

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved top and white pants, is sitting on the edge of a white boat. She is holding a string attached to a large white balloon. Behind her, a man with short blonde hair, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved top and white pants, is standing. The boat is on a body of water, and the background is a blurred crowd of people. Several large balloons, some white and some black, are floating in the air. The overall scene is bathed in a soft, blue light.

audite

# déjà-rêvé

Dialogues across time

**Klavierduo Neeb**

Christian Benning | Patrick Stapleton percussion

**CLAUDE DEBUSSY** (1862-1918)

Johannes X. Schachtner (Arr.)

**Jeux – Poème dansé** 17:50

**WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART** (1756-1791)

Klavierduo Neeb (Arr.)

**Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major, K. 467**

I. Allegro 14:23

**JOHANNES X. SCHACHTNER** (\*1985)

**Bach.Choral.Exerzitien**

- I. Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme (BWV 645) 5:30
- II. Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier (BWV 706 / 730 / 731) 4:27
- III. Herzlich tut mich verlangen (BWV 727) 1:17
- IV. Vater unser im Himmelreich (BWV 636) 2:08
- V. Lobt Gott, ihr Christen allzugleich (BWV 732) 1:27
- VI. Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten (BWV 691) 3:06
- VII. Vater unser im Himmelreich (BWV 682) –  
Hommage à György Kurtág 6:49

**BERND ALOIS ZIMMERMANN** (1918-1970)

**Monologues for Two Pianos**

- I. – 1:40
- II. – 2:57
- III. – 2:58
- IV. – 2:06
- V. – 8:20

### “Dialogues across time”

“**Monologues** – this is a piece for two pianists: real monologues by these pianists, who play simultaneously [...] but not always at the same ‘time’, who in a sense [...] dwell on their ‘own thoughts’.”

With these words **Bernd Alois Zimmermann** explained the title of his largest-scale and greatest work for two pianos. In 1964, the German composer – at the time highly successful and the recipient of many awards – decided to rework his concerto *Dialogues* for two pianos and orchestra (1960) into a work for two pianos without orchestra. In doing so, he did not limit himself to integrating the orchestral score into the piano parts, but revised the work’s entire construction: the sequence of musical sections was reversed, some passages were omitted and others inserted, and the movement’s structure presents new features in its compositional technique. *Dialogues* was already characterized by collages in which a wide variety of musical material is ingeniously layered next to and on top of each other; Zimmermann viewed this as a superimposing of different “layers of time” (“simultaneously, but not always at the same ‘time’”), and carried this principle further in the *Monologues*. Occasionally and independently of one another, the two pianists quote works from the history of music, from Bach to Messiaen, in this way giving rise to “dialogues across time.” In the last section at the latest, when the Gregorian Pentecostal hymn *Veni creator spiritus* is heard in parallel with quotations from Debussy and Mozart, we gain clues about Zimmermann’s motive in quoting this particular selection of works: to evoke the creative power of the human spirit and the almost transcendental perfection of its testimonials, of which the works of Bach, Mozart, and Debussy are shining examples.

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**’s music has become a symbol of the works of genius that can only be brought forth by the spirit in an uninhibited state of playful creativity. A splendid example is the **Piano Concerto in C major (K. 467)** – the luminous counterpart to the D-minor Concerto written at the same time – which initially presents a remarkable variety of thematic material before developing it with boundless creative joy. With the interaction of a wide range of musical characters, a dramaturgical dialogue unfolds that goes far beyond the traditional interplay of piano and orchestra. This serves as the basis for our two-piano arrangement of the rich and varied opening movement, whose character is aligned with Mozart’s own compositions for this instrumental combination. In the *Monologues*, Zimmermann harks back to Mozart’s playful spirit by taking up thematic threads from this movement and bringing them into dialogue with each other as well as with quotations from Debussy’s *Jeux*.

**Claude Debussy**’s final orchestral work **Jeux** (“Games”), conceived as ballet music (“poème dansé”), evokes a surreal dream world in which the “impossible” – the unconstrained and happy love affair of three people at the same time – becomes possible. The music is highly complex, seems playfully light, and yet creates an atmosphere of enigmatic profundity. During Debussy’s lifetime, the work received little attention; in the 1950s, it was discovered by avant-garde composers such as Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen, and – largely due to its unconventional formal structure – was celebrated as a pivotal work of modernism. Influenced by these latter composers, Zimmermann had at the same time begun to integrate serial compositional techniques (i.e. strict serial techniques which can be interpreted as extensions

of twelve-tone technique) into his work. Soon these were omnipresent in his compositions, but he found his own ways of incorporating this principle, itself so uncompromisingly rational, into his music:

*“It soon became apparent that the idea of the serial, once conceived, led to extensions which then, very quickly, thrust one out of the serial [...]. This cleared the way for what had hitherto seemed impossible to capture (at least using the methods of the serial), namely the spontaneous, associative, dreamlike, even trance-like.”*

In *Jeux*, Debussy had succeeded in advancing into the world of dreams and emotions in a completely different way, so it is not surprising that Zimmermann probably felt a special affinity for this work. His own results in exploring dream worlds can be strikingly experienced in the *Monologues*: quotations are cleverly interspersed, superimposed, and intertwined with Zimmermann’s “own” music – instead of an ordinary sequence of quotations, this creates a fascinating “*déjà-rêvé*” effect (a false memory in which the impression arises that what is being experienced in the present has already been dreamed).

With his **Chorale Preludes, Johann Sebastian Bach** created a compendium of organ pieces, based on chorale melodies and the musical-theological interpretation of the associated texts, which present a unique range of different styles and sophisticated contrapuntal constructions. In the *Monologues*, Zimmermann quotes two of these pieces simultaneously with one each of the movements from Olivier Messiaen’s early orchestral / organ work *L’Ascension. Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* (“Awake, calls the voice to us”, BWV 645) is combined with *Alléluias sereins d’une âme qui désire le ciel* (“Serene alleluia of a soul that longs for heaven”), and *Vater unser im Himmelreich* (“Our Father in heaven”, BWV 682) with *Prière du Christ montant vers son Père* (“Prayer from Christ ascending towards his Father”). Zimmermann, himself a man of deep faith, certainly chose these combinations in view of the analogies in the theological backgrounds of the individual movements.

In the piece **Bach.Choral.Exerzitien**, which we premiered ourselves in November 2022, **Johannes X. Schachtner** also draws on Bach’s Chorale Preludes. The work “dazzlingly occupies a space between arrangement and re-composition,” thus drawing an analogy with the stylistic range of Bach’s organ pieces.

*“For each of the original organ works, I have chosen a specific arrangement technique. Thus, through omissions on the one hand and dynamic layering on the other, ‘Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme’ becomes an aubade which develops from the ‘Rhinegold’-like primordial sound (also in E-flat major) into the fanfare-like motif of the chorale’s final line. The chorale ‘Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier’, often set by Bach, is collaged with its various harmonizations and ornamentations before, in my version of the chorale ‘Herzlich tut mich verlangen’ (whose melody is also known as ‘O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden’), Bach’s original disappears almost beyond recognition. In the following, first ‘Vater unser im Himmelreich’, the vertical is dissolved into racing, intertwining chains of sixteenth notes. A Baroque-like aura (with Baroque timpani and harpsichord-like prepared piano) is evoked in the arrangement of ‘Lobt Gott, ihr Christen allzugleich’, while ‘Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten’ harks back to Bach’s original in a very personal manner. The large-scale arrangement of the chorale ‘Vater unser im Himmelreich’ is conceived as a tribute to György Kurtág, with supplementary aliquots in the piano figurations.”* (Johannes X. Schachtner)



## NEEB PIANO DUO

Siblings Sophie (\*2000) and Vincent (\*1998) Neeb discovered the uniquely in-depth musical experience of playing together as a piano duo in their early youth. On the path of their artistic development, they have won many awards: among other honours, they won the competition at the International Piano Duo Festival Bad Herrenalb in 2013 as well as the WDR Klassikpreis of the city of Münster and the first prize of the Southwest German Chamber Music Competition in Bad Dürkheim in 2015. In 2017 they received the Primo Premio Assoluto in addition to numerous special prizes at the Concorso Pianistico Internazionale Roma for piano four hands. The following year they were named fellowship holders of the Hans and Eugenia Jütting Foundation; in addition, they are fellowship holders of the Yehudi Menuhin Live Music Now association.

At the 2019 German Music Competition, they received several special prizes and a scholarship in conjunction with their inclusion in the Federal Selection of Concerts of Young Artists. Since then they have performed in renowned halls such as the Prinzregententheater Munich, the Sendesaal Bremen, and the NDR Landesfunkhaus Hannover as well as at prestigious festivals such as the Sommerliche Musiktage Hitzacker, the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival, and the Cantiere Internazionale d'Arte Montepulciano.

Sophie and Vincent Neeb completed their piano duo studies with Shao-Yin Huang and Sebastian Euler at the Innsbruck Conservatory. They have received inspiration from other leading duos such as Yaara Tal and Andreas Groethuysen as well as from Hans-Peter and Volker Stenzl.

They received their first piano lessons from Stefan Flemmerer and were later junior students in Munich at the HMTM with Michaela Pühn. Vincent Neeb then studied at the same institution with Markus Bellheim and is now continuing his studies in Hanover at the HMTMH with Ewa Kupiec. Sophie Neeb began her studies with Sebastian Euler at the Innsbruck Conservatory and is currently continuing with Konstanze Eickhorst at the Lübeck Academy of Music.



## CHRISTIAN BENNING

Multi-percussionist Christian Benning (\*1995) is now regarded as a central figure in the international percussion scene (“Rhythmic genius” – *Die ZEIT*). Solo concerts have taken the Culture Prize-winner of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* to the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, the Milan Cathedral, the Teatro Romano of Verona, the Church of the Redeemer of Jerusalem, the state operas of Egypt and Oman, and the Abbey of San Diego. Successes at international competitions as well as concert tours through Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America with renowned orchestras underscore his artistic versatility.

The principal timpani player at the opera house of Port Louis teaches at the Conservatory of Mauritius and has developed a new hybrid percussion instrument known as CreativeBeats. In October 2022, he began doctoral studies at London’s Brunel University on the subject of specially developed rhythm-based training methods for professional sports. After his junior studies, he completed his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich and is currently pursuing the concert exam programme there. A scholarship holder of the Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes, he has also studied at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University and at the Yale School of Music in the U.S..



## PATRICK STAPLETON

Patrick Stapleton (\*1993) completed his studies at the University of Music and Performing Arts Munich, first with Adel Shalaby and later in the master class of Peter Sadlo as well as with his successor Alexej Gerassimez. In addition to his solo appearances, he is involved in countless chamber music projects in which he has already collaborated with world-renowned artists such as Steve Reich. Since 2018 he has been performing regularly in the musical *The Lion King* in Hamburg and is a part of successful crossover projects such as MEUTE and VKKO, which received the Bayerischer Kunstförderpreis in 2019. He is also a founding member of the Christian Benning Percussion Group. Two CD albums already testify to his artistic work.

Concert tours have taken Stapleton to such renowned venues as the Munich Philharmonie, the Hamburg Elbphilharmonie, the Royal Opera House Muscat, the Cairo Opera House, and the Moulin Rouge in Paris. He has won several prizes in international music competitions. Most recently, he won the Musikförderpreis of the Konzertverein Ingolstadt in 2020 and was awarded the first prize in the Kulturkreis Gasteig Music Prize competition in Munich.

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