



Arc

Intercontinental Ensemble



	Bianca Bongers	
1	Collage van een Achtvlak	7:28
	Clara Schumann (arr. Ernst Spyckerelle)	
	Drei Romanzen, Op.21	
2	Andante	4:22
3	Allegretto	1:09
4	Agitato	4:26
	Aregnaz Martirosyan	
5	Emotional Diversity	7:47
	Sarah Neutkens	
6	September I	6:15
	Louise Farrenc	
	Nonet, Op.38	
7	Adagio – Allegro	11:54
8	Andante con moto	8:04
9	Scherzo. Vivace	4:54
10	Adagio – Allegro	5:37

Total playing time 1:02:02

About the album

Those of you who are familiar with our previous CDs know that we put a lot of thought into our album titles. This once again turned out to be a big challenge.

Whilst *Traveling Light* alluded to the symphonic arrangements and our ensemble's international backgrounds and *In Motu* described both our personal motivation as well as the common motor behind the three pieces on the CD, we knew from day one that this third CD was much more rebellious and difficult to place. It truly is a nightmare for our (as of yet nonexistent) marketing department.

The first thing that sprang to mind was the female aspect: this CD focuses on work by exclusively female composers, but to give the CD a name based on that simply felt too easy and raised more questions than it answered.

The biggest question was: Is there something deeper that connects these artists?

Each composer has mastered a different style, which means that creating a description of one work ended up being detrimental to another. Whereas one composer challenges the listener with new combinations, another gives familiar sounds new perspective. One piece gives the impressions of stylistic refinement, wherein another puts emotion front and centre. What makes it even more complicated is that many of these contradictions can even be found during the same piece.

It became more and more clear that this CD wasn't about one specific feeling, style or thought. It was about the connection between the pieces various personalities which makes the individual pieces part of something bigger.

That's how we came up with the title *Arc*, the shape in which bridges have been built for centuries and also the way in which character development is described in a story.

In terms of architecture, an arc is the shape which encompasses all of the same exciting contradictions as the pieces on this CD. It combines the playful, serious, fragile, strong, the unpredictable and the refined and combines these into a

detailed character description of each composer.

What's more, every piece tells a personal story that takes the listener along, and as every good story does, provides the listener with new insights that they didn't have beforehand.

In retrospect, *Arc* is a great counterpart to our previous CD *In Motu*. A set of twins, of which one child, *In Motu*, plays outdoors all day, doing everything in his power to put anything he can get his hands on into his mouth whilst managing to get scrapes all over his body. The other child, *Arc*, is a dreamer whose powerful fantasy can create entire worlds and bring anyone willing along for the journey.

We hope that you'll notice more and more connections between the pieces every time you listen to this CD, and that you can experience it as a kind of sonic kaleidoscope, which tells you new stories every time you listen.

Collage van een Achtlak

Bianca Bongers draws inspiration from strong imagery combined with one specific feeling for much of her work. *Collage van een achtlak*, which translates to *Collage of an octahedron*, is one of these works. Bianca went looking for clarity and found it in the geometric shape of an octahedron. How can different aspects of this octahedron be clearly brought to life in music?

Originally written for string orchestra in 2016, Bianca arranged her own work into a version for nonet. This gave the piece a new feel: the wind instruments combined with the strings created more richness of colour in every chord of the piece.

Collage van een achtlak is a three-movement work. The first movement explores the lines of the octahedron and how they turn into dots if one looks at the two-dimensional shape from the side. This is put into music through the use of short pizzicato and staccato notes which morph into long notes. The visual phenomenon of dots and lines have been transformed into an aural phenomenon.

After a short signal from the strings, the second movement begins. One hears lush chords interspersed with tense silences. The chords turn out to be unrelated monoliths, but there is a power which holds everything together, eventually ending in one of the highlights of the piece. The philosophical question posed in this middle movement is whether an octahedron needs energy to keep its shape, or whether it is simply a place where lines happen to meet.

The signal – heard earlier in the strings and now played by the entire nonet – introduces the final movement: a long, splendid chord which describes the character of the octahedron. Bianca once again manages to give movement to something inherently static: every instrument keeps its pitch, but the instruments change dynamics at different times. It is as if you are looking at a canvas and seeing different colours every time the light hits it slightly differently.

Bianca Bongers (1987, NL) studied composition with Wim Henderickx and Luc van Hove and the Royal Conservatory in Antwerp, and cello with Monique Heidema at the Fontys Conservatory in Tilburg. She also took composition lessons from Daan Manneke and Willem Jeths, and took part in masterclasses with Wolfgang Rihm, Brian Ferneyhough and Rebecca Saunders. Her music has been performed by artists such as Duo Mader/Papandreopoulos, Ensemble Adapter, Kugoni Trio, Trio Catch and International Ensemble Modern Academy.

Drei Romanzen, Op.21

Clara Wieck was just 19 years old in 1838 when she conquered Europe's musical capital, Vienna, with her piano playing and was subsequently given the highest Austrian title of 'Königliche und Kaiserliche Osterreichische Kammer-virtuosin'. The Clara-hype was so outrageous that Viennese confectioners invented a new cake for her: the 'Torte a la Wieck'. Clara became one of Europe's most important musical figures. She gave concerts all over the continent and met musical superstars such as Paganini, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Joachim and Ysaye.

With such an incredibly talented daughter, one can understand the thoughts her father (also her piano teacher and manager) Friedrich Wieck must have had

when he realised that a former student of his, Robert Schumann, had fallen in love with and wanted to marry his daughter.

Schumann had started to compose at this point, but in the eyes of Clara's father he was still a bit of a black sheep who had impulsively stopped studying law in order to become a piano virtuoso, an ambition which was quickly quashed by Robert himself, who practiced far too much, eventually overtaxing and destroying one of his hands. Moreover, he frequented bars a little too often and was ten years older than Clara. It was not a good match.

Love, however, is blind, and the couple married in 1840 against Clara's fathers will. His fears seemed unfounded. Clara Schumann remained an in-demand performer and was the breadwinner of the relationship for a long time. She also ensured that her husband's works were heard everywhere, performing them during countless recitals.

Clara was not only a performer, but also a composer- she composed both a piano concerto and a piano trio. She wrote the *3 Romanzen* in 1853, the year in which the Schumanns met a young, ambitious and not unattractive composer, who became a lifelong friend — some wagging tongues claim that the friendship was very intimate- one Johannes Brahms...

Emotional Diversity

When Armenian composer Aregnaz Martirosyan started writing this work for Intercontinental Ensemble, she couldn't foresee that her composition process would be interrupted. This changed drastically on September 27, 2020, when conflict broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Friends and family members were called to the front, where deadly conflict was raging. These developments forces Aregnaz to scrap all of her earlier ideas and begin again. The piece *Emotional Diversity* is her reaction and resistance to the madness of this war. Aregnaz interweaves Armenian melodies with new musical colours.

Aregnaz Martirosyan has studied music with Dieter Ammann at the HSLU

since 2019. She completed her piano studies in 2012 at the Romanos Melikyan conservatory in Yerevan. Between 2013-2017, she studied at the Komitas State Conservatory in Yerevan, completing her bachelor of composition under Vardan Adjemian.

In 2016, she won the 2nd prize at the Pan-Armenian choir competition for young composers as well as the 3rd prize at the international Renaissance competition in Gyumri. In 2017, she received a diploma at the Sergei Prokofiev Competition in Moscow. She took part in the international music festival 'Avet Terterian' in Armenia. In 2018, she won the 1st prize and the Armenian National Philharmonic Orchestra Award at the 'Sayat-Nova' International Music Competition in New York.

After her studies, she took part in masterclasses with composers such as Franck Bedrossian, Claude Ledoux, Jean Pierre Deleuze, Simon Steen Andersen, Stefan Pring, Franck Yeznikian and Dmitri Kourliandski. She has discussed her works with Wolfgang Rihm and Krzysztof Penderecki, both of whom have left a lasting impression on her.

September I

In September I, Neutkens tries to embody the melancholy of the passing of summer: the stifling heat and high hopes of the summer make way in September for rest and melancholy.

Sarah Neutkens is a composer, pianist, visual artist, writer, model and art historian. She is always searching for total freedom in her music and art. She is not only active within the classical music world — with her works being performed by artists including the Alma Quartet, Intercontinental Ensemble and Nederlands Kamerkoor — but she also connects contemporary music, jazz, pop music, and the art and fashion world. She has an impressive and varied list of collaborations, including a residency at Into the Great Wide Open and Muziekgebouw Eindhoven, articles in Harper's Bazaar and Vogue, and collaborations with various museums.

With her interdisciplinary approach, Neutkens wants to show that composition, no matter what style or form it may take, is something that is still extremely relevant as long as it involves searching for the most honest and authentic way to express yourself.

Nonet, Op.38

Pianist, renowned pedagogue, composer and founder of one of the most influential music publishers of the 19th century: an impressive curriculum vitae that clearly showcases Louise Farrenc's wide range of talents. Born into a family of sculptors, her musical talent was discovered early on and was nurtured by her parents, who enrolled her in piano and composition lessons with Ignaz Moscheles, Johann Nepomuk Hummel and Anton Reicha.

Despite her aforementioned talents, Farrenc became a piano pedagogue at the Paris Conservatory and received a lower salary than her male colleagues. Farrenc – clearly not one to rest on her laurels- decided to affect change and composed her nonet in 1849. After a triumphant premiere – including a very young Joseph Joachim on the violin – the directors of the Conservatory realised their mistake and gave Farrenc her well-deserved pay raise.

The nonet is a brilliant piece of chamber music and feels nearly symphonic in parts. Every phrase, every harmony is a celebration that is showcased thanks to the clarity of the musical structure. Every instrument has its moment de gloire and the balance between the various voices works at all times.

The nonet brought to mind the gardens of Versailles, due to the refinement and attention to beauty and symmetry. The music invited us to imagine various scenarios taking place in such a beautiful setting: a solemn reception during the first movement, a calm walk during the second movement, a bacchanal-by-night during the third movement and, finally, carefree children playing and running about during the final movement.

Ernst Spyckerelle





Intercontinental Ensemble

The Intercontinental Ensemble is a nine-piece ensemble consisting of four strings and five wind instruments. The young ensemble was founded in Amsterdam in 2013. Their members come from different continents and countries such as Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Czech Republic, Luxembourg and The Netherlands. In addition to performing original nonet repertoire, it focuses on making and playing self-made arrangements. As a result, they breathe new life into well-known works and can take them to stages where this was not possible beforehand.

In September 2018, the ensemble released their debut album *Traveling Light* on the TRPTK label featuring arrangements of major symphonies. In addition to arranging symphonies, the Intercontinental Ensemble broadens the repertoire for nonet by requesting new pieces. The aim of both the symphonies and the new pieces is to popularize this line-up with the public and other musicians through a large and varied repertoire. They also demonstrate the versatility of these line-ups through collaborations with other artists such as the Piano Duo Scholtes-Janssens and star violinist Niek Baar.

They have performed on major Dutch stages such as the Concertgebouw, Muziekgebouw aan het IJ, Schiermonnikoog Festival, but have also been invited to perform in Mexico, Belgium and Italy, among others.

The ensemble also likes to work with other musicians and composers. For example, they have already collaborated with the master pianist and composer Severin von Eckardstein, Wim Henderickx, Niek Baar, Piano Duo Scholtes-Janssens, Sarah Neutkens, Aregnaz Martirosyan, Ekaterina Levental, Marieke Vos, Bianca Bongers, Edo Frenkel, Apollonio Maiello and Gabriel Lubell.

Musicians

Violin Ernst Spycykerelle
Viola Iteke Wijbenga
Cello Simon Velthuis
Double bass Jorge Hernández
Flute Eliška Vondráček Horehled'ová
Oboe Ivan Cheng
Clarinet Alfonso Manzanera Rojo
Bassoon María Yañez Ocaña
French horn Simão Fonseca
Artistic supervisor Andreas Patrik Hansson

Many thanks to...

Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Stichting Voordekunst, Ab Nieuwdorp for providing us airtime, Joop & Petra Pauwelussen and Jo Spycykerelle for their campaigning, Veerle Ackerstaff from Break Free Films, Ben Banis, Steamy & Stephen Cheng, Fede Fabregat, Biagio Fiorito, family Fonseca, family Garrido, family Hernández, family Manzanera, Bill & Bing Monsour, Marcelle & Ton Oosterwijk-Posing, Josien Pauwelussen, Elena Rodríguez, family Spycykerelle-Stevens, Edorta Ugalde, family Velthuis, Willemien de Vlieger-Moll, family Vondráček Horehled'ová, Sabine and Bernd Weisshaar-Dahlke, family Wijbenga, our teachers, partners, friends and all our generous backers who made this project possible!



TRPTK

Our goal is to create immersive experiences through sound. By creating an acoustic hologram, we try to give you the illusion of being at the world's most beautiful concert halls and churches – all without ever leaving your listening room.

No costs or efforts are spared to seize that magical moment in which music is being created, and bring it home to you in the highest quality possible. Why? Simply because this is how music is supposed to be experienced: fresh and alive, not canned and with a stale aftertaste of conservation. To us, music is life, and should be lived to the fullest in an authentic and uncompromising way. Through these recordings, we bring you closer to the music than you've ever imagined. The devil is in the details, and the ability to catch those makes all the difference between good quality and excellent quality. Listening to our recordings, you're able to perceive every breath, every bowing, every movement with astonishing clarity. Not only do you hear the music, you hear the music as it's being created. This adds a human dimension to your listening experience, connecting you instantly and instinctively with artists from all over the world.

The basis for all our recordings is our Optimised Omnidirectional Array (OOA) of microphones, which I developed for my Master's Degree in Audio Engineering in 2013. The aim of OOA is to create a truly accurate image of the soundstage, while retaining uncoloured transparency in the tonal characteristics of the recording. This means, in musical terms, that every little detail of the original performance and its acoustic surroundings is accurately recorded, and perfectly reproduced.

We choose our artists not just by their ability to amaze us. We're eager to collaborate with musicians and composers who walk that fine line between renewing genres and connecting to audiences. Together with them, we can achieve our goal of creating daring recordings that stay loyal to the idea of always aiming for the highest quality possible. Because at TRPTK, we bring you not just the sound, but the core of music.

Brendon Heinst founder, recording and mastering engineer at TRPTK

Equipment used on this recording

Microphones

DPA d:dicatè 4041-SP

DPA d:dicatè 4006A

Ehrlund EHR-M

Microphone preamplifiers

Millennia HV-3D-8

AD/DA conversion

Merging Technologies Hapi

Merging Technologies Anubis

Grimm Audio CC2 master clock

Monitoring

KEF Blade Two

KEF LS50 Meta

Hegel H30

Hegel C55

Cabling

Furutech custom microphone, loudspeaker & power cables and interlinks

Grimm Audio TPR8 breakout cables

Tuning

JCAT Optimo 3 Duo

JCAT M12 Switch Gold

JCAT NET Card XE

Computer Audio Design GC3

Furutech NCF Boosters

For a full list of specifications,
please visit more.trptk.com/ttk0078



Credits

Recording & mastering engineer **Brendon Heinst**

Assistant recording engineer **Hans Erbllich**

Editor **Ernst Spyckerelle**

Artwork & photography **Brendon Heinst**

Liner notes **Ernst Spyckerelle**

Recording dates **October 4th to 7th 2021**

Recording location **Westvest Church, Schiedam (NL)**

Recording format **11.2MHz 1bit in 5.1.4-channel immersive**

For videos, photos, additional information and more, scan QR code underneath disc or visit more.trptk.com/ttk0080