsen was given the job of conductor. It was during this period that much of his best-known music was written, the greater part of it being incidental music for the theatre. He died in Oslo on 4th December 1935, one of the nation's most respected musicians.

First written for a church concert, the *Passacaglia in G minor* was begun in 1897 but revised until 1914. Based on the last movement of Handel's *Keyboard Suite No. 7 in G minor, HWV 432*, it is perhaps Halvorsen's best-known work for violin and viola duo. It opens with a relatively unadorned arrangement of the original theme and variations before transformation into an elaborate set of new variations based on Handel's music. Halvorsen himself played the viola at the première.

As in the *Passacaglia*, Halvorsen echoes the musical

language of the baroque in another Handelian work for violin and viola, the *Sarabande con variazioni*. The piece makes use of the famous *Sarabande* from Handel's *Keyboard Suite in D minor, HWV 437*. Again, Halvorsen remains faithful to the original movement for the first part of his arrangement, but soon the music blossoms into a number of separate variations, some lyrical and expressive, others explosively virtuosic.

With the *Concert Caprice on Norwegian Melodies* we enter an altogether more pastoral realm. With its opening imitation of a bird-call and rustic double-stopping it evokes the natural world. Unlike the other works on this disc, it was written for two violins, which dance around each other in friendly rivalry. Halvorsen may have had the Hardanger fiddle (an eight-stringed Norwegian folk-violin) in mind while writing this piece – certainly he could play the instrument, and was familiar with much Norwegian folk-music, being commissioned by Grieg to transcribe traditional folk tunes played on the fiddle.

Antonio Bartolomeo Bruni was born in Cuneo, Italy on 28th January 1757. He studied the violin in Turin and Novara before travelling to Paris at the age of 23. There he began to establish a reputation as a violinist, performing in the famous Concert Spirituel. A year after his arrival in the city he was offered a place in the orchestra of the Comédie-Italienne, one of Paris's most popular theatres. In 1789, however, he took the post of first violinist at the Théâtre de Monsieur. It was during this period that Bruni began to publish some of his compositions, including several works for violin. It was within the sphere of comic opera, however, that he gained his greatest successes, collaborating in the premières of almost twenty of them between 1785 and 1800. Despite the upheavals of the French Revolution, Bruni's career continued to flourish. He became a member of the recently formed *Commission temporaire des Arts*, a committee tasked with making an inventory of and preserving the republic's heritage. In 1799 he became director of the Opéra-Comique, but just two years later he accepted the post of director at the newly-opened Théâtre Italien. His tenure there ended in 1806, when he returned to his home town of Cuneo. It was

there that he eventually died, on 6th August 1821.

Bruni's *Six Duos Concertants* for violin and viola showcase a range of styles and modes of expression. He wrote more than twenty such works, and the six on this disc constitute *Book Four*. Each follows a similar pattern, containing two often contrasting movements. The first of these duos, *No. 1 in E flat major*, exemplifies this pattern: it begins with an *Allegro moderato*, characterized by a sweet, lilting melody, followed by an *Allegro assai* full of dance-like rhythms and delicate figuration. *No. 2 in G minor-major* is unusual in that the imposing first movement, marked *Allegro con moto*, is in G minor, while the second, a gently dignified *Andante*, is in G major. *No. 3 in B flat major* begins with an especially beautiful movement, an *Allegro moderato* with an underlying vivacity and energy that belies the tranquil, flowing eloquence of the figuration. Its partner, the

Menuetto: Moderato, is a lively minuet. *No. 4 in D major* opens with an elegant *Allegro maestoso*, followed by a markedly different *Allegretto scherzando*, a playful movement that wittily incorporates melodic leaps and interruptions into the violin part. *No. 5 in C major* contains two equally contrasting movements: the first, an *Adagio – Allegro*, begins with a slow, sorrowful introduction in the minor mode before blossoming into joyful C major, while the delicate *Andante sostenuto* enlivens its predominantly melody-and-accompaniment texture with graceful ornamentation and light-hearted energy. The final duo, *No. 6 in F major*, establishes a tone of peaceful lyricism with its first movement, an *Adagio*, while the subsequent Finale, marked *Allegro scherzando*, closes the book with exuberance and energy.

Caroline Waight



Photo: Sashia Gusev

Natalia Lomeiko

Natalia Lomeiko launched her solo career at the age of seven with the Novosibirsk Philharmonic. A few years later she was invited to study at the Yehudi Menuhin School, hailed by Menuhin as 'one of the most brilliant of our younger violinists'. After completing her studies at the Royal College and the Royal Academy of Music she won several prestigious international competitions, including first prize in the Premio Paganini in Italy and Michael Hill in New Zealand. She has appeared with major orchestras around the world, including the St Petersburg Radio Symphony, Tokyo Royal Philharmonic, the New Zealand Symphony, Auckland Philharmonia, Melbourne Symphony, Royal Philharmonic and many other orchestras. She has performed chamber music with such renowned musicians as Gidon Kremer, Tabea Zimmermann, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, Shlomo Mintz, Boris Pergamenschikov, Isabelle Faust and Yuri

Bashmet. She has recorded for Dynamic, Foné and Trust Records with pianist Olga Sitkovetsky. In 2010 she was appointed Professor of Violin at the Royal College of Music in London.

<http://www.natalialomeiko.com>

<http://www.lomeikozhisinduo.com>

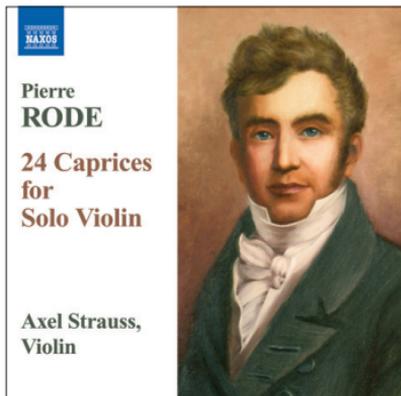


Photo: Natalia Lomeiko

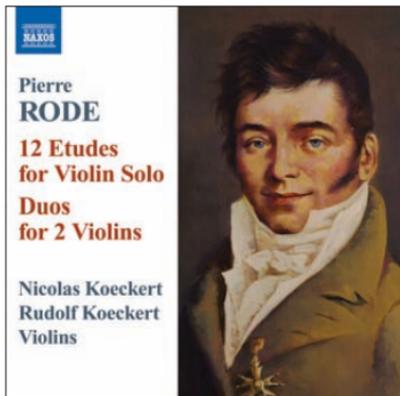
Yuri Zhislin

Yuri Zhislin became the BBC Radio Two Young Musician of the Year in 1993 and has performed throughout Europe, America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. He regularly appears both on the violin and the viola at festivals around the world. His chamber music partners have included María João Pires, Dmitry Sitkovetsky and Natalie Clein. Zhislin is the founder and Artistic Director of the Russian Virtuosi of Europe, an ensemble that brings together some of the finest young Russian musicians based in Western Europe. He is currently a professor of violin at the Royal College of Music in London and gives master-classes throughout Europe. His début recital CD for the Somm label in 2005 was received with great critical acclaim.

Also available

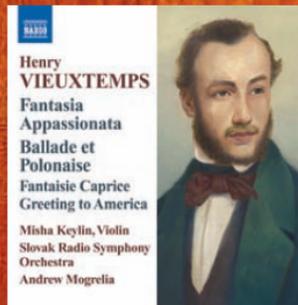


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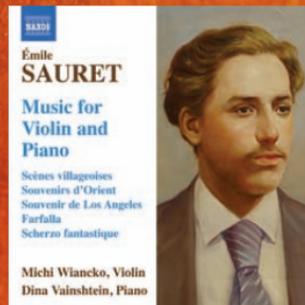


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Johan Halvorsen was one of the leading figures in Norwegian music during his lifetime. His folk-inspired *Concert Caprice on Norwegian Melodies* evokes the natural world while his *Passacaglia* and *Sarabande* echo the sophisticated world of the Baroque. Virtuoso violinist Antonio Bruni thrived in Paris despite the French Revolution, and his *Duos Concertants* are underrated gems of the repertoire. Husband and wife duo, violinist Natalia Lomeiko, described by Yehudi Menuhin as 'one of the most brilliant of our younger violinists', and violist Yuri Zhislin, hailed by *The Strad* as 'a virtuoso with a lyrical talent and a truly Romantic temperament', have been acclaimed for their technically flawless performances.

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| 14-15 | Duo No. 6 in F major | 8:27 |



Natalia Lomeiko, Violin
Yuri Zhislin, Viola / Violin *



Recorded at Holy Trinity Church, Weston, Hertfordshire, England, 1st-3rd November 2009
Producer, Engineer and Editor: John Taylor • Booklet notes: Caroline Waight • Research: Jonathan Frohnen

Cover painting of Johan Halvorsen by Chai Ben-Shan • Publishers: Wilhelm Hansen,
Copenhagen & Leipzig (tracks 1-2), Masters Publications Inc. (Miami Lakes, Florida) (tracks 3-15)

A complete track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet

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Playing Time
75:04



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Booklet Notes in English
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