

CHAMPS HILL
RECORDS

Vol. 3

RÖNTGEN:
STRING TRIOS NOs. 9-12 LENDVAI STRING TRIO



This wonderful project of discovering, performing and recording the complete string trios by Julius Röntgen has been a truly monumental and tremendous experience for us.

Our journey began in 2006 when we were introduced to Röntgen's first string trio (the only one published to date), and soon after discovered that there are fifteen more, carefully stored in handwritten manuscript form in the Netherlands Music Institute in the Hague.

Intrigued, we began to investigate further and it has been our privilege to rediscover these wonderful string trios which have been archived and unperformed, hidden away from the public for over 80 years.

Reading and playing from the old hand written scores, instead of the usual typeset-published sheet music we are used to, has added a very personal touch to the journey. Thanks to the Kersjes Prize and Champs Hill Records we have been able to record and bring to life this colourful and captivating music, which we hope you will enjoy as much as we do.





Nadia Wijzenbeek violin **Ylvali Zilliacus** viola **Marie Macleod** 'cello



Julius Rontgen (1855–1932)

TRIO NO.9 IN A-FLAT MAJOR (29 March 1923)

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------|
| 1 | Un poco animato | 5'04 |
| 2 | Moderato con sentimento | 4'55 |
| 3 | Allegro energico | 5'36 |

TRIO NO.10 IN F MINOR (Fuglsang, 27 July 1923)

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|------|
| 4 | Allegro molto | 4'08 |
| 5 | Andante | 5'15 |
| 6 | Allegretto affetuoso | 4'53 |

TRIO NO.11 IN G MINOR (Bilthoven, 23 January 1925)

- | | | |
|---|------------------|------|
| 7 | Moderato | 6'59 |
| 8 | Vivace e giocoso | 3'02 |
| 9 | Andante con moto | 7'07 |

TRIO NO.12 IN A MAJOR (Bilthoven, 3 February 1925)

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|------|
| 10 | Allegro assai | 3'57 |
| 11 | Pastorale. Andante tranquillo | 2'25 |
| 12 | Menuetto affettuoso | 3'37 |
| 13 | Allegro non troppo | 4'12 |

Total playing time: **61'12**

Produced and Edited by Matthew Bennett

Engineered by Dave Rowell

Recorded on 19th–21st March, 2014 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

Cover and biography photographs of Lendvai String Trio by Sarah Wijzenbeek

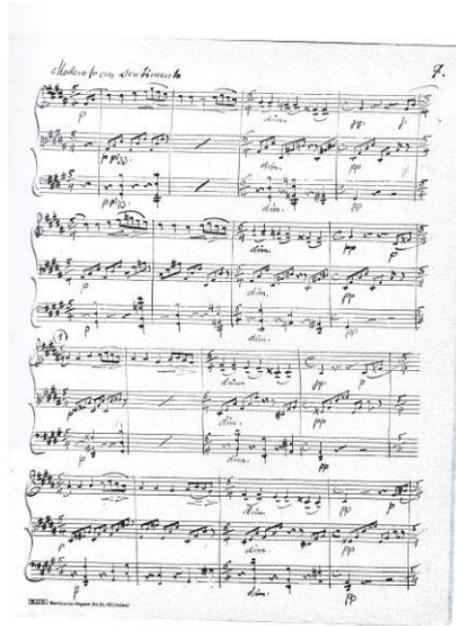
Booklet rear cover picture of Julius Röntgen at the Concertgebouw Amsterdam (1931) by Jan Boon (1882–1975)

Executive Producer for Champs Hill Records: Alexander Van Ingen

Label Manager for Champs Hill Records: Matt Buchanan



1st movement of Trio No.11
Moderato



2nd movement of Trio No.9
Moderato con sentimento

There is a certain tendency towards irreverence in the Dutch spirit that causes Julius Röntgen's countrymen to refer to his great talent with gentle mockery. Röntgen's professional reputation enjoyed a noticeably higher regard in other countries, and he earned accolades abroad that eluded him in his home nation. One such distinction was the honorary doctorate conferred upon him by the University of Edinburgh in 1930, presented by Sir Donald Francis Tovey. After Röntgen's death, *The Times* published a eulogy written by the esteemed musicologist, who referred to Röntgen's works with praise: "Röntgen's compositions, published and unpublished, cover the whole range of music in every art form; they all show consummate mastery in every aspect of technique; even in the most facile there is beauty and wit; each series of works culminates in something that has the uniqueness of a living masterpiece." Besides his international reputation as a renowned pianist and composer, he was also in high demand as a teacher, turning down offers abroad in favour of staying in Amsterdam. Composers such as Grieg and Brahms respected him highly and sought his friendship. As a pianist, he enjoyed collaborations with some of the great musicians of his time: singer Johannes Messchaert, cellist Pablo Casals, and violinist Carl Flesch, among others.

Julius Röntgen came from a very musical family. His father Engelbert, a violinist, was born in the Netherlands (Deventer) and later emigrated to Leipzig, Germany, where he played in the Gewandhaus Orchestra. He married the pianist Pauline Klengel, who came from a family with a long musical tradition. Julius, the eldest child and only son, spent his youth in Leipzig. His parents were well connected within the highest musical circles, and regularly received musicians such as Felix Mendelssohn, Niels Gade and Joseph Joachim in their home. Julius Röntgen's grandfather taught him the fundamentals of piano and violin playing, and his parents themselves took responsibility for his further training. Röntgen's exceptional musical talent was

apparent at an early stage, but his father seems to have done his best to prevent his son from leading the typical life of a child prodigy. In addition to the training that he received from his parents, Röntgen studied for short periods of time with teachers such as Louis Plaidy, Carl Reinecke, Moritz Hauptmann and Franz Lachner. Within a few years, Röntgen gained a widespread reputation as a piano virtuoso, performing throughout Europe.

He began writing music at a young age, publishing his first composition in Germany in 1871. Only a few years later, he was invited to accept a teaching position in Amsterdam. After some hesitation, he settled there in 1877, making an immediate impact on the level of his students. In 1884, together with a number of colleagues, he founded the Amsterdamsch Conservatorium where he also served as managing director from 1913 until 1924.

Despite his busy career as a concert pianist, teacher, conductor and director of the Conservatory, Röntgen managed to compose more than 600 compositions. Many of these works remain obscure, and even Röntgen himself admitted in an interview that he did not know all of his own compositions. As a fellow composer once recalled: "In the time it takes for someone to pick up a pen and paper, and to write down the keys and signs, Röntgen had probably already composed the beginning of a fugue." For Röntgen it was his usual practice, since the music was already completed in his head before he committed it to paper.

During Röntgen's lifetime, only one hundred of his compositions were published, the first 31 of them by the German firm Breitkopf und HärteL. Most of Röntgen's manuscripts are in the depots of the Netherlands Music Institute in The Hague. Recent years have seen a concerted effort to record the majority of his symphonic works and solo concertos; however, much of Röntgen's chamber music is still lying in

obscurity. This series of recordings by the Lendvai String Trio is therefore a wonderful opportunity to get acquainted with a rich and diverse corner of Julius Röntgen's oeuvre: the complete string trios.

THE STRING TRIOS

Röntgen wrote sixteen String Trios, fifteen of which have never been published. For the most part, the Trios were also neither numbered nor named by the composer (an exception being the *Walzer Suite*), leaving the year of composition and key signature as the only means of their identification.

For someone who had starting composing in his teens, it is surprising that Röntgen came to the genre of String Trios only later in life, completing his first trio in 1915 at the age of 60 and the last trio in 1930, two years before his death. The reasons for this remain obscure, but it is clear that chamber music played an important part in Röntgen's life. In 1912, he formed a professional piano trio with two of his sons from his first marriage (Engelbert, a cellist, and Julius Jr., a violinist). With this ensemble, he gave concerts for years. However, Röntgen had another favourite instrument, the viola, and with two sons from his second marriage (Edvard and Joachim), he played string trios, presumably only at home, where he himself played the viola parts.

In 1923 Julius Röntgen celebrated his 65th birthday. At an age considered by many to signify retirement he was still full of new musical ideas, enough to compose four string trios within a time of less than two years. The first trio on this CD (No.9) was written in the spring of 1923, followed by Trio No.10 during summer holidays in Fuglsang, Denmark that same year. Fuglsang, a large manor house set within a beautiful park, was the holiday destination of choice for Röntgen and his family who stayed there for a few weeks nearly every summer between 1892 and 1914. Röntgen

loved this place for its natural beauty and the possibility to make sailing trips every day, calling it his 'second homeland'. The resort was very popular among other musicians and composers such as Carl Nielsen (with whom Röntgen became close friends) not only for its splendid setting but also for its marvellous music hall, where concerts were given every summer evening. Unfortunately, the outbreak of World War I in 1914 forced the Röntgen family to curtail their trips abroad, and nearly ten years passed before they could resume their holidays in Fuglsang.

Röntgen loved the great outdoors, and for many years his greatest wish was to build his own home in the midst of unspoiled nature. When the family started to make plans for such a home, it was clear to them that their son Frants Edvard (1904–1980) should design it. Although the boy was only sixteen years old, he started to sketch a house for the family. The Röntgen's also had to decide upon a location; at first they considered Schoorl, another one of their favourite holiday destinations, but they soon realized that it was too far from Amsterdam, where Röntgen still was director of the Conservatory. Their eye then fell upon Bilthoven, a little village near Utrecht, which at that time was still nestled within the quiet countryside amongst woods, heather and sand dunes. Construction began on a house styled according to the principles of the Amsterdam architectural school in the summer of 1924. Naturally, a large music room was planned, shaped like a half rounded conservatory. The building progressed quickly and the family was able to move in only one year later. They called their new home *Gaudeamus* after the famous song *Gaudeamus igitur* (let us be happy) that students used to sing and that his friend Johannes Brahms had quoted in his *Academic Festival Overture*. But the house had another name as well; because it was the first design project of young Frants, it was also affectionately dubbed 'Opus One'.

In the meantime, Röntgen retired from the directorship at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. Even so, he maintained a rigorously active schedule, giving a well-

attended music analysis course together with his wife Mien des Amorie van der Hoeven. Besides teaching, he was also composing almost constantly, inspired as he was by his natural surroundings. As he himself told a journalist in an interview: "I lay down in the heather and the birches are looking at me, with God's sky above."

THE STRING TRIOS NOs.9–12

String Trio No.9 is an all-round work in which every movement has a distinct character. The first movement, written in a strict classical style, is exceptionally playful and elegant, with an extensive contrapuntal passage typical of Röntgen's works. The second movement, *con sentimento*, is shaped by a melancholic violin melody that grows in intensity, accompanied by *pizzicato* and *arpeggio* figures in the viola and cello. The otherworldly atmosphere is briefly interrupted by a short *intermezzo* before the movement comes to an ambiguous standstill. The movement ends without ending, hanging in the air for a moment before rushing headlong into the turbulent and dramatic final movement whose wildness and virtuosity is heightened with arpeggios and repeated notes. A subtle quotation of the first movement's opening theme gives the listener a feeling of completeness as the Trio draws to a close.

Röntgen's Tenth String Trio was written in the summer of 1923 while the family was on holiday in Fuglsang. The work begins with a series of short rhythmical figures, establishing a mysterious and ominous atmosphere that is intensified through a descending minor motif and the contrapuntal second theme. Despite the later appearance of some melodic material, the movement maintains its dark character and ends with a chilling vehemence. The next movement's calm placidity is a marked contrast: here, the strings present a rising *legato* melody in a nearly motionless unison, conjuring the image of a boat floating in water with a surface smooth as glass, rippling now and then with a light wind. The unison line is followed by a

rhythmic motif that becomes a recurrent theme, also appearing at the end as an *attacca* upbeat that ushers in the final movement. Here again we hear themes with a lively character reminiscent of folk music, peppered with grace notes and *appoggiaturas*. Despite its festive nature the music dances along with a certain restraint until the very end, where Röntgen surprises the listener with a fast, energetic passage in a new meter as it jubilantly runs to the finish line.

Trios No.11 and No.12 were both written within a ten-day period in the beginning of 1925. At that time, Röntgen was staying in a hotel in Bilthoven while awaiting the completion of his new home. Despite his temporary surroundings, both of these Trios have a light-hearted and optimistic character, perhaps because Röntgen himself was looking forward to finally living in the midst of unspoiled nature. The Trios are full of dance movements: a *Sicilienne*, a Waltz and a Minuet. Rounded out by a *scherzo*-like movement and a *Grand Finale*, both of these Trios shine with a genuine and palpable exuberance.

The first movement of Trio No.11 is somewhat dramatic without any specific character, which makes the second movement's impressive *perpetuum mobile* quite a surprise. This *scherzo*-like movement, almost clownish in its effects, is strongly reminiscent of George Bizet's *Jeux d'enfants*. Another surprise from the composer is the use of a slow movement to conclude this work. Starting with a *Sicilienne* theme, the movement is comprised of five short fragments that are constantly changing in tempo, measure and character. Near the end, after a reprise of the melancholic *Sicilienne* theme, the first theme of the first movement makes an unexpected appearance. Far from being a literal restatement, however, it has been transformed into a more dramatic presence that inevitably forces itself upon the quiet *Sicilienne* theme. In a work already full of unexpected twists and turns, the last movement is no

exception: despite its peaceful beginning, the movement ends with an dramatic acceleration, a real example of musical apotheosis.

The last String Trio on this album, No.12, is the only one with four movements. It opens with a lively and playful Waltz that contrasts readily with the *Pastorale* in the second movement, a breath-taking oasis of simplicity and great musical beauty. Here, the music is so evocative of peace and tranquillity that one can easily imagine Röntgen lying on his back amongst the heather, gazing at the sky above while composing this music in his head. For the third movement Röntgen falls back on the traditional form of a Minuet and Trio: the somewhat downcast character of the Minuet is paired with a playful and energetic Trio of contrasting energy. The final movement sweeps in like a *Grand Finale* as the string players tumble about each other at a dizzying speed. The Trio's large-scale structure is brought together by a stroke of self-reference as Röntgen recycles a distinct rhythm from the first movement, augmented almost to the point of caricature.

Margaret Krill
(English edited by Shuann Chai)

Lendvai String Trio

Since their Wigmore Hall debut in 2006, the Lendvai String Trio has had a busy schedule of concerts at major venues throughout Europe, including several re-invitations to Wigmore Hall, recitals at Kings Place, the Barbican and Purcell Room in London, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and Musikaliska in Stockholm.

In 2011 the trio was awarded the prestigious Kersjes Prize in Holland, as well as being selected for the Concertgebouw's Young Artist Series in Amsterdam; other previous successes include winning awards from the Kirckman Concert Society, the Worshipful Company of Musicians, Musician's Benevolent Fund, the Park Lane Group, and the Concert Promoters Network in the UK. In 2005 they were selected for the Holland Music Sessions 'New Masters on Tour', resulting in a series of concerts across Romania, Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and the Netherlands. The trio regularly perform at festivals in the UK, Germany, Italy, France, Switzerland, Austria and Sweden and their concerts have been broadcast by Dutch Radio 4, Swedish Radio P2 and BBC Radio 3. Their debut CD *Destination Paris* (2011, Stone Records) received international acclaim as well as their recent recording of the complete Beethoven String Trios (Stone Records) which was *BBC Music Magazine's* Chamber Choice in June 2013.

The trio enjoys regular collaborations with other artists and recent highlights have included concerts with oboists Alexei Ogrintchouk and Nicholas Daniel, and pianists Paolo Giacometti, Charles Owen, Alasdair Beatson and Martin Sturfält. As well as regularly commissioning new works, the Lendvai String Trio are also keen to uncover and revive 'forgotten' and lesser-known works for the genre.



Nadia Wijzenbeek ~ *violin*

Dutch violinist Nadia Wijzenbeek enjoys an international career as a Concertmaster, chamber musician and soloist.

Nadia was appointed Concertmaster of The Radio Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra in the Netherlands in 2009. In 2013 she became concertmaster of the Dutch Radio Philharmonic Orchestra.

Besides the Lendvai String Trio, Nadia is also a member of the Aronowitz Ensemble, BBC New Generation Artists and the recipient of the Borletti Buitoni Trust special Ensemble prize.

Having started to play the violin at a very young age under the tutelage of her aunt Coosje Wijzenbeek, Nadia went on to study at the Amsterdam Conservatory with Elisabeth Perry and Herman Krebbers, graduating with distinction. She continued her studies in London at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama with David Takeno, where she was awarded a Concert Recital Diploma.

Nadia is Artistic Director of the popular concert series 'Raadhuisconcerten' in her home town Hilversum.

Nadia plays a Joseph filius Andrea Guarneri violin.

Ylvali Zilliacus ~ *viola*

Swedish violist Ylvali Zilliacus is frequently invited to international chamber music festivals in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Brazil, UK and Cyprus. Between 2009-2013 she was the principal violist of Musica Vitae Chamber Orchestra in Sweden with whom she often performed as a soloist. Ylvali works regularly with

the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and has also worked with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, London Symphony Orchestra and the Philharmonia.

Prior to this, between 2003-2007 Ylvali played in the period instrument ensemble English Concert directed by Andrew Manze. She studied in London and Berlin with Simon Rowland-Jones, Tabea Zimmermann and David Takeno and plays a viola by Lorenzo Storioni from 1767 kindly lent to her by the Swedish instrument foundation, Järnåkerfonden.

Marie Macleod ~ *cello*

British cellist Marie Macleod has performed throughout Europe, USA and Australia as soloist and chamber musician, appearing with orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra and the Ulster Orchestra. As well as being cellist in the Lendvai String Trio, Marie is also a member of the Phoenix Piano Trio and the Aronowitz Ensemble who are BBC New Generation Artists and Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award winners, and she records regularly for Stone Records, the BBC and Sonimage.

In 2013 Marie was appointed principal cellist of the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra. Between 2006 and 2008 she was principal cellist of the Västerås Sinfonietta in Sweden, after which she became the assistant cello teacher at the Yehudi Menuhin School and cellist in the Sheffield-based chamber group Ensemble 360. Marie's competition successes include winning the string section of the BBC Young Musician of the Year in 1998, and she studied with Louise Hopkins at the Yehudi Menuhin School, Steven Isserlis at IMS Prussia Cove, Frans Helmerson in Germany and David Takeno at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She plays a Matteo Goffriller cello from 1706.