An aerial photograph of a valley during the "fog of the morning" (nebulosa matutina). The middle ground is completely obscured by a thick, white layer of fog that flows like a river between the hills. In the foreground, a small village with red-roofed houses is visible on a hillside. In the background, a range of blue mountains stretches across the horizon under a clear, light blue sky.

Traveling Light



Ludwig van Beethoven

**Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36**

- I. Adagio molto - allegro con brio
- II. Larghetto
- III. Scherzo: Allegro
- IV. Allegro molto

Franz Schubert

**Symphony No. 8 in B minor, "Unvollendete", D.759**

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Andante con moto

Johannes Brahms

from **Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90**

- III. Poco allegretto

## About the album

We grow with our challenges.

Ours was: How can we expand the repertoire for nonet, uncover the chamber music in orchestral pieces, while also working our own group sound?

This CD is a proud first step in this direction.

Making a musical arrangement is best compared with translating a book, and I imagine that a translator must answer the same questions before he goes to work. How do I transform the original into a new form, whilst keeping the message of the work clear? Which bits and pieces have to be cut, and what new space is created through this process? Which notes must stay?

Armed with the orchestral score and a sharpened pencil, I started my operation. In the beginning, I mumbled "sorry, Ludwig..." under my breath every time I crossed out a note, but after a while I started to get into the swing of things, and before I know it I was two symphonies in.

The result was interesting for us: It turned out that we couldn't really treat these arrangements as orchestral works anymore. Their new form posed a new, different set of challenges for us than the original orchestral parts. The symphonic versions that we all know and love had to make way for a more transparent, flexible approach, with open ears and sharp eyes for our fellow players.

The title "Traveling Light" has a double meaning: on the one hand it refers to the arrangements themselves, which have been slimmed down from a full

orchestral setting to a version for nine individual players. On the other hand, it has a special, extra meaning for us, as we have come together from all corners of the earth, driven by our love for music. That this happened in Amsterdam – a city that counts more than 180 nationalities amongst its residents – is, of course, a happy coincidence.

Travel isn't just about packing a suitcase small enough to be hand luggage. We also see it as the cultural luggage that everyone takes with them. What happens to your own, personal luggage when you're constantly moving from place to place, or when you meet people from different backgrounds? When nine people with different pasts and backgrounds make music together, how many of your original convictions and ideas remain intact?

Another thing we noticed was that an enormous number of interpretative possibilities became available to us, and that this great freedom came with great responsibility. No conductor to cue for an entrance or to tell us how we should phrase something. No concertmaster or section leaders for us to hide behind. We were all required to know the score by heart, and to ensure that we knew what the others were doing without getting lost in our own notes.

This democratisation of the symphony helped us all grow, both as musicians and as people. In the end, it's all about the music, and we hope that you will enjoy rediscovering these symphonies through our arrangements as much as we did.

## Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 2 in D major, Op. 36

When you think of symphonies, you cannot help but think of Ludwig van Beethoven. He revolutionised this musical form, composing nine monumental symphonies, and gifting almost every burgeoning symphonic composer of the generation that followed him an inferiority complex.

This meant that it was very important for us to keep the spirit of Beethoven as intact as possible during the arranging process. The fact that this was our first symphony arrangement made it extra exciting.

The piece itself has an overwhelming sense of freshness and joie de vivre. In around just 35 minutes, Beethoven showcases his whole artistic spectrum: overpowering openings, rhythmic drive, a lyrical streak and an outstanding ear for orchestration, all held together by an iron will to set musical forms down in his own hand.

The second symphony hasn't always been well received. At its premiere in 1803, the audience found it to be something "new and ear-catching to the point of far-fetched"; there was a clear preference for the less complex first symphony, which was also performed. The last movement in particular seemed to give critics enough motivation to crawl behind their desks and spew their gall. A little taste: "bizarre, shrill, and pompous" - and a veritable literary highlight: "... a plump monster, a wounded dragon that refuses to die whilst bleeding out, and that raging and furious wildly swings its quivering tail".

## Franz Schubert: Symphony No. 8 in B minor, "Unvollendete", D.759

Franz Schubert is one of the many composers traumatised by Beethoven. To an acquaintance of his, he admitted: "Secretly and in silence I still hope to achieve something myself, but who should be allowed to create something after Beethoven?" In retrospect, everyone is in agreement that Schubert succeeded in his goal, and that he composed masterpieces in every musical form except opera.

The reason that Schubert's eighth symphony is subtitled "Unvollendete" is obvious: rather than being a four movement symphony, this work has only two movements. The reason that he never finished the symphony, however, is still not entirely clear. It remains a favourite point of discussion to this day amongst lovers of Schubert's music. Did he have to focus his energy and time on another work, forgetting about this symphony? Are there actually two completed and final movements of this symphony which have been lost (or have yet to be found)? Was it Schubert's intention all along to create a two-movement work?

Whatever the reason may be, the two movements that we were gifted, are among the best Schubert has ever composed. It was this that made it a clear choice to arrange this symphony: we could play these beautiful melodies in our setting.

## Johannes Brahms: “Poco Allegretto” from Symphony No. 3 in F major, Op. 90

There are symphonies where one movement shines brighter than the rest and seems to have a life on its own. The “Adagietto” from Gustav Mahler’s fifth symphony is a perfect example, as is the first movement of Beethoven’s fifth symphony... and the “Poco Allegretto” from the third symphony of Johannes Brahms.

Every note of this movement seems to come straight from the heart of the composer, and removing notes during the arranging felt distinctly sadistic. However, Brahms survived (albeit figuratively) and the new version allowed us to discover and highlight new voices which are more difficult to hear in the heavier orchestral version. There is an abundance of musical material in every measure; it’s a distinct danger that the work simply gives under its own weight.


By reducing the number of players, the weight of the sound is lessened and every voice has the chance to be heard. Moreover, it was a pleasure to transfer these melodies into a form where Brahms felt very much at home: the realm of chamber music and of intimate contact with your fellow players.











## Intercontinental Ensemble

The Intercontinental Ensemble is a young flourishing chamber music ensemble with nine passionate musicians of various nationalities, constantly striving to provide the highest level of musicianship, on their own and in collaboration with composers and artists of various disciplines.

9 instruments – 9 personalities – 5 nationalities: forming one harmonious and contrasting, rich and colourful ensemble. The ensemble has a chamber symphonic character, presenting arrangements of symphonies in an intimate setting, as well as original repertoire for nonet. Also other varied adventurous combinations are possible.

Their activities has led them to collaborations with artists such as Severin von Eckardstein, Wim Henderickx, Ekaterina Levental and they have presented themselves in the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Mexico, and beyond.

## Musicians

**Ernst Spyczerelle** violin

**Iteke Wijbenga** viola

**Simon Velthuis** cello

**Jorge Hernández** double bass

**Eliška Horehled'ová** flute

**Alexander van Eerdewijk** oboe

**Alfonso Manzanera Rojo** clarinet

**Simão Fonseca** french horn

**Daniel Garrido Iglesias** bassoon

Arrangements by **Ernst Spyczerelle**

## Producer's notes

I've always been a big fan of slimming things down to their bare essence. There's nothing really like being able to hear or see anything in full clarity, detail, integrity, without distractions or clutter. Just like using less microphones on a recording can result into greater clarity and sound fidelity, the one-to-a-part-approach of the Intercontinental Ensemble results in a slimmed-down, yet unprecedentedly clear sound, where everything the composer wrote is audible in its full glory.

This does, however, put greater strain on both the artist as well as the recording engineer. Not being able to hide behind fellow players of your instrument group may leave one vulnerable. But not for the Intercontinental Ensemble. With the clarity of a chamber ensemble but with the force and vivacity of a large orchestra, they performed these three works by Beethoven, Schubert, and Brahms beautifully.

Where one would sometimes choose a fairly complicated microphone technique to record a symphonic orchestra, or even an ensemble of this size, we chose to slim the whole system down and bring it to its bare essentials as well. By using just 7 microphones for an entire 5.1-channel surround sound recording, our aim was to achieve the same kind of transparency in the sonic qualities as the ensemble sought in their sound.

The result is a striking combination of the grandeur and dynamics of a large symphonic work and the unparalleled transparency of a smaller chamber ensemble. We had an absolute blast witnessing these nine heroes bring such staples of the classical music world into a new form, breathing new, beautiful life into these already astounding works.

## Brendon Heinst

TRPTK proudly uses **Sonodore** microphones, **KEF** loudspeakers, **Hegel** amplification, **Merging Technologies** AD/DA conversion, and **Furutech** cabling and power conditioning at their recording and mastering facilities, carefully optimized by **Acoustic Matters**.

All recordings are done in **DXD** (352.8 kHz 32 bits) in immersive 5.1-channel surround sound, and all masters are generated from the original DXD Studio Master, without dynamic compression or limiting of the signal. In both stereo and surround sound, our aim is to truly recreate the original venue and atmosphere.

## Credits

recording, editing & mastering	<b>Brendon Heinst</b>
assistant engineering	<b>Luuk Meijssen</b>
photography & artwork	<b>Brendon Heinst</b>
liner notes	<b>Ernst Spycckerelle</b>

## Equipment

microphones	<b>Sonodore RCM-402</b> <b>Brauner VM-1</b>
preamplifiers	<b>Sonodore MPA-502</b>
ad/da converters	<b>Merging Technologies HAPI</b>
cabling	<b>Furutech custom microphone cables</b> <b>Furutech NanoFlux NCF</b> power cables <b>Furutech NanoFlux</b> speaker cables <b>Furutech LineFlux XLR</b> interconnects
loudspeakers	<b>KEF Blade Two</b>
amplifiers	<b>Hegel H30</b>

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**Benjamin Ziai**, **Roberta Cristini**, **Bea Andrés**, **Diechje Minne**, **Ruña 't Hart**, **Maria Kouznetsova**, **Irene Kok**, **Raquel Martorell Dorta**, **Hanna Guirten** and **Ellen Rydelius**, the **Royal Conservatory of Amsterdam**, **Severin von Eckardstein**, **Wim Henderickx**, **Ekaterina Levental**, **Bastiaan Witsenburg**, **Tariq Al-Sadoon**, **Quinten Spycckerelle** and all our friends and family!



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