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# BRUCH

Double Concerto for Clarinet,  
Viola and Orchestra Op.88

8 Pieces for Clarinet, Viola and Piano Op.83

Giovanni Punzi *clarinet*  
Eva Katrine Dalsgaard *viola*  
Tanja Zapolski *piano*

COPENHAGEN PHIL  
Vincenzo Milletari *conductor*

## Max Bruch 1838-1920

### Double Concerto in E minor Op.88

for clarinet, viola and orchestra (1911)

- |                     |      |
|---------------------|------|
| 1. Andante con moto | 6'56 |
| 2. Allegro moderato | 5'27 |
| 3. Allegro molto    | 5'13 |

### 8 Pieces Op.83

for Clarinet, Viola and Piano (1910)

- |                                   |      |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| 4. Andante                        | 3'26 |
| 5. Allegro molto                  | 2'32 |
| 6. Andante con moto               | 6'41 |
| 7. Allegro agitato                | 3'54 |
| 8. Rumanische Melodie             | 4'29 |
| 9. Nachtgesang                    | 5'40 |
| 10. Allegro vivace, ma non troppo | 3'31 |
| 11. Moderato                      | 5'31 |

Giovanni Punzi *clarinet* · Eva Katrine Dalsgaard *viola* · Tanja Zapolski *piano*

Copenhagen Phil · Vincenzo Milletari *conductor*



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Producer, Musical direction, Postproduction: Rosella Clementi  
Sound engineer: Erik Skovgaard Pedersen & Johannes Bakke Petersen  
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## Bruch and the clarinet

In 1908, on the occasion of his 70th birthday, Max Bruch had declared to a friend that his composing days were over: 'the source of my inspiration is dried up'. After a career marked equally by industry and resentment, in which the composer felt time and again that his music and its merits had been insufficiently recognised, especially in his home city of Cologne, he was feted with a sequence of concerts and performances in Rhineland venues, culminating in the young Pablo Casals winning acclaim both for and with *Kol Nidrei*. 'The happy participation of the nation and the whole musical world,' wrote Bruch to another friend, 'has shown me that I have not lived quite in vain, and that in spite of all modern madness, my constant efforts to hold aloft the flag of perfect Beauty will now be honoured by thousands.'

Yet the spring flowed again, and from a source of historical precedent. Just as Brahms had turned late in life to the expressive possibilities offered by the uniquely mellow tone-quality of the clarinet, inspired by the playing of Richard Mühlfeld, so the elderly Bruch found inspiration in the playing of his son, Max Felix, to compose the two works on this album.

Having composed no chamber music for several decades, he wrote the **Eight Pieces for clarinet, viola and piano** in 1909; the set was published the following year by his loyal publisher Simrock. They belong to the genre of character pieces by Schumann such as the eight *Fantasiestücke* Op.12 and in particular the quartet of *Märchenerzählungen* Op.113 (Fairy Tales) scored for the same combination of instruments. According to Clara Schumann, her husband's own description for the *Märchenerzählungen* was 'highly Romantic', and the same might justly be said of Bruch's effort in imitation, half a century on.

Some of the pieces – in particular Nos. 3, 5 and 6 – were originally conceived with a harp accompanying the two melody instruments, and a thrumming, arpeggiated texture is retained in the piano part. The musical subject of the Romanian Melody (No.5) was suggested to Bruch by a visitor to one of his Sunday musical house-

parties, ‘the delightful young Princess zu Wied’ to whom Op.83 is dedicated: probably Princess Sophie of Schönburg-Waldenburg (1885-1936), consort of Prince William of Wied, who became Princess of Albania upon her husband’s accession in 1914. The composer thought the melody exquisite, and his elaboration of it forms the cycle’s high point, musically and expressively, together with the succeeding Nocturne. There follows an Allegro vivace of Mendelssohnian lightness and deftness, before the cycle closes in its prevailing mood of lyric yearning.

Although he recommended against playing the Eight Pieces in sequence, Bruch was pleased to learn, when his son gave their complete first performance in Cologne in January 1909, that the playing of Max Felix had drawn favourable comparison with that of Mühlfeld himself, graced by ‘a tone and sense of phrasing which is pure and free from dross’ according to the conductor Fritz Steinbach, who as director of the court orchestra in Meiningen had worked closely with Brahms on his orchestral music.

In April 1911, now beset with health complaints, Bruch retired from all his public posts and duties. Yet, far from turning inward, he threw renewed energy into composing, and the year produced a harvest of choral and instrumental music. Perhaps stirred by the success of the Eight Pieces, he wrote the lovely **Double Concerto** for clarinet and viola in E minor with his son in mind once more; Max Felix duly gave the first performance in March 1912 with the violist Willy Hess in the North Sea port of Wilhelmshaven, ‘in front of all the admirals and captains of our navy’ according to the fiercely patriotic composer, though doubtless in this case the fervent Nationalism which coloured his music and discourse was infused with paternal pride.

Opening with a cadenza for each instrument punctuated by orchestral chords, the concerto soon unites clarinet and viola in entwining melody: a device readily encountered in the Double Concerto of Brahms. The most inspired passages of Bruch’s music rarely stray far from Brahmsian models, such as the rising pizzicato

accompaniment for the first movement’s third theme, encountered halfway through. Though Bruch never places the soloists in opposition to one another – as Brahms so selectively and effectively does – it is this point that finds them in the most sweetly harmonious dialogue, and the remainder of the movement unwinds rhapsodically.

What follows is, unconventionally, a more flowing central intermezzo which sympathetically plays to the strength of each solo instrument’s character, with the clarinet floating a long-limbered, exquisite melody above the viola’s mellow string-crossings. The serenade-like character of the movement is further intensified by Bruch’s ingenious reduction of the accompanying orchestral texture into guitar-like strummings. A brief central section is livelier still, recalling somewhat the spirit of Bruch’s musical hero Mendelssohn.

Another question mark at the movement’s close is emphatically answered by the finale’s opening fanfare, which leads to an exposition of racing energy scored for the full orchestra, and the clarinet’s entry is withheld until bar 49. Even in this more heavily scored movement, Bruch takes care not to obscure the more shy and inner-part sonorities of the viola, which duly answers the clarinet’s roulades while retaining a more reflective character. If Bruch tailored the clarinet part to the talents of his son, with all its youthful high spirits, does the more measured and introverted cast of the viola line reflect the character of the composer himself? At any rate, it is salutary to think that the Double Concerto was produced just two years before Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* battered the musical world into submission, while Bruch held faithfully to the precepts of Classical form and Romantic harmony.

© Giovanni Punzi



Principal clarinet of the Copenhagen Phil, **Giovanni Punzi** was born in Salerno in 1989. Having made his concerto debut at the age of 14 with the Bulgarian National Radio Symphony Orchestra he became a student of Calogero Palermo and Alessandro Carbonare at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome. He continued his studies at the National Conservatory of Music in Paris with Philippe Berrod and at the Royal Danish Academy with John Kruse. In 2016 he graduated with a masters in arts, music and theatre from the University of Salerno.

As principal clarinet of the Orchestra Giovanile Italiana, Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra and the Schleswig Holstein Festival Orchestra, Giovanni Punzi has played under the direction of Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti, Valery Gergiev, Daniele Gatti and Kent Nagano, among others. At the age of 20 he was appointed solo clarinet in the Pomeriggi musicali orchestra in Milan. In 2011 he was awarded a diploma by the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena. In 2012 he became principal clarinet of the Orchestre Symphonique de Bretagne. He has made guest appearances as principal clarinet with the Danish Radio Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Northern Sinfonia and Les Dissonances, having also worked with the Royal Danish Orchestra and Orchestra Mozart.

Solo appearances include concerts with the Copenhagen Phil, Orchestre de chambre de Paris, Philharmonische Orchester Freiburg, Odense Symfoniorkester, the Royal Academy of Music in London, the Royal Danish Academy, the Opéra de Rouen and the Orchestra da Camera di Parma. His concerto repertoire includes all the significant works in the genre from Mozart to Françaix.

Among his competition awards are the Claude Debussy Competition (Paris, 2010), Jacques Lancelot Competition (Rouen, 2011), Jeunesses Musicales (Belgrade), Freiburg and Horice (Prague). He has made many broadcasts for radio stations across Europe.

Giovanni Punzi is professor of clarinet at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. In 2017 he became artistic director and of the Mediterranean Clarinet Academy, the premier higher-education centre for clarinetists in southern Europe.



Photo of Anne Mie Dreves

**Eva Katrine Dalsgaard** was born in Copenhagen and educated at the Hanns Eisler Musikhochschule in Berlin, where she studied with Kim Kashkashian. Following the completion of her masters degree in viola performance, she joined the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra. In 2001 she returned to Denmark to play with The Jutland Ensemble in Viborg while also receiving her Artist Diploma at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, where she debuted in 2004 under Tim Frederiksen. Additional inspirational musical figures include Thomas Riebl, Garth Knox and György Kurtág. In 2005 Eva Katrine received a Léonie Sonning scholarship and was hired as principal viola in the Copenhagen Phil. She has been guest in some of the most recognized current Danish chamber music ensembles, including the Nightingale String Quartet,

the Black Diamond Ensemble and the Athelas Sinfonietta. In 2016 she founded the T3io Phil string trio with Richard Krug and Kirstine Futtrup; together they have given concerts across Denmark.



Martin Bubandt

**Tanja Zapolski** is a leading young Danish pianist, who has appeared with leading orchestras in Scandinavia and farther afield under the baton of conductors such as Sir Simon Rattle. Having made her concerto debut at the age of eight, she studied at the Royal Danish Academy of Music with Anne Øland and Amalie Malling and then at the Anton Rubinstein Academy in Düsseldorf with Dina Yoffe; she has also taken masterclasses with Dmitri Bashkurov and Leif Ove Andsnes.

She won first prize at the Nordic Talent competition in Oslo and the International Competition for Young Performers; further awards include scholarships from the Jacob Gade and Léonie Sonning foundations, the Danish Freemason Prize, the Gladsaxe Music Prize and the Victor Borge Prize.

Tanja Zapolski's performance of Ravel's G major Piano Concerto was acclaimed for its 'intense energy and vibrant colour. With steely concentration and explosive technique she delivered an awe-inspiring performance, at all times light and brilliant.' She also works in experimental fields of music and has performed at many jazz festivals. As a passionate advocate of Minimalist piano music, she has played with Philip Glass in a portrait concert of his Etudes in Aarhus as part of celebrations marking its year as European City of Culture.

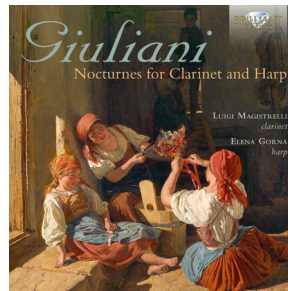




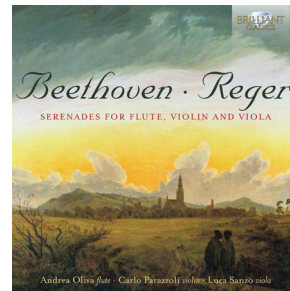
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Born in Italy, **Vincenzo Milletari** studied at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatoire in Milan and at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen under the guidance of Giordano Bellincampi, Michael Schönwandt and Pier Giorgio Morandi. He won second prize and the Heracomm Audience Prize at the 10th Arturo Toscanini Conducting Competition in Parma. Significant engagements include appearances at the Festival della Valle d'Itria, the Copenhagen Phil, the Orchestra Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi in Milan with Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, the Royal Danish Theatre (new productions of *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and *The Queen of Spades*) and a symphonic concert at the Musical Olympus Festival in St Petersburg.

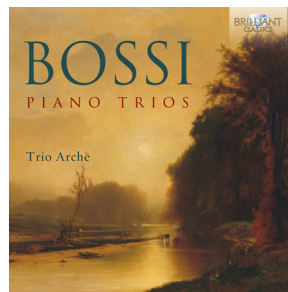
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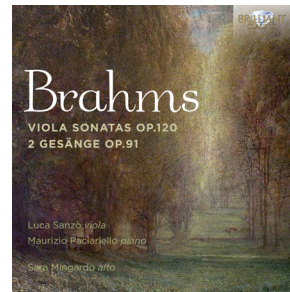
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