

Conrad BECK

COMPLETE MUSIC FOR SOLO PIANO

10 KLAVIERSTÜCKE FÜR DEN HAUSGEBRAUCH

SONATINES NOS 1 AND 2

KLAVIERSTÜCKE I AND II

2 TANZSTÜCKE

PRÉLUDE

DANSE

Gabrielle Beck-Lipsi

FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING

CONRAD BECK Complete Music for Solo Piano

Zwei Tanzstücke (1928)

- | | | |
|----------|---------------|------|
| 1 | No. 1 Boston | 3:51 |
| 2 | No. 2 Foxtrot | 2:47 |

Sonatine (1928)

- | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|------|
| 3 | I <i>Allegro molto vivace</i> | 5:07 |
| 4 | II <i>Lento</i> | 4:35 |
| 5 | III <i>Allegro energico</i> | 4:30 |

Danse (1929)

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------|-------------|
| 6 | Danse (1929) | 3:13 |
|----------|---------------------|-------------|

Klavierstücke I (1929)

- | | | |
|-----------|------------------------------------|------|
| 7 | No. 1 <i>Allegro</i> | 1:31 |
| 8 | No. 2 <i>Andante sostenuto</i> | 2:10 |
| 9 | No. 3 <i>Allegro giocoso</i> | 2:03 |
| 10 | No. 4 <i>Lento</i> | 3:45 |
| 11 | No. 5 <i>Allegro ma non troppo</i> | 1:20 |
| 12 | No. 6 <i>Allegro molto vivace</i> | 2:53 |

Klavierstücke II (1930)

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|------|
| 13 | No. 1 <i>Allegro energico</i> | 3:14 |
| 14 | No. 2 <i>Lento</i> | 5:16 |
| 15 | No. 3 <i>Allegro moderato</i> | 2:34 |
| 16 | No. 4 <i>Allegro</i> | 2:19 |
| 17 | No. 5 <i>Presto</i> | 1:36 |

Sonatine No. 2 (1941)	7:13
18 I <i>Con anima</i>	1:44
19 II <i>Lento</i>	3:07
20 III <i>Presto</i>	2:22
Zehn Klavierstücke für den Hausgebrauch (1945)*	12:56
21 No. 1 Kleiner Marsch	1:00
22 No. 2 Für eine stille Stunde	1:53
23 No. 3 Erzählung	1:05
24 No. 4 Unrast	1:07
25 No. 5 Melodie	1:35
26 No. 6 Intermezzo	0:45
27 No. 7 Ballade	0:40
28 No. 8 Schnell vorbei	1:07
29 No. 9 Zuversicht	2:29
30 No. 10 Entschluss	1:15
31 Prélude (1948)	4:24
	TT 77:21

Gabrielle Beck-Lipsi, piano

* FIRST RECORDING
FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING

CONRAD BECK, SWISS COMPOSER: AN INTRODUCTION

by Walter Labhart

Conrad Beck – the son of Bernhard Beck, a pastor, and Lydia Barker, the daughter of a British architect – was born on 16 June 1901 in Lohn, outside Schaffhausen, in the north of Switzerland, and raised in Zurich. After taking his Matura (his school-leaving certificate), he first studied machine-engineering at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich. But following private piano lessons with Carl Baldegger and harmony lessons from the composer Paul Müller-Zürich, he decided on a musical career. He then studied at the Zurich Conservatoire with the composer-conductor Volkmar Andreae (composition), the composer-pianist Reinhold Laquai (counterpoint) and again Carl Baldegger (piano).

In 1924 he moved to Paris, where he studied instrumentation privately with Jacques Ibert as well as taking further instruction from the Basel composer Ernst Levy. He also sought advice in compositional matters from Nadia Boulanger, Arthur Honegger and Albert Roussel. From 1927 on, his works were published by Schott in Mainz. Beck had no Jewish ancestors, but when in 1933 the Nazis took power and ‘aryanised’ German culture, Beck’s publishing contract was terminated when he refused to sign a statement supporting an ‘Aryan’ view of art. It was only after 1945 that Schott once again took up the publication of his music.

Beck relocated to Basel in 1933 at the suggestion of the conductor and music patron Paul Sacher, who championed his music for five decades, commissioning and conducting premieres of his works with the Basler Kammerorchester and the Collegium Musicum Zürich. From 1936 to 1966 Beck was music director of Radio Basel, where he was instrumental in promoting contemporary music. From 1963 he lived alternately in France and in Basel.

In 1954 he was awarded the composition prize of the Schweizerischer Tonkünstlerverein and in 1956 the Ludwig-Spohr-Preis of the city of Braunschweig. The Basel Arts Prize followed in 1964. In 1973 he was appointed Commandeur de l'Ordre du Mérite Culturel by Prince Rainier III of Monaco.

Conrad Beck died in Basel on 31 October 1989. His musical estate is held in the Paul Sacher Stiftung in Basel.

Output and Style

Beck's extensive and varied output includes all important genres except opera. There are seven symphonies, almost twenty *concertante* works (including concertos and concertinos for clarinet, clarinet and bassoon, cello, flute, harpsichord, oboe, piano, string quartet, viola, violin and wind quintet) and a generous amount of instrumental and chamber music (four string quartets among it). His vocal music includes several substantial choral works as well as some smaller-scale pieces and a handful of songs for solo voice, some with orchestral accompaniment, others with piano. For an *œuvre* of this size and quality to be as nearly completely unknown as Beck's is little short of astonishing.

Even the early works take the anti-Romantic position which extends through Beck's output, reflected consistently in a clear and linear style: polyphonic textures and structures are central to his music, and his dissonance-rich harmonies result predominantly from his part-writing. Indeed, his sonorities can often be harsh, especially in those works which venture into atonal regions, their themes often derived from complex chords. But his Alemannic gravity and the introspection which often comes to the fore in slow movements are offset by a vivid sense of rhythm – in his time in France Beck had close links to the 'Groupe des Six' and what he learned in Paris remained with him.

Indeed, he was one of the founders of the 'École de Paris', a loose association of composers, most of them from eastern Europe, based in Paris between the two World Wars. Its early members, apart from Beck, were the Hungarian Tibor Harsányi, the Czech Bohuslav Martinů and the Romanian Marcel Mihalovici. They were later joined by such figures as the Austrian Alexander Spitzmüller (another composer who

Conrad Beck, Igor Stravinsky and Paul Sacher outside the restaurant Im Schmiedenhof in Basel in 1930



Photograph: Hans Jacob Beck collection

has vanished from sight), the Pole Alexandre Tansman and the Russian Alexander Tcherepnin. Prokofiev, Roussel and Stravinsky were often seen around the same tables.

Although Neo-Baroque and Neo-Classical elements alternate in his output, Conrad Beck did not adhere to either of these movements. Taking his cue from the music created during the 1920s in Paris by Honegger, Milhaud, Roussel, Stravinsky and others, he developed an independent, predominantly lyrical and deeply expressive style. He had been born only a year after George Antheil, Aaron Copland, Ernst Křenek, Alexander Mossolov and Kurt Weill, and so his fusion of linearity and chordal density was a very personal contribution to the international avant-garde of that generation.

In view of Paul Sacher's unflagging support of Beck and his music, it was natural that when, in 1976, to celebrate Sacher's 70th birthday, Mstislav Rostropovitch commissioned several composers to write pieces for cello solo based on the notes of Sacher's name – eS A C H E Re (E flat, A, C, B, E, D) – Beck was one of them, contributing *Drei Epigramme über den Namen Sacher*.¹

¹ Beck kept good company: the other composers were Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, Benjamin Britten, Henri Dutilleux, Wolfgang Fortner, Alberto Ginastera, Cristobal Halffter, Hans Werner Henze, Heinz Holliger, Klaus Huber and Witold Lutoslawski.

The Piano Music

Compared to his voluminous output of orchestral works, instrumental concerti and chamber music, Beck's piano music is not plentiful. But its modest quantity does not in any way detract from its high quality. The first *Sonatine* (1928) and the *Klavierstücke I and II* (1929 and 1930), for example, were important contributions to the stylistic variety of the music produced by the École de Paris. As the only Swiss, Beck differed fundamentally from the others. He was not interested in piano music for effect or virtuosity, preferring music which, while pianistic, sought simpler means of expression; inwardness, compression and a deeper expressiveness meant more to him than pianistic brilliance. This attitude explains why he avoided concert studies, big sonatas, toccatas or other showy genres.

Occasional handbooks offer insights into his *œuvre* for piano. Curiously, the second volume of the *Klaviermusikführer* published by Reclam in 1967 does not mention the solo music and comments instead on the unpublished *Rhapsody* for piano and orchestra (1936), quoting the Swiss music-critic Willi Schuh:

Although one might call Beck's art austere, one does it better justice by emphasising its unusual intellectual approach. The masterly craftsmanship and formal assurance, far from being slick, show a highly developed feel for the integration of a work of art, for true culture; while this does not reconcile the inner conflict, it makes this *Rhapsody* a valid, artistically important document of a conflict which dominates the musical situation of a generation. Rather than suffering from this contradiction, Beck's work gives expression to it.²

Klaus Wolters, the only recent writer to discuss Beck's piano music (and that was twenty years ago), characterised it thus:

Alemannic nature and French influences also merge quite curiously in Conrad Beck – in a manner similar to, and yet quite different from, Honegger. Rather than an amalgamation of French spirit, it is more like a transmission of certain French stylistic forms – as

² *Klaviermusikführer*, Vol. 2, Reclam, Stuttgart, 1967, p. 709 (Willi Schuh, *Schweizer Musik der Gegenwart*, Atlantis-Verlag, Zurich, 1948, pp. 236–37).

experienced during his several years' stay in Paris (Honegger and Roussel being particular models) – to his very personal and unconventional, very Swiss way of expressing himself. Although the bizarre and aggressive rhythms and glaring harmonies of the fast movements may seem hard and angular, his music has an incredibly delicate sensitivity, particularly in the slow movements. As a very introverted musician, he spurns all empty activity, all theatricality. His message is always concise, clear and transparent, reduced to essentials, and yet filled with strong spirit.³

The neutral title *Zwei Tanzstücke* ('Two Dance Pieces'; 1928) conceals an individual approach to jazz and the light music of the 'Roaring Twenties'. Full of syncopations, the 'Boston' [1] is an Americanised waltz, such as had already been heard in the fourth movement of Hindemith's *Suite 1922*. But in the harmonically daring 'Foxtrot' [2] Beck indulges his love of shrill dissonance. From the 1920s the march-like American foxtrot was the most fashionable dance in Europe, used in popular songs and operettas as well as in operas by Ernst Křenek, Maurice Ravel and Kurt Weill. These two piano pieces show Conrad Beck in tune with his time, open to anything new, radically anti-Romantic and independent. For once, the constructivist⁴ cover design and modern typography (by an unknown graphic artist) perfectly reflected the progressive spirit of the music.

The first *Sonatine* was composed in 1928 in Paris, where the pianist Monique Haas (later the wife of Marcel Mihalovici) premiered it on 14 June 1933. Shortly afterwards the writer Kurt Herrmann remarked on its ascetic character and the 'graphically clear two-part writing'.⁵ The piece shows Beck formally addressing other important trends: although the fast, occasionally motoric outer movements bow to the French variety of Neo-Classicism (familiar to him from his work with Roussel and his contacts with Martinů), the expressive middle movement (*Lento*) [4] is a lovely example of Neo-Baroque *arioso*; the melodic line, generally at the top, occasionally gives way to restless figurations and sonorous chords. The first movement (*Allegro molto vivace*) [3] refers to

³ *Handbuch der Klavierliteratur zu zwei Händen*, Atlantis Buch-Verlag, Zurich and Mainz, 4th edn. 1994, p. 569.

⁴ Indeed, the members of the *École de Paris* were sometimes referred to as 'Les Constructeurs'.

⁵ *Die Klaviermusik der letzten Jahre*, Hug, Leipzig/Zürich, 1934, p. 6.

sonata form but the repeats surprise the listener with numerous diversions. Immediately complex, the writing twice collapses into cluster-like entities. In the resolute Rondo-Finale (*Allegro energico*) [5] there are jazzy staccato chords. Just before the end, in a bright D major, powerful dissonances fuse into a ten-note chord.

Dedicated to Bohuslav Martinů, Beck's *Danse* [6] introduces a highly original collective work: *Treize Danses*, published in Paris in 1929 with a jacket designed by Mikhail Larionov. The direction *Lent et triste*, odd for a dance, matches the melancholy colouring of the chromatically inflected music. This lyrical rather than dance-like contribution by the only Swiss composer of the collection was followed by dances and dance-inspired pieces by the following composers: Marcel Delannoy, Pierre-Octave Ferroud, Tibor Harsányi, Jacques Larmanjat, Nicolai Lopatnikoff, Bohuslav Martinů, Georges Migot, Marcel Mihalovici, Manuel Rosenthal, Erwin Schulhoff, Alexandre Tansman and Jean Wiéner.⁶

The six pieces in the collection *Klavierstücke I* (1929), dedicated to Albert Roussel, were premiered on 22 May 1931 in Winterthur by the renowned pianist and pedagogue Walter Frey (1898–1985; from Baden, in the canton of Aargau),⁷ who gave the premieres of many solo and *concertante* works by Alban Berg, Conrad Beck, Adolf Brunner, Nikolai Lopatnikoff, Frank Martin, Albert Moeschinger and Egon Wellesz. In the first two pieces, *Allegro* [7] and *Andante sostenuto* [8], the melodic lines are supported by chords in changing harmonies. The following *Allegro giocoso* [9], in the style of a Baroque invention, is in stark contrast to the fourth piece [10], a *Lento* of extreme rhythmic diversity based on a persistent ostinato. The Foxtrot, *Allegro, ma non troppo* [11], recalls the Prague composer Erwin Schulhoff, whose 5 *Études de Jazz* (1926) influenced many sympathetic musicians. The last piece, *Allegro molto vivace* [12], features rapid left-hand runs and chromatically shifting chains of chords which create a bluesy warmth.

⁶ The first complete recording of *Treize Danses*, played by Gabriel Beck-Lipsi, appeared in 2013 on the double CD *École de Paris/ Treize Danses*, Edition M & S 5080/2, Müller & Schade, Bern.

⁷ Walter was the brother of the composer and piano virtuoso Emil Frey (1889–1946). The Swiss pianist Luisa Splett recently began a survey of Emil Frey's piano music on Toccata Classics: Volume One was released on TOCC 0339.

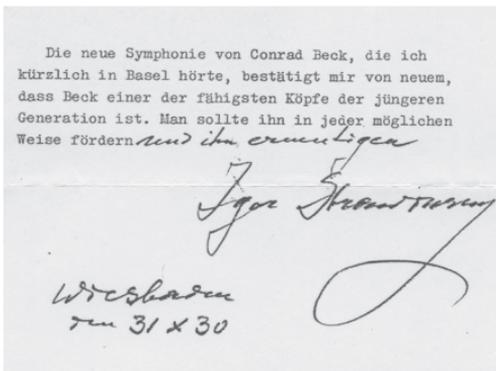
The five *Klavierstücke II* (1930) are dedicated to Tibor Harsányi and possess the same qualities as the first series. After the opening *Allegro energico* [13], the *Lento* which follows [14] combines chords in F sharp minor and G major to startling bitonal effect, and the third piece, *Allegro moderato* [15], adds corrosive seconds to its many dissonances. Coolly linear and woodcut-sharp, the *Allegro* [16] is a prime example of the ‘New Objectivity’ developed by Paul Hindemith in Germany – and by his less familiar former co-student Werner Wehrli⁸ in Switzerland. The concluding *Presto* [17], which displays effective *unisono* passages and toccata-like elements, is a bravura piece which deserves to be adopted by virtuosi.

The *Sonatine No. 2* (1941) was written for the 1941 Tonkünstlerfest in Locarno, at the suggestion of the Schweizerischer Tonkünstlerverein. Nowhere else does Beck achieve such lightness and clarity as in this short opusculum. The outer movements (the first is marked *Con anima* [18]), often in only two parts, frame a wonderfully simple, crystalline *Lento* [19]. The *Presto-Finale* [20] is like a gigue in extended tonality, ending surprisingly in B major.

The *Zehn Klavierstücke für den Hausgebrauch* (‘Ten Piano Pieces for Home Use’), still unpublished,⁹ were commissioned by Ernst Mohr. Known as the author of the first biography of Willy Burkhard, he was teaching assistant for musical theory at Basel University, and in 1943 was chosen as head of the board of examiners of the Swiss Musical Education Association. This position was probably what inspired him to commission Swiss composers to write piano pieces for teaching purposes. These particular pieces are dedicated to his wife, ‘Frau Dr Trauti Mohr-Bally’. Six of the ten pieces, composed in January 1945 in Basel, were premiered on 11 November of that year by the then well-known Swiss pianist Karl Engel in a concert for the International Society for Contemporary Music in Basel. The programme included Stravinsky’s Three

⁸ The Aarau-born Wehrli (1892–1944) studied with Hans Huber and Hermann Suter in Basel before studying – alongside Hindemith – with Iwan Knorr and Bernhard Sekles in Frankfurt. In 1918 he took up a teaching post in his native Aarau and remained there for the rest of his short life – during which he nonetheless managed to write a considerable quantity of music in most of the major genres, his style evolving from an initial Romanticism to more brittle contrapuntal textures which suggest the influence of Hindemith.

⁹ A copy of the manuscript was graciously supplied for this recording by the Paul Sacher Stiftung, Basel.



For Igor Stravinsky, a performance of a Beck symphony in Basel (he had written five by 1930) 'once again confirms for me that Beck has one of the most able minds of the younger generation. He should be promoted and encouraged in every possible way'.

Pieces for solo clarinet, Bartók's *Contrasts* for violin, clarinet and piano and Hindemith's Second String Trio. One can safely assume that Beck knew Hindemith's *Kleine Klaviermusik (Leichte Fünfstückchen)*, published in 1929 within the framework of the *Sing und Spielmusik für Liebhaber und Musikfreunde* ('Pieces for Amateurs and Music-lovers to Play and Sing'). Beck's *Zehn Klavierstücke für den Hausgebrauch* share their thematic clarity, contrapuntal inserts, circling around the tonic, relatively simple layout, and especially their variety of contrasts. Both composers avoid indications of tempo in these pianistic miniatures – Hindemith even managing without titles. Underlining their expressive content, Beck gives his pieces some quite personal titles: 'For a quiet hour' [22], 'Restlessness' [24], 'Soon over' [28], 'Confidence' [29] and 'Decision' [30].

Beginning with a 'Little March' [21], these delicately poetic creations are so varied that in Swiss piano music they are best compared with Arthur Honegger's *Sept Pièces brèves* composed in Paris in 1919–20. Between the bell-like repeated notes in 'Restlessness' [24] and the expressive drive of the 'Intermezzo' (No. 6) [26], the hymn-like 'Melodie' [25] provides a restful interlude. True to its title, 'Soon over' (No. 8) [28] features repeated fourths and fifths with an accompaniment of short melodic fragments. Dotted rhythms add exciting

tension to ‘Decision’ (No. 10) [30]. ‘Confidence’ (No. 9) [29] is based on sonorous octaves reaching ever higher, and recalls the ‘heavy tread’ required by Walter Lang in the tenth of his ten piano *Miniatures*, Op. 17 (1927).

These pieces show a sensitive approach to domestic and didactic music. Beck is a master at creating rewarding pieces with restricted means while remaining true to his own distinctive style. With these ten pieces he continued the pedagogic tradition of Swiss musicians which, in the twentieth century, began with Werner Wehrli (*Von einer Wanderung*, Op. 17, of 1921), Ernest Bloch (*Enfantines*, 1923) and Arthur Honegger (*Cahier romand*, 1923) and was to continue after Beck’s contribution with Walter Lang’s *Der Baumeister*, Op. 50, of 1947.

Commissioned by the Paris publisher Heugel, Beck’s last solo-piano work, a *Prélude* dedicated to Marcel Mihalovici [31], was written on 5 May 1948 in Basel. Only three pages long, it has all the hallmarks of Beck’s distinctive style; what is new is the use of deep bell-like chords in dialogue with the melodic lines in the right hand. The architectural-constructive writing remains contrapuntal throughout, and the tension provided by adding octaves to the melody and increasing the volume subsides only in the peaceful F sharp major final chord.

Walter Labhart (born in 1944) is a freelance artistic director of concerts, a curator of art and music exhibitions and an editor of instrumental music. He lives in Endingen, Switzerland.

BECK’S MUSIC FROM A PIANISTIC – AND A PERSONAL – PERSPECTIVE

by Gabrielle Beck-Lipsi

It is an unusual privilege to interpret works by an outstanding composer who was also a close relative. As Conrad Beck’s daughter-in-law, I was fortunate to study his second *Sonatine* with him in 1965, before playing it in the Salle Cortot in Paris during my studies with Vlado Perlemuter.

While working on the recording of this CD, my father-in-law was always before my inner eye: I saw his gestures, heard his voice, sensed his modest character. He was very sensitive, and possessed deep humanity and kindness as well as a sense of humour – but where work and art were concerned, he was rigorous, uncompromising and energetic. He had no time for bragging. I can still see him, for instance, as he admired an antique or (in his little workshop in Rosey, Haute Saône, France, where he had a second home) worked on it or polished it. Nuance and sensitivity were characteristic of him, both in his attitude to life and in his approach to art. There are times when the unusual rhythms in his music even remind me of his way of speaking, of his accent.

What was not readily noticeable in everyday life but comes across in his music is his powerful inner strength, reflected in his intelligent combinations, his pronounced lyricism, the unexpected rhythms, the clash of his very individual dissonances, his sometimes barely perceptible nuances and other subtleties. All these features belonged to his particular musical wizardry, but he was too modest to speak of any kind of artistic legacy himself.

There are several distinguishing features of Beck's piano music which deserve closer attention. The first is rhythm. His sometimes complex but nonetheless exciting rhythms are atypical of Swiss composers; instead, they sometimes have an 'exotic' character, such one also finds in his friends from the École de Paris, each in his own way. There are aspects of his rhythm, based on his personal mathematics and inspiration, which will defeat the casual listener: some passages will defy any attempt to count, and only by studying the score do the hidden refinements emerge.

Beck's music is often dissonant: like any good composer, he developed his own, individual harmony, or rather his 'theory of dissonance', and complex, unexpected clashes are typical of his music. It is interesting to see how precisely these details can be rendered on the piano. In some passages they may involve only small differences – for instance, a repeat a semitone lower or higher than the previous time, usually within a complex, compact structure. The difference is so tiny that it's hardly perceptible, but the effect on the listener can be almost caressing and can produce corresponding emotions. Once, while discussing what he considered good music by contemporary composers,

my father-in-law told my husband that, as in music, he appreciated a finely nuanced drawing more than a highly coloured painting.

In the Classical era, modulations to other keys were usually effected via fifths, fourths or thirds. When varying an element, Beck often alters it by just a semitone. Although the variation is hardly noticeable, it is yet such that one may perceive it as a different colour. Such nuances are akin to Impressionist painting.

What also strikes me in Beck's piano music is that these semitone shifts are more often downwards than upwards. That's not always the case, but it's noticeable when you compare his music to that by other composers. But, as I observed while practising, when the contrary happens and a passage shifts upwards, the effect is all the lighter, brighter and more hopeful.

Beck's pianism is worth a word, too. His piano music can be uncomfortable, sometimes even un pianistic. Yet it seems to me that in his own way he explored the possibilities of the instrument in a new and unique manner. His development of new tone-colours and touch-techniques, unexpected clashes, close-packed textures, tiny nuances or, on the contrary, a wide dynamic spectrum, opened for me a magic-box filled with new surprises. Moreover, unsurprisingly for a composer with such a large orchestral output, Beck thinks on an orchestral scale and manages to make the piano sound like an orchestra.

His distinctive counterpoint – similar to Bach's – follows strict formal guidelines, and I found myself practising contrapuntal passages as I would for Bach, who was not necessarily fixated on a keyboard instrument either. This is simply music.

Tone-colour is another issue in this music. If one imagines other instruments while playing the piano – for example, imagining the bowing of a violin rather than the sound of a gong – my technique changes and that helps me find different tone-colours. Beck's music responds well to this differentiation of colour, not least since it plays with chromaticism in every direction, finding variety in his sensitive shifts and his linear, contrapuntal skill.

A last word on the *Prélude* of 1948 ^[31], which, only three pages long, nonetheless crystallises very special states of mind. In the middle section the contrapuntal element

is handled almost as strictly as in an invention by Bach, but with a light, dancing rhythm. It is a playful intermezzo between two dramatic outer sections, unusually tense, the frequent syncopations at the beginning of almost every second bar producing a threatening, imperceptible hesitation. The third section develops two contrasting elements, linked in suspenseful dialogue: the one element is frightening, like a bad dream, and grows ever stronger until the powerful (rather than happy) end. The other element expresses fear via disquiet and unease. These two elements resemble two people arguing: one of them is quieter but threatening, the other is frightened. Discovering this kind of musical deliberation was interesting, and it helped me to follow Beck's general development since his youth in the 1920s. The typical, individual attributes of his music remain evident and recognisable throughout changing times. His artistic explorations and his life necessarily brought change.

Gabrielle Beck-Lipsi (born in Zurich in 1941) has family links with both 'Écoles de Paris' – arts and music: she is the daughter of the Parisian sculptor Morice Lipsi (1898, Łódź, Poland–1986, Küsnach, Switzerland) and the Swiss painter Hildegard Weber-Lipsi (1900–99) and she is the wife of Hans Jacob Beck, son of Conrad Beck. After growing up on the shores of Lake Zurich, she went to study piano at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique and the École Normale in Paris (1958–62) with Vlado Perlemuter (whose personal association with Maurice Ravel was a particular source of inspiration for her), Marcel Ciampi and Ina Marica. Then, for almost thirty years, she did not touch the piano, working instead as a photographer and for other cultural projects. It was only in 1996 that she returned to the piano – but with more enthusiasm than ever, advised by a colleague from Paris, the Swiss pianist Michael Studer. She then began to perform in various European countries and recorded mainly Impressionist and modern music. Of particular interest is the double CD album published in 2013 by Müller & Schade, Bern: *École de Paris/Treize Danses* (M&S 5080-2). Many of the featured composers from this Montparnasse circle – like Harsányi, Martinů, Mihalovici, Rosenthal and Tcherepnin – were close friends of Conrad Beck and of her parents as well.



Photograph: Ludmila Beck



Recording realised on various dates in the home studio of Gabrielle Beck-Lipsi, Hinwil, Switzerland, and finalised in December 2015

Engineering: Gallus Media, St Gallen

Mastering: Gallus Media, St Gallen, and Hans Jacob Beck, Hinwil

Booklet texts: Walter Labhart and Gabrielle Beck-Lipsi

Translation from the German: Anne de Dadelsen

Cover design: David M. Baker (david@notneverknow.com)

Typesetting and lay-out: KerryPress, St Albans

Executive producer: Martin Anderson

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