

The image is an album cover for 'Virtuoso Music for Horn & Piano'. It features two men, Eric Ruske and Pedja Mužijević, in a studio setting. Eric Ruske, on the left, is wearing glasses and a black turtleneck, holding a golden horn. Pedja Mužijević, on the right, is wearing a black ribbed turtleneck and has his arms crossed. A grand piano is visible in the background. The title 'VIRTUOSO MUSIC FOR HORN & PIANO' is written in white serif font in the top left. The artists' names and instruments are listed on the right. The Albany Records logo is in the bottom right corner.

VIRTUOSO
MUSIC FOR
HORN
&
PIANO

ERIC RUSKE
HORN

PEDJA MUŽIJEVIĆ
PIANO

ALBANY

Standing out as perhaps one of the more colorful composers on this recording, **Rafael Méndez**, at the age of 10, became the musical darling of the notorious bandit Pancho Villa and traveled across Mexico with his entourage. His real fame, though, rests with the more than 300 trumpet solos he wrote and arranged, his numerous recordings, and the star bearing his name in Hollywood's Walk of Fame.

The son of the town trumpeter, **Gioachino Rossini** completed the bulk of his musical offerings early in life. The *Prelude, Theme and Variations*, composed at age 65, is included in a group of lighter chamber music works that he himself described as one of the "sins of his old age." The work was premiered at one of Rossini's famous Saturday musical soirées and was performed by Eugène Vivier, a hand horn virtuoso of the day. The closing section, when repeated, affords the listener the opportunity to hear the variant "for the lazy" (as Rossini marked in the score) as well as the version for the more industrious.

César Cui is perhaps most well known as one of the least popular composers of "The Five." This group of composers (that also included Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov and Borodin) made Russian nationalism a musical priority. We have Frøydis Ree Wekre to thank for this charming arrangement of *Perpetuum*

Mobile.

A discussion of virtuoso keyboard music must include the name of **Carl Czerny**. The student of Beethoven's, friend of Liszt's, and composer of more than 1,000 pieces was truly a musical force of his day. This is one of the three *Fantasies*, all of which are based on themes written by Franz Schubert, each originally penned for Pianoforte and the Physharmonica or Violin. The violin has certainly bested the physharmonica in popularity, and, as it was a sort of pump action reed organ, I think I can understand why.

A piece on which I labored (unsuccessfully) as a young piano student was the *Valse Op. 64, No. 1* by **Fryderyk Chopin**. Little did I know that I would tempt fate again years later, having wisely chosen an instrument that only involves one hand.

George Frideric Handel studied law at Halle University until his father died and he could pursue his musical career in earnest. This *Aria con Variazione* is from the fifth of eight harpsichord suites written in the year 1720. The subtitle, "The Harmonious Blacksmith" by which it is most well known, was given after Handel's death and has no connection to it whatsoever.

The *Csárdás* of **Vittorio Monti** was written for violin and piano but has been transcribed by everyone (including the accordion player

Washington, D.C. and the Dukes Hall in London.

An active chamber musician, he has appeared at the Newport Music Festival, the Casals Festival, Les Flâneries Musicales d'Été de Reims Festival in France, the Bargemusic series in New York City, the OK Mozart International Festival, the Sarasota Music Festival, and the Festival de Musique de St-Barthélémy. Mr. Ruske is in great demand as a teacher and clinician, and in addition to having worked at many universities in the United States, he has taught at the Royal Academy of Music in London, the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, and the College of Music at Seoul National University.

In addition to a critically acclaimed recording of the complete Mozart Concerti with Sir Charles Mackerras and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, his discography includes recordings for Musical Heritage Society, Fleur de Son and Albany Records labels.

A native of LaGrange, Illinois and a graduate of Northwestern University, Eric Ruske has been the recipient of grants from the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts and the International Institute of Education. Having served on the faculties of the Cleveland Institute of Music and the New

England Conservatory of Music, he is currently on the faculty of Boston University and heads the Horn Seminar at the Boston University Tanglewood Institute.

PEDJA MUŽIJEVIĆ

Since making his first orchestral appearance with the Zagreb Radio Symphony Orchestra, pianist Pedja Mužijević has distinguished himself as one of the most versatile of young artists. Praised for his interpretations of standard literature and as a champion of contemporary music, he has toured extensively as soloist with orchestras and as recitalist throughout eastern and western Europe, Great Britain, Canada, Japan and the United States.

He has performed with The Residentie Orkest in the Hague, the Dresden Philharmonic, Orquesta Sinfonica (Montevideo), the Boston Pops and the Boston Symphony Chamber Players. Mr. Mužijević has appeared at the Aldeburgh Festival, the Frick Collection, the Teatro Municipal in Santiago de Chile, the Mostly Mozart Festival, the Lincoln Center Great Performers Series, and the Smithsonian Chamber Music Society.

Pedja Mužijević many honors include top prize in the Busoni International Piano Competition. He was a finalist in the Naumburg International Piano Competition.

International Piano Competition, as well as winning the special prize of the Chopin Society, Warsaw, and the special prize of the Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon.

Pedja Mužijević graduated from the Academy of Music in Zagreb, where he received the Croatian Music Institute Award for best recital. He continued his studies at The Curtis Institute of Music and at the Juilliard School, where he received his Master of Music degree. The teachers who have had the greatest influence on his artistic development include pianists Joseph Kalichstein and Vladimir Krpan, violinist Robert Mann, and harpsichordist Albert Fuller.

Mr. Ruske plays on a F/B-Flat Double Horn made by S.W. Lewis Orchestral Horns.
Mr. Mužijević played an instrument kindly provided by the Yamaha Corporation of America.

Sibley, Mr. John Saint-Amour, Mr. Doug Collins, Mr. Steven Lewis, J.L. Horner, Mr. David Ginott, Ms. Willona Sinclair and especially Ruth and Alan Broder for their generous financial support.

This recording is dedicated to my sons Jack and Eliot and my friend Xiao-Ming Xie.

Recorded January 3-5, 2000 at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City.

Produced by Gregory K. Squires and edited by Wayne Hileman.

All photos by Christian Steiner.