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# REGER

## PIANO TRIO OP.102



### ARTIUM TRIO

Francisco Lima Santos *violin*

Pedro Gomes Silva *cello*

João Barata *piano*



**Max Reger** was born in Brand, Bavaria on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1873. His father worked as a schoolteacher and played four instruments, while his non-musical mother possessed a quasi-mystical religious nature. Although the Wagner operas which the fifteen-year-old Reger saw at Bayreuth inspired him to pursue a musical career, the influence of the older composer upon his own music was very limited. From 1884 he studied with Adalbert Lindner (piano) and then with the celebrated theoretician Hugo Riemann. His earliest compositions, dating from his mid-teens, were lieder (a genre to which he would contribute nearly three hundred examples) and chamber works. It was the latter genre which would most consistently inspire Reger to compose his finest music. His mature music in general reflected both the Baroque revival and modernist tendencies, while two of the most lasting influences upon his style were Brahms and Bach.

Reger's academic career followed a path of successive teaching posts at Wiesbaden, Munich and Leipzig, while he was also active as pianist, organist and conductor. In the latter capacity he was appointed to the Meiningen Court Orchestra in 1911. He taught three hundred pupils (including Erwin Schulhoff and Othmar Schoeck) and influenced such composers as Szymanowski, Suk, Hindemith and Honegger. As a composer he was astonishingly prolific, amassing a total of well over a thousand works in a short career. A reputation for complexity and turgidity stubbornly clings, but this is a judgment typically based on ignorance of a number of works in clear contradiction. Anyone familiar with the Four Tone-poems after Böcklin, especially No.1: The Hermit Fiddler, will have a greater appreciation of Reger's expressive range. Towards the end of his life he admitted that only in his later works had he learnt how to orchestrate, so who can imagine how much more he would have developed had he lived beyond the age of forty-three? A combination of overwork, an over-fondness for alcohol and indulgent eating habits all contributed to his fatal heart attack.

It is among organists that Reger's reputation is highest, his substantial quantity of music for the instrument including some of his greatest works. Today his music in general (- he wrote in nearly every genre except opera and symphony) is rarely played, yet in a 1922 letter Schoenberg described him as a genius. In his book *Style and Idea*, each time he writes of the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century masters Wagner, Mahler, Strauss, Debussy, he always includes Reger in the same breath.

Reger's Piano Trio in E minor, Op.102 is a late work dating from 1907-8. It is sometimes described as his "Second Piano Trio", but the Trio in B minor, Op.2 is scored for violin, viola and piano, a very unorthodox combination which disqualifies it from being classified as a piano trio in the accepted sense. The first movement is a large-scale extended sonata structure (a form which Reger sometimes weakened through over-complication) in which the densely chromatic language

contributes to a restless quality. The opening melodic shape E-F-D sharp-E proves to be a germinal motif. In the manner often employed by Brahms also, this motif – or its variants, modifications and derivations – reappear especially in this movement, but also throughout the work. Contrastingly diatonic, the second subject (D major, repeated in B major) is broadly lyrical, though with surprising dynamics – beginning quietly but rising to fortissimo at the third bar. An important aspect of this theme is its tonal stability, in strong contrast to much of the other material in the movement. In the development section Reger treats both his main themes, but the initial motif is never absent for long. In the recapitulation the broad second subject begins in B major rather than the D major of its original appearance. The subdued concluding bars bring a final reference to the germinal motif E-F-D sharp-E.

A spectral scherzo in C minor follows, imbued with a slightly sinister element enhanced by the scoring for pianissimo pizzicato strings. The trio section in E major – Andante con moto (molto grazioso, dolce ed espressivo) – is in strong contrast, lyrical and relaxed, with canonic writing for violin and cello.

The Largo, a sonata-rondo, begins with a calm, hymn-like passage for the piano. The first episode is more animated, building to an agitated climax. When this passage is recalled, an even more passionate climax is reached, but Reger always returns to his beautiful hymn-like theme and the movement ends serenely.

The Brahmsian finale has an abundance of material including examples of Reger's beloved fugal writing, march-rhythms and a chorale-like theme. One fugal passage during the development section, beginning pianissimo in the violin, is based on very chromatic material, but this final movement is relatively diatonic, showing Reger at his most genial, even playful at times, while occasionally accommodating a contrastingly heroic tone. As early as bar 5 we find the marking *grazioso* and soon afterwards a more robust dotted figure is marked *agitato*. Indeed, the changes of mood are frequent enough for the movement to warrant the description mercurial. Following a wide-ranging development section of some intensity (beginning with a return to the opening ten bars), the recapitulation is slightly shortened but otherwise regular. The coda begins with a return to the first subject, crescendoing from ppp to fortissimo, before a *Più mosso* leads to the emphatic final bars. Even at the very end of the work, Reger is still reinforcing its organic nature by again referring to the initial four-note motif. Reger's fondness for full textures, exemplified in much of this trio, suggests the influence of the organ loft, where he was much at home. The piano part is idiomatic, as we might expect from a composer/pianist, but also demanding, especially in the outer movements.

Reger's Op.79 comprises a collection of pieces (from Op.79a to Op.79f) for diverse combinations including songs, organ works and fourteen chorales for a cappella choir. The three pieces Op.79d for violin and piano - Wiegenlied, Capriccio, Burla – reveal Reger the miniaturist. They date from 1902-4, just a few years before the Piano Trio Op.102. The Wiegenlied, in G major and 6/8, is marked Allegretto con grazia. It may be classified as salon music but its wide intervals and generally unpredictable contours are not typical of this genre. Even shorter, the far more robust Capriccio in 3/8 is followed by Burla (Vivacissimo), an energetic piece tinged with chromaticism and of varying phrase-lengths. Its espressivo middle section is slower and markedly contrasting.

The two brief pieces for cello and piano Op.79e are Caprice and Kleine Romanze. Marked Vivace assai, the vigorous Caprice in B minor has a lyrical central section (espressivo). In common with the Wiegenlied for violin and piano, the Kleine Romanze shows Reger's fondness for unpredictability in his melodic line, as well as exploiting the character of the cello with particular eloquence. Though these pieces from Op.79 are relatively slight in the context of Reger's output, they are greatly varied in mood and at the same time indicative of the expressive range which characterises his musical output as a whole.

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Recording: September 2018, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, Portugal  
Music Production & Sound: Hugo Romano Guimarães, Santi Bargañó, nmusicproduction.com  
Photos: Vitorino Coragem  
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Formed in 2016, the **Artium Trio** is composed by the young portuguese musicians Francisco Lima Santos (violin), Pedro Gomes Silva (cello) and João Barata (piano). In the same year, the Trio was awarded the 1st prize in “Prémio Jovens Músicos” Competition. In 2019, was awarded the 2nd Prize in the “Concurso Internacional de Música de Cámara Antón García Abril”.

The Trio has performed in Portugal’s major halls, including the Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian’s Hall, Casa da Música, Centro Cultural de Belém’s Main Auditorium, among others. The Trio has recorded concerts for Portugal’s National Television and Radio.

Their debut album was released by KNS Classical with works by Anton Arensky, Dmitri Shostakovich and Mikhail Glinka.

*“For a young formation still in their twenties, the members of the Artium Trio certainly work well together as a perfectly balanced unit. They express the music independently and yet seem to follow each other’s rubato and dynamics instinctively and in doing so allow the music to speak freely without imposing their own individualities on it. The hallmarks of any great ensemble and an indication of even greater things to come.”* Jean-Yves Duperron

Born in Lisbon, **Francisco Lima Santos** (1991) began his musical studies at the age of 9 under Ana Margarida Sanmarful. He then studied with Khachatour Amirkhanian (Lisbon College of Music), Yuzuko Horigome (Koninklijk Conservatorium) and Ana Chumachenko and Zograb Tatevosyan (Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía).

He performed as a soloist with the Portuguese Symphony Orchestra and Gulbenkian Orchestra. He was a member of the European Union Youth Orchestra. He has played with the Euskadi Symphony, the Belgian National Orchestra and the Munich Philharmonic. He has regularly performed in chamber music festivals, playing alongside soloists such as Diemut Poppen, Ivan Monighetti, Christel Lee and Barnabas Kelemen.

He has been Concertmaster of the Gulbenkian Orchestra since 2017.

**Pedro Gomes Silva** was born in Lisbon (1995) and began his cello studies aged 8 under the guidance of Prof. Luis Sá Pessoa. Pedro then studied with Levon Mouradian, Pavel Gomziakov and Louise Hopkins at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

He is currently studying at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam under the guidance of Prof. Pieter Wispelwey.

As a chamber musician, Pedro has played in several festivals with musicians such as Adrian Brendel, Tatiana Samouil, Natalia Tchitch, Sergey Ostrovsky, Pavel Gomziakov and members of the Endellian Quartet, performing in halls such as Gulbenkian Auditorium, Barbican, Milton Court, Casa da Música, Fondazione Zeffirelli, among others.

He has performed as a soloist with orchestra in Portugal’s major concert halls such as the CCB, Aula Magna, S. Luiz Theatre, Vianna da Motta Auditorium and Calouste Gulbenkian Auditorium, alongside orchestras including the Orchestra of the National Conservatory, Youth Symphony Orchestra, Hornton Chamber orchestra and Symphony Orchestra of ESML.

Between the years of 2011 and 2014, Pedro was principal cellist of the Orquestra Sinfónica Juvenil and held a scholarship from EDP Foundation – OSJ. Since 2013, he has been working regularly as an extra with the Gulbenkian Orchestra.

Pedro was chosen to be part of London Philharmonic Orchestra’s Foyle Future Firsts during the 2020/21 season.

He was awarded the First Prize at the 2019 Virtuoso Belcanto Cello Competition (Lucca, Italy).

**João Barata**, born in Covilhã, began his piano studies at the age of six with Paula Ramos. He then studied with Tâmara Antontseva and with Jorge Moyano. He made his orchestral debut at the age of 12 in Ettelbruck (Luxembourg).

He was awarded several first prizes in international competitions, including at the Santa Cecília International Competition, Cidade de Almada International Music Competition and at the International Competition Cidade do Fundão. He has offered recitals and chamber music concerts in several places in Portugal and Spain performing in halls such as Gulbenkian Auditorium, Casa da Música, Centro Cultural de Belém, Auditorio Nacional de Música, among others.

Since 2017, studies at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid under the guidance of Galina Eguiazarova, having been awarded in 2020 the “Most Outstanding Piano Student Award”. He is a recipient of Fundación Albeniz and Gulbenkian Foundation scholarships.

