

## Norie Takahashi



### Bach-Reger Transcriptions for Piano Duet: Brandenburg Concertos Nos. 1-6 & Organ Works

Johann Sebastian Bach

2CD aud 23.445

**Radio 100,7** 05. Sep 2019 - 14:25 (Luc Boentges - 2019.09.05)  
source: <https://www.100komma7.lu/program/episode...>



#### BROADCAST

*CD-Klassik: Bach emol anescht*

No e puer Diske mat engem variéierte Programm aus der Literatur fir zwee Pianoen, respektiv véier Hänn op engem Piano, consacréere si hir nei Sortie ganz dem Max Reger a sengen Transkriptione vu Bach-Wierker. Um Programm stinn nieft enger Passacaglia an zwou Fugen, déi sechs Brandenburgische Konzerte.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**www.pizzicato.lu** 08/09/2019 (Remy Franck - 2019.09.08)  
source: <https://www.pizzicato.lu/notizbuch-eines...>



#### Notizbuch eines Rezensenten – CD-Kurzrezensionen von Remy Franck (Folge 243)

*Brandenburgische Konzerte am Klavier*

Das Piano Duo Takahashi Lehmann legt seine nunmehr vierte CD-Produktion bei Audite vor. Sie enthält Transkriptionen von Johann Sebastian Bachs Brandenburgischen Konzerten, sowie der Passacaglia BWV 582, der Toccata und Fuge BWV 565 und des Präludiums und Fuge BWV 552 durch den deutschen Komponisten Max Reger. Die Interpretationen fallen durch ein ebenso alertes wie feinfühliges und vor allem extrem transparentes, dynamisch exzellent variiertes sowie sehr farbenreiches Spiel auf, das die Brandenburgischen in einem neuen, attraktiven Licht erscheinen lässt.

Süddeutsche Zeitung 27. September 2019 (Wolfgang Schreiber - 2019.09.27)  
source: <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/die-b...>



**J. S. Bach, von Max Reger bearbeitet**

*Die "Brandenburgischen Konzerte" für vierhändiges Klavier*

Wenn die großen Meister kreativ genötigt aufeinanderprallen, selbst wenn ganze Epochen zwischen ihnen liegen, können die Funken der Fantasie und der Faszination stieben.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

The Guardian Sun 27 Oct 2019 (Nicholas Kenyon - 2019.10.27)  
source: <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/o...>



**Home listening: Bach-Reger, Josquin des Prés and Western Wind**

*Takahashi/Lehmann make light work of Reger's Brandenburg duet transcriptions.  
Plus, more Josquin from the Tallis Scholars*

[...] these two very skilful pianists lighten the textures, choose dancing speeds and crisp articulation, and create something that is quite delightful. So this is an enjoyably contemporary, rather postmodern collection.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Gramophone Mon 16th September 2019 (James Jolly - 2019.09.16)  
source:



<https://www.gramophone.co.uk/blog/the-li...>

**The Listening Room: Episode 81 (16.9.19)**

[...] Max Reger's two-piano arrangements of Bach's Brandenburg Concertos are something special, and a new recording from the Piano Duo Takahashi | Lehmann does them proud – Reger's invention and imagination, and love for the music, jumps off every page. Sample them in the Fourth Concerto.

Piano News November / Dezember 6/2019 (Oliver Buslau - 2019.11.01)



In den Bearbeitungen der Orgelwerke arbeitet das Duo die durch Verdopplungen in den Klavierklang eingearbeiteten Orgelregister herrlich heraus und zeigt den Komponisten als Meister im Umgang mit Klavierfarben.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Rondo 14.09.2019 (Michael Wersin - 2019.09.14)  
 source: <https://www.randomagazin.de/kritiken.php...>

**RONDO**  
 THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

Norie Takahashi und Björn Lehmann haben Regers Bearbeitungen sorgfältig, ja akribisch erarbeitet und geben sie mit der nötigen konzertanten Spielfreude, aber gleichzeitig mit großer Ruhe wieder.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Gramophone December 2019 (Jeremy Nicholas  
 - 2019.12.01)

**GRAMOPHONE**  
 THE WORLD'S BEST CLASSICAL MUSIC REVIEWS

Concertos date from the early 1900s. They were so well received, so we are told, that they had to be reprinted only two years later. Who was buying them? I can't believe they were intended for musical suburban husbands and wives so they had a bit of Bach to belt out on their Bechstein. The technical demands are well beyond the reach of the average amateur but, like many another duet arrangement, offer a completely new perspective on the originals.

Reger's main preoccupation as a Bach transcriber was, of course, with the organ works and it is his profound knowledge of counterpoint that makes these Brandenburg arrangements so successful. Moreover, while a couple of Brandenburgs is usually quite enough at one sitting (for this writer, at least), here, once I started I couldn't stop. It's many a long year since I enjoyed this marvellous, life-enhancing set so much. Who knew that Reger could be such fun?

A great deal of this is down to the immaculate pinpoint ensemble of Norie Takahashi and Björn Lehmann and the rhythmic buoyancy of their execution. With properly brisk tempos, the outer movements bubble along with an insatiable joie de vivre. They use a minimum of pedal, too, so the complex voicing is always crystal-clear, underpinned by a springy, resonant bass line, while the upper treble, which so often in present-day recordings flies off into a different airier acoustic, here is firmly linked to the lower registers. The piano sound is, to my taste, ideal. All the concertos are recorded on a splendid Yamaha with the exception of No 5. That is played on a Steingraeber in a barely noticeably different acoustic/location.

As far as Reger's organ transcriptions are concerned, Takahashi and Lehmann offer us two works (the ubiquitous Toccata and Fugue in D minor and the St Anne Prelude and Fugue) which Reger also arranged for piano solo, together with his (only) version of the mighty Passacaglia, BWV582. These provide a judicious contrast to the boisterous Brandenburgs.

Here, in short, is a pair of discs to return to often. In fact, my one complaint about the whole enterprise is the deathless prose of its prolix booklet.

Badische Zeitung Dienstag, 10. Dezember 2019 (Johannes Adam - 2019.12.10)

Badische  Zeitung

### Komponierte Interpretation

*Reger als Bach-Bearbeiter*

Lebenslanger Maßstab und Mentor Max Regers war Johann Sebastian Bach. Ihm hat der Spätromantiker nachgeeifert, ihn hat er gespielt – und bearbeitet. So auch die sechs Brandenburgischen Konzerte in eine Fassung für Klavier zu vier Händen gebracht. Das Pianoduo Norie Takahashi und Björn Lehmann agiert ungemein präzise, wie aus einem Guss. Die schnellen Sätze künden von sprühender, unbändiger Musizierlust. So beherzt, so leicht, so musikalisch kann Kontrapunkt klingen! Die langsamen Etappen – man denke etwa ans Andante des zweiten Konzerts – kreieren eine völlig andere, eine romantische Welt, werden zum Nocturne, zum emotionalen Zentrum der Werke. Sehr schön die aufs Klavier umgehobene Bach'sche Orgelmusik. Überraschung: Reger führt die c-Moll-Passacaglia BWV 582 – entgegen jeder Erwartung – nicht zum strahlenden Dur-Schluss im Fortissimo, sondern lässt das gewichtige Variationen-Opus sanft und leise verebben. Ein Bogen zurück zum sachte inszenierten Anfang. Ja: komponierte Interpretation.

www.ClassicsToday.com 01.01.2020 (Jed Distler - 2020.01.01)

source: <https://www.classicstoday.com/review/inc...>



### Incisive And Joyful Bach/Reger Brandenburgs

In every way these contenders yield to the Takahashi/Lehmann duo's ensemble proficiency and musical insights. [...] The duo brilliantly streamlines the arrangements' notey upholstery by virtue of brisk tempos, discreet pedaling, incisive articulation, and sheer joy in music making.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[American Record Guide](#) February 2020 (James Harrington - 2020.02.01)



These are Max Reger's piano duet transcriptions of Bach's 6 Brandenburg Concertos made in 1904-1905 and three other major organ works. Reger wrote "Sebastian Bach is for me the beginning and end of all music; on him rest, and from him originates, all real progress!" Countless volumes of piano duet arrangements, well into the 20th Century, seemed obligatory in the music publishing business; but Reger's stand apart for their inventiveness and quality. He arranged many of Bach's works in more than one version (solo piano, piano duet, 2 pianos). His many editions of Bach's keyboard works have fallen out of favor for their excessive and very personal additions to Bach's original texts. He said that his approach to Bach would "very much challenge the objections of pedestrian blockheads, or more politely speaking, the literal scholars lacking in imagination". Like Reger's very enjoyable 2-piano version of the Goldberg Variations (Schumann and Magalhaes, 2Piano 1039213, Mar/Apr 2014), I want the pianists to follow the tempos, dynamics, and phrasing that Reger was specific about in his performance instructions. He had an excellent musical mind and his ideas are well worth hearing—not to mention that the subject matter may be some of the greatest ever written. These are transcriptions in that there is not an added or deleted measure and any note changes are simply displacing a line up or down an octave or revoicing some chords to make them playable by two pianists at one keyboard. Reger wanted these to be as transparent as possible and said Fifth Concerto "was exceptionally difficult to arrange; I made countless attempts before I finally figured out the right one." The performances here by Takahashi and Lehmann are amazing from every perspective. They make music in every measure: lines are clearly delineated and shaped, they are not shy about using

the full dynamic range of the modern piano, and their virtuosity is stunning. When I used the music and listened specifically for how Reger divided up the notes for four hands, I was torn between Reger's ingenuity and the pianist's realization of it. Audite's recorded piano sound is state of the art and the booklet essay is very informative. This is a recording I will return to on a regular basis.

**Fanfare March 2020 ( - 2020.03.01)**

fanfare

"Mommy! Mr. Reger is picking on me again! He said I was [sob!] a pedestrian blockhead! And I wasn't even walking! I was riding in the back seat!" Then I woke up.

But that dream was also a prophecy: Max Reger, a composer who gets many more pages in music reference books than people standing in line waiting to buy recordings of his music, eventually called me a pedestrian blockhead. This was an epithet he reserved for anyone who disagreed with his approach to the music of Bach. Carefully placing his monocle in full Charlie McCarthy position, and staring at me with the expression of a kipper who thought he owned the world but suddenly found himself on a plate, skewered by a 24k gold fork, continued: "I am alerting you in advance that my perhaps 'too personal' way of playing, and accordingly of editing Bach will very much challenge the objections of the pedestrian blockheads ... they will consider my many nuances ... too modern and entrench themselves behind the wall of mental laziness, insisting that Bach should be played classically! Such people, who are more Catholic than the Pope, [Oh my, I hope the long line of rabbis and cantors from whom I am descended never see this! DR] cannot be helped." Oh, I don't know—maybe I am a pedestrian blockhead. That would explain why I have so much trouble finding a hat that will fit me.

One of his colleagues says that Reger was "... capable of expressing, in the most radical way, the idea that the work he had beneath his hands was at that moment his property." This is a very serviceable idea, and no doubt occurred to the pickpocket who had liberated my wallet while I was in Riverside, California staring with fascination at the Parent Orange Tree (one of, and perhaps the only, tourist attractions in that city).

So, as you see in the headnote above, Reger found the time to transcribe lots of Bach's music, including all of the Brandenburg Concertos, for two pianos. This was immensely valuable, for it had the potential to bring this great music to people all over the land, who lived far from the big cities and couldn't go to concerts, and therefore were doomed to musical ignorance (unless they somehow found the power to go out and buy a record player or a radio—Reger lived well into the 20th century).

So nobody really needed a piano reduction. Well, what did it accomplish? I'm sure that whenever it was played, many audience members thought to themselves, "Wow! It sounds sort of like the Brandenburg Concertos!" and then, around the middle of the second movement, those ideas morphed into the chances that they'd be selling sandwiches during the intermission. So at least this music boosted the take at the concession stand.

Because, after all, the Brandenburgs are totally dependent upon the orchestration. The Brandenburg No. 2 without the high trumpet? It's like the difference between a veterinarian and a taxidermist (with a taxidermist, you get your dog back). Bach was as great an orchestrator as he was in every other phase of music. And if somehow we could arrange to have him listen to this disc—well, Bach told his dear son C. P. E. (known affectionately in the family as Seepy) that his music faded, like Prussian blue; just think what he'd say to Reger.

If you're a part of a piano duo, you might want to play some of this music as a stunt. But contemplating the level of difficulty, you'd better leave plenty of practice time, and you'd better be at least as good as the consummate pianists, Norie Takahashi and Bjorn Lehmann, who play flawlessly, at breakneck speed, and as if they were Oscar Peterson seeing how many notes he could cram into a measure of 4/4 time.

Well, you will know immediately whether or not you want this recording, and if you do, it will never be played better than it is here.

**www.musicweb-international.com Tuesday May 5th ( - 2020.05.05)**

**source: <http://www.musicweb-international.com/cl...>**



Anyone who knows me will appreciate my liking for the German composer Max Reger, who due to his vast output of organ music and his fondness for counterpoint was often described as the Bach of the twentieth century. In fact, Bach was his musical hero, stating that "Sebastian Bach is the beginning and end of all music; upon him rests, and from him originates, all real progress!" It is fitting then that some of Reger's finest transcriptions, whether for orchestra or piano, are of the music of Bach. Whilst I have a lot of Reger, including a few discs of transcribed Bach, I don't have a set that contains all of the Brandenburg Concertos, so when offered the chance to review this set, I jumped at it.

Reger's transcriptions for piano four-hands of the Brandenburgs had their beginnings in a request from the Peters publishing house for a two-hand version in 1904. With the Fifth Concerto giving him particular difficulties the following year, this led to numerous attempts to arrange the work until he came up with the one we have here. Up until then, Reger had concentrated on transcribing Bach's organ music, but agreed, with the resulting edition selling out within two years and needing to be re-published. It also led to a new request, for Reger to produce transcriptions of the Orchestral Suites.

These transcriptions are, therefore, a labour of love, with the result being something quite wonderful. As already stated, I do have recordings of some of these transcriptions, but sadly not all, and I must admit to having returned to them regularly, enjoying them every time I listen to them. This recording only served to further my liking for these pieces; Reger managed expertly to keep the nature and spirit of the original whilst making them more accessible to everyone. The result being wonderful music and being arranged wonderfully well; what is more is that here, in the Piano Duo Takahashi|Lehmann, we have a performance that surpasses each of the performances of the concertos that I already have. The performance is excellent with the Piano Duo Takahashi|Lehmann showing great dexterity and understanding of each other which leads to wonderful ensemble playing. I did not miss the orchestra once, which is something I can't say about every recording I have heard before.

The other three works on this set are all transcriptions of Bach's organ pieces, and I suppose the obvious place to start is the now infamous Toccata & Fugue in D minor, BWV565. With questions still asked about its composition, it is probably the piece that most people will associate as being by Bach. Here the performance by the Piano Duo Takahashi|Lehmann lives up to the sparkling transcription. Here, if anything, Reger added new impetus to the work, with the performers rising to every challenge set. However, the first transcription of an organ piece we encounter on this set is the wonderful Passacaglia in C minor, BWV582, a real tour de force for the organist. This arrangement makes the most of Bach's sonorities, something that is brought out to the full here. The final work on the disc is the popular Prelude & Fugue in E flat major, BWV552 'St Anne', another truly wonderful organ work, Reger made two arrangements of this piece, the other for solo piano. Again, the Piano Duo Takahashi|Lehmann sparkle in their performance, and their's again, is the finest recording of this transcription that I have heard, making this a wonderful inclusion in this set.

As already stated, Norie Takahashi and Björn Lehmann are wonderful throughout, their's is a real partnership, with the resulting performance being excellent, one which has soon become my "go-to" recording for these works and Reger transcriptions in general. The recorded sound is also excellent which only serves to heighten the enjoyment of this performance. The accompanying booklet, in German and English is good, but a little more insight might have been good. But this is no reason not to invest, and it will be a real investment, in this excellent recording, especially as it retails for little more than the price of a single CD. One of the finest recordings of transcriptions of Bach that I have heard in a very long time.

www.amazon.de 9. November 2019 ( - 2019.11.09)  
source: <https://www.amazon.de/Bach-Reger-Transcr...>



A delight. Such skill and musicality. I hate to say it but I prefer these piano versions to the originals.

www.amazon.de 13. Januar 2020 ( - 2020.01.13)  
source: <https://www.amazon.de/Bach-Reger-Transcr...>



[...] This new and exciting two-cd set by these brilliant pianists, Norie Takahashi and Bjorn Lehmann present these masterpieces in a fresh, colorful and beautiful interpretation. Their tonal balance forms an artistic whole which makes for a delightful listening experience for the experienced classical music listener as well as for the beginning music student alike. Excellent program notes are available in German and English. This 2019 set is highly recommended for all pianists, musicians and piano aficionados alike.

**Musik & Theater** 09/10 September/Oktober 2020 ( - 2020.09.01)



### Bachs Terzenliebe

Das Piano Duo Takahashi/Lehmann bringt mit präzisiertem Zusammenspiel, rhythmisch strengem Musizieren und vielerlei Klangfarben die besten Voraussetzungen mit. Die Abgrenzungen von Solo- und Tuttipassagen erfolgen stets mit ebenso viel Feingefühl wie Nachdruck, klangliche Härten bleiben jedoch aus.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Neue Musikzeitung 17. Juni 2021 ( - 2021.06.17)  
source: <https://hoerbar.nmz.de/2021/06/bach-rege...>



### HörBar

Nach drei Alben mit Originalkompositionen und Transkriptionen aus gleich drei Jahrhunderten (alle bei audite) hat sich nun das PianoDuo Takahashi / Lehmann der Reger'schen Ausgabe angenommen und verfolgt dabei einen interessanten eigenen Weg.

Deutlich ist ihrer Artikulation die Auseinandersetzung mit dem aktuellen Stand der Praxis anzumerken [...] Verbunden mit dem direkten Klang und einer angenehm trockenen Akustik legt die Produktion damit auch architektonische Strukturen frei [...] Unter verschiedenen Aspekten eine ebenso starke wie spannende Einspielung!

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*



## Allusions and beyond

Johann Sebastian Bach | Max Reger | György Kurtág | Bernd Alois Zimmermann | Johannes Brahms

CD aud 97.700

Hessischer Rundfunk HR 2-Kultur, CD-Tipp, 22.09.2016 (Meinolf Bunsmann - 2016.09.22)



### BROADCAST CD-Tipp

BROADCAST CD-Tipp

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[www.pizzicato.lu](http://www.pizzicato.lu) 09/10/2016 (Remy Franck - 2016.10.09)

source: <http://www.pizzicato.lu/aus-dem-notizbuc...>



### Interessante Duo-Platte

Das Piano Duo Takahashi-Lehmann legt seine nunmehr dritte CD-Produktion bei Audite vor. Sie enthält Transkriptionen bereits existierender Werke sowie Originalkompositionen, die durchdrungen sind von musikalischen Zitaten und Anspielungen auf Werke anderer Komponisten: György Kurtags Bearbeitungen Bach'scher Choralvorspiele und Max Regers Transkription des Fünften Brandenburgischen Konzerts, Brahms' Haydn-Variationen und Bernd Alois Zimmermanns Monologe. Das Duo Takahashi-Lehmann spielt dieses anspruchsvolle Programm mit bestechender Klarheit und, besonders in den langsameren Stücken, sehr stimmungsvoll.

Record Geijutsu October 2016 ( - 2016.10.01)



### Spezielle Empfehlung

Japanische Rezension siehe PDF!



**www.musicweb-international.com February 2017 (Dominy Clements - 2017.02.01)**

source: <http://www.musicweb-international.com/cl...>



Norie Takahashi and Björn Lehmann's piano duo has been around since 2009 and already has two previous releases on the Audite label: "Originals and Beyond" and "Transcriptions and Beyond." Allusions and Beyond continues an exploration of familiar and more or less unknown repertoire, and this nicely programmed recording is packed with variety and interest.

Max Reger's admiration for Johann Sebastian Bach knew no bounds, and he made around 150 transcriptions of his works, of which this Fifth Brandenburg Concerto is a fine example. This kind of music in piano duet can easily sound rather dated, and as a domestic entertainment it certainly belongs firmly in that period before we became provided with the passive ease of broadcast music. Takahashi/Lehmann turn in a nice performance with plenty of life and expression, not attempting to introduce 'authentic' atmosphere but also not making Reger's version of the piece into anything heavier than it need be.

Equally if not more intriguing are György Kurtag's transcriptions of Bach. Kurtag as a composer is quite an uncompromising modernist, but timid listeners need have no fears with regard to these tracks. Bach's music is kept intact while the colour of the piano is broadened as an organ might with extra stops, adding octaves or fifths here and there and exploring contrasting registers for instance in the rumbling textures of *Aus tiefer Not schrei ich zu Dir*. The added notes in *O Lamm Gottes, unschuldig* give the upper register a remarkable toy piano/music box effect.

With Bernd Alois Zimmermann we enter the world of two pianos as well as that avant-garde tension in which artistic abstraction meets the challenges of time and tradition. Zimmermann's work in this period involves much layering of time in every sense, and the allusions here appear in unexpected musical quotes that emerge and mix with each other, pitting Bach against Messiaen, Debussy, Mozart and other elements including fragments of jazz. This is 'music about music': demanding, but with an acceptance of its poetic impact by no means unrewarding. Zimmermann's stormy rages and sunlit shafts of beauty are to my mind like Beethoven's – only difficult in their requirement of focus and clarity, and the musicians here certainly give a virtuoso demonstration of communicating the force and "imploring appeal" of this score.

The musical contrast here between Monologues and Brahms' Variations on a Theme by Haydn could hardly be greater, but creates its own moment of musical magic. Takahashi/Lehmann play this work with plenty of detailed consideration, only giving in to legato richness where the variations demand it, but with nicely proportioned dynamic contrasts and articulation giving as much clarity as they deliver with the other works in this programme. Collectors will have their own favourites when it comes to recordings of this work, and I have my own soft spot for the heightened drama from Martha Argerich and Nelson Freire in their live Deutsche Grammophon recording (review), but this version will do very nicely.

Beautifully recorded and nicely presented, this is the kind of release I have no hesitation in recommending to anyone looking for a meaty and entertaining adventure into the toothsome sonorities of good piano duo playing.

**Fanfare February 2017 (Raymond Tuttle - 2017.02.01)**

source: <http://www.fanfarearchive.com/articles/a...>

This is Piano Duo Takahashi-Lehmann's third disc for Audite. The first, *Originals and Beyond* (Audite 97.706), contained arrangements for piano four hands by Schoenberg, Beethoven, and Schumann of their own works. It was reviewed positively by Huntley Dent in *Fanfare* 39:1. The second, *Transcriptions and Beyond* (Audite 97.708), contained music by Stravinsky (including the composer's own arrangement of *Le sacre du printemps*), Nancarrow, and Arnulf Herrmann. It appears not to have been reviewed in these pages. Now we have *Allusions and Beyond*. The title is itself an allusion to the fact that the works by Brahms and by Bernd Alois Zimmermann allude to the works of other composers.

There are surprisingly few recordings of Max Reger's very convincing arrangements of Bach's six Brandenburg Concertos. In fact, the only recording of all six of them—as far as I know, anyway—is a set that was released on LP by the Musical Heritage Society, featuring pianists Martin Berkofsky and David Hagan. It's serviceable, although aggressively recorded, and (obviously) out of print. Peter Rösel and Santiago Rodriguez also recorded Concerto No. 5, for Elan Recordings. That's a better recording, but it is even harder to find than the MHS LPs. Let's hope that this strong and joyful performance by Piano Duo Takahashi-Lehmann encourages Audite to ask these performers to record the remaining five. I'd buy it.

György Kurtág's Bach transcriptions are somewhat better represented on disc, including on an ECM New Series disc that features the composer himself with his wife, Márta. These are extraordinarily subtle works. For example, at times Kurtág asks the pianists to cross their own or each other's arms as they play. This is not a circus stunt, but still trickery of a sort, because the departure from traditional playing positions forces a rethinking of the music, and thus produces changes in the "expressive microcosm," to use the booklet annotator's apt phrase. A YouTube video ([youtube.com/watch?v=Z8lTh58jhA8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8lTh58jhA8)) of the aged Kurtágs playing some of these works is very moving, but the present performers certainly are sensitive to what is going on here, and these are beautiful readings. It's worth mentioning that Kurtág's setting of *O Lamm Gottes unschuldig* uses doublings of the melody at octaves or fifths in order to mimic an organ's overtone stops. You will swear that another instrument is being played, but it's all piano!

For Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Monologues*, Norie Takahashi and Björn Lehmann leave each other's side for 18 minutes and sit at their own pianos. (They remain separated for the Brahms.) *Monologues* contains five sections, and most of them include fragments of music by Bach, Beethoven, Debussy, and Messiaen to create what the composer called "music about music." Zimmermann had the idea that time was not a line but a sphere, and that cosmic time and an individual's "inner time" were not necessarily in sync. He described this as "pluralistic chronological simultaneity," and expressed it musically through the insertion of quotations into his own works. Thus (we are asked to consider in the booklet note), his *Monologues* "embody the concept for this CD." Whether you buy that or not probably will determine how you feel about *Monologues*. Perhaps ironically, it seems a little dated to me, but I might need more time to grow into it. The present performers plunge into this work unreservedly.

The last piece on this CD is Brahms's famous Haydn Variations. The version for two pianos predated the orchestral version. Other than that, little needs to be said about the music itself, probably. As for the performance, I find it refined, hush-hush sensitive, and interpreted almost to the point of preciousness. It's as if Elisabeth Schwarzkopf cloned herself and both of them took up the piano. My impression of Brahms was that he was unaffected, and that's a quality I listen for in his music as well. Piano Duo Takahashi-Lehmann seems to have other ideas, and while I can respect them I do not share them. This is fussy, finicky Brahms.

I'll come back to this disc for the Bach/Reger and the Bach/Kurtág, and not so much for the Zimmermann and Brahms. There's no denying, however, that Norie Takahashi and Björn Lehmann are thoughtful and superbly capable musicians.

**American Record Guide February 2017 (James Harrington - 2017.02.01)**  
source: <http://www.americanrecordguide.com/subsc...>

This disc would be worth getting if all it contained were the wonderful performance of Brandenburg Concerto 5 in Reger's piano duet version. Add the other music in, and you have one of the best discs I've heard recently. Though the repertoire is Germanic, it is balanced stylistically and contains a couple of acknowledged masterpieces. Bjorn Lehmann and Norie Takahashi have impressive individual credentials and have been performing together since 2009.

One is not even aware of the tremendous difficulties required to keep all of Bach's counterpoint clear or the interweaving lines smooth and flowing. It is a performance that uses all of the tonal resources of a modern piano in the most musical ways. It was originally written for solo harpsichord, violin, flute, and string ensemble. Bach was showing off both his own keyboard skill and the new two-manual harpsichord he had just acquired. The first movement cadenza is one of those legendary parts that every keyboard player admires. Reger saw fit to divide it among 4 hands, with virtually no extra notes. The challenge so wonderfully met by Takahashi and Lehmann is to make it sound like only two hands.

Bernd Alois Zimmermann (1918–70) wrote his Monologs for 2 pianos in 1964, a significant reworking of his Dialogs for 2 pianos and large orchestra from 1960. I was impressed with this large five-movement work as performed by the Huber-Thomet Duo (Wergo 6809, May/June 2015). Here it is a little faster and performed as well. It will not be to everyone's liking, but it is a well-written and always interesting work.

The Bach Chorales and Brahms Variations are beautiful music, very well performed. The Brahms lacks a little of the excitement I like in the two Argerich recordings (Teldec, May/June 1995; EMI 58472). Excellent piano sound from Audite and comprehensive booklet notes complete this outstanding release.



## Originals and beyond

Ludwig van Beethoven

CD aud 97.706

**Bayerischer Rundfunk BR-Klassik / Leporello 21.11.2014 (Thorsten Preuß - 2014.11.21)**



Faszinierend, welch poetische Zwischentöne Norie Takahashi und Björn Lehmann Beethovens störrischer Fuge entlocken. Wie sie den Farbenreichtum und das breite dynamische Spektrum von Schumanns Orchestermusik aufs Klavier zaubern. Und vor allem: wie sie Arnold Schönbergs Kammer-symphonie mit virtuosem Feuer und tänzerischem Drive in eine spannende und mitreißende Geschichte verwandeln. [...] Eine Klavier-CD, die einfach Freude macht – und bei der man die orchestralen Originale keine Sekunde vermisst.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[www.pizzicato.lu](http://www.pizzicato.lu) 26/12/2014 (Remy Franck - 2014.12.26)



### Keine Imitationen

Wer seine Musik verkaufen will, der muss sie so einrichten, dass möglichst viele Menschen Freude daran haben können. Aus diesem Grund haben Komponisten viele ihrer großen Werke für kleinere Besetzung umgeschrieben, bevorzugt für das Klavier. Schönberg hat es mit seiner Kammer-symphonie gemacht, Beethoven mit der Großen Fuge und Schumann mit seiner 2. Symphonie – jeweils für Klavier zu vier Händen. Björn Lehmann und Norie Takahashi präsentieren uns demnach Originalwerke, die als Kompositionen für Klavier durchaus eigenständig sind, trotz der bekannteren Vorlage. Den beiden Interpreten gebührt also zunächst das Verdienst, dass sie programmatisch nichts Künstliches schaffen. Dies gilt auch für ihre musikalische Darbietung, die in keiner Phase den Versuch einer klanglichen Kopie der Ausgangspartitur darstellt. Im Gegenteil!

Das Duo Lehmann-Takahashi entflechtet das komplexe Gewebe der Schönberg-Symphonie, verleiht ihr dadurch eine packende Intensität und viel Spannung, gepaart mit wundervoll lyrischen Momenten. Gleiches gilt für die eigentlich starre Struktur von Beethovens Opus 134, das hier mit Leben gefüllt wird und dessen formale Ketten musikalisch gesprengt werden. Robert Schumanns 2. Symphonie könnte bei diesem Duo glatt als große Sonate durchgehen.

The Duo Lehmann Takahashi plays transcriptions of works by Schönberg, Beethoven and Schumann with much intensity and gives the music a new face and character.

concerti - Das Konzert- und Opernmagazin Januar 2015 (CV - 2015.01.01)



### Sanitäter in der Melodiennot

Das Klavierduo Norie Takahashi und Björn Lehmann hat ein spannend komponiertes Debüt-Album vorgelegt: [...] bei Schönberg nähern sich beide diesen heimatlosen Melodiefetzen wie Sanitäter, die permanent frische Luft zuführen.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Crescendo Magazine Le 3 janvier 2015 (Jean-Marie André - 2015.01.03)



### Originals and beyond ? Vrai ou faux ?

En conclusions, ce sont de nouvelles œuvres qui nous sont ainsi révélées ! Beaux moments de piano !

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Fono Forum Februar 2015 (Frank Siebert - 2015.02.01)



### Empfehlung des Monats

*Intensiv*

Das Klavierduo Takahashi / Lehmann überzeugt auf dieser CD nicht nur mit seinem Spiel, sondern überrascht mit einem sehr anspruchsvollen Programm, das Transkriptionen bietet, welche die Komponisten selbst von ihren Werken angefertigt haben. Das Duo verzichtet hier auf jegliche salonhafte Musik und meidet auch die ausgetrampelten Pfade, die man mit Schuberts f-Moll-Fantasie oder Brahms "Ungarischen Tänzen" so gern zu beschreiten pflegt. Es scheint fast, dass die Interpreten sich bewusst vom herkömmlichen Repertoire abgewendet haben, um dem Duo-Musizieren eine intellektuelle Strenge und musikalische Würde zu geben.

Die ausgewählten Werke jedenfalls sind zentrale Epochenmusik: Beethovens "Große Fuge" op. 134 ist nicht nur ein komplexes Opus aus des Komponisten Spätwerk, sondern beschwört den polyphonen Geist Bachs herauf, Schumanns zweite Sinfonie verweist in ihrer romantischen Hochblüte wiederum auf Beethoven, und Schönbergs Kammermusik op. 9 bezieht sich gleichermaßen auf die von Beethoven und Schumann geschaffenen Kompositionsprinzipien und öffnet den Weg in die Moderne.

Diese Dichte und gegenseitige Bezugnahme in der Programmauswahl korrespondiert eindringlich mit dem hervorragend aufeinander abgestimmten Spiel des 2009 gegründeten Duos. Norie Takahashi und Björn Lehmann, beide Schüler von Klaus Hellwig in Berlin, durchdringen die unterschiedlichen Sphären mit geistiger wie manueller Intensität, und es gelingt ihnen, den jeweiligen Werkcharakter von Beethovens Sprödigkeit über Schumanns Enthusiasmus bis Schönbergs experimenteller Wucht unter dem Mikroskop der Klavierfassungen klar hervortreten zu lassen.

[The Listener - Blog für klassische Musik und mehr](#)  
12. November 2014 (Rainer Aschemeier - 2014.11.12)



### Originals and Beyond – Klaviertranskriptionen von Beethoven, Schönberg und Schumann

*Musikarchitekten am Werk*

Norie Takahashi und Björn Lehmann bieten auf dieser CD rundum solide Darbietungen der Stücke. Sie überzeugen durch eine überragend gute Spieltechnik und durch eine ausgeklügelte Rhythmik, [...] die hier zu hörenden Stücke so atemberaubend transparent und glasklar klingen zu lassen. Als Vorteil oder Nachteil (ganz nach persönlichem Geschmack) lässt sich verbuchen, dass Takahashi und Lehmann einen sehr wiedererkennbaren Sound haben und dieser „Interpretenklang“ über den „Komponistenklang“ zu dominieren scheint.

Der Klavierklang der Aufnahme ist derweil schlichtweg optimal: [...] Ich kann mir kaum schöner klingende Klavieraufnahmen vorstellen. Der Sound der Aufnahme überzeugt mich total.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

WDR 3 TonArt 30.12.2014, 15.05 - 17.45 Uhr (Christoph Vratz - 2014.12.30)



Erneut zeigt sich das Duo Takahashi-Lehmann von seiner besseren, seiner agilen Seite. Mutige Akzente, beißende Harmonien und dennoch eine flüssige Dramaturgie – das zeichnet diese Schönberg-Interpretation aus.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Stereo März 2015 (Frank Siebert - 2015.03.01)



Norie Takahashi und Björn Lehmann [...] durchdringen die unterschiedlichen Sphären mit geistiger wie manueller Intensität, und es gelingt ihnen, den jeweiligen Werkcharakter von Beethovens Sprödigkeit über Schumanns Enthusiasmus bis Schönbergs experimenteller Wucht unter dem Mikroskop der Klavierfassungen klar hervortreten zu lassen.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

The Guardian 2015/feb/08 (Fiona Maddocks - 2015.02.08)



### Originals and Beyond CD review – revelatory original transcriptions for piano duo

The revelation is Beethoven's Grosse Fuge, intended as the final movement of his quartet Op 130. Percussive, dissonant, revolutionary and deftly played by this duo, it could have been written last week.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Piano News März / April 2015 (Marco Frei - 2015.04.01)



[...] die Fassungen für Klavierduo gewähren mehr noch unerhörte Einblicke in die Partituren. [...] das gleichermaßen vergeistigte wie empathische Spiel des Duos bringt die kühnste Abstraktion zum Glühen. Nichts klingt hier trocken und sperrig, sondern ist vom Feuer der Inspiration erfüllt [...] Ein starkes CD-Debüt, Fortsetzung erwünscht

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[Der neue Merker](#) 21. Juli 2015 (Dr. Ingobert Waltenberger - 2015.07.21)



Das Duo Takahashi/Lehmann liefert hier interpretatorisch seine stärkste Leistung und differenziert dynamisch höchstmöglich bei sehr direktem Anschlag. [...] Insgesamt sind beide CDs absolut empfehlenswert. Sie liefern neue Erkenntnisse zu scheinbar Altbekanntem, aber auch spannende musikhistorische Querbezüge.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Lippische Landeszeitung LLZ Online 22.05.2015 (Barbara Luetgebrune - 2015.05.22)



**Musik-Tipp: Jenseits des Originals**

Auf dem Album "Originals and Beyond" spielen Takahashi und Lehmann Beethovens Große Fuge B-Dur, Schumanns Sinfonie Nr. 2 und Schönbergs Kammer-sinfonie Nr. 1 - Werke, die ihre Schöpfer selbst für Klavier-Duo arrangiert haben. Ein höchst spannungsvolles Programm, das die Musiker in perfekter Balance aus Passion und intellektueller Durchleuchtung intonieren.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[The Herald Scotland](#) Saturday 10 January 2015 (Michael Tumelty - 2015.01.10)



**The honourable art of the piano transcription**

I've long since given up active missionary work on trying to persuade people to open their ears and give it a go; but I would certainly point to one new album being released on Monday, and which will be reviewed tomorrow in the Sunday Herald music section. It's on the German Audite label, features the Berlin-based Takahashi/Lehmann Piano Duo, and is a firecracker of a selection, by and large astoundingly played, with two real warhorse transcriptions in Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony and Beethoven's Great Fugue, and a magical duo performance of a piano duet transcription of Schumann's Second Symphony which I didn't know existed. It's a stunner. All three transcriptions were made by the composers themselves; and that's as authentic as it gets.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Two of the works on this album from the adventurous duet pianists Norie Takahashi and Björn Lehmann are intellectually daunting. Following Beethoven's three complexes of dense fugal writing in the *Grosse Fuge* is beyond me without some analysis and preferably a score; the same is true of Schoenberg's *Chamber Symphony No. 1*, where each of the 15 instruments is a soloist, with little or no overlap of parts. The labored program notes are a trial to read, but they make a sound point: Both the Beethoven and the Schoenberg contain very few passages, or even notes, inserted for harmonic reasons. Instead, every note is thematic, serving some structural purpose. As such, both scores are miracles of dense, precise organization (although Schoenberg took pains to say that he didn't work this out intellectually but via his subconscious).

With that in mind, is it helpful or a drawback to reduce these thorny works to the monotone of a single piano played by four hands? My own response is to split the difference. We lose the color of the original instruments—quite a major loss in the *Chamber Symphony*, where the disposition of notes among eight woodwinds, two horns, and five strings allows Schoenberg to provide signposts according to instrumental timbre. On the other hand, in the piano reduction he reduces a wealth of intersecting lines to fewer strands, rather like untangling a ball of yarn. In the Beethoven, a string quartet delivers a fairly homogenous sound, not so far removed from a keyboard, so the main loss comes from the piano's inability to do what strings can do. It can't draw a true legato, for example—not particularly a problem when the *Grosse Fuge* has such minimal legato writing once the short introduction is over. In both cases, the listener certainly appreciates the added clarity, and Takahashi and Lehmann excel in following each other and rendering a unified interpretation. The two performers met as music students in Berlin and continue to pursue busy solo careers.

The easy piece here is of course the Schumann *Second Symphony*, which one might expect to sound more pianistic because of the composer's fame as a keyboard writer. There's also the rather outworn complaint that Schumann wrote his symphonies for the piano in the first place, later dressing them up with clumsy orchestration, so a two-hand or four-hand reduction simply brings them back to home base. In actuality, his four-hand transcription seems totally straightforward and unexceptional to my ears. The scherzo and finale sound unusually well suited to the keyboard, though. Maybe the old complaint had its justification. The present reading is very musical and enjoyable. My only reservation is that Schumann's orchestration is necessary to separate out the cyclical motif that holds *Symphony No. 2* together, and from its first clarion statement in the brass, a piano is no substitute.

The title of this release is somewhat misleading: *Originals and Beyond: Original transcriptions for piano duo*. These aren't original transcriptions in the sense of newly made; all three works were arranged by their respective composers. Nor was there much of an original intent behind them. For rehearsal purposes and to disseminate new music before the age of the gramophone, it was normal practice to produce piano reductions for two hands, four hands, and two pianos. This use has been outmoded by recordings, albeit piano scores are still common for study and for singers' rehearsals in opera before the orchestra appears. Ultimately, the audience for this disc might be confined largely to listeners with an analytical approach to two difficult scores. The recorded sound, as heard through conventional two-channel stereo, is excellent. Slimline cardboard packaging; notes in German and English.



**Bayerischer Rundfunk BR-Klassik, CD-Tipp vom 21.11.2014 (- 2014.11.21)**



**BROADCAST**

*CD-TIPP*

Sendebeleg siehe PDF!

**Intoxicate #119 2015 December (- 2015.12.01)**



Japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

[www.ilcorrieremusica.it](http://www.ilcorrieremusica.it) 15 novembre 2015 (Stefano Cascioli - 2015.11.15)



Il nuovo Sacd dell'Audite contiene proposte tanto insolite quanto affascinanti. Tre grandi capolavori della letteratura austro-tedesca (la Kammer-symphonie nr. 1 op. 9 di Schönberg, la Grande Fuga di Beethoven e la Seconda sinfonia di Schumann), eseguiti nelle versioni inconsuete per pianoforte a quattro mani.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[ensuite Kulturmagazin](http://ensuite.kulturmagazin.de) Dezember 2016 (Francois Lilienfeld - 2016.12.01)



**Die «Zweite» Schumann: Klaviere oder Orchester?**

Ich zögere nicht, diese Aufnahme als eine der wichtigsten Neuerscheinungen der letzten Jahre zu bezeichnen.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*



## Transcriptions and beyond

Igor Stravinsky | Conlon Nancarrow | Arnulf Herrmann

CD aud 97.708

concerti - Das Konzert- und Opernmagazin Juli / August 2015 (EW - 2015.07.01)



### Inspirierter Strawinsky

Alles aus dieser komplexen Partitur klingt da differenziert: in den Phrasen gestisch fein ausgearbeitet, dramaturgisch mit Weitblick gestaltet, kraftvoll, mystisch, zärtlich, ekstatisch und mit Sinn für klingende Raumwirkung. Fantastisch! Ebenso inspiriert gestaltet sich auch der Rest dieses Albums, das zu den großen Ereignissen dieses Jahres zählt.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

Neue Musikzeitung 07/2015 (Juan Martin Koch - 2015.07.01)



### CD-Tipps 2015/07

Hervorragend programmiert und gespielt ist auch diese Klavierduo-CD, auf der Strawinskys „Concerto“ und die Klavierfassung des „Sacre“ zwei ausgezeichnete kürzere Werke umrahmen: eine Transkription von Nancarrow's mechanistisch-melancholischer „Sonatina“ und Arnulf Herrmanns die Duo-Konstellation intelligent reflektierende „Hausmusik“.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[Der neue Merker](#) 21. Juli 2015 (Dr. Ingobert Waltenberger - 2015.07.21)



Das Duo Takahashi/Lehmann liefert hier interpretatorisch seine stärkste Leistung und differenziert dynamisch höchstmöglich bei sehr direktem Anschlag. [...] Insgesamt sind beide CDs absolut empfehlenswert. Sie liefern neue Erkenntnisse zu scheinbar Altbekanntem, aber auch spannende musikhistorische Querbezüge.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Echte partners pionieren er op los**

Ook op Audite pionieren Norie Takahashi en Björn Lehmann er flink op los. Het pianoduo plaatst op het schijfje Transcriptions and beyond bewerkingen voor piano vierhandig in een origineel perspectief. In het Concerto per due pianoforti-soli van Stravinsky kruipen ze zonder blikken en blozen in de glansrol van de concertpianist, terwijl het koppel met de nodige bravoure en passant de taken van het orkest voor zijn rekening neemt. De Amerikaan Conlon Nancarrow (1912-1997) maakt het pianisten evenmin gemakkelijk. Maar voor de ritmische uitdagingen van diens Sonatina (bewerkt door Mikhashoff) draait het duo zijn handen niet om.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

[www.pizzicato.lu](http://www.pizzicato.lu) 15/08/2015 (Guy Engels / Alain Steffen - 2015.08.15)

**Perfektes Doppel in der Doppelkritik**

Rezension von Guy Engels:

Im Tennis gehören blindes Vertrauen und eine gemeinsame Spieltaktik zu den Grundvoraussetzungen für ein erfolgreiches Doppel. Ähnliche Qualitäten braucht auch ein Klavierduo. Björn Lehmann und Norie Takahashi sind ein perfekt aufeinander abgestimmtes Doppel. Nur aus diesem Grund rechtfertigt sich der zweite Teil des CD-Titels denn auch vollauf. Die beiden Pianisten spielen nicht nur Transkriptionen, sie gehen darüber hinaus. Etwa im Stravinsky-Konzert, wo sie mit klugen Rubati immer wieder für innere Spannung sorgen.

Die gemeinsame Lektüre zeigt sich vor allem in den vielen Jazz-Rhythmen. Hier extemporiert das Duo phasenweise quasi Improvisationen, die nur in höchstem Einvernehmen möglich sind.

Die Nancarrow-Sonatina gestalten die beiden quirlig-nachdenklich, während sie die in Arnulf Herrmanns 'Hausmusik' explizite Unschärfen im Schwebezustand lassen. Die Bearbeitung des 'Sacre du printemps' – das letzte Werk in dieser grundsätzlich hervorragenden Einspielung – hätten wir uns lediglich noch einen Tick ekstatischer, wilder, leidenschaftlicher vorstellen können.

Rezension von Alain Steffen:

Mit Igor Stravinskys 'Sacre du printemps' wird der Käufer gelockt. Die Fassung für vierhändiges Klavier ist momentan sehr beliebt und die Interpretation des Duos Takahashi/Lehmann gehört zweifelsohne zu den gelungenen Versionen dieses Stücks. Die Aha-Erlebnisse allerdings werden dem 'Sacre' vorangestellt. Selbst wenn Conlon Nancarrows 'Sonatine' und Arnulf Herrmanns 'Hausmusik' schöne Beispiele moderner resp. zeitgenössischer Musik für vierhändiges Klavier sind, so ist es aber Stravinskys 'Concerto per due pianoforti', das auf dieser CD am meisten fasziniert. Zum einen, weil man dieses Stück relativ selten hört, zum anderen, weil die Interpretation einfach hervorragend ist und die beiden Pianisten kein Orchester vermissen lassen. Sie trauen sich, dieses Werk als ein sehr modernes Stück zu spielen, komplex, anspruchsvoll und mitreißend. Überhaupt ist es die Ernsthaftigkeit der beiden Künstler Norie Takahashi und Björn Lehmann, ihre Liebe zum Detail und zur Struktur sowie ihr Mut, zum größten Teil unbekannte Werke zu veröffentlichen, die diese CD hörenswert macht. Empfehlenswert in allen Hinsichten!

You will not buy this CD for the Sacre du Printemps, but for Stravinsky's Concerto and Conlon Nancarrows Sonatine, two rarely played compositions which receive gorgeous interpretations from the Duo

Takahashi/Lehmann.

**Fono Forum September 2015 (Julia Spinola - 2015.09.01)**

**FONO FORUM**  
KLASSIK JAZZ HIPI

### Süße ohne Süßlichkeit

*Spannende Entdeckungen lassen sich auf dem CD-Markt viele machen. Aber welche Produktionen lohnen sich und welche nicht? Julia Spinola hat sich einen genauen Überblick verschafft.*

"Originals And Beyond" hieß die erste CD des 2009 gegründeten Klavierduos Takahashi | Lehmann mit originalen Klavierbearbeitungen von Schumann, Beethoven und Schönberg. Wenn die Musiker nun mit "Transcriptions And Beyond" diesen Weg mit weiteren Originalwerken und mit Bearbeitungen aus dem 20. und 21. Jahrhundert fortsetzen, so ist das jedoch mehr als nur ein Anknüpfen an das Erfolgsrezept der umjubelten Debüt-CD. Im mitreißend virtuos, zugleich von höchstem Formbewusstsein zeugenden Spiel dieser beiden rasanten Pianisten kommt die Klavierfassung von Strawinskys "Le Sacre du Printemps" als Komposition eigenen Rechts zur Geltung – ja, beinahe zieht man diesen komprimierten, tiefenscharfen Blick auf die kompositorische Essenz von Strawinskys Skandalwerk der im Vergleich fast harmlos wirkenden Orchesterfassung vor. An Farbigkeit, Raumwirkung und rhythmisch-klanglicher Wucht jedenfalls steht diese ursprünglich aus rein pragmatischen Gründen erstellte Fassung für Klavier zu vier Händen dem Original in nichts nach. Conlon Nancarrow, der sich für die kompositorischen Möglichkeiten der mechanischen Klaviere begeisterte, schrieb "Musik für tausend Finger", wie György Ligeti es bewundernd formulierte. Auch seine Sonatine von 1941 komponierte Nancarrow später für mechanisches Klavier um. Takahashi und Lehmann spielen nun eine Rückverwandlung für zwei Klaviere von Yvar Mikashoff, die Nancarrow ausdrücklich schätzte. Schwindelerregend virtuos bewegt sich diese Musik in ähnlich surreal-utopischen Sphären, wie Ligeti sie später in seinen Klavieretüden entwarf. Und auch Arnulf Herrmanns "Hausmusik" bittet Ligeti als Gast hinein. Elektrisierend.

**DeutschlandRadio Kultur - Radiofeuilleton TonArt 30.07.2015 (Haino Rindler - 2015.07.30)**

Deutschlandradio  
Kultur

### Vier Hände faszinieren

Die japanische Pianistin Norie Takahashi und der deutsche Pianist Björn Lehmann haben sich auf vierhändige Klavierstücke spezialisiert. Doch sie sind auch privat ein Paar: Die Musik von Franz Schubert hat sie zusammengebracht.

Das in Berlin lebende japanisch-deutsche Klavierduo Takahashi | Lehmann hat sich auf die Interpretation von Bearbeitungen für Klavier zu vier Händen spezialisiert. Sie hätten sich an der Berliner Universität der Künste kennengelernt und die gleiche Klavierklasse besucht, erzählt Norie Takahashi im Deutschlandradio Kultur. Schubert habe sie zueinander gebracht, "da gibt es ein reizendes Repertoire fürs vierhändige Klavier".

Mit der Zeit hätten sie vor allem Originalbearbeitungen aus dem 19. Jahrhundert für sich entdeckt. "Diese Erarbeitungen erlauben oft einen anderen Blick auf die Musik", sagt Björn Lehmann. "Ein Original ist wie ein Ölgemälde, sehr farbig, auch in den äußeren Dimensionen eher für größere Räume gedacht. Eine vierhändige Bearbeitung ist eher wie eine Zeichnung: Es ist weniger koloriert, aber feiner. Man sieht einige Dinge mehr."

Das Klavierduo hat zwei CDs veröffentlicht, wobei die erste CD von 2014 "Originals And Beyond" Originalkomposition enthält, die andere CD "Transkriptionen And Beyond" Transkriptionen von fremder

Hand.

**Stereo 10/2015 Oktober (Julia Spinola - 2015.10.01)**

**STEREO**

Im mitreißend virtuos, zugleich von höchstem Formbewusstsein zeugenden Spiel dieser beiden rasanten Pianisten kommt die Klavierfassung von Strawinskys "Le Sacre du Printemps" als Komposition eigenen Rechts zur Geltung [...] Schwindelerregend virtuos bewegt sich diese Musik [...] Elektrisierend.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Yomiuri Shimbun 16.07.2015 (Numano - 2015.07.16)**



[...] diese beiden Pianisten bewältigen von Nancarrow bis zum "Sacre" mühelos sämtliche Probleme, denen Duos gewöhnlich begegnen.

Diese CD bietet sich nicht an, es ist aber eine außergewöhnlich begeisternde Platte.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Record Geijutsu August 2015 (Tsutomu Nasuda / Jiro Hamada - 2015.08.01)**



Tsutomu Nasuda:

[...] Gleich ab dem "Concerto" von Stravinsky zeigt das Duo ein fantastisches Zusammenspiel. Messerscharfe Rhythmik, artikuliertes Passagenwerk. Die Kompositionen von Nancarrow und Herrmann haben ebenso spannende Klänge. Man kann scharf geschliffene Anschläge und sehr sensiblen Sinn für Klänge hören, und es sind ohne Zweifel sehr durchdachte Interpretationen.

Nach zwei Werken der Moderne kommt dann der "Sacre", der einen ganz besonders frischen Eindruck hinterlässt. Es gibt da wunderbar farbige Klänge voller Imaginationskraft!

Jiro Hamada:

[...] Ihre außergewöhnliche Technik, ihr sehr intensiver und lebendiger Anschlag passen wunderbar zur Musik von Stravinsky und den zeitgenössischen Werken.

Überflüssig zu erwähnen, dass Ihr Zusammenspiel perfekt ist.

Die Klavierversion vom "Sacre" hat eine ganz eigene Attraktivität gegenüber der Orchesterversion, was von einigen hervorragenden Aufnahmen bewiesen wird. Diese Aufführung hat nun Qualitäten, die sie vorangegangenen Aufnahmen absolut ebenbürtig macht.

[...] ich bin sicher, man kann noch viele zukünftige Erfolge von diesem Klavierduo erwarten.

**www.classicalcdreview.com July 2015 (R.E.B. - 2015.07.01)**

**CLASSICAL CD REVIEW**  
a site for the serious record collector

This performance is excellent indeed, if not quite up to the standard of the recent DVD concert performance by Martha Argerich and Daniel Barenboim. [...] Audio is superb, with complete CD notes.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Kulimu 41. Jg. 2015 Heft 1/2 (uwa - 2015.10.01)**

**KULIMU**  
Kunst & Literatur & Musik

Ihr Spiel ist kraftvoll und zugleich differenziert wie ekstatisch. [...] Alles ist mitreißend gestaltet. Mit ihrem hoch virtuos und suggestivem Spiel [...] Jedes Detail dieser Sätze leuchtet das Klavierduo kompromisslos und mit durchhörbarer Klangschärfung aus. Die Vermittlung der Entschlossenheit des Gestaltens und die klangliche Ausgewogenheit im Duospiel machen diese Einspielung zu einem Muss für jede Phonotheke.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**Piano News 5/2015 (Grünefeld - 2015.05.01)**

**Piano** www.pianonews.de  
MAGAZIN FÜR KLAVIER UND PIANO NEWS

Weicher Anschlag für den lyrischen Beginn und abgedämpfte perkussive Wirkungen laden sich allmählich zur Wucht des paganen Rituals auf, das somit klangvisuelle Qualitäten erreicht. [...] Solche Rollenmuster hat auch die Sonatine von Conlon Nancarrow, und zwar in herber Tonalität und extrem verwinkelter Stimmführung, die Takahashi/Lehmann brillant balancieren.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*

**American Record Guide March / April 2016 (Harrington - 2016.03.01)**

**American  
Record Guide**

Stravinsky composed his great orchestral work, *Le Sacre du Printemps*, originally for piano 4-hands, before its orchestration and scandalous public premiere in May of 1913. The piano version was first performed in private by the composer and Debussy in June of 1912, then published in 1913. The piano version is far more than a ballet rehearsal score. It makes full use of all the sounds two pianists can bring forth. Many who prefer the orchestral version would agree that it also sounds appropriate on the piano. Different aspects of the music become clearer when it is limited to the black and white palette of the piano. It is by far the most often performed work for two pianists that I have reviewed over the past few years.

The piano arrangements of *Le Sacre* and *Petrouchka* were designated by the composer for piano 4-hands, but published as 4-hands at one or two pianos. Practically speaking, all of the notes written cannot be played by two people at one piano, and a number of duo piano teams choose to use two pianos. Using just one requires intricate choreography, especially between the lower player's right hand and the upper player's left. They are often right on top of each other. I find that many recordings are not perfectly clear about whether one or two pianos were used. Stravinsky regularly employs five music staves for all of the notes, and you can find plenty of examples where three are all playing in the same octave—talk about a traffic jam.

Two excellent pianists, with a love of this music and sufficient rehearsal time are capable of giving a good performance if they simply follow the printed score. Stravinsky may have put more there than it's possible to play. No deep interpretive choices are required, so the variety of recordings available can be tough to sort through. I tend to prefer ones that generate visceral excitement contrasting with the mysterious sonorities. The Rite of Spring should never be background music. The other works included on a given disc could make your choice easy or even more difficult.

Duo Silver-Garburg make the logical choice of two ballets arranged by the composer for piano 4-hands. Petrouchka for full orchestra has a piano part large enough to get the pianist billed almost as if it were a concerto. It is not a coincidence that the most often performed solo piano work at the last Van Cliburn competition was Stravinsky's highly virtuosic *Trois Movements de Petrouchka*. The composer's arrangement of the full ballet for 4-hands works very well and makes a great companion to *Le Sacre*. The performances here show an upper part played noticeably louder than the lower in many instances. There is also a difference of attack and sustain between the pianists, even when they are playing the same musical gesture. The upper chords marked staccato or sharply accented are often so abbreviated that there is not enough duration to hear and absorb the harmonies. I would also like more volume and attack in the lower part, especially the bass drum thumps. Those criticisms aside, Duo Silver-Garburg (a husband-wife team) have as perfect an ensemble as I've ever heard. Nuances in tempo are always dead-on together and there is nary a smudged note.

Duo Koroliov (another husband-wife team) surrounds its in-concert recording of *Rite of Spring* with two sets of *Easy Pieces* for piano 3 and 4-hands, two solo piano pieces ('Tango' and 'Piano-Rag-Music') and a curiosity that has never come my way before, three pieces for string quartet arranged for piano 4-hands by the composer. The sound is noticeably different between the concert and studio recordings; the studio is brighter and more to my liking for this music. The two sets of easy pieces are played with disarming verve and panache—far more than would normally be expected in little trifles like this. They come off as legitimate, fully worked out short ideas that remind one of *Petrouchka* or other more significant works. The two solo works are played by Koroliov with great style, and the odd string quartet arrangements are certainly worth a few hearings. The *Rite of Spring* has more gusto and better balance than Silver-Garburg, but suffers from being a little too careful (slower) sometimes.

Duo Takahashi-Lehmann (no indication of a husband-wife team, but they have been performing together since 2009) are the best of the current lot. Audite's sound and excellent booklet notes complement a stunning performance by this young duo. The amount of excitement they build at the climactic points in *The Rite of Spring* can leave you breathless. I also found a fascinating video clip on line of the two interviewed and playing excerpts (at one piano). The *Concerto for 2 Pianos* is a large four-movement work not heard often enough and rarely in as strong a performance as here. Conlon Nancarrow wrote his *Sonatina* for player piano, but it was arranged for piano 4 hands by Yvar Mikhashoff—explicitly approved by the composer. Arnulf Herrmann wrote his three-movement *Hausmusik* in deference to the styles and traditions of playing piano duets at home back in the 19th Century, but in a decidedly modern harmonic language. For variety, performance, sound, booklet, and uncovering new works, my choice this time around is Duo Takahashi-Lehmann.

Intoxicate #119 2015 December ( - 2015.12.01)



Japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

Yomiuri Shimbun 12.01.2016 ( - 2016.01.12)



Japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

??? 7/16 ( - 2016.07.01)

Japanische Rezension siehe PDF!

Neue Zeitschrift für Musik 2015/05 (Lutz Lesle - 1999.11.30)

source: <https://musikderzeit.de/artikel/transcri...>



Im Hin und Her schneller Figurationen und rhythmisch-melodischer Momente vollziehen die Partner häufige Rollenwechsel, finden aber auch dialogisch zueinander.

*Full review text restrained for copyright reasons.*



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