



audite

Andrea Lucchesini piano

Scarlatti·Berio | Schubert·Widmann



Scarlatti • Berio

- ① **Scarlatti:** Sonata in D major, K. 491 5:33
- ② **Berio:** 6 encores for piano, No. 1 Brin 1:52
- ③ **Berio:** 6 encores for piano, No. 2 Leaf 1:25
- ④ **Scarlatti:** Sonata in G major, K. 454 4:57
- ⑤ **Berio:** 6 encores for piano, No. 4 Erdenklavier 1:20
- ⑥ **Scarlatti:** Sonata in F minor, K. 239 3:10
- ⑦ **Berio:** 6 encores for piano, No. 3 Wasserklavier 1:57
- ⑧ **Scarlatti:** Sonata in F minor, K. 466 5:35
- ⑨ **Berio:** 6 encores for piano, No. 5 Luftklavier 3:21
- ⑩ **Scarlatti:** Sonata in A major, K. 342 2:07
- ⑪ **Berio:** 6 encores for piano, No. 6 Feuerklavier 2:58
- ⑫ **Scarlatti:** Sonata in G major, K. 146 3:05

Schubert • Widmann

- ⑬ **Schubert:** Moments Musicaux (I. Moderato) 5:39
- ⑭ **Widmann:** Idyll and Abyss (I. unreal, from afar) 1:57
- ⑮ **Schubert:** Moments Musicaux (II. Andantino) 6:40
- ⑯ **Widmann:** Idyll and Abyss (II. Allegretto, un poco agitato) 3:55
- ⑰ **Schubert:** Moments Musicaux (III. Air russe) 1:58
- ⑱ **Widmann:** Idyll and Abyss (III. like a music box) 1:19
- ⑲ **Widmann:** Idyll and Abyss (IV. Scherzando) 1:51
- ⑳ **Schubert:** Moments Musicaux (IV. Moderato) 5:42
- ㉑ **Widmann:** Idyll and Abyss (V.) 1:23
- ㉒ **Schubert:** Moments Musicaux (V. Allegro vivace) 2:07
- ㉓ **Widmann:** Idyll and Abyss (VI. sad, desolate) 2:43
- ㉔ **Schubert:** Moments Musicaux (VI. Plaintes d'un Troubadour) 6:36

Schubert | Widmann

“In the face of Schubert’s music, tears fall from the eye without first asking leave of the soul; so unpictorial and real is it as it enters into us” – in these words, written in 1928, Adorno summarized in a nutshell an essential characteristic of Schubert’s music. In my homages to Schubert *Lied für Orchester* (2003, rev. 2009), the Octet (2004), and the six piano pieces *Idyll und Abgrund* (2009), I seek to explore, in my own way, this ever-imperiled flight between heaven and hell, paradise and the darkest moments of fear, between idyll and abyss.

What is Schubert’s “style”? Naturally there are certain idioms, certain things that recur in his works. What particularly impressed me were the famed “heavenly lengths,” the “singing before the abyss,” as I’d like to call it, the catastrophic that can be inherent in the moments when the music shifts to major. For example, one of Schubert’s final songs, “Der Hirt auf dem Felsen,” D. 965 for voice, clarinet, and piano, begins with the words, “When, from the highest rock up here, down to the valley deep I peer, and sing and sing.” Here we already seem to find the principal topoi of Schubert’s oeuvre: walking in nature, singing – and like in the dop-pelgänger from *Winterreise*, the painful gulf between song and echo, reality and chimera, idyll and abyss.

My compositions contain the most varied references to works from the past. But at the same time these are always reference points that compel me to set boundaries, also so I can express myself in my own language even more. The attention I have devoted to Schubert also led me, for example, to reflect on the parameter of melody to a greater extent than before – a parameter that is woefully neglected in contemporary music. I learned a great deal about myself and my musical language in the process. And, in *Idyll und Abgrund*, refined the way I write for piano.

I am delighted that Andrea Lucchesini has combined *Idyll und Abgrund* with Schubert’s *Moments musicaux* on this recording. Juxtapositions like these can kindle exciting new discoveries.

Jörg Widmann, May 2018
Translation: Aaron Epstein

An open dialogue
by Andrea Lucchesini

The friendship that I shared with Luciano Berio from the early 90s is one of the most significant experiences of my life: our generational differences melted away thanks to Berio's surprising openness. His generous and impassioned personality often burned brighter when he came face to face with unexplored territory, and he involved me in many projects that remain, still today, among my fondest memories.

Luciano Berio's interest in a free flow of imagination between distant worlds – in which dance, improvisation, folk inspiration and exploration of timbric possibilities of the piano keyboard coexist – was also sparked by this project, which marks the most recent of the many gifts I received from him.

It is a program that we studied together during the last days of the illness that led to his death. Berio was very curious to listen to this sequence (the pieces follow one another without interruption) that intersects his *Six Encores* with six Scarlatti Sonatas.

This back-and-forth exchange is inspired by certain creative peculiarities of both composers, in their use of the keyboard and in their quest for particular sounds. In the end the various pieces are seen through a new perspective, brightened by a different light.

It is, all at once, a dialogue and a contrast: a listening experience in which the effects of alternation between Scarlatti and Berio's pianistic microcosms give rise to unpredictable results. On the one hand, therefore, we find Scarlatti's single-movement sonatas, where, in addition to rhythmic and melodic freedom, different keyboard techniques which are absolutely revolutionary for the period are added – a result of the merger of the Italian school and the Iberian tradition.

Within the virtually stable and rigid pre-established framework of the monothematic binary sonata, Scarlatti takes on the challenge of a boundless wealth of inventions, imaginatively illuminating an infinite number of colours on the keyboard.

On the other hand, in *Six Encores* all the distinctive characteristics of Berio's writing for piano are condensed in the transience of fine miniatures, which are considerably difficult to play and perform.

The alternating order highlights some notable elements such as the thematic cell of the three repeated sounds that open the *Sonata in D major K. 491* and which appear again at various pitches in the course of *Brin*. Another example is found in the staccato jazz effects of *Leaf* which meet up with the brilliant writing of the *Sonata in G major K. 454*. This, in turn, is connected to the following piece, *Erdenklavier*, by the sudden alternation of soft and loud dynamics, which in Berio results in evoking a true-to-life sound of livestock bells, imagined as a flock makes its way through the sunny Sardinian countryside.

At the center of this journey we find *Wasserklavier*, the only tonal piece of the collection, which I wished to frame between two sonatas of a different nature but both in the key of F minor (*K. 239* and *K. 466*). In *Luftklavier* the virtuosity of a pianissimo perpetual

motion is fueled by shifting resonances, paving the way for the whirling velocity of the *Sonata in A major K. 342*. This, in turn, is linked to the resonant texture of *Feuerklavier*, which begins with quick quadruplets then blossoms into thematic suggestions gathered into resonant clusters. All of this is softened by the elegant agility of the final *Sonata in G major K. 146*.

Performing these concerts is gratifying to me due to the rapt attention of the audience. During this listening experience, unprecedented fascination often traces unexpected and very personal paths, generating unpredictable emotions – it is a result that I am certain Luciano Berio had foreseen when we first conceived the idea of this special musical journey together.

For many years Schubert's music has filled me with great joy. When I discovered that Jörg Widmann – an artist with whom I have had the pleasure of performing and whose other work I have followed with great interest – had decided to dedicate a contemporary tribute to his work I was thrilled. I thought it was interesting to propose the contrast between an intellectual approach to the music of the past with one's own existing compositions – the method suggested by Luciano Berio – and the result of an emotional attachment to Schubert's miniatures, with which Widmann weaves an affectionate and up-close dialogue with unusual results.

“On hearing Schubert's music, tears pour out of the eyes without ever having moved the soul, so literally and real does his music enter us.” Adorno's statement from 1928 captures the essential phenomenon of Schubert's music in a nutshell. In my compositions in homage to Schubert, my objective is to capture this constantly precarious flight between heaven and hell, paradise and the very depths of anxiety and between idyll and abyss in my own personal fashion.” (Jörg Widmann)

The coherence of the invention and the perfect completeness of Schubert's compositional expression give each of the *Musical Moments* a special expressive feature: the six sketches belong to the most advanced stage of his creative parable and show us a pianistic style stripped of preoccupations with instrumental virtuosity. The focus shifts towards the exploration of expressive intimacy, and the apparent simplicity of the ternary form lends itself to an enigmatic volley of references, while musical ideas follow one another with the utmost evocative freedom.

The *Six Schubert Reminiscences* that make up *Idyll and Abyss* by Jörg Widmann incorporate Schubert's stylistic elements in a modern and estranged language, seen as through a distorting mirror that reflects and accentuates their brilliance. Delicate dance moves, chord clusters and high-pitched melodies with blinding splendour are at times superimposed one upon the other, accentuating the tension between a lost harmony and the harsh landscape of the present: the stretching of these forms creates an unpredictable instability that nonetheless maintains vital momentum, an affectionate tribute to the past, free of restraints.

The alternating and uninterrupted flow of the *Musical Moments* and *Idyll and Abyss* intends to render the dialogue impromptu and direct, renouncing every form of mediation. The result is a sort of notebook, which opens with the *Moderato* in C major, a question

suspended on a dry melodic line with a wavering pace, on which Widmann's first piece is placed with the same mysterious stride – the indication in the score is *Irreal, von fern*. The bass is nearly a dull sound in *ppp* (the abyss), while the melody suggests, without ever affirming it, a lyric backlit design. In the upper register resonant clusters of dissonant chords (*poco f*) contrast with the grave line of the lower voices.

The second Musical Moment, *Andantino*, takes its basis from a suspended pattern of chords that progress together toward a luminous aperture, followed by a nostalgic melody in F sharp minor which, with small harmonic differences, is resumed with dramatic vehemence only to fold once again and disappear, accompanied by an insistent double stroke. *Idyll and Abyss II* shows strong dynamic contrasts, in a Schubert-style melody paired with a detached accompaniment, leading to the *Poco meno mosso (quasi Glockenspiel)*. The indications *ritenuto* and *diminuendo* lead to a harmonic and timbric loss, but in the end consonance is rediscovered and makes the line blossom once again, finally purified of its initial gloom. The main theme returns and is revisited in different ways, without ever abandoning the use of dissonant “disturbances”.

Schubert once again, with the *Air russe* that contrasts with the previous piece for its smooth simplicity, oscillating between major and minor, like a gentle march. Widmann's third piece is a miniature in “music-box” style that, as it winds down, progressively slows, separating the sounds in a fragmentary and uncertain flow. Without interruption, the *IV (Scherzando)* comes back to life with great brilliance of virtuosic improvisations and a Viennese flair. The whistle imitates a questioning figuration in the right hand and the mood fluctuates, from playful to lyric, from happy to melancholic, in a continuous flow of energy.

Schubert's *Moderato* in C sharp minor is a perpetual-motion tribute to the form of the Bach prelude, but the uniformity of the fourths ceases abruptly and, after a long silence, becomes a lulling and wavering song. It then returns to its initial structure up unto the *coda*, where the two elements are flanked for the farewell. The calm invoked by this piece is interrupted by Widmann's fifth piece, where the dynamic contrasts, from *pp* to *fff*, pave the road to the *Allegro vivace*: a rallying episode which is rapid, percussive and insistent. Next is *VI Taurig, desolat (Sad, desolate)* which with a transfigured fragment of the beginning of the *Sonata D. 960* is drawn to an exasperating close.

We have reached the epilogue of the *Musical Moments* and of our journey: a timeless meditation, in which moods are quieted by the sweetness of memories.

Andrea Lucchesini

Translation: Hollie Grey



Andrea Lucchesini

Trained under the guidance of Maria Tipo, Andrea Lucchesini gained international recognition at a very young age when he won the *Dino Ciani International Competition* at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan. Since then he has performed throughout the world with leading orchestras under conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Semyon Bychkov, Riccardo Chailly, Dennis Russell Davies, Charles Dutoit, Daniel Harding, Vladimir Jurowski and Giuseppe Sinopoli.

In 1994 Andrea Lucchesini was awarded the prestigious *Accademia Musicale Chigiana International Prize* by European music critics, followed by the *F. Abbiati Prize* from Italian music critics in 1995.

Numerous recordings document his artistic career, among them Luciano Berio's concerto *Echoing Curves*, conducted by the composer himself. This marked the beginning of his close relationship with Berio, with whom Lucchesini witnessed the creation of the composer's final and challenging work for solo piano, *Sonata*. He performed the world premiere of this piece in 2001 and recorded it together with all other piano works of Berio. In recent years, Lucchesini has enthusiastically immersed himself in the Schubertian repertoire, e.g. with the recording of the *Impromptus*.

Since 1990 he has dedicated his attention also to chamber music exploring various formations and varied repertoire, including his close collaboration with cellist Mario Brunello and the *Quartetto di Cremona*.

In addition, Andrea Lucchesini is passionately dedicated to teaching. He currently teaches at the *Scuola di Musica di Fiesole* where he was also artistic director from 2008 until 2016. He is frequently invited to give master classes at major music institutions throughout Europe and in New York.

He serves as a jury member at numerous international piano competitions and was appointed *Accademico di Santa Cecilia* in 2008.

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trailer on **You Tube**

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available at audite.de

recording:

October 1 - 3, 2017

recording location:

Istituto Boccherini, Lucca

instrument:

Steinway D

piano tuner:

Claudio Bussotti

recording format:

pcm, 96 kHz / 24bit

recording producer:

Dipl.-Tonmeister Ludger Böckenhoff

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