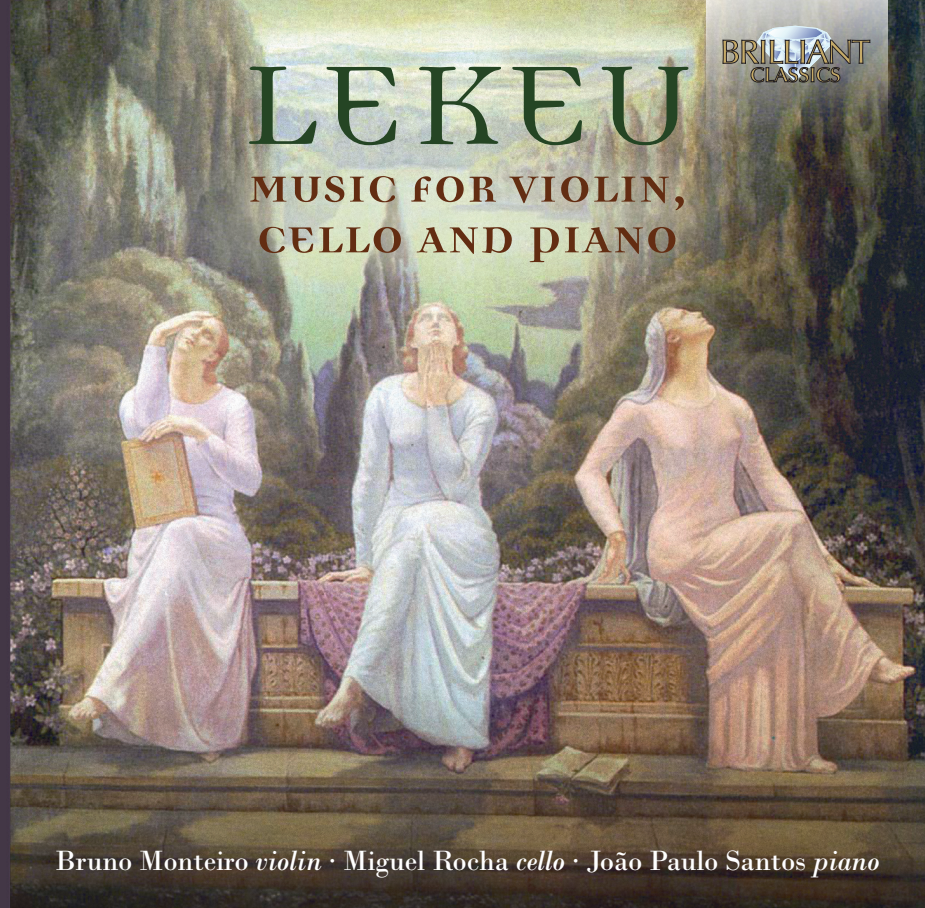


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BRILLIANT
CLASSICS

LEKEU

MUSIC FOR VIOLIN,
CELLO AND PIANO



Bruno Monteiro *violin* · Miguel Rocha *cello* · João Paulo Santos *piano*

Guillaume Lekeu 1870-1894
Music for Violin, Cello and Piano

Sonata for Violin and Piano in G

1. Très modéré 12'58
2. Très lent 10'14
3. Très animé 11'06

**Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello
in C minor**

4. Lent – Allegro 12'41
5. Très lent 12'20
6. Très animé (Scherzo) 7'09
7. Lent – Allegro molto 11'10

Bruno Monteiro *violin*
Miguel Rocha *cello*
João Paulo Santos *piano*

Guillaume Lekeu was born in Belgium, near Verviers, on January 20, 1870, and died in Angers on January 21, 1894. He studied piano and music theory with Vosse, and at age 15 composed his first work. He also studied philosophy and, in 1889, travelled to Bayreuth, where he encountered Richard Wagner's music (in fact, Lekeu is said to have been so moved upon hearing *Tristan and Isolde* that he fainted). Later, he became a student of César Franck and then Vincent d'Indy. The latter encouraged him to compete for the Rome Prize, where he was awarded second prize for the cantata, *Andromède*. Lekeu was known as the "Rimbaud" of music and left only several completed works. At the time, he was considered one of the most gifted composers of his generation. The life of this young genius was cut short by typhoid fever at age 24. Chamber music was, without a doubt, the realm in which Lekeu was most highly regarded: the Sonata for Cello and Piano (1888), the Piano Quartet (1893) and the two works included on the current disc, the Sonata for Violin and Piano (1892) and the Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello (1890) are vivid examples.

The **Sonata for Violin and Piano in G Major** was composed between the spring and summer of 1892 and cost the composer "infinite suffering." Perhaps the most important score by Lekeu, this sonata achieved enormous success at the time of its premiere in Brussels on March 7, 1893, by the great violinist Eugène Ysaÿe, who commissioned the work. The piece, concerned above all with form, is free from the excesses of passion that in some ways afflicted previous works (the work is also free from any literary motivation). It attains a rare balance and purity of expression as it achieves a near perfect fusion between the instruments. Its thematic unity not only assures formal cohesion, but also creates a type of stable psychological structure. Divided in three movements, (*Très modéré*, *Très lent* and *Très animé*), the first begins with a lyrical theme in the violin, characterized by broken octaves on the note D, generating a long melodic line in a climate of nostalgia. A second motive follows, brief and cheerful (*Vif et Passioné*), in sonata form, whose second theme is entrusted



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to the piano. The internal movement is a type of grand, ternary lied which opens with a meditative phrase in the violin, accompanied by a noble and energetic piano. In the central section, there is a pattern of alternating meters: 7/8, 3/4, 4/8 and 8/8. Here, the music is set in the dorian mode, based on folk music from Wallonia, and marked “*Très simplement et dans le caractère d’un chant populaire.*” The final movement is also in 2 distinct parts – the first, vigorous, and the next, lyrical and impassioned. Since this is (like the sonata by his teacher, Franck) a cyclic work, the initial motive is restated by the violin and then the piano to create a luminous close in the main key, exhibiting a strong, youthful eloquence.

The **Trio for Piano, Violin and Cello in C minor** dates from 1890 and by all indications, seems free from Franckian and Wagnerian influences and more inclined towards Beethoven. Its creation was not without struggle and Lekeu did not seem particularly satisfied with final result (he complained of an overly disciplined and broken discourse). In effect, his prolixity is revealed in the first movement (a slow introduction and then, a very energetic and fortissimo Allegro). Lekeu commented, in a letter to his mother, dating from March 1890: “Introduction, the pain, a light signifying a presence, fleeting, followed by the shadow of dreams; Allegro molto: a constant struggle that recalls transient victories.” Surely something which Beethoven very much embodied in his works. The following three movements, *Très lent*, *Très animé* (with a syncopated Scherzo inserted), and *Lent*, followed by an energetic Finale – perhaps a bit long, but with true harmonic richness – conclude this work. As previously mentioned, the composer was not overly pleased with this score, one which, nevertheless, displays a total emotional sincerity that is not surprising considering the age and brilliance of this musical genius at the time of its creation.

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Translation by Fredrick Gifford

Guillaume Lekeu nasceu perto de Verviers na Bélgica a 20 de Janeiro de 1870 e faleceu em Angers a 21 de Janeiro de 1894. Estudou piano e teoria musical com Vosse e aos 15 anos compôs a sua primeira obra. Estudou também Filosofia e em 1889, viajou a Bayreuth, onde se familiarizou com a música de Richard Wagner (aliás, após ouvir *Tristão e Isolda*, desmaiou dada a comoção que a partitura lhe causou). Foi mais tarde discípulo de César Franck e depois de Vincent d’Indy. Este último encorajou-o a competir no Prémio de Roma, onde alcançou o 2º lugar com a cantata *Andromède*. Lekeu foi apelidado como “o Rimbaud da música” e deixou-nos apenas algumas obras concluídas. Foi, no seu tempo, considerado um dos mais dotados compositores da sua geração. Uma febre tifóide interrompeu a vida deste jovem génio aos 24 anos de idade. A música de câmara foi, sem dúvida, o domínio em que mais se notabilizou; a Sonata para Violoncelo e Piano (1888), o Quarteto com Piano (1893) e as duas obras que neste CD são interpretadas, a Sonata para Violino e Piano (1892) e o Trio para Piano, Violino e Violoncelo (1890) são disso vivos exemplos.

A **Sonata para Violino e Piano em Sol Maior** foi composta entre a Primavera e o Verão de 1892 e custou ao compositor uma “pena infinita”. É talvez a partitura mais importante de Lekeu que, aliás, alcançou um enorme sucesso aquando da sua estreia em Bruxelas a 7 de Março de 1893, pelo grande violinista Eugène Ysaÿe, que a encomendou ao jovem músico. A obra, dominada na forma, isenta das profusões de paixão que afectavam de algum modo as obras anteriores (isentas também de qualquer pretexto literário), encontra um equilíbrio e uma pureza de expressão rara e consegue atingir uma fusão quase perfeita entre os dois instrumentos. A unidade temática, por outro lado, assegura não somente a coesão formal, mas cria igualmente uma espécie de estrutura psicológica constante. Dividida em três andamentos (*Très modéré*, *Très lent* e *Très animé*), o primeiro é iniciado por um tema cantado no violino, caracterizado pela sua queda de oitava inicial na nota *ré*, induzindo uma longa linha melódica de clima nostálgico. Um segundo motivo segue-se, breve e

alegre (*Vif et Passioné*) em forma sonata, cujo segundo tema é confiado ao piano. O andamento intermédio é uma espécie de grande *Lied* ternário aberto por uma frase meditativa do violino, sendo o acompanhamento feito pelo piano num estilo nobre e caloroso. Ao inicial 7/8 suceder-se-á um 3/4, um 4/8 e um 8/8, alternando numa parte central em modo dórico e denominada *Très simplement et dans le caractère d'un chant populaire*, baseado na música folclórica de Valónia. O último andamento é também ele dividido em 2 partes distintas – uma vigorosa e uma segunda, lírica, muito apaixonada. Sendo uma obra cíclica (tal como a Sonata do seu mestre, Franck), o motivo inicial é reexposto pelo violino e depois pelo piano, que constituirá a conclusão no tom principal, extremamente brilhante, de uma forte eloquência jovem.

O *Trio para Piano, Violino e Violoncelo em Dó menor* é datado de 1890 e ao que tudo indica, parece libertar-se da influência franckiana e wagneriana e mais inclinado para Beethoven. A sua elaboração não deixou de ser penosa e Lekeu não se mostrou particularmente satisfeito com o resultado final (queixou-se de um discurso cerrado, muito disciplinado). Com efeito, a proximidade revela-se no primeiro andamento (*Lent* introdutório e depois no *Allegro* que se lhe segue, muito enérgico em *fortíssimo*). Lekeu comentou à sua Mãe por carta, datada de Março de 1890 o seguinte: “*Introdução*, a dor, uma luz de presença, fugidia, perseguida pela sombra do sonho; *Allegro*: uma luta constante com lembrança das vitórias passageiras”. Seguramente algo que Beethoven muito encetava nas suas obras. Os três andamentos seguintes, *Très lent*, *Très animé* (com um *Scherzo* sincopado no meio), *Lent* e um brilhante *Finale*, um pouco longo talvez, mas de grande riqueza harmónica, concluem esta obra. Como anteriormente mencionado, o compositor não ficou agradado com esta partitura, mas dela se denota, no entanto, uma total sinceridade emocional, o que não surpreende dada a idade e fulgor deste genial músico aquando da sua elaboração.

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Bruno Monteiro, Violin

Heralded by the daily Público as “one of Portugal’s premier violinists” and by the weekly *Expresso* as “one of today’s most renowned Portuguese musicians”, Bruno Monteiro is internationally recognized as a distinguished violinist of his generation. *Fanfare Magazine* describes him as having a “burnished golden tone” and *Strad* states that his “generous vibrato produces radiant



colors”. *MusicWeb International* refers to interpretations that have a “vitality and an imagination that are looking unequivocally to the future” and that reach an “almost ideal balance between the expressive and the intellectual”. *Gramophone* praises his “unfailing assurance and eloquence” and *Strings Magazine* summarises that he is “deserving of a much larger slice of the limelight on the world stage”.

Monteiro made his debut recitals at the age of 13 at S. Luis and Rivoli Theaters and his first solo orchestral concert at the Lisbon Opera House (Teatro Nacional de São Carlos) when he was 14. Since then and with a repertoire that ranges widely from Bach to Corigliano, including important Portuguese composers, he concertizes as recitalist, soloist and chamber musician in all the major musical centers of Portugal and internationally, he has also performed in prestigious venues in countries such as Spain (Palácio de Cibebes), France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Vienna (Musikverein), Romania (Bucharest Cultural Center), Bulgária (Bulgaria Hall), Ukraine (Kiev Philharmonic), Denmark, the Philippines, Malaysia, South Korea and the USA (Carnegie Hall).

He has been a guest soloist with orchestras such as Orquestra Filarmonia das Beiras, Orquestra do Norte, Orquestra Clássica da Madeira, Orquestra Sinfónica de Palma de Mallorca, Orquestra Sinfónica Portuguesa and the English Chamber

Orchestra. In recital, he has performed with João Paulo Santos since 2002.

A noted recording artist, his 2014 CD of the complete works for violin and piano and solo violin by the esteemed Portuguese composer Fernando Lopes-Graça (Naxos) received the highest acclaim from newspapers and musical magazines all over the world.

Equally praised worldwide was his debut recording for Brilliant Classics (2015) with the complete music for violin and piano by Karol Szymanowski. *BBC Music Magazine* wrote that “*Portuguese virtuosos Monteiro and Santos, captured in opulent sound, hurl themselves into the virtuoso fray where appropriate, steering the music’s sometimes meandering course with a firm rudder*”. *The Examiner* proclaimed that “*Monteiro’s playing on this new recording is particularly effective in escalating the mood of Opus 30 (Myths) beyond the plane of mere mortals*”. Finally, *Musical Opinion* declared that this recording is “*one of the most significant to have been released in recent years with regard towards a completion of this wonderful composer’s music*”. This recording was selected as “*Classical CD of the Week*” (March 2018) by *Forbes (USA)*.

His 2016 CD with the complete music for violin and piano by Erwin Schulhoff, released also by Brilliant Classics, received high acclaim by critics, not only in Portugal, but in the UK, France, Spain, Austria, USA, Canada and Brazil. In Madrid, it was selected as the *Editor’s Choice* and as one of the Top 10 CD’s worldwide by *Revista Ritmo*. In the USA, it reached the *Favorite Recordings 2016* list on *Classical Candor* and in São Paulo was selected as the *CD of the Week* by *Radio Cultura* and was broadcast throughout the country.

Monteiro studied at the Manhattan School of Music in New York with Patinka Kopec (associated teacher to Pinchas Zukerman), the late Isidore Cohen (former member of both the Juilliard Quartet and the Beaux Arts Trio) and members of the American String Quartet with scholarships from the *Gulbenkian Foundation* and *Centro Nacional de Cultura*, later completing his training in Chicago under Shmuel Ashkenasi (former first violinist of the Vermeer Quartet) as a scholar of the *Ministério da Cultura* and the *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia*.

Miguel Rocha, Cello

Miguel Rocha began his studies at the Conservatory of Porto with Isabel Delerue. In 1983, he worked abroad with M. Strauss (Paris), Vectomov (Prague), Iankovic (Maastricht), Aldulescu, Pergamenchikov (Basel), Fallot (Lausanne).

Rocha obtained several degrees with the highest classification, including the First Prize for Virtuosity from the *Haute école de Musique*, Lausanne, and the First Prize of the International Music Competition, UFAM. He was awarded a scholarship from the *Gulbenkian Foundation* from 1983-85 to study in Paris and at the Superior Academy in Prague. He continued his studies at the Maastricht Conservatory and the Superior Academy in Basel, with funding from the SEC.

Rocha has participated in pedagogical workshops at Manhattan University with Burton Kaplan and in masterclasses with Paul Tortelier, C. Henkel, Janos Starker, P. Muller and M. Tchaikovskaia.

He has given concerts in France, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Mexico, Brazil and the United States.

A soloist of the Lausanne Sinfonietta from 1996-1999, Rocha taught at a number of schools in France, including the National Conservatory of Belfort, Grenoble, Annecy, and at Lausanne, Switzerland, from 1997-2000.

In 2001, he returned to Portugal, where he developed intense artistic activity as



a soloist and chamber musician as well as a pedagogue, at the Superior School of Castelo Branco – ESART.

He has performed in a number of ensembles with Ana Bela Chaves, António Rosado, Luiz Moura Castro, Daniel Rowland, Miguel Borges Coelho, Aníbal Lima, Filipe Pinto Ribeiro, etc.

Rocha has recorded three CD's as a member of the *Duo Contracello*, as well as one disc in France, with Trio Athena, of trios by Debussy and Beethoven.

As the baroque cellist of the *Ensemble Avondano*, Rocha participated in the publication and recording of unpublished Portuguese repertoire from the eighteenth century: the four sonatas and two duos by João Baptista André Avondano (on the Stradivarius instrument, the “King of Portugal”), and in the recording of a second CD featuring the Trio Sonatas of Pedro António Avondano (on the eighteenth century Galrão cello).

Miguel Rocha is currently Professor Coordenador at ESART.

João Paulo Santos, *Piano*

Born in Lisbon in 1959, João Paulo Santos is a graduate of the Lisbon National Conservatory. With sponsorship from the *Gulbenkian Foundation*, he completed his piano studies in Paris with Aldo Ciccolini (1979/84).

For the past 42 years, Santos has been associated with *Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos*, the Lisbon Opera House, first as Chief Chorus Conductor and now as Director of Musical and Stage Studies.

Artistically, he has distinguished himself as opera conductor, concert pianist and researcher of less-known and forgotten works by Portuguese composers.

Santos has conducted operas from Menotti to Sondheim; in Portugal, he has premiered works by Stravinsky, Hosokawa, Hindemith, Martin and Henze, having received the *Acarte 2000 Prize* for his musical direction of Henze's *The English*

Cat. He has been invited to conduct world-premiere performances of works by António Chagas Rosa, António Pinho Vargas, Eurico Carrapatoso and Clotilde Rosa. He has also discovered, revised and brought Portuguese operas such as *Serrana*, *Dona Branca*, *Lauriane* and *O Espadachim do Outeiro* to the stage.

Upcoming conducting performances include *L'Étoile* by Chabrier.

In 2018, in a joint production between Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos and Imprensa Nacional Casa da Moeda, Santos began to publish a collection containing major scores of the Património Lírico Português.

As a pianist, he performs as a soloist, in chamber music groups, with major singers and in duo both with cellist Irene Lima and violinist Bruno Monteiro.

His discography includes repertoire that ranges from *Chat Noir* Songs to classical works, including Saint-Saëns, Liszt, Satie, Martinů, Szymanowski, Schulhoff, Poulenc, António Frago, Luís de Freitas Branco and Jorge Peixinho.



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