

Entartete Musik

Works for alto saxophone and piano

Compact Disc 2

54'11

Compact Disc 1

51'39

Paul Hindemith 1895–1963

Sonata (1943)

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------------------|------|
| | 1 | I. Ruhig bewegt | 1'56 |
| | 2 | II. Lebhaft | 3'50 |
| | 3 | III. Sehr langsam | 2'40 |
| 1 | I. Allegro | 6'20 | |
| 2 | II. Vivace | 3'30 | |
| 3 | III. Adagio – Presto | 5'42 | |
| | 4 | IV. Das Posthorn (Zwiesgespräch) | 1'09 |
| | 5 | V. Lebhaft | 2'52 |

Paul Dessau 1894–1979

Suite (1935)

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|------|---|---------------------------|------|
| 4 | I. Petite ouverture | 2'13 | 6 | I. Allegro, ma non troppo | 3'31 |
| 5 | II. Air | 1'59 | 7 | II. Sarabande | 2'57 |
| 6 | III. Serenade | 2'51 | 8 | III. Allegro | 3'19 |

Erwin Dressel 1909–1972

Bagatellen (1938)

- | | | | | | |
|----|-------------|------|----|-----------------|------|
| 7 | I. Elegie | 3'15 | 9 | I. Cantabile | 3'59 |
| 8 | II. Scherzo | 4'30 | 10 | II. Furioso | 5'16 |
| 9 | III. Aria | 3'11 | 11 | III. Con grazia | 3'42 |
| 10 | IV. Gigue | 2'49 | 12 | IV. Burla | 4'52 |

Erwin Schulhoff 1894–1942

Hot-Sonate (1930)

- | | | | | | |
|----|------|------|----|----------------------------|------|
| 11 | I. | 4'16 | 13 | I. Fantasie | 3'10 |
| 12 | II. | 1'50 | 14 | II. Allegro | 3'21 |
| 13 | III. | 3'48 | 15 | III. Allegretto scherzando | 3'36 |
| 14 | IV. | 4'49 | 16 | IV. Signal | 3'21 |

Ernst-Lothar von Knorr 1896–1973

Sonata (1932)

Duo Disecheis

David Brutti *alto saxophone*

Filippo Farinelli *piano*

Andreas Wolf *speaker* (CD2: 4)



Many thanks to Andreas Wolf for having recited the poem on Hindemith's Sonata, Maria Chiara Verrigni for the use of the Auditorium in Acquasparta, Simone Borgianni for technical assistance on the saxophone, Maurizio Catarinelli for preparing and tuning the piano; and Francesco Pecorari for the liner notes.

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Auditorium Matteo D'Acquasparta, Acquasparta, Terni, Italy
Sound engineer, mixing & mastering: Luca Ricci (l.c.studiomobile@libero.it) · Editing: Filippo Farinelli
Recording set-up: Microphones: Shoeps MK21, Shoeps Mk2, Shoeps MK21, Neumann TLM103
Microphones preamp.: Millennia HV3D · Recording device: Alesis HD24
Saxophone: Rampone & Cazzani R1-Jazz solid silver-24K, gold plated (AG925);
mouthpiece: Drake custom; ligature: Rovner Platinum and Versa; reed: Légère Signature 3
Piano: Yamaha C7
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Entartete Musik

In 1933, following the crisis of the Weimar Republic, Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany. This change led to the establishment by the Nazi regime of a number of institutions that radically curtailed people's freedom: the Gleichschaltung, a totalitarian system of control aimed at eliminating any form of individualism, at shaping the way people thought and eradicating any non-Nazi organisation that might have wielded influence of some sort; and the Reichskulturkammer (RKK) directed by Joseph Goebbels, whose seven departments controlled all forms of cultural activity.

Art was supposed to be Arian and anti-Semitic. In July 1937 the regime inaugurated an exhibition in Munich that featured Entartete Kunst (degenerate art), with the aim of enflaming public opinion against modernist art. The following year in Düsseldorf it adopted a similar policy under the title Entartete Musik, in which dodecaphonic and atonal music were defined as degenerate, along with jazz, cabaret music, the foxtrot and all music written by Jews and composers who were not in line with anti-Semitic and Arian ideas. The most degenerate instrument was deemed to be the saxophone, not least on account of its relationship with jazz, and thus Afro-American culture and the fusion of musical genre¹; in keeping with this belief, on the poster for the Düsseldorf exhibition the black jazz musician in Ernst Krenek's opera *Jonny Strikes Up* was portrayed with ape-like features, shouldering a saxophone with the Star of David on his jacket.

Composers soon found themselves in an extremely difficult human and artistic condition characterised by threats, intimidation and deportation. Their music was banned and their musical activities in Germany interrupted; some of them tried to escape, while others, like Erwin Schulhoff, died in concentration camps. Within this context, the virtuoso and visionary saxophonist Sigurd Manfred Rascher became a point of reference. During the 1930s he lived in Berlin and played in the Philharmonic Orchestra. He was against the ideas expressed by the regime, and in the year Hitler came to power he moved to Denmark. From here he toured all of Europe (except Germany) to perform in concerts, and then in 1938 emigrated to the United States. Rascher's technical innovations and expressive skills were such that many of the works recorded here were dedicated to him.

One such case was the Sonata composed by Ernst-Lothar von Knorr in 1932, which features a number of advanced solutions typical of Rascher, including very high tones, slap and Flatterzunge (flutter-tonguing). Each of the four movements is distinctive yet also coherent, with certain elements that recall Bartók and others that are closer to neoclassical modernity. The Sonata, which fortunately survived a fire caused by an air raid in 1944, embodies many of the themes of Entartete Kunst. Von Knorr managed to continue his work as a composer without enrolling in the Nazi party, and this was thanks to his position as a Wehrmacht music officer.

Rascher also inspired Paul Dessau, who had escaped from Germany in 1933, moving to Paris, where two years later he wrote this Suite. During the same period Dessau also composed Gebrauchsmusik, or 'utility

music' that could be used as propaganda by the German Democratic Republic, as well as music for ballets, operas and early movies. All this is mirrored in the concise idiom of the Suite: pastiche abounds, especially in the last movement (Serenade), where the addition of plenty of *glissandi* (even in octave) breaks the dramatic line with elements of true parody.

Among Dessau's collaborators were Bertolt Brecht, Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith, the latter of whom left Berlin in the year of the Düsseldorf event. Hindemith was in America by September 1943, when he composed the Sonata in E flat for french horn (or alto horn in E flat, or alto Sax in E flat) and piano. The work is neo-baroque in style, with refined counterpoint and many themes and rhythms that overlap between the saxophone and the piano. Between the third and fourth movements (Sehr langsam and Lebhaft respectively), the composer introduces a dialogue in verse to be read by both musicians:

The Posthorn (Dialogue)

Horn Player

Is not the sounding of a horn to our busy souls
Even as the scent of blossoms wilted long ago
Or the discolored folds of musty tapestry
Or crumbling leaves of ancient yellow tomes

Like sonorous visit from those ages
Which counted speed by straining horses' gallop
And not by lightning prisoned up in cables
And when to live and learn they ranged the countryside
Not just the closely printed pages
The cornucopia's gift calls forth in us a pallid yearning, melancholy longing.

Pianist

The old is good not just because it's passed
Nor is the new supreme because we live with it
And never yet a man felt greater joy than he could bear or truly comprehend.

Your task, it is, amidst confusion, rush and noise
To grasp the lasting, calm, and meaningful
And finding it anew, to hold and treasure it.

Like the Lied by Ludwig C.H. Hölty in the Harp Sonata (1939), the poem *Das Posthorn* embodies a fine

balance between modernity and form. In its interpretation of this work, Duo Disecheis pays particular attention to the rhythmical aspect of the composition, with a meticulous recovery of the tempi.

Composed in 1932, Wolfgang Jacobi's Sonata was also dedicated to Rascher. Although it does not contain any special technical features, it embodies a harmonic complexity that verges on atonality, with occasional cluster effects, melodies that shimmer with rapid changes of character and rhythmical elements in elaborate counterpoint. In the Sarabande, these complex, dissonant harmonies meld with gentle *cantabile* melodies. By contrast, the last movement comprises rhythmical devices in ternary groupings somewhat reminiscent of those of the first movement, along with a succession of trills and melodies in counterpoint that dissolve into the development of thematic elements bereft of a simple solution.

Instead of being dedicated to a saxophonist, Erwin Schulhoff's *Hot-Sonate* is a tribute to the Berlin Funkstunde radio station. Written in 1930, it encapsulates the various features of Entartete Musik, and is clearly close to jazz as a genre. The third movement is almost grotesque in character, with biting, ironic sax *glissandi*, musical themes in a syncopated interplay between the two instruments, and a melody that sounds like a written improvisation. In 1939 Schulhoff escaped from Germany, embraced communism and took refuge in Prague. Shortly afterwards the Nazis invaded Czechoslovakia, and in 1941 he was arrested. He died of consumption in a concentration camp in Weißenburg (Bavaria) on 18 August 1942.

Bernhard Heiden was more fortunate: he managed to escape from Nazi Germany in 1935, taking refuge in Detroit. Two years later he wrote the Sonatas for alto sax and piano, which were performed for the first time by Larry Teal, to whom they are dedicated. The three movements develop within a relatively formal structure. In the Allegro, the melody is handled in repeated fugue motifs, with themes that follow one another, without ever achieving a resolution. The Vivace is made up of simple, vivid elements that give rise to repetitive rhythmical episodes. In the last movement a lyrical, dissonant Adagio of great sophistication alternates with a rhythmically complex Vivace.

Erwin Dressel's *Bagatellen* and Hans Gál's Suite Op.102 are more traditional in approach. Written in 1938 and 1949 respectively, they both feature a solid formal framework, with the *Bagatellen* comprising simple but refined modern harmonies that evolve within the structure of the pieces. As for Suite Op.102, it is the only work written by an Austrian composer in this recording. Gál clearly harks back to Brahms and to some extent Richard Strauss as regards formal structure and the development of melody, interrupting the apparent solemnity from time to time with touches of irony.

Duo Disecheis interprets these works with great clarity and measure, placing them in an historical perspective. The sophisticated sonority, the set-up used by the sax and the technical solutions adopted to reflect the original style all clearly owe much to Rascher. It is a legacy that marries evolution with renewal, throwing fresh light on the music of central Europe and on a repertoire that bears the signs of suffering.

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Translation: Kate Singleton

¹ Joseph Goebbels described jazz as 'American-Jewish-Negro jungle music'.

Duo Disecheis

Duo Disecheis was formed in November 2001 by the saxophonist David Brutti and the pianist Filippo Farinelli, its aim being to perform and promote 20th-century and contemporary chamber music. Having studied at the conservatories of Bordeaux (Brutti; with Marie Bernadette Charrier), Perugia and the Universität für Musik und Darstellende Kunst in Vienna (Farinelli; with Charles Spencer in Vienna), both musicians then continued their studies with Duo Pepicelli and Pier Narciso Masi at the 'Incontri col Maestro' International Piano Academy in Imola. Here they each obtained a three-year Masters diploma under the guidance of Pier-Narciso Masi, thereafter taking courses with Federico Mondelci at the Internationales Oleg Kagan Musikfest (Kreuth-Munich) and the Estate Musicale in Portogruaro (Venice).

From 2001 to 2008 Duo Disecheis received awards in more than 15 international and national competitions – including the 2007 Gaudeamus Interpreters Competition in Amsterdam (one of the most prestigious competitions for contemporary music performance), the International Chamber Music Competition 'Provincia di Caltanissetta', the International Chamber Music Competition 'Città di Trapani' and the 8th 'Città di Rome' Competition.

The duo performs regularly in the world's greatest concert halls and festivals, including the Muziekgebouw in Amsterdam, the 2006 World Saxophone Congress (Ljubljana, Slovenia), Festival 'da Bach a Bartòk' (Imola), the Sala dei Notari (Perugia), the European University Institute (Fiesole, Florence), Teatro Lirico Sperimentale (Ancona), Amici della Musica (Modena), Compositori a Confronto (Reggio Emilia), the Yamaha Musica Festival (Milan) and the 2007 Festival Automne Musical (Châtelleraut, France).

With a keen interest in the discovery and development of new musical languages, Duo Disecheis regularly collaborates with composers like Marco Momi, Michael Edlund, Dimitri Nicolau, Stefano Trevisi, Christina Athinodorou and Paolo Baioni. The two musicians have together recorded for Rai Radio 3, while their discography includes music for the label Materiali Sonori, a 3-CD box set dedicated to Charles Koechlin's complete music for saxophone (for Brilliant Classics), and the world premiere recording of Jean Françaix's *Neuf Historiettes* for baritone voice, tenor saxophone and piano (for Max Research; CD DL018).

In addition to their interest in contemporary music, Duo Disecheis owns an extensive repertoire that ranges from composers tied to the French musical aesthetics of the late 19th century, such as Debussy, D'Indy, Koechlin and Schmitt, to composers from the second half of the 20th century – notably Denisov, Denhoff and Nodaira – as well as those whose work is versed in German Expressionism, including Dessau, Jacobi and Schulhoff.

www.duodisecheis.com