

# Innermost

Dmitry Ferschtman  
Mila Baslawskaja





Franz Schubert

Arpeggione sonata, D.821

1	Allegro moderato	12:33
2	Adagio	3:42
3	Allegretto	9:02

Robert Schumann (arr. Dmitry Ferschtman)

Violin sonata No. 1, Op.105

4	Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck	8:14
5	Allegretto	3:55
6	Lebhaft	4:42

Dmitri Shostakovich

Cello sonata in D minor, Op.40

7	Allegro non troppo	11:54
8	Allegro	3:32
9	Largo	7:42
10	Allegro	4:33

Total playing time 1:09:52

## Innermost

Over the years - now that we have practically covered the entire classical and romantic repertoire for cello and piano - we have realised more and more clearly why we have become musicians in the first place and what is indispensable for our inner balance.

Herein lies the answer to the question of why we have recorded these composers and these pieces at this moment. We both feel that these composers had the greatest influence on our love of music at a very early stage and were even a decisive factor in us becoming musicians.

Starting with Schubert. Listening to Die Winterreise for the first time as young teenagers left an indelible impression for the rest of our lives. We were incredibly lucky to hear Schubert in truly 'shockingly' ideal performances: Fischer-Dieskau, Kathleen Ferrier, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf with Gerald Moore and Edwin Fischer....

We were overwhelmed, children still, by the complete symbiosis of music and poetry. This became a guideline for us in the way we wanted to make music ourselves: in essence, always wanting to tell something to the listener. Getting to know first the instrumental and later the vocal music of Schumann strengthened our youthful conviction that 'enchantment with the story in the music' is for us the only possible relationship with the listener.

Interestingly, our connection with this music is mirrored by the composers themselves. Reading about Schumann's life, we discovered that he wrote in a diary or article "Schubert is my everything".

Not much later, we also felt the same emotional vulnerability in Dmitry Shostakovich as lies in Schubert and Schumann's narratives. As a composer Shostakovich (for whom we also played his sonata) is in many ways far removed from the first two. However, what unites these three, in our view, is precisely their keen feeling, their great empathy for human suffering. They are people 'without skin' - with an open heart.

Dmitry Ferschtman & Mila Baslawskaja



## Three remarkable sonatas for cello and piano

In music, as in the visual arts, cities sometimes develop as epicentres for musical encounters and possible mutual influence. Debussy and Stravinsky, for instance, met as newcomers in Paris and, sitting four handed at the piano, read through the revolutionary *Sacre du Printemps* even before its premiere in 1913.

The city of Vienna was able to develop such a historical role twice in history: with Schoenberg, Webern and Berg and some 100 years earlier with Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven. It is often forgotten that Schubert in fact also belongs to these latter three, at least as far as his place as a 'Viennese' composer is concerned.

However, although contemporaries in a sense, Beethoven and Schubert never met. The musical compositional difference between the two great composers - in one city at the same time - is astounding and shows how exceptionally individual music can be.

Schubert admired Beethoven, a master of thematic construction, for his art of variation, but was himself a master of direct, open and intense emotion by his own means: seemingly effortlessly flowing rich melodies, beautiful harmonies with a predilection for using the unexpected shift through thirds, a method Schubert elevated to a higher plane. There is no composer, neither before nor after him, who used this specific aspect of direct harmonic emotion so strongly.

It was Schumann who, when he unexpectedly became acquainted with the 9th Symphony "La Grande" (in C Dur, D.944, 1828), called the music of Franz Schubert "a music, broadly spoken, but of "Himmlicher Länge"! A fitting description: you just have to listen, you want to listen - over and over again. The music holds you captive with its seemingly direct "simplicity" and openness.

The great pianist Arthur Rubinstein made a similar statement about the Adagio in the String Quintet in C Dur (D.956, 1828): "Surely that is the Gate of Heaven that is opening". Indeed, unworldly sounds assault the listener in these late Schubert works. Here we can count in the last three piano sonatas, the last two symphonies, the string quintet mentioned above, both piano trios and - last but

not least - the Arpeggione sonata (D.821,1824). The Arpeggione itself, a 6-string instrument, was designed and built in 1823 by the Viennese Johann Georg Stauffer. The instrument is now a museum exhibit and the only lasting sonata for it has been taken up by cellists, for whom, with their four-string instrument, the sonata is a real challenge.

The First Violin Sonata op. 105 from 1851 is a good example of the "poeticisation" of music to which Schumann strove. It is presented here, somewhat darker in colour, in the cello transcription adopted by Dmitry Ferschtman himself. The theme contains the very essence of "Sturm und Drang": strong emotional impulses mould the melody lines. "With passionate expression", Schumann notes right at the opening of the sonata. Both instruments come into play at high speed with alternating, imitative or supplementary use of the melodic arcs; together they advance with equal energy. The music rolls and spins, as if no standstill can be tolerated.

In the second, more pastoral, movement, subtle questioning seems to be the main theme with some humorous-melancholic accents. In the last movement, the imitations, the strong momentum and the braiding of both instruments return, but now in staccato. What a gripping vitality lies in this sparkling music! This is Schumann's "poeticisation" with its full youthful, idealistic power. The sonata overwhelms like a "joyous whirlwind" and this is exactly mirrored by Schumann writing in a whirlwind: within the space of five days. To be precise, from 12 to 16 September 1851. That is only three years before Schumann's two-year stay in Endenich, the clinic in Bonn where permanent social exclusion was the rule, with no regular visits from his wife Clara or his children. Schumann died there in 1856, alone, exhausted by demonic, terrifying hallucinations. This later sonata - although the first for violin - thus belongs to his last great works.

The (sole) Cello Sonata that Shostakovich wrote in 1934 (opus 40), is based on a totally different approach to duo playing and, above all, on a very own, different musical idiom. The Cello Sonata by the then 28-year-old composer is probably the last work he was able to write without direct intimidation from the authorities. The premiere took place in December 1934. Shostakovich' opera

Lady Macbeth from the Mtsensk district (after Leskov's novella) had by that time been performed with great success for a full year, but the drastic change after Stalin's personal opera visit in 1936 had not yet taken place. After this event, 'Lady Macbeth' became the reviled "stumbling block" for the regime. The fear of execution or exile ruined the composer's life for years after that and influenced his compositions.

The cello sonata, however, was written in a relatively carefree period. The work therefore still breathes a post-romantic atmosphere, with some slightly ironic chords and laconic-wry melodic lines. However, even in this relatively light-hearted sonata, Shostakovich already seems to sense and express his sombre fate (and that of many of his compatriots).

There are four movements: Allegro non troppo with a beautiful romantic introduction of the theme by the cellist with small dissonant frictions. Several subtle motifs are explored and developed by both instruments. Then comes the Allegro with a thumping ostinato like a pounding folk dance and subtle flageolets to accompany a thin piano theme. In the Largo, the cellist opens with a thoughtful elegiac episode with sparse accompaniment. However, the relative calm develops more and more towards a culmination of symphonic proportions. The sonata concludes with the Allegro as a fresh dialogue between the two instruments. A cheerful, mocking 'word and counterword' with at times strange harmonic endings. Every now and again the cello suddenly dives into flageolets, next the piano spreads out garlands of broken chords and rapid scale sequences.

With an enormous individuality in style, harmony and instrumental treatment, Shostakovich opens a whole magic cabinet of fascinating, kaleidoscopic sound effects. And all this displayed by just two musicians!

Eric van Griensven



## TRPTK

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**Brendon Heinst** founder, recording and mastering engineer at TRPTK

# Equipment used on this recording

## Microphones

Sonodore RCM-402 60v active-powered

Neumann KM84 Rens Heijnis modified

## Microphone preamplifiers

Merging Technologies Hapi

## 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 cables

Mogami 2534 microphone cables

Furutech NanoFlux NCF power cables

Furutech Pure Power 6E NCF

Furutech custom loudspeaker 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/ttk0089](https://more.trptk.com/ttk0089)



## Credits

Recording & mastering engineer **Brendon Heinst**

Assistant engineer **Bart Koop**

Editor **Hans Erblich**

Liner notes **Eric van Griensven, Dmitry Ferschtman & Mila Baslawskaja**

Piano technician **Michel Brandjes**

Artwork **Livia Matze**

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

Recording format **352.8kHz 32bit in 5.1-channel surround**

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