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# Romantic Trumpet Sonatas

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DANIEL-BEN PIENAAR PIANO

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Grieg Schumann Mendelssohn Pils



# Romantic Trumpet Sonatas

JONATHAN FREEMAN-ATTWOOD  
TRUMPET

DANIEL-BEN PIENAAR  
PIANO

**Edvard Grieg** (1843-1907)

**Holberg Suite, Op.40** (1884) arr. Pienaar

- 1 **Praeludium** ..... (2:14)
- 2 **Sarabande** ..... (3:29)
- 3 **Gavotte** ..... (2:30)
- 4 **Air** ..... (5:02)
- 5 **Rigaudon** ..... (3:50)

**Robert Schumann** (1810-1856)

**Sonata No.1 in A minor, Op.105** (1851)\*

- 6 **Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck**..... (6:51)
- 7 **Allegretto** ..... (3:47)
- 8 **Lebhaft**..... (5:05)

**Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy** (1809-1847)

**Sonata No.2 in D Major, Op.58** (1843)\*

- 9 **Allegro assai vivace** ..... (7:02)
- 10 **Allegretto scherzando** ..... (4:55)
- 11 **Adagio** ..... (4:09)
- 12 **Molto allegro e vivace**..... (6:18)

**Karl Pilss** (1902-1979)

**Sonata for Trumpet and Piano** (1935)

- 13 **Allegro appassionato** ..... (5:00)
- 14 **Adagio, molto cantabile**..... (6:22)
- 15 **Allegro agitato** ..... (2:54)

\*Transcribed by

Daniel-Ben Pienaar and Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

## Romantic Trumpet Sonatas

Opportunities to improve the lot of the trumpet and piano duo have been the motivation behind our two previous discs, *La Trompette Retrouvée* and *Trumpet Masque*. All the works we purloined for those projects, from Giovanni Gabrieli to Gabriel Fauré, were initially selected for various kinds of makeover and subsequently transmuted in acts of shameless appropriation. These ‘editions’ have attempted to introduce some fresh and unusual possibilities to this under-explored medium in ways closely harnessed to our own performance values.

The nature of our re-workings has largely been shaped by assessment of the respective period, genre and idiom of the original scores as we gauge the potential for ‘creating’ a particular work in a revised image. Thus, transforming movements from Emmanuel Chabrier’s solo-piano *Pièces Pittoresques* into a trumpet and piano suite for instance, was aesthetically a shoo-in since the salon tradition had become a readily recognisable setting for the filigree of later French 19<sup>th</sup>-century cornet and trumpet showpieces. Chabrier’s crystalline textures and characterful motives could thus be reconfigured without fear or favour. Fauré’s *Violin Sonata No.2* (from the same disc), on the other hand, would argue for a fiercer, more plangent landscape than the original, with its heightened dislocation of timbre and biting rhythms.

In our *Trumpet Masque*, Georg Muffat’s *Sonata in G Major* from the late 17<sup>th</sup>-century collection ‘*Armonico Tributo*’ made even more adventurous demands on the arranger and listener – certainly the listener who knew the original version. A filtered five-movement, five-part string ensemble piece was redrawn for a modern duo-chamber landscape and for instruments which didn’t exist in their current state of engineering until at least 150 years later. That’s when we conceived our metaphorical ‘Masque’: alluding to the past by acting out recognisable characters in an unexpected ‘entertainment’ where common identity was at stake. At least the Chabrier and Fauré revisions had been forged on existing piano parts and conventional solo role-playing!

So, what 'might have been' if, all along, the trumpet (with or without piano), had become a vehicle of similarly expressive range to the violin and cello? What if, in the hearts and minds of great composers, the trumpet had found an occasional place at the high table? A trio of little sonatas in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by say Weber, Mendelssohn and Schumann, on the back of Hummel's Concerto, would have kick-started a mini-genre, surely? And is it unrealistic or indulgent, in an industrial age where the new chromatic piston-instrument was earning its stripes in band, opera and orchestral life, to feel a legitimate degree of loss or hard luck?

Similar to the first volume of the series when John Wallace, Colm Carey and I presented *The Trumpets that Time Forgot* (notably the substantial Suite for violin, cello and organ, Op.149, by Josef Rheinberger), the 19<sup>th</sup>-century 'sonata' canon became the obvious hunting ground. In this period, the difficulty has less to do with the inventive allocation of material between the instruments than how best to convey a convincing narrative within relatively large-scale movements: for practical and historical reasons, solo trumpet music has tended to remain within manageable time-frames, at least until the late 20<sup>th</sup>-century. Hence its solo repertoire with piano, up to this time, has been limited to competition pieces and a very few recital works. Genuinely fine originals can be counted on two hands at most, of which examples by Enescu and Hindemith arguably shine brightest.

The choice of Mendelssohn and Schumann represents an invasion of core string repertoire closer to mainstream recital fare than we've previously 'acquired'. **Mendelssohn's Cello Sonata No.2 in D Major, Op.58** seemed a natural choice. Whilst this is a long work by trumpet-playing standards, problems of stamina are reduced considerably by the generous, open-plan dialogue of the first movement, extending into a radiant and idiomatic four-movement concert sonata for trumpet and piano. The demanding piano part circumnavigates the solo line with such dazzling ease that the trumpet – unused to such heady accompanimental fantasy – is, inevitably, caught up in its '*schwung*'. The bold D Major opening melody, imbued with what could easily pass for emblematic trumpet arpeggios and an incandescent lyricism, soon combines with incisive passage-work which a tonguing instrument can execute with

rapier thrill. It can be argued that the contrast of these various elements is enhanced in the upper register of a trumpet, thereby clarifying the textural relationship between soloist and piano. Even cellists balk occasionally at the ungrateful scrubbing in the lower register!

That Mendelssohn wrote this piece fairly late in his all-too-short compositional career (1842, by which time he tended, deliberately, to reference music from his earlier *oeuvre*) contributes to an especially kaleidoscopic character which eggs on the new protagonists to seek out uncharted territory. No movement is without resonance: the swathes of Mediterranean heat of the 'Italian' Symphony in the first, Puck-like figuration in the most obvious homage to A Midsummer Night's Dream in the second, a Lutheran organ chorale and passion-like recitative dominating the rhetorical world of the third movement *arioso* and the blisteringly athletic combat of the last, recalling an almost Schumann-esque chamber-finale world in which energetic themes are rolled out for increasingly congenial discussion. All these myriad aspects deflect attention away from issues of instrumental idiom, as such, and provide 'elbow room' for the revisionist for whom abstract melodic fluency and figurative decoration can be agreeably adopted.

**Schumann's Violin Sonata No.1 in A minor, Op.105** inspires a different set of self-imposed challenges. A far shorter, more condensed and tautly argued work than the Mendelssohn, it presents a mini-anthology of how Schumann conceived an expressive world of capricious freedom within an established sonata structure. This work successfully and gently critiques a formal expectation which Schumann could find inhibiting. The first of three sonatas, Op.105, was written in 1851 and largely motivated by a kind of early '*gebrauchsmusik*', following Ferdinand David's request for 'intelligent new pieces'. Schumann was following in the steps of his Fantasy Pieces for clarinet and piano from three years earlier. In this respect, writing to a 'job spec' played psychologically to Schumann's strengths, reducing the heavy burden of composing sonatas in the great tradition. Fluency reigned: it was composed in four days, and his wife Clara had the piano part under her fingers on the fifth.

Compelling breadth and spontaneity are evident as the first movement sets sail. *‘Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck’* is home territory for Schumann, as the unsettled cantabile of the solo line seeks poetic resolution in its temperamental outbursts, poignant reflections and disoriented glances – all underpinned by a brooding and at once assertive piano part. The degree of intensity and sweep of this three-movement work is conditioned by the role of each movement within a contained tonal world hinging on A minor and F Major, described by Linda Correll Roesner as *‘two faces of what is essentially one gesamt tonality’*. Our transformation has required a few re-writings in solo figuration (and re-allocation of material) to provide a suitably idiomatic trumpet and piano dialogue still within Schumann’s characteristic *‘tonbild’*.

Trumpet players are not usually faced with these sophisticated representations of structural implication and mood, and yet the instrument seems well positioned to project a particular urgency and yearning in the first movement. Similarly, the *‘moto perpetuo’* (*‘Lebhaft’*) of the last movement recalls the articulated world of the trumpet *étude*. The movement was deemed something of a problem in Schumann’s day with Clara, especially, finding it *‘less graceful and more intractable’* than the first two movements. In essence, it is a form of *scherzo* – a reference to Mendelssohn’s more elf-like creations cannot be avoided – a brilliantly pointillist study in counterpoint which both challenges the emotional temperature of the steamy first movement whilst also, through a brief recurrence of its main theme at the end, reconciling the reflective and charismatic elements of the work in a potent conclusion. The second movement is a beguiling foil whose ephemeral whimsy turns with surprising flights of fancy (the early one in F minor, especially), all gathered up in a touching close that playfully belies its acutely judged atmosphere.

**Grieg’s Holberg Suite, Op.40** for piano needs little introduction. It has attracted arrangers since its composition in 1884, the first of whom was Grieg when he published the work for string orchestra a year later. The principal attraction of the suite is how the ‘olden style’ – a neo-classical ‘zeitgeist’ to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of the Scandinavian

‘Molière’, Ludvig Holberg – is ingeniously coupled to Grieg’s unmistakable love of his own vernacular. Stylised dances they may be, but each movement carries its Baroque reference lightly, through strong sequential progression, periodic phrasing (but often wrong-footed), ornament and textural luminosity; the slow movements reveal the emotional intensity of Grieg at his most unequivocal. The opening *Praeludium* is a brilliant vehicle for the trumpet and piano to ‘take off’ in a work whose arrangement here explores the chiselled extremes between the collaborative potential of the duo (notably in the delightful rustic shenanigans of the *Gavotte* and *Rigaudon*) and the simple ‘primus inter pares’ of the trumpet in the less intricate parts of the score.

The **Trumpet Sonata by Karl Pilss**, written in 1935, stands as one of the very few significant solo trumpet works which draws its inspiration blue-bloodedly from within the post-Romantic tradition. Pilss was a Viennese stalwart at the time of Franz Schmidt and Richard Strauss: composer, teacher, chorus master and répétiteur. He also served for 32 years as the Director of Studies at Salzburg Festival, where he worked closely with many great conductors from Knappertsbusch to Karajan. His inherent conservatism and the colleagues with whom he consorted in the pre-War years, have perhaps, inevitably, encouraged enquiries as to his political leanings. Much of this stems from Pilss’s interest in writing brass music and his close association with the Trompetenchor der Stadt Wien, as composer-in-residence, at a time when such a notable brass ensemble was an obvious vehicle for cultural propaganda.

The dedicatee of the Sonata is Helmut Wobisch, the most prominent trumpet player in Vienna at the time and a notable pioneer of Baroque music, alongside his positions in the Philharmonic and State Opera. The extent to which musicians, such as Strauss, Wobisch and Pilss, ‘accepted’ the Nazi regime, within the complex ideological atmosphere in Austria during the Anschluss, is hard to gauge and even harder to judge. On the evidence of this Sonata, one can be forgiven for imagining that it was the preservation of the Austro-German musical tradition as a force for human good that consumed Pilss above all. If there is



a lapse in taste, it is to be found in the animated central section of the attractive Adagio. But such is the high level of Pils's workmanship only a seasoned curmudgeon would deny this Sonata the right to sit alongside its new 19<sup>th</sup>-century cousins – if only for the contrapuntal coda which combines all the themes in a 'pocket' Bruckner Symphony No.5.

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### Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood is a performer, writer, educator, recording producer and Principal of the Royal Academy of Music in London. He studied at the University of Toronto and Christ Church, Oxford. Soon after, he became Dean of Undergraduate Studies at the Academy, where he led a pioneering new degree course in performance studies under the aegis of King's College London. He then became Vice-Principal & Director of Studies, a post he held until 2008. In 1997, he was elected an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music and in 2001 received a personal chair in his conferment as a Professor of the University of London.

As a trumpet player, Jonathan Freeman-Attwood has attracted plaudits from the press for his solo recordings, initially with his debut album in 1993, *Albinoni and Contemporaries*, and in 1998, *Bach Connections* – a trumpet and organ recital which threads its way from Bach through to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 2004, a disc of works by Rheinberger, Strauss and Elgar with John Wallace, entitled *The Trumpets that Time Forgot* (Linn CKD 242), heralded a series of recording projects exploring ways in which the trumpet can, retrospectively, be 'written into' established traditions of mainstream solo and chamber music. Both *La Trompette Retrouvée* (Linn CKD 294) (including a virtuosic arrangement of Fauré's Sonata, Op.108) and *Trumpet Masque* (Linn CKD 310) in 2007 and 2008 were hailed in the press, the latter receiving *High Fidelity's* 'Recording of the Year 2008' and *Metro* describing it as 'extraordinary playing, switching between fizzy fireworks and tender pathos with ease'.



**Jonathan Freeman-Attwood**  
trumpet



**Daniel-Ben Pienaar**  
piano

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood's career also extends to recording producer of around 150 discs for many independent labels, including BIS, Naxos, Chandos, Hyperion, Simax, AVIE and Channel Classics. Several of his productions have won major awards, including Diapason d'Ors, eight Gramophone Awards and many nominations, with the Clerk's Group, I Fagiolini, Phantasm, Rachel Podger, Trevor Pinnock, L'Arte di Suonatore and The Cardinal's Musick. He has recently produced a disc of Mozart and Haydn with The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment using Stradivari instruments, having just finished the complete Mozart Violin Sonatas with Rachel Podger and Gary Cooper, the complete Piano Sonatas with Daniel-Ben Pienaar, as well as producing Gramophone's 'Record of the Year' in 2010 with William Byrd's Latin Church Music performed by The Cardinal's Musick under Andrew Carwood.

He continues to be active as a critic, lecturer and contributor to journals and books, including The New Grove (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) and Cambridge University Press's 'Companion of Recorded Music' and he broadcasts regularly for BBC Radio 3. He is an established authority on Bach interpretation, particularly as it challenges and refocuses historical perspectives on 'performance practices' and – in more pedagogical contexts – how recordings of the past can influence current priorities and tastes. He writes essays regularly for EMI, Warner, Deutsche Grammophon and other major record labels.

In July 2008, Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood became the 14<sup>th</sup> Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, founded in 1822. He was appointed a Fellow of King's College London in July 2009, and a Trustee of the University of London in 2010.

*'a multi-talented trumpeter, academic and Renaissance Man'* BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE

*'outstanding playing with a dynamic range of lively dialogue and solo lyricism in virtuoso style'* THE OBSERVER

*'Freeman-Attwood's playing is notable for the beauty and freedom of line, while the bravura is exhilarating'* GRAMOPHONE

## Daniel-Ben Pienaar

Daniel-Ben Pienaar is active as a recitalist and chamber musician and divides his time between studying this repertoire and its contexts, teaching at the Royal Academy of Music in London (where he is piano professor and academic lecturer), playing and recording. Recent work includes four Schubert recitals comprising the major piano sonatas at the Duke's Hall of the Royal Academy and a complete Mozart piano sonata cycle for Oxford University. The latter has been recorded by AVIE to universal acclaim, including a 5-star review in the Sunday Times which described the set as *'one of the most completely satisfying surveys of this music ever committed to disc'*.

*'He offers answers that push the music to the brink though the bounds of credibility aren't breached. His is a tough but thought-provoking approach.'* GRAMOPHONE

*'A kaleidoscope of colours and textures in performances that combined the dramatic with the ethereal, the monumental with the intimate.'* INTERNATIONAL PIANO

*'Daniel-Ben Pienaar's performances are quite simply stunning. The instrument he plays matters much less than his musicianship, which is evident at every turn.'* GRAMOPHONE

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