



CHAMPS HILL  
RECORDS

Vol. 2

RÖNTGEN:  
STRING TRIOS NOS. 5-8  
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 2007 when we stumbled across Röntgen's first string trio (the only one then published), and soon after discovered that there were fifteen more, carefully stored in handwritten manuscript form in the Netherlands Music Institute in the Hague. Intrigued, we began to investigate further, and to our astonishment realised that none of these wonderful works had been performed in public, let alone recorded. It has been a privilege to be the first ensemble to rediscover these string trios which have been archived for over 80 years. Reading and playing from the old handwritten scores, instead of the usual computer-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

Julius Röntgen

Henk van der Vliet

Het Kersjes Fonds

## JULIUS RÖNTGEN (1855–1932)

### STRING TRIO NO.5

*(Aan Mr. Richard van Rees in onze vriendschap 7–12 January 1920)*

- |   |   |       |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | Animato, non troppo presto  | 03'32 |
| 2 | Adagio  | 05'56 |
| 3 | Allegretto tranquillo – Allegro marcato – Vivace – Animato –<br>Con brio – Tranquillo e dolce | 07'33 |

### STRING TRIO NO.6

*(30 March–5 April 1920)*

- |   |                      |       |
|---|----------------------|-------|
| 4 | Moderato con moto    | 05'51 |
| 5 | Animato e leggiero   | 03'06 |
| 6 | Poco andante         | 04'18 |
| 7 | Agitato e passionato | 04'52 |

### STRING TRIO NO.7

*(Schiermonnikoog, August 1920)*

- |    |                         |       |
|----|-------------------------|-------|
| 8  | Allegro piacevole       | 05'03 |
| 9  | Poco allegro e leggiero | 03'12 |
| 10 | Poco Adagio e sostenuto | 06'35 |
| 11 | Allegretto con grazia   | 04'01 |

### STRING TRIO NO.8

*(7 January 1923)*

- |    |                            |       |
|----|----------------------------|-------|
| 12 | Allegro piacevole          | 05'29 |
| 13 | Allegretto un poco agitato | 03'08 |
| 14 | Allegro, un poco sostenuto | 06'31 |

Total playing time: 69'09

Produced & Edited by Matthew Bennett  
Engineered by Dave Rowell

Recorded on 9th–11th October 2013 in the Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, UK

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



The 1st movement of Trio No.6,  
Moderato con moto

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 thirty-one 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.

At the end of 1919, Röntgen became an official citizen of the Netherlands. Shortly thereafter he celebrated his 65th birthday, but instead of decreasing his activities and responsibilities, he kept himself busier than ever. He retained his position as director of the Amsterdam Conservatory until 1924, accepted private students, and even started to concertize again. From 1920 to 1923, Röntgen composed a great deal of vocal music, chamber music (including several string quartets), some orchestral pieces, concertos, and a number of contrapuntal works for piano.

Alongside his considerable compositional output during this period Röntgen also focused on a completely different metier, that of folk music. Around 1920 he met with the singer and musicologist Max Friedlander, with whom he collected and (re)edited both classical songs and folk songs. A few years later, Röntgen began a collaboration with filmmaker Dirk Jan van der Ven (1891–1973), whose documentaries portrayed images of everyday life in the Netherlands. The films were shown in theatres throughout Holland as well as abroad with Röntgen providing live accompaniment at the keyboard, playing original music based on traditional Dutch tunes. Röntgen felt that the dissemination and popularization of his own national music was one of his most important priorities. The fact that traditional Dutch music had not yet won the public's appreciation was perplexing to him, as he considered these tunes to be representative of his nation's strongly individual character.

Röntgen and his family spent most of their holidays in Catrijp, a small village on the sea. During these summers Röntgen wrote his Second, Third, and Fourth String Trios. However, the outbreak of World War I changed their financial situation considerably, and from 1920 onwards the Röntgens spent their holidays on Schiermonnikoog, the smallest of the Dutch North Sea islands. Within a short time the family had developed such friendly relations with the locals that they were invited to stay rent-free, under the condition that they were willing to give daily concerts. Röntgen was very pleased with this arrangement and considered living on the island full-time. During the family's first summer there he composed the Seventh String Trio.

The four trios on this CD were composed in a very short time, three of them within one year. In December 1920 Röntgen wrote to his friend, the baritone Johannes Messchaert that he "made seven string trios which we are playing one after the other, Joachim, Edvard and I on my old beloved viola". Through all of Röntgen's String Trios it is obvious that he had extensive experience playing chamber music. The challenging viola

parts, full of high positions, leads one to suppose that Röntgen himself must have been an impressive violist.

The Fifth Trio (January 7–12, 1920) was dedicated "in old friendship" to Richard van Rees. At the time, van Rees was Chairman of the Board of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, but he had also served as Chairman at the Maatschappij van Toonkunst, where Röntgen had conducted for years. Being so long acquainted, the two men knew each other well in both professional and personal contexts. This trio has a light and sunny first movement. The second movement is strikingly tender, almost contemplative, and very moving. It brings us through a dense texture of voice-leading into the last movement. Here it seems as though Röntgen has set ten loose fragments on paper, each with its own tempo and character, but in fact the movement takes the shape of variations on the main theme, later re-introducing the theme of the first movement. The end of the movement seems to hesitate in choosing a theme, and the piece ends with no conclusion.

The Sixth (March 30–April 5, 1920) and Seventh (August, 1920) String Trios are notable for the numerous themes that bear a resemblance to folk music. Both of them have light-footed scherzo movements in which the string players can display their virtuosity. In the first movement of the Sixth Trio, Röntgen uses irregular time signatures, voice-leading in close intervals, and chorales as interludes. The third movement is distinctly mysterious, feeling as though the music never comes to life. Almost every bar begins with a rest, and the motives rarely develop into melodies, sounding like question marks. Doubt wanders around in this piece. In contrast, the slow movement of the Seventh Trio is full of fascinating melodies, and Röntgen excels in moving the themes seamlessly from one instrument to another. Both trios end with an exuberant final movement. In number six, we are confronted with a never-ending waltz. The main theme switches continuously between the string players, finally ending

in a glorious finale with a short reference to the opening theme from the first movement. The last movement of the Seventh Trio recalls a preparation for a big party in a small village, complete with a number of peasant dances: perhaps a reminiscence of that year's joyful holiday in Schiermonnikoog.

The last string trio presented here was composed a year and a half later. Number Eight is the first of three string trios from 1923. Two things attract attention here: the absence of a slow movement and the numerous corrections Röntgen made in his score. The trio starts with a tender, intimate atmosphere, while the other movements are dominated by a number of folk tunes. The second movement is particularly witty and full of contrasting rhythms. The last movement contains an impressive array of material, beginning in a rhapsodic fashion with brief sections which Röntgen marked 'improvisando' but suddenly being diverted to another theme, followed yet again by a few folk songs. The widening of this theme and acceleration towards the end make a stunning finale to this work.

*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.

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.

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

### ALSO AVAILABLE...



CHRC0068

### RÖNTGEN: STRING TRIOS NOS 1-4 LENDVAI STRING TRIO

The first in a four-CD series exploring the complete string trios of Julius Röntgen, performed by the Lendvai String Trio.

A firm friend of Edvard Grieg, Röntgen's trios - remaining largely unpublished - are influenced by his friend's interest in folk music.

*"... The Lendvai trio has a deep well of energy... persuasive playing, technically of the highest order..."*  
The Strad

*"... At once, the coherence of these players manifested itself... A superb performance..."*  
Musical Opinion Magazine



CHRC0063

### LUDWIG THUILLE: SONGS

A new Champs Hill Records release exploring the music of Ludwig Thuille (a close friend of Richard Strauss), this two-CD set includes a number of world-premiere recordings. Featuring rarely-heard songs (including Thuille's three winsome trios), some of the finest young voices in the UK - Sophie Bevan, Jennifer Johnston and Mary Bevan - are accompanied by the first-rate Joseph Middleton.

*"The crème de la crème of young British-based musical talent"*  
The Daily Telegraph