

FANTASY TRIOS | DIMENSION PIANO TRIO



Bridge - Suk - Ireland - Schoenberg

This CD was a thrill to make and we were fortunate that Champs Hill Records gave us the artistic freedom to be able to choose a programme of four wonderfully evocative and expressive pieces linked by a 'fantasy' theme. The Phantasie form was very popular at the beginning of the 20th century and the Phantasie trios by Bridge and Ireland – who both studied with Stanford – are early works written in a single continuous movement with sections of distinct character and contrasting tempi intertwined. The 'fantasy' theme is evident in a programmatic sense in Schönberg's early masterpiece of 1899 *Verklärte Nacht* based on Richard Dehmel's poem of the same name, and in Josef Suk's Elegie Op.23 which was inspired by Julius Zeyer's patriotic verse 'Vysehrad'.

We would like to sincerely thank David & Mary Bowerman for their generosity in making it possible for us to record in their home, and for their wonderful hospitality during our stay. We all feel privileged to have been invited to record on the Champs Hill label, and to do so in such a beautiful hall amidst such a peaceful setting against the backdrop of breathtaking views was truly inspirational.



FANTASY TRIOS | DIMENSION PIANO TRIO

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| 1 | PHANTASIE IN C MINOR FRANK BRIDGE (1879-1941) | 15'37 |
| 2 | ELEGIE OP.23 JOSEF SUK (1874-1935) | 06'33 |
| 3 | PHANTASIE IN A MINOR JOHN IRELAND (1879-1962) | 11'35 |
| | VERKLÄRTE NACHT OP.4 ARNOLD SCHOENBERG (1874-1951)
arr for Piano Trio by Eduard Steuermann | |
| 4 | <i>i</i> Sehr langsam | 06'33 |
| 5 | <i>ii</i> Breiter | 06'15 |
| 6 | <i>iii</i> Schwer betont | 02'09 |
| 7 | <i>iv</i> Sehr breit und langsam | 09'51 |
| 8 | <i>v</i> Sehr ruhig | 04'45 |

Total playing time: **63'22**

Produced & Engineered by Andrew Mellor
Edited by Andrew Mellor

Recorded on 24th-26th July 2012 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

Dimension Trio photos by Andrew Nicholaides

Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen
Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: John Dickinson

The *Phantasie Trios* of Frank Bridge and John Ireland are just two examples of the many British works that owe their origins to the annual Cobbett Prize Competitions for chamber music. Walter Willson Cobbett (1847-1937), a wealthy businessman, amateur violinist and writer on music, had been deeply impressed by the appearance of the first modern editions of Elizabethan and Jacobean instrumental music; he wished to revive the *Fancy* or *Fantasia* or *Phantasie* as practiced by composers for viols such as Byrd, Gibbons and Lawes. This genre – a single movement marked by several changes of tempo and character, with a generally cumulative effect – seemed to him a distinctively English genre which had been crowded out by the sonata form works of Mozart and Haydn and Beethoven. In pursuit of this aim, from 1905 onwards Cobbett organized an international competition under the aegis of the Worshipful Company of Musicians, for new works of chamber music which he suggested should be in single-movement ‘phantasie’ form. In the event, most composers tended to produce works either in three-part form (related outer sections with a contrasting middle) or a free version of sonata-form (exposition with two contrasted themes; development; recapitulation).

Announced in 1907, the competition of 1908 was for a piano trio, and of the 67 works entered, the first prize (of £50) went to Frank Bridge for his *Phantasie* in C minor; this was subsequently premiered on 28 April 1909 by the London Piano Trio at a banquet of the Incorporated Society of Musicians. This First Piano Trio (Bridge would write a Second in 1929) is a prime example of the ruggedly mellifluous, chamber style of his early years, which shows a strong influence of Fauré while remaining distinctively British in its expressive aura. W.W. Cobbett, in a lecture given at the Royal Academy of Music, said that Bridge’s Trio ‘is of a remarkable beauty and brilliance’, marking him out as ‘one of our foremost composers for the chamber. With a lavishness to which I can recall few

precedents, he has provided thematic material more than sufficient for a lengthy work in sonata form’. In fact, the *Phantasie’s* single-movement structure does resemble a sonata-form movement, in that it begins with a passionate two-subject exposition (*Allegro moderato e con fuoco*) and ends with a recapitulation and coda, but instead of a central development section there is an *Andante con molto espressione* episode, corresponding to a slow movement, which is itself interrupted by a raffish *Allegro scherzoso*. The climax of the work comes with the return and extension of the *andante*, before the recapitulation, which is rounded off by an ebullient coda.

John Ireland gained second prize (of £10) in that same 1908 Cobbett Competition with his *Phantasie Trio* in A minor for violin, cello and piano, the first of three works he was to write for this combination. (The following year he would win the first prize in Cobbett’s competition for a violin sonata.) Dedicated to his teacher Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, this work was also premiered by the London Piano Trio, in advance of Bridge’s trio, at London’s Aeolian Hall on 26 January 1909. His *Phantasie Trio* is in fact in an approximation of sonata form. Its first subject is an ascending theme with a prominent dotted rhythm, and the potential for a balancing, lyrical dying fall. The more reflective second subject, announced by the piano in the distant key of A flat, is a mellifluous and lyrical tune, mainly descending in motion, with a hint of folksong to it. The development of these materials is on the whole gentle, almost pastoral in character, weaving a filigree of counterpoint around reminiscences of the principal phrases of the exposition. This mood continues into the start of the recapitulation, where the first subject returns serenely in A major before gathering energy and moving into a quicker, dance-like coda that ends the work in high spirits.

Josef Suk was born at Krevovice, Bohemia and first became known as a violinist: he was in fact the grandfather of the famous Czech violinist of the same name. In 1892 he formed the Bohemian String Quartet with three friends (one of them was Oscar Nedbal, who later became famous as a composer of waltzes and operetta) and remained a member of it for almost the whole of his life. Suk studied composition in Prague, where his principal teacher, whom he venerated, was Dvorák; and in 1898 he married Dvorák's daughter, Otylka. Richly gifted, his early works – such as the *Serenade for Strings* and the *Fantastic Scherzo* – show a fluent and fairly direct continuation of the 'Czech national' style of Smetana and Dvorák, with a taste for fairy-tale or legendary subjects. His music also has a tendency to autobiography, and this early period was a generally happy one for him. The double blow of the deaths of Dvorák and Otylka, in 1904 and 1905 respectively, led to the composition of Suk's tragic *Asrael Symphony*, dedicated to their memories, and afterwards his music – though it gained in stature – seldom recaptured the innocence of his earlier works.

The *Elegie*, though written slightly earlier than *Asrael*, is also a memorial work. The revered Czech poet and playwright Julius Zeyer died aged 60 in 1901. Suk had already (in 1898) written the incidental music for Zeyer's play *Radúz and Mahulena*, and on this, in 1899-1900, he had based one of his best-known works, the orchestral suite *Pohádka (Fairy Tale)*. In April 1902 Suk composed the *Elegy* as part of a ceremony held in Prague to mark the anniversary of the poet's death. In this original form, it was scored for violin, cello, string quartet, harp and harmonium; for its publication, Suk re-worked it for piano trio, and added the subtitle 'Under the Impression of Zeyer's *Vyšehrad*' – a reference to Zeyer's 1880 epic poem of that title, which refers to the name of a rocky bluff standing high above the Vltava River, traditionally considered the birthplace of the city of

Prague, as it was the site of the castle where in the 8th century the Bohemian royal court was established in the reign of the prophetic Queen Libuše, whom Smetana had celebrated in an opera and in the symphonic poem *Vyšehrad*.

The *Elegy* begins with a music of restrained lament, the melody shared between violin and piano over the piano's slowly marching chords. A more dramatic and anguished episode intervenes, and then the opening subject returns. But instead of simply rounding out the ternary form, the music takes an unexpected plunge into new regions, and in the coda the initial material is transfigured, rising high in the strings against pearly tremolos in the piano.

Like Suk's *Elegy*, the most substantial work on this programme was not originally conceived for piano trio at all. Composed in a mere three weeks in the summer of 1899, it is the one which posterity has come to regard as Arnold Schoenberg's first masterpiece. So far the 24-year-old had been an ardent Brahmsian, but his friend Alexander Zemlinsky – himself a protégé of Brahms – had been opening Schoenberg's ears to Wagner and the contrary claims of programme-music and literary romanticism. The result was a powerful synthesis: *Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night)* after a poem by Richard Dehmel – a work in the form of classical chamber music (a string sextet) that is in effect a symphonic poem infused with the new idiom of post-Wagnerian chromaticism.

Schoenberg chose a poem from Dehmel's collection *Weib und Welt (Woman and the World)*. Two lovers wander among the trees on a cold moonlit night. She confesses she is pregnant: not by him, but by an earlier lover whom she took because until now she had believed that having a child would bring meaning, if not happiness, to her life. He, inspired to calm confidence by the beauty of the moonlit world, assures her that the love they have now found together will unite

them and make the child their own; they embrace, and walk on 'through the high, bright night'. Never before had Schoenberg written anything so passionate.

The Vienna Tonkünstlerverein refused to promote a public performance, officially because the score contained one chord that nobody could find in the harmony textbooks. 'It sounds as if someone had smeared the score of *Tristan* while it was still wet!' commented the operetta composer Richard Heuberger in disgust. The premiere was eventually given in Vienna in March 1902 by the famous string quartet led by Mahler's brother-in-law Arnold Rosé, augmented by two additional players (one of them the composer and cellist Franz Schmidt).

The layout of Dehmel's poem – in five sections, the woman's outburst and the man's reply framed by passages illustrating their walk in the moonlight – gives the basic form of Schoenberg's sextet, and every phrase is most sensitively illustrated in the music, from the dragging steps at the opening to the wonderfully radiant evocation of the 'transfigured night' at the close. Yet on another level the music makes so much sense in its own terms that one hardly feels the programme to be a vital element in its structural logic, however it may have affected the initial inspiration. Schoenberg's success in fulfilling his large design indicates how rapid was his progress towards musical mastery. Several outside influences are still prominent – Wagner, Brahms, Hugo Wolf probably, Richard Strauss perhaps – but the work is thoroughly Schoenbergian. The counterpoint has his characteristic boldness and clarity however great its elaboration, and the melodies have his distinctive plasticity. The work's key-centre is D, minor in the first half, major in the second. But it is often quitted for remote areas; and decisive returns to D, often suggested, are almost as often suspensefully delayed.

This makes the almost sententiously firm D major of the opening of the fourth section (the *Man's reply*) especially striking, and creates the work's main structural division, initiating a 'second movement' complementary to the first. The nocturnal loveliness of the D major ending, too, is all the more satisfying for being so long and so artfully postponed.

There are certainly places, however, where *Verklärte Nacht* seems almost to burst the bounds of Schoenberg's chosen string-sextet medium. In fact he twice arranged it for string orchestra, in 1916 and 1943, and in these versions the greater richness of tone is certainly an advantage, though not necessarily a decisive one, over the sextet original. The version for piano trio which we hear on this disc was in fact written by Eduard Steuermann, piano pupil of Busoni, composition pupil of Schoenberg, and one of the most distinguished interpreters of the piano music of both composers. His remarkably effective *Verklärte Nacht* arrangement was made in 1932 at the request of Alice Moller, a Viennese patroness of the arts, for performance in her home. She retained the manuscript for many years, returning it to Steuermann after World War II; it was only published in 1993, and has proved extremely effective in transfiguring the substance and the passion of Schoenberg's youthful romantic masterpiece to a new and perhaps rather unlikely medium.

Malcolm MacDonald

DIMENSION TRIO

Anthony Hewitt ~ *piano*

Rafal Zambrzycki-Payne ~ *violin*

Thomas Carroll ~ *cello*

Formed in 2000 as a result of partnerships made as pupils of the Yehudi Menuhin School, Dimension Trio soon achieved success on the international scene by winning the 2005 Parkhouse Award and Audience Prize which led to regular appearances at major concert halls in London, including at Wigmore Hall.

Dimension's members have also pursued successful careers as soloists enabling them to diversify beyond the core Trio repertoire to include solos and duos in their programmes. Similarly, appearances by guest artists including Michael Collins, Tasmin Little, Gervase de Peyer, Julian Rachlin, Rachel Roberts, Radovan Vlatkovich and members of the Belcea and Alban Berg String Quartets, have resulted in exciting performances of the piano quartet and quintet literature.

Dimension have more recently been recognised for their interpretation of Beethoven's Triple Concerto which they have performed with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Northern Sinfonia, and Brighton Philharmonic Orchestra at prestigious venues



“robust... lyrical... impressive unanimity of phrasing and intonation”

The Strad

including Cadogan Hall in London. They have also performed this piece with Orquesta Odissea in Madrid's Teatro Monumental and with the Wrocław and Lodz Philharmonic orchestras in Poland conducted by Daniel Raiskin and Otis Klöber respectively.

On the European scene they have appeared on Spanish National Television, and their festival engagements include critically acclaimed performances at the Kastav International Festival in Croatia, Bastad and Helsingborg Festivals in Sweden, Ulverston International Music Festival and Beaminster Festival in the UK, and the Lancut and Warsaw Beethoven Festivals in Poland.

Dimension enjoys collaborations with contemporary composers and other projects have included the premiere of Richard Hyung-Ki Joo's 'Triology Dimension' and Malcolm Singer's Piano Trio, the premiere of which was given at Wigmore Hall and a few days later at St. John's, Smith Square as part of the composer's 50th Birthday Concert.

www.dimensiontrio.com

ANTHONY HEWITT *piano*

“A remarkably gifted artist”

The Gramophone

Award-winning British pianist Anthony Hewitt enjoys a diverse career as recitalist, concerto soloist, chamber musician, accompanist, festival director, teacher, educator, and lecturer.

A highly versatile and engaging artist, his communicative performances have won him critical acclaim worldwide throughout a career which includes engagements with the National Symphony Orchestra and Princeton Symphony Orchestra in the USA, the English Chamber Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Camerata and Northern Sinfonia in the UK, and the RTE Orchestra in Ireland.

In the UK he has performed with orchestra at London’s Royal Festival Hall and Symphony Hall in Birmingham, given eight recitals at Wigmore Hall, and has appeared as chamber musician at King’s Place and Cadogan Hall in London, Bridgewater Hall in Manchester, and Usher Hall in Edinburgh. Prestigious festivals include Swaledale, Newbury and Prussia Cove in the UK, Kronberg and Mecklenburg in Germany, Stift in Holland, and Bastad in Sweden.

Anthony joined the faculty at the Birmingham Conservatoire in September 2013 and is frequently invited to judge on competition juries. He is based in South West London and his hobbies include cycling into the countryside, and skiing and hiking in the Alps.

www.anthonyhewitt.co.uk



RAFAL ZAMBRZYCKI-PAYNE *violin*

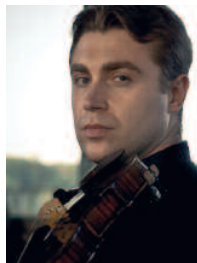


photo: Joanna Szproch

Winner of the BBC Young Musician of the Year Competition in 1996, Rafal was born in Lodz, Poland. He studied with Wen Zhou Li at the Yehudi Menuhin School and at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, and subsequently in Vienna with Gerhard Schulz where he was also a scholar at the Herbert von Karajan Centre. His studies have been generously funded by various organisations including Ashurst Morris Crisp.

Rafal has performed with orchestras such as the English Chamber Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony, Philharmonia, London Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic,

Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic in the UK as well as with the Armenian Chamber Orchestra, Danubia Symphony in Budapest, KZN Philharmonic in Durban, Johannesburg Philharmonic, Sinfonia Varsovia, Munich and Zurich Chamber Orchestras. He had the honour of working on several occasions with the late Lord Menuhin as conductor.

In 2004 Rafal became the Solo Violinist and Leader of the international Frankfurt-based contemporary music group Ensemble Modern, as part of which he regularly performs in many of the world’s top venues and festivals. He has performed on numerous occasions as a soloist with the Ensemble Modern (Salzburg Festival - Ferneyhough’s *Terrain*, Schwetzingen SWR Festival and the Alte Oper in Frankfurt - Berg’s Chamber Concerto).

Rafal’s first commercial recording was released on the EMI Debut Series featuring works by Szymanowski, Britten and Grieg together with pianist Carole Presland.

Rafal plays on a violin made by J.B. Villaume in 1844.

THOMAS CARROLL *cello*

The Welsh-born cellist Thomas Carroll studied with Melissa Phelps at the Yehudi Menuhin School and with Heinrich Schiff in Austria. An exceptionally gifted cellist, he is one of only two artists who auditioned successfully for both Young Concert Artists Trust in London and Young Concert Artists, Inc. in New York. He has since given critically acclaimed debut recitals at Wigmore Hall (London), Alice Tully Hall (NY) and in Boston, California, Florida and Washington DC.

As a concerto soloist Thomas has appeared with the London Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, London Mozart Players, ViVA, Orchestra of the East Midlands, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra (conducted by Heinrich Schiff), English Chamber Orchestra, Prague Philharmonic, Sofia Philharmonic, and Bayerischer Rundfunk Orchestra.

Much in demand as a chamber musician, Thomas has worked with the Belcea Quartet, Chilingirian Quartet, Endellion Quartet, Yehudi Menuhin, Ivry Gitlis, Gidon Kremer, Steven Isserlis, Mischa Maisky, Michael Collins, Julian Rachlin at Wigmore Hall, the Edinburgh and Cheltenham International Festivals, among many others. His recordings include Michael Berkeley's String Quintet with the Chilingirian Quartet for Chandos. Thomas is a Professor at the Royal College of Music in London and the Yehudi Menuhin School.



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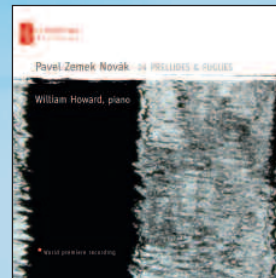


CHRC062

ALL HANDS ON DECK
MAN OVERBOARD

Described by *The Guardian* as “staggeringly virtuosic”, Thomas Gould is also a dab hand at jazz; here, his playing meets its match in the lyrical clarinet of Ewan Bleach. Together with Louisa Jones, Jean-Marie Fagon and Dave O’Brien, they form the hot swing band Man Overboard. This debut album includes numbers by Fats Waller, Al Jolson and Hoagy Carmichael - all played in Man Overboard’s infectious, melodic style: *On the sunny side of the street*, *All of Me* and *How High the Moon* are joined by many other favourite tunes.

“Gould and Bleach are facile performers ... the rhythm section are absolutely steeped in the idiom ... the result is captivating”
BeBop Spoken Here



CHRC016

PAVEL NOVAK 24 PRELUDES & FUGUES
WILLIAM HOWARD - *piano*

The world premiere recording of Pavel Zemek Novak’s 24 Preludes & Fugues, performed by Schubert Ensemble pianist William Howard. Performing in this world premiere recording Howard is established as one of Britain’s leading pianists, enjoying a career that has taken him to over 40 different countries, and has seen him perform on over 30 CDs.

“I have no doubt that these 24 Preludes and Fugues are one of the finest piano works of our time” David Matthews

“superb performance and stunning sound: a real discovery” BBC Music Magazine