

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat, Op. 110

1	Moderato cantabile molto espressivo	6:53
2	Allegro molto	2:24
3	Adagio ma non troppo – Fuga. Allegro ma non troppo	11:06

CÉSAR FRANCK

Prélude, Choral et Fugue, FWV 21

4	Prélude. Moderato	5:06
5	Choral. Poco più lento – Poco allegro	6:54
6	Fugue. Tempo I	7:46

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Kreisleriana, Op. 16

7	Äußerst bewegt	3:03
8	Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch	9:50
9	Sehr aufgeregt	5:35
10	Sehr langsam	4:11
11	Sehr lebhaft	3:27
12	Sehr langsam	4:13
13	Sehr rasch	2:27
14	Schnell und spielend	3:42

ABOUT THIS ALBUM

"The sole object of music is the expression of the infinite." - E.T.A. Hoffmann

In front of you lies *Eternal Longing*, Yukiko Hasegawa's debut album. The title was chosen while Yukiko was reading E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Kreisleriana*. Or rather, she was struck by the term as it resonated with her on a deep level.

Yukiko explains: "*Eternal Longing* ('unendliche Sehnsucht') is the presumed longing for something sacred, something truly beautiful and deeply satisfying. A feeling which accompanies us throughout our lives and makes it impossible for people to remain happy for long. It haunts us and drives us, makes us want to get involved in beautiful artworks and go see wonderful landscapes. It searches for a deeper understanding of life and our part in the infinities of existence and time. It also is the reason why I play the piano."

It is also the reason why Yukiko, for as long as she knows, feels attracted to certain music, certain composers that explore this feeling in deep ways, like Bach, Mozart, and the composers on this album.

Before Yukiko was able to present the works on this album, she had walked a long path starting in Hamamatsu in Japan, where she grew up. She enjoyed piano lessons from the age of four, and soon decided to follow a career in music. After high school, Yukiko continued her piano studies in Tokyo. Studying music means to be submerged in an international world characterized by a very competitive spirit, where the accent lies on rivalry and virtuosity. Yukiko says: "Often people were trying to play quicker and quicker, and sometimes also louder. For me, playing the piano was for other reasons, and at times I felt even alienated for studying piano." It was also in Tokyo that Yukiko met her later teacher Willem Brons. Yukiko: "I remember very well that Willem Brons came to Tokyo to give lectures and masterclasses. He spoke in such a very inspired way of the deeper layers in music, that it made me want to come to the Netherlands to study with him. I auditioned and applied for a scholarship with the International Rotary Foundation, and luckily I got accepted."

"In Amsterdam," Yukiko continues, "I felt I had to start all over. It wasn't easy, but I did have such a wonderful time." She graduated for a Master of Music with the piano, and received a Bachelor's degree in fortepiano. The latter study provided her with knowledge of authentic performance practices and a broader understanding of the repertoire of the 18th and 19th century. "And I like the sound of the fortepiano," Yukiko explains, "Sometimes it may come across as from a dream and awakens a certain melancholy." She laughs: "I guess I'm just a romantic soul!"

Yukiko added: "When I studied fortepiano at the Amsterdam Conservatory, we – with a group of students – went to the gallery of Chris Maene, a piano and fortepiano builder. There, I played on Chris Maene's Walter model (a replica of a Walter fortepiano). When I heard about the Straight Strung instruments I was very excited and had no doubt that it would sound wonderful. It was a huge wish for me to play and record the repertoire of this album on that instrument, thanks to its many possibilities in sound. Thanks to YPMA-Maene Gallery Alkmaar, my dream could come true!"

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major, Op. 110

“Beethoven’s music awakens that endless longing which is the very essence of romanticism.” – E.T.A. Hoffmann

“When I think of Beethoven,” Yukiko says, “one of the first things that comes to mind is the Heiligenstadt Testament, a letter to his brothers in which he writes about his decision to take his own life because of his growing deafness. However, while writing this letter, he finds that he cannot do such a thing. It seemed impossible to him to leave the earth too early, before writing all the music he felt inside him. He dedicated the rest of his life solely to serve God with his art.”

The *Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat, Op. 110* is the penultimate of all Beethoven piano sonatas. He wrote it in the year 1821, a year in which he wrote hardly anything at all. Yukiko tells us: “Beethoven’s composing process is usually characterized by hard labor and diligent searching. Often he would write a great amount of sketches and trials in order to get to the right theme. That year proved especially difficult due to Beethoven being held up by various illnesses.” As with his other late sonatas, the structure doesn’t follow the blueprint sonata form. The three movements are to be played as one, and the whole piece in general is highly improvisational. In fact, the term *Sonata quasi una fantasia* comes to mind, thinking of the structural design of the *Piano Sonata No. 14, Op. 27*.

“I wonder if this Sonata is meant to be autobiographical,” says Yukiko. “I think not, but this work surely is very personal. In the first two movements, you can hear someone who is looking back on his youth. First in a sweet and dreamy atmosphere, and then in a way that reminds me of the rough playing of boys. The third movement carries all the weight. After an improvisatory opening, we hear one of the most beautiful and heartbreaking passages – an *Arioso*, so sorrowful and full of pain. Beethoven composed an ‘endless melody’ here that makes us think of Chopin. Then enters a most ardent fugue, of which the rising theme is related to the main melody of the first movement. However, in the end, this leads to even greater despair. The plaintive melody we heard before is now played again, but softer, tired (‘ermattet’), and broken into smaller elements with many rests in between, as if one needs to grasp for breath. A wonderful shining moment is reached with the repetition of G major chords – here we are, harmonically, the furthest away from the home key of A-flat. From this sound, the fugue presents itself again, yet now in inverted and descending form. Giving the right inspiration to continue in a way without hindrances, and unleashing joyous energy.”

CÉSAR FRANCK

Prélude, Choral et Fugue, FWV 21

Yukiko: “I see in *Prélude, Choral et Fugue* the juxtapositioning of a religious world and the earthly life of the people. The music of the *Prélude* is full of human unrest, at times lamenting, and poses questions. Then comes the Choral which sounds like angels singing down on the people, offering feelings of consolidation and resignation. Each time the choral theme is played, it grows evermore passionate and overwhelming. The impulse of a fugue shows a new way, its theme strongly chromatic, descending, reminding the listener of death.

As the music develops, it becomes more intense and wild. Thereupon the texture breaks with a passage with a pedal point on F-sharp, which is the transformed music of the *Prélude*, opening a door towards an ending. Finally, a triumph is achieved where the three themes of the *Prélude*, the *Choral*, and the *Fugue* are heard simultaneously.”

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Kreisleriana, Op. 16

“I have never understood Schumann’s *Kreisleriana* until I read E.T.A. Hoffmann,” says Yukiko. “Upon reading, everything suddenly became clear; it was as if Johannes Kreisler came to me and told his story. It opened my eyes. And it was such fun to read *Kreisleriana*! It sounds as though it was written just yesterday... And that ending, how he disappeared from this world! I think Schumann found in the archetypal romantic soul of Johannes Kreisler his own mirror image – or the personality he would have liked to be. He strongly identified himself with Kreisler.”

The writer of the stories about Johannes Kreisler, E.T.A. Hoffmann, was a multi-talent who – aside from writing and painting – was also a jurist, music critic, and composer. He thought of music as ‘capable of thousands and thousands of nuances’ and that it ‘releases an inexhaustible spring of expressive means precisely where paltry speech dries up.’

It seems this is what Robert Schumann took up as starting point for much of his musical output, since literature for him always played a very important role. Early on, Schumann even aspired a career as a writer, but in the he chose music, and the writings he did were mainly his essays on music for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. He certainly didn’t think of Hoffmann’s words as ‘paltry’. On the contrary – they wielded such a strong force of attraction upon him that he wanted to translate Hoffmann’s words into his own music. Schumann came to see that in order to transform literature into music, one shouldn’t literally try to imitate or translate the context of the text. Not tracking a literary work from start to finish, but instead catch the spirit (‘Geist’) of the whole, and have the text as transformed (‘verwandelt’) into the music. The Geist, an expression of a higher feeling, should even take the upperhand over the more intellectual idea, which the composer would like to present, which is only material or form. As it was Schumann’s view that music is the ‘language of the soul’, he explored the idea that music can convey any psychological or emotional state of mind, as for instance a memory of happiness, or perhaps anger or remorse.

Yukiko: “Schumann claimed that a genuinely artistic piece of music will have a center of gravity, towards which everything tends, and from which everything emanates like beams (‘Geisterradien’).” This center of gravity expands over all of the eight movements of *Kreisleriana*, and gives the work a poetic unity and deep coherence. “I see it as my goal to search for this center,” tells Yukiko, “which can sometimes be obvious, while other times hard to find. However, as a performer you have to find this in yourself. You have to be the one giving the ‘Geist’ to the music – and then play the whole piece from this anchoring feeling.”



YUKIKO HASEGAWA

Yukiko Hasegawa is known for her refined and sensitive musicianship with a deep understanding of the many different styles in her repertoire. Born in Japan, she now resides in The Netherlands. Both active as a pianist and fortepianist, she performs as a soloist and in chamber music collaborations for many different music festivals and concert venues. Internationally she has performed in Germany, Poland and Japan. She made her orchestral debut in 2004 in Hamamatsu, Japan with the Krakow Philharmonic Orchestra, playing Beethoven's 5th Piano Concerto. With pianist Tobias Borsboom she forms a piano duo, with which she regularly performs in Japan. In 2019 they were the winners of the 'Shizuoka no Meishu-tachi' auditions.

Yukiko Hasegawa graduated at the Conservatory of Amsterdam for her Master's Degree (2011), studying with Willem Brons and for a Bachelor's Degree for Fortepiano (2009), with Stanley Hoogland. Yukiko continued her artistic and pianistic development by participating in the Imola Piano Academy Eindhoven and in masterclasses, given by a.o. Jan Wijn, Jan Boguslaw Strobel, Georg Friedrich Schenck, Klaus Hellwig, and Geoffrey Douglas Madge.

WORDS OF GRATITUDE

First of all, I would like to express my love and gratitude to Tobias Borsboom for his support, advice, humor and patience... and for putting my thoughts into words. I am very grateful for Chris Maene and the staff of the YPMA-Maene Gallery Alkmaar for their wonderful cooperation in making this recording possible. And last but not least: to Brendon, Ernst and Ben of TRPTK, my greatest thanks for their kind and positive support and confidence in me as one of their artists. Their professionalism, recording quality, knowledge and creativity is truly inspiring and makes me look back on this project with the greatest pleasure and happiness. Lastly, I would like to thank all the listeners for their interest in my playing. I hope that it will bring you much joy.

Yukiko Hasegawa



CHRIS MAENE STRAIGHT STRUNG CONCERT GRAND PIANO

In the late 19th century, Steinway & Sons successfully brought to fruition the concept of the modern cross-strung grand piano. Ever since then, this construction concept has been imitated by all piano builders. It has resulted in a standardization of piano building and a uniformity of piano sound. As a reaction to this, the second half of the 20th century witnessed an intense quest for performance practices using historical instruments that bring back the greater sound diversity and transparency of older times.

As part of this movement, the Chris Maene Factory soon began specializing in building harpsichords and pianofortes, based on Chris Maene's renowned and unique collection of more than 300 historical instruments. This gradually led to the desire to build his own grand piano with different sonorous properties, aiming to offer a valid artistic alternative to existing concert grands. To accomplish this, Chris Maene went back to the original basic principle of straight, parallel stringing, where the bass strings are not crossed over the other strings but run parallel to them.

In 2013 Daniel Barenboim commissioned Chris Maene to build "the perfect parallel-strung concert piano". He wanted to reconcile the unique characteristic sonorous richness of the historical piano with the volume, clarity, power and playing comfort of the best modern concert pianos.

In May 2015 Daniel Barenboim inaugurated his new straight strung grand piano with Schubert recitals in Vienna, Paris and London. The sound of the unique instrument was very well received by press, audiences and musicians alike.

By now the Chris Maene Straight Strung Grand Piano is played all over the world by the best international concert pianists, and the Chris Maene Factory is building a full range of straight-strung grand pianos.

The Chris Maene Straight Strung Concert Grand Piano is regularly used for concerts and recordings by artists such as Martin Helmchen, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Emanuel Ax, Eric Le Sage, Hannes Minnaar, Liebrecht Vanbeckevoort, Jan Michiels, Julien Libeer, Jef Neve and Bram De Looze.

For more information, please visit www.chrismaene.com

trptk

Founded in 2014 as a movement promoting authenticity in music, TRPTK captures new music by contemporary artists in its most true-to-life form, by combining scientifically developed recording techniques with state-of-the-art ultra-high-end technologies.

The basis of all our recordings is formed by our unique Optimized Omnidirectional Array (OOA), a microphone system I developed for my Master's thesis at the Utrecht School of Arts and Technology. This recording technique, based on both scientific and psychoacoustic principles as well as "real-world" listening tests by an independent panel, focuses on producing a completely accurate soundstage, both in tonal quality as well as in imaging.

This sense of "being there" is enhanced by recording both in 2.0-channel stereo and 5.0-channel surround sound, as well as in 9.1 Auro-3D. Whereas perfect stereo can best be explained as looking onto the sound stage of the musicians at the recording venue through a perfectly clear glass window, surround sound actually makes you experience the music as though being right there in the venue. Enveloped by sound, both directly from the performers as well as — and very importantly — all the indirect sounds, reverberations, room tones, and yes, even your fellow audience in a concert recording setting.

Every recording is made in the DXD (Digital eXtreme Definition) format, with a resolution of 352.8 kHz at 32 bits. This extreme resolution, over 16 times higher than a standard CD, is necessary to capture and playback all the tiniest details in the music that would otherwise get lost. TRPTK does not allow for any dynamic range compression or limiting during the entire recording, mixing and mastering process. Nothing gets added to or removed from the original recording.



recording & mastering engineer at TRPTK

Grimm | AUDIO

DPA
MICROPHONES

JCAT

KEF
INNOVATORS IN SOUND

HEGEL
MUSIC SYSTEMS

FURUTECH
PURE TRANSMISSION

CREDITS

Recording & mastering	Brendon Heinst
Editing	Ernst Spyckerelle
Piano tuning	Marten Harlaar / YPMA-Maene
Liner notes	Tobias Borsboom Yukiko Hasegawa
Photography & artwork	Brendon Heinst

EQUIPMENT

Microphones	DPA d:dicate 4006A DPA d:dicate 4015A
AD/DA converters	Merging Technologies HAPI Merging Technologies Anubis
Master clock	Grimm Audio CC2 at 352.8 kHz
Monitoring	KEF Blade Two loudspeakers KEF LS50 loudspeakers Hegel H30 amplifiers Sennheiser HD800s headphones
Power conditioning	Furutech Daytona 303E CAD Ground Control GC1
Cabling	Furutech custom microphone cables Furutech LineFlux XLR interlinks Furutech / Grimm Audio breakout cables Furutech custom loudspeaker cables Furutech custom power cables Furutech NanoFlux NCF power cables
Misc.	Furutech e-TP609E NCF power distributor Furutech NCF Boosters JCAT M12 Switch Gold JCAT NET Card FEMTO

trptk