



Ernst KRENEK

COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME TWO

DOUBLE CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND VIOLIN, OP. 124

LITTLE CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORGAN, OP. 88

CONCERTO FOR TWO PIANOS, OP. 127

PIANO CONCERTO NO. 4, OP. 123

Mikhail Korzhev, piano

Eric Huebner, piano

Nurit Pacht, violin

Adrian Partington, organ

English Symphony Orchestra

Kenneth Woods

ERNST KRENEK: COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME TWO – 1. THE MUSIC-HISTORIAN'S PERSPECTIVE

by Peter Tregear

Ernst Krenek's reputation as a 'one-man history of twentieth century music' is nothing if not well deserved. Over nearly eight decades of creative life he was not only to witness but also to contribute to most of the formative art-music movements of the age. It may come as a surprise, then, to find that the concertos on this second album are quite similar in style – until one realises that all four works were composed in the ten or so years following his arrival in America, when he was coming to terms with the likelihood of an indefinite period of exile from Europe. The prospect did not rest easy with him, not least because, as he later observed, 'in America, I am a composer-in-residence since I am not American-born, while in Europe, I am a composer-in-absence'.¹ Here he would also no longer be able to support himself through composing alone. Instead, like so many of Europe's cultural and scientific elite who also had had to flee Nazi Germany in fear of their lives, a career in university teaching beckoned. Now in relative isolation from compositional developments in Europe and elsewhere, and faced with the necessity of forging what was essentially a new career as he approached middle age, a degree of consolidation and stock-taking in his compositional outlook was perhaps inevitable.

In February 1939 Krenek commenced a two-year contract as a professor in music at Vassar College, a liberal-arts College in up-state New York, which then was followed by an offer of a Chair in Music at Hamline University in Saint Paul, Minnesota. Fortunately, this new post also enabled him to meet and work with the conductor and virtuoso pianist Dimitri Mitropoulos. The two men would soon develop close professional and personal ties. As chief conductor of the Minneapolis Symphony

¹ Ernst Krenek, interview with Vivian Perlis, Palm Springs, California, 22 March 1975; quoted in Olive Jean Bailey, 'The Influence of Ernst Krenek on the Musical Culture of the Twin Cities', PhD Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1980, p. 184.

Orchestra (the forerunner of the Minnesota Orchestra), furthermore, Mitropoulos had a platform from which he could exercise a genuinely passionate interest in new music. Indeed, Mitropoulos once exclaimed to Krenek that he would 'even carry chairs' to help make a concert of such music happen, above all a concert of Krenek's own compositions.² With such prominent musical support, Krenek was able, among other achievements, to establish a chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music at Hamline.

Their interest was not one shared by the wider community in Minneapolis. Krenek also found the winter climate very disagreeable. And by 1947, as he later acknowledged, 'as a teacher and academic administrator I was running out of steam'.³ A one-semester leave-of-absence from Hamline late that year precipitated his resignation. It was perhaps just as well, for soon thereafter Mitropoulos also left Minneapolis, in this latter case to take up the conductorship of the New York Philharmonic.

By now, too, the war in Europe was over and Krenek could connect with the European musical avant-garde, and in particular those composers who were attending the annual Darmstadt International Summer Courses for New Music. It helped encourage him to explore the strict serial organisation of musical materials after the manner being championed at that time by composers like Pierre Boulez. At the same time, Krenek also quickly realised that he was not going to find the same degree of interest in his music that had characterised his pre-war European career. His old homeland in particular was simply not interested in attempting any kind of substantial cultural, let alone physical, rehabilitation of the major composers of the Weimar era, of which he was unquestionably one. Europe, it seemed, was keen to distance itself from not only the musical artefacts of the period under National Socialism but also from the period that immediately preceded it, as it faced the new political and cultural realities of the Cold War.

Krenek's later works for piano were in any event never to follow the Darmstadt School model of seeking after the total control of musical material or the removal of every trace of conventional tonality. Instead, most of them, and certainly all the piano and orchestra

² Ernst Krenek, interview with John Stewart, Palm Springs, 10 February 1977, as noted in Stewart, *Ernst Krenek: The Man and His Music*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991, p. 247.

³ Ernst Krenek, 'Teaching Composition in America: Reminiscences', *The American Music Teacher*, February–March 1975, pp. 9–10.

works recorded here, have if anything a decidedly nostalgic flavour (although refracted through the acerbic lens of atonality organised around the twelve-tone technique and its variants). They are punctuated by numerous illusions to the dance and salon music of the Vienna of Krenek's childhood and youth. To that extent these concertos also are reminiscent of Schoenberg's own Piano Concerto, Op. 42 (1942).

It was the particular success of another 'nostalgic' work for piano, his *George Washington Variations*, Op. 120 (1950),⁴ which led to the commission from the same source of his **Piano Concerto No. 4, Op. 123**. The commissioner was Morris Molin, a wealthy Los Angeles businessman, whose daughter Miriam had become a fine virtuoso pianist. The Concerto was premiered on 22 October 1951 in Cologne, with Miriam Molin as soloist and Krenek conducting. There was not to be a US premiere until 23 April 1965, given by the Civic Orchestra of Minneapolis, and that came about only because the music director, Thomas Nee, had been a former student of Krenek's at Hamline. From the perspective of today this long delay seems surprising, since it is a very attractive concert piece indeed, but Krenek had found himself at this time caught between the Scylla of being too modern and the Charybdis of not being modern enough.

Composed substantially while he was on one of his first tours back to Europe, the work has a traditional fast-slow-fast three-movement formal outline. The first movement, *Allegro, agitato e pesante* [1], is a grotesque waltz, the peculiarly Viennese character of which is betrayed by the predominance of minor thirds and distinctive recurring rhythmic patterns. The contrasting *Molto adagio* middle movement [2] opens with shimmering tremolos and cluster chords alternating between the soloist and the orchestra, a texture which soon dissolves into atonal lyrical passages of ever-increasing intensity. There are also two long solos for the bass clarinet and trumpet that also suggest reminiscences of times (if not tonalities) now past. A powerful orchestral climax eventually gives way to a return of the quiet lyrical mood of the opening, but this time performed by the soloist alone as a kind of anti-cadenza. The third movement, *Allegro, molto vivace* [3], is an ingenious fugue in the style of a march. Its subject is a twelve-tone

⁴ Recorded by Stanislav Khristenko on Ernst Krenek: Piano Music, Volume One (Toccata Classics tocc 0298).

row with peculiar symmetrical properties and as such Krenek is able to deploy some of the usually aurally inscrutable techniques of twelve-tone composition in a way that can not only be heard but which also allow for the kind of contrapuntal showmanship, such as themes in inversion and retrograde inversion, that so delighted J. S. Bach and his contemporaries.

Around the same time as Krenek was writing this concerto, Mitropoulos had been lobbying the duo-pianists Jack Warren Lowe and Arthur Whittimore, with whom he had already had much success performing and recording Francis Poulenc's Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra in D minor (1932), to commission Krenek's **Concerto for Two Pianos, Op. 127**. Krenek completed the score in May 1951 in Los Angeles and the premiere was given on 24 October 1953 in Carnegie Hall, New York, with Lowe and Whittimore at the pianos and Mitropoulos conducting. Krenek's work largely spurns the urbane Neo-Classicism that characterises Poulenc's. If anything it owes more to the brittle technical fireworks and figurative display typical of a Prokofiev piano concerto, or indeed Krenek's own Weimar-era grotesqueries from the early 1920s.

After a primal scream from the orchestra, the *Allegro vivace* first movement [4] presents a series of driving rhythms across which both short motivic figures and sections of contrapuntal lyricism punctuate the frenetic texture. An *Andante* second movement [5] invokes Krenek's beloved dance-like figurations again, but here they evoke more the mood of a haunted serenade (is it *O sole mio*, a reference to his recent visit to Italy?) than a society ball. Dance-rhythms, now of a foxtrot perhaps, also pervade the third movement [6], another *Allegro vivace*, which turns out to be an epigrammatically short interlude. The finale [7] responds to this musical provocation with an equally unexpected expansive formal construction. It commences with a lyrical *Adagio* introduction that gradually develops into a lilting *andante* and then concludes with one last Weimar-era-like dance-parody, this time of a march.

The **Double Concerto for Piano and Violin, Op. 124** was the result of another commission, this time from George Avakian, a well-known and highly respected producer

at Columbia Records. Avakian requested it for his violinist wife Anahid Ajemian and pianist sister-in-law Maro Ajemian, to both of whom it is dedicated. The work received its premiere on 6 October 1951 in Donaueschingen with Hans Rosbaud, conductor, and the dedicatees as soloists. Yet again Krenek produced a score punctuated with numerous allusions to dances, especially the Viennese waltz, but here the texture is also more lyrical and conversational, as if Krenek wished to acknowledge something of the intimate familial relationship that existed between the soloists themselves. Certainly, the character of the solo parts is more one of duetting rather than duelling. Krenek may also have had the thematic clarity of Berg's Violin Concerto (1935) in mind as an example to follow. And, like Berg's work, the Concerto also uses recurring dance-rhythms as a structural device, in particular the rhythmic signature of a Ländler. Thematic material from the short *Andantino* introduction [8] provides the melodic cells for the march that follows, *Allegro ma non troppo, deciso* [9]. The third movement [10], another *Andantino*, brings back the Ländler; the fourth, *Allegretto* [11], evokes in turn a waltz, march and polka. In the *Lento* fifth movement, by contrast [12], the Ländler takes on a monumental character, suggesting that here is the emotional, as well as temporal, centre of the work. A finale-like *Allegro* [13] follows, ending with a cadenza for the pianist that mirrors a similar solo passage for the violin in the second movement. The 'real' finale [14] begins when the Ländler returns, *Tempo di Ländler*, its identity now fully exposed.

The ***Little Concerto*, Op. 88**, 'for piano and organ (or piano)' [15]–[20] was composed over the winter of 1939–40 between Charleston, Southern Carolina, and Charlotte, Northern Carolina. It premiered on 23 May 1940 in Poughkeepsie, New York, at the Skinner Recital Hall of Vassar College, with the pianist Mary Williams, organist E. Harold Geer and with Krenek conducting. As was common for a non-conservatoire music department, by far the majority of students were female, and that in turn meant that the Vassar College orchestra commonly lacked brass and percussion players, which explains the chamber-like orchestration. Like the *Double Concerto*, and once again also in ways reminiscent of Berg's Violin Concerto, this is a work characterised by crystal-clear lyricism, easily identifiably thematic links, ostinato patterns derived from motivic cells and an overall chamber music-like quality. To be sure, it is relatively brief, written for modest forces and intended for

an orchestra of mostly semi-professional musicians, but it nevertheless betrays both a seriousness of artistic purpose as well as quiet good humour.

Peter Tregear is a teaching fellow at Royal Holloway University of London. He has conducted several UK premieres of Weimar-era works, including Max Brand's opera Maschinist Hopkins at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in 2001, and Krenek's Schwergewicht in Cambridge in 2004. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the Ernst Krenek Institut in Krems and a committee member of the International Centre for Suppressed Music, London. He is the author of Ernst Krenek and the Politics of Musical Style (Scarecrow Press, Lanham (Maryland), 2013).

2. THE CONDUCTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

by Kenneth Woods

Preparing for and recording Volume One in this series of Complete Piano Concertos of Ernst Krenek¹ proved to be a very illuminating experience for me. Krenek was a composer I had been curious about for many years, having found the handful of works I'd been able to spend time with in the past quite tantalising. Krenek had long been a composer whose name carried a somewhat forbidding reputation among some listeners and musicians as a composer of very serious, austere and perhaps somewhat emotionally remote music. In the course of getting to know his first three, very different, Piano Concertos, I discovered Krenek to be a much more direct, accessible and communicative composer than I could possibly have guessed. Even his Second Piano Concerto, by far the most harmonically abstract work in this cycle, is a work that our musicians seemed genuinely to love playing and which has a very satisfying emotional, visceral punch to it. The Third Concerto is even more of a work that seems to have been conceived to delight and reward listeners and performers, as engaging as it is crafty.

The first two works in this new recording find Krenek on even more extravert form. The **Fourth Piano Concerto, Op. 123**, is an unapologetically virtuosic work,

¹ Volume One, containing the Concertos No. 1 in F sharp major, Op. 18 (1923), No. 2, Op. 81 (1937), and No. 3, Op. 107 (1946), was released on Toccata Classics TOCC 0323.

perhaps closest in spirit to the best of Prokofiev and Bartók in its combination of a spiky tonal language with a kind of raw physicality and emotionality, allied to a flair for bold gestures. The first movement of the Fourth Concerto [1], in the Brahmsian time-signature of $\frac{6}{4}$, overflows with dance-rhythms and sprung energy. The transition to the recapitulation, culminating in a dazzling ultra-virtuoso descending unison scale in the brass and low strings in the recapitulation, is just one example of Krenek's often-overlooked sense of orchestral panache and bravura. Over the course of these two albums, my colleagues and I were repeatedly thrilled to discover how rewarding this music is to play. Krenek's writing for the orchestra is original yet idiomatic, challenging yet satisfying. The nocturnal *Molto adagio* [2] is the kind of darkly cathartic music that musicians love to sink their teeth into, positively Mahlerian in its anguished lyrical breadth of line, but full of the seductive gloom one finds also in Berg and Bartók. The 1950s are not generally thought of as a golden age for the fugue. There's something wonderfully self-assertive about Krenek choosing to end his final solo piano concerto with such a dazzling example of this ancient genre [3]. Krenek's serial pyrotechnics achieve the admirable result of delighting the scholar with the ingenuity of the musical construction of the movement while similarly delighting the listener. It's not every composer that can make a twelve-tone composition so catchy.

Krenek's **Concerto for Two Pianos, Op. 127**, is perhaps an even more extravert work, full of shameless virtuosity, grand gestures, wit and surprises. The form of the work is interesting. In some ways, it follows the traditional slow-fast-slow pattern, while in other respects it feels more like a fantasy or a set of fantastic variations. Holding the entire work together is a short theme that may or may not be a quotation from the chorus of the popular Neapolitan song, *O sole mio*. If the quotation was intentional, it certainly magnifies the humorous impact of the piece. In any case, the Concerto for Two Pianos is a work that doubles down on the traditional idea of concerto as showpiece, complementing pianistic display with a full array of dazzling orchestral writing.

The other two double concertos in this programme show Krenek taking a more contemplative view of the concerto. The **Double Concerto for Violin and Piano, Op. 124**, seems very much of its time, with some affectionate nods towards the music of

Stravinsky, and the choice of the two solo instruments invites comparisons with Berg's *Chamber Concerto*. The *Double Concerto* may eschew some of the big-boned display of the Fourth Piano Concerto and Concerto for Two Pianos (although the piano and violin cadenzas are replete with virtuoso writing), but it is full of lyricism and elegance. In essence, the piece is a theme and variations, with the slow waltz which opens the piece [8] setting the tone for a work which is full of echoes of Vienna, with all manner of marches and dances. The post-Romantic lyricism of the *Lento* [12] is complemented by the spiky harmonies and pungent, Stravinskian wind-sonorities, and Stravinsky also seems an obvious inspiration for the way Krenek playfully disassembles the quirky fast waltz [14] which brings this beguiling work to a close.

In some ways, the *Little Concerto, Op. 88*, which is both the shortest and the earliest work on this album, is the one that seems to most conform to our received impressions of Krenek as a somewhat remote composer. At least that is what I thought until we got to work on it in these sessions. It's certainly a very intimate piece, and not a bit showy. It is more confessional in tone than the other works, speaking, I feel, to Krenek's sense of isolation and uncertainty in his early years in America. Yet, having lived with the piece for a while now, I find it very beautiful, and not without humour, either.

It is hard adequately to express my admiration for Mikhail Korzhev's achievement in these two recordings. I've come to believe that Krenek's undeserved reputation for inaccessibility comes mostly as a result of past performances that tended to embody a certain kind of rather grey, dutiful aesthetic. By contrast, Misha has brought to these concertos a truly staggering technique and the kind of colour, imagination and audacity that one expects in performances of piano concertos by Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky. He has found here worthy colleagues in Eric, Nurit and Adrian, who have all brought flair and imagination to the three double concertos. The results have been both eye-opening and inspiring for me and my colleagues in the orchestra.

3. THE PIANIST'S PERSPECTIVE

by Mikhail Korzhev

Some major changes occurred in Krenek's personal and professional life while he was working on his **Piano Concerto No. 4, Op. 123**. On 8 August 1950 he married Gladys Nordenstrom, a former composition student of his from Minnesota. Krenek's previous two marriages – to Anna Mahler and Bertha Haas – had ended in divorce but in Gladys he finally found his true soulmate and they remained happily married for the rest of his life, until his death in Palm Springs 41 years later.

A few days after the marriage ceremony Krenek left Los Angeles for Europe – his first trip back to the Continent since he had fled it in the wake of the Nazi take-over of Austria. This time he first went to the International Summer Course for New Music in Darmstadt, where he lectured, participated in discussions and had some of his compositions performed. Then he travelled to Vienna, his home-town, where he had a very emotional reunion with his mother, who had remained there all the years of his exile.

It is tempting to speculate that all these exciting events in Krenek's life are somehow reflected in the score of the Fourth Piano Concerto. For instance, the exuberantly boisterous first movement [1], its music bubbling and sparkling like champagne, was written around the time of his marriage. The sombre, dramatic and haunting second movement [2] was finished during his stay in Vienna and might have been conceived as a mournful lamentation over the fate of the old city and its inhabitants, devastated by the war. And the finale, completed upon Krenek's return to California, sounds like a triumphant march of the homecoming victorious hero [3]. Although one cannot say for certain the music was indeed inspired by events in Krenek's life, to me it definitely sounds like a very personal statement by the composer, whether or not it was written to commission.

Only a month after completing the Fourth Piano Concerto Krenek finished the **Double Concerto for Violin and Piano, Op. 124**. Written as a set of six variations on a twelve-tone theme, lyrical and intimate, it is very different in character from its flamboyant predecessor. And the next year, 1951, he wrote yet another double concerto – this time for two pianos and orchestra, Op. 127. It is a brilliant knuckle-busting virtuoso piece that provides a tremendous showcase for both soloists and for the orchestra as well. Curiously, the second movement [5] is based upon the popular Italian song *O sole mio*, treated somewhat ironically.

Like the Concerto for Violin and Piano, the **Little Concerto, Op. 88** (scored for piano or harpsichord, organ and small orchestra), is structured as a series of variations on a twelve-tone theme. But that's where the similarity between the two pieces ends. The Piano and Organ Concerto is a dark, brooding, deeply unsettling piece. The minimalist orchestration and the heavily contrapuntal textures give it a Neo-Baroque flavour. Concise and exquisitely crafted, this concerto stands well among the bigger works for piano and orchestra by Krenek and deserves no less attention than his larger-scale concertos.

The nature of the piano-writing in these four concertos deserves some attention. Both the Fourth Piano Concerto and the Concerto for Two Pianos are some of the most 'Neo-Classical' of Krenek's compositions; indeed, the Two-Piano Concerto is one of the very few pieces where Krenek directly recapitulates some sections of music – a very Classical feature, one almost never found in Krenek's compositions, which are typically very 'asymmetrical' and avoid exact repetitions. The piano-writing in both of these concertos is likewise rather lean, and the textures are very transparent.

Even so, the Concerto for Two Pianos has some really scary (for us pianists) and very effective parallel runs (like the synchronised *martellato* run at the end of the third movement [6]). And although the use of the extreme ranges of the keyboard is similarly effective here, the technical/textural devices Krenek uses are in fact relatively conventional. Instead, the power of his music lies in its purely musical qualities: the astonishing counterpoint and some really inventive harmonic progressions are what strike my ear first, although his orchestration is also excellent – for example, how he

combines piano, harp and percussion in his Third Piano Concerto is very innovative indeed.

His treatment of the piano in the later concertos don't show quite the same degree of innovation. Indeed, the piano-writing in the *Double Concerto* is of a rather conventional nature, but I think that is because some of the 'pointilliste' piano runs imitate the transparency of the violin-writing – as, for example, in the large piano cadenza at the end of the sixth movement [13] – but I think the main reason for that is purely musical, since the piano cadenza here to some extent mirrors the violin cadenza in the second [9].

With the *Little Concerto*, it is worth bearing in mind that it was written for piano *or* harpsichord and organ, and so it is natural that some of the piano runs here, as well as general transparency of texture, are typical of how one writes for harpsichord – but it is not as if the piano mimics the harpsichord here; it is simply written with the idea that either instrument could be used in performance (although a couple of runs at the end of the work are slightly modified in the harpsichord version so as to accommodate the shorter range of the instrument).

Mikhail Korzhev, a pianist who 'projects strength, atmosphere and the ability to tangle even the knottiest passages' (*International Record Review*), is equally active as a solo recitalist, a chamber musician and orchestral soloist. He has worked with a number of distinguished conductors, among them Sergiu Commissiona and Carlo Ponti Jr; his chamber partners have included soloists of the Russian National Orchestra, the Mladi Chamber Orchestra, Lyris String Quartet and members of the St Petersburg and Tokyo String Quartets. His collaborative work has been highly appreciated by Eugenia Zukerman, Richard Stolzman, Oleh Krysa and other noted musicians. Korzhev's performances have met with enthusiasm in the American and European press. *Momento Sera* in Rome felt that 'The young Russian pianist [...] displayed a notable technical mastery which allowed for passionate moments of ardent lyricism as well as wonderful purity and fluency,' and



The Salt Lake Tribune felt that ‘Korzhev belongs to that exclusive club of super musicians’ and that ‘he already performs like a keyboard legend’.

His particular interest in contemporary music led him to participate in the Virginia Waring International Piano Competition in 2005, which had an emphasis on the music of Ernst Krenek. As a winner of that competition in September 2006 Korzhev gave a recital in the Konzerthaus in Vienna, about which the *Wiener Zeitung* wrote: ‘Korzhev obviously has much affection for Krenek’s personal style, thanks to which the listener experiences the dramatic qualities of the work’. Following the success of his Vienna debut Korzhev recorded a CD of Krenek’s piano music, released by Phoenix Edition/Naxos Records in 2008 that became an instant top-seller and received very enthusiastic reviews.

Mikhail Korzhev’s second CD recording featured compositions for piano solo as well as works for violin and piano (with Alyssa Park) by the prominent Anglo-Dutch composer Gerard Schurmann and was released by Toccata Classics in 2012 on TOCC 0133. In the same year a very different recording project came out: a compilation of 40 classical standards for the online music library Megatrax. Another Schurmann CD – this one a collection of chamber works, with the cellist Clive Greensmith and clarinetist Håkan Rosengren – was released in spring 2014 on Toccata Classics TOCC 0220. A new recording project with the Lyris String Quartet presenting the two Schurmann piano quartets and two violin works is currently in preparation and will be released on Toccata Classics TOCC 0336.

But it is his playing in the first three piano concertos of Ernst Krenek (on Toccata Classics TOCC 0323) that has garnered the loudest praise: ‘Pianist Mikhail Korzhev is able to make even the most knotty of Krenek’s serial textures flow naturally. His tone is warm, and his phrasing ideally focussed’ (Gavin Dixon, *Classical CD Reviews*); ‘Korzhev’s piano playing is scintillating’ (John J. Puccio, *Classical Candor*), ‘The performances are exceptionally good, with Mikhail Korzhev proving a terrific virtuoso and highly sensitive musician’ (Robert Matthew-Walker, *Musical Opinion*) – the critical enthusiasm has been uniform.

Mikhail combines his performing career with teaching. He has served on the faculties of University of Southern California, Chapman University and currently is on the faculty of California State University at Fullerton. Since 2008 he has been a faculty member at Beverly Hills International Music Festival, and in summer 2009 he taught a summer course at the Bosendorfer Piano Academy in Vienna. He holds a doctorate in piano performance from University of Southern California, where he studied with Daniel Pollack. His previous teachers include Alexander Satz and Vera Khoroshina at Moscow Conservatoire College.

Eric Huebner has drawn worldwide acclaim for his performances of new and traditional music since making his debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at age seventeen. In January 2012 he was appointed pianist of the New York Philharmonic and has been featured in works by Lindberg, Stravinsky, Ives, Milhaud, Carter and Richard Strauss, among others. In March 2016 he was featured in recital as part of the New York Philharmonic 'Messiaen Week' series. Other recent solo projects include a complete performance in November 2016 of Ligeti's piano études in the contemporary-music series of the St Louis Symphony Orchestra. He has collaborated with the conductor David Robertson in performances of Ligeti's Piano Concerto, Messiaen's *Oiseaux exotiques* and with the percussionist Colin Currie on the American premiere of Elliott Carter's *Two Controversies and a Conversation* for piano, percussion and chamber ensemble. From 2001 to 2012 he was a member of Antares, a quartet comprising clarinet, violin, cello and piano. First prize winners of the 2002 Concert Artists Guild International Competition, Antares appeared regularly in major chamber-music venues throughout the United States and worked closely with many composers on the commissioning of new works for its combination.



A passionate interpreter of the music of our time, Eric Huebner has premiered countless new works, including a recent set of piano études by the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Roger Reynolds, with whom he has had a particularly fruitful collaboration. He has been involved with the New York Philharmonic 'Contact!' series since its inception and is a member of the Contemporary Music Ensemble Committee of the Orchestra. A regular visitor to the west coast, he has twice been a featured recitalist at the Ojai Festival in California, has performed on the Monday Evening series in Los Angeles, the Carlsbad Music Festival, and at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and made recital appearances at Zipper Hall, Villa Aurora and the Italian Consulate. In New York City, he has appeared as soloist and chamber musician in Carnegie's Zankel and Weill Recital Hall, Miller Theatre, Merkin Hall, Le Poisson Rouge, Roulette and Subculture. Additionally, he has appeared with numerous NYC-based contemporary music ensembles, including the International Contemporary Ensemble, Talea, New York New Music Ensemble, American Contemporary Music Ensemble, Manhattan Sinfonietta, So Percussion and the American Modern Ensemble.

A devoted teacher as well as performer, Eric Huebner is an Associate Professor of Music at the University at Buffalo (SUNY), where he maintains a studio of graduate and undergraduate piano majors and minors and teaches courses in twentieth-century piano music and piano literature. Since autumn 2014 he has been a member of the adjunct faculty of The Juilliard School, where he teaches a course in orchestral keyboard performance.

His performances have been broadcast on PBS and NPR, and on radio stations KMOZ (Los Angeles), WNYC (New York), Radio Bremen (Germany), ORF (Austria) and the BBC. He has recorded for Col Legno, Centaur, Bridge, Albany, Tzadik, Innova, New Focus Recordings and Mode Records. A recent solo release on New Focus Recordings features him in works by Carter, Schumann and Stravinsky. He holds a B.M. and M.M. from The Juilliard School, where he studied with Jerome Lowenthal. He lives in Buffalo and New York City and is married to composer Caroline Mallonée.

The violinist **Nurit Pacht** was a top prize-winner in international competitions, including the Irving Klein International Music Competition in California and the Tibor Varga International Violin Competition in Switzerland. As a soloist she has featured in major world events, such as the European conference for the inauguration of the Euro in Brussels, and under the auspices of the European Commission and United Nations she toured the former Yugoslavia during the cease-fire in 1996. In 2015, she performed for Pope Francis on his visit to New York and gave a State Department-funded recital tour of Ukraine. She spent several years touring the world as the soloist in stage-director Robert Wilson's 'Relative Light' and in projects with Bill T. Jones and his dance company, performing works for solo violin by J. S. Bach and John Cage. She has performed Philip Glass' duos for violin and piano with the composer at the piano and premiered many new works, including some dedicated to her, like Noam Sheriff's violin concerto *Dibrot*, with the Israeli Contemporary Players. She was the soloist on a tour of China with the Young Israel Philharmonic, performing Sibelius and Tchaikovsky Concertos. She has toured as soloist with the Israeli Chamber Orchestra, the Pacific Symphony and the Houston Symphony, and has performed as guest soloist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Rhode



Island Philharmonic, the Des Moines Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony, most of the major orchestras in Romania, the National Symphony in Columbia, Wrocław Chamber Orchestra and Filarmonica di Roma. She has performed in recitals and in small ensembles at the festivals of Santa Fe, Monadnock, Sienna, Mecklenberg and, at the invitation of Christoph Eschenbach, at Ravinia's Rising Stars Series. She has worked closely with many celebrated composers including the late Pierre Boulez, John Corigliano, John Harbison and Shulamit Ran. As a Baroque violinist, she has a master's degree from the Historical Performance program of The Juilliard School and has collaborated with William Christie, Christopher Hogwood, Monica Huggett and Jordi Savall. She has been a guest leader of ensembles including Music of the Baroque in Chicago and New York Baroque Inc. *Continental Britons: The Émigré Composers* – a live recital recording from the Wigmore Hall in London, released by Nimbus Records – featured her performances, with pianist Konstantin Lifschitz, of music by Hans Gál, Peter Gellhorn, Mátyás Seiber and Leopold Spinner.

Adrian Partington is currently Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral, Artistic Director of the Gloucester Three Choirs Festival and Artistic Director of the BBC National Chorus of Wales. He recently directed his third Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester, directing the Philharmonia Orchestra in several programmes, including Mahler's Symphony No. 8 on the last night of the Festival. He has been Director of Music at Gloucester Cathedral since January 2008, since when he has taken the choir on concert tours to Canada, South Africa, Sweden and the USA.

He has been Director of the BBC National Chorus of Wales since 1999, preparing the chorus for well over 150 concerts, including many BBC Proms; and a dozen CDs, two of which have been nominated for Grammy awards (music by Stanford in 2008, and by Parry in 2014). He conducts the BBC National Chorus and Orchestra of Wales in several concerts each year – for example, in July 2016, he conducted a Somme Commemoration Concert live on BBC Radio 3, which included a rare performance of the Delius Requiem. For many years, Adrian worked at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, where he founded in 2008 a Post-Graduate Choral Conducting course, which has already



Photo: Antony Thompson, TWM Media

produced a large number of distinguished conductors. Before working in Cardiff, he was Associate Chorus Master of the CBSO Chorus, and joint founder and conductor of the CBSO Youth Chorus. He has worked closely with many leading international conductors, including Claudio Abbado, Valery Gergiev, Bernard Haitink, Sir Charles Mackerras and Sir Simon Rattle. He has been chorus master for many BBC Proms over a twenty-year period, including the 2016 opening night. In 2015, he made his debut with the Dutch Radio Choir.

As well as enjoying his several permanent posts, Adrian pursues a varied career as an orchestral conductor. He conducts the Philharmonia Orchestra each year at the Three Choirs Festival and will direct them at the Royal Festival Hall in May 2018, and he has a long association with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Mozart Festival Orchestra and Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. He has conducted the Orchestra of Welsh National Opera in several performances of 'community' operas in Birmingham, Bristol and Cardiff, conducting them in *Messiah* in December 2016. In April 2015 he made his debut with the Royal Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra with Elgar's *The Kingdom* in Bruges; and in September 2016 he made his debut with the Royal Northern Sinfonia, conducting them in a Romantic programme in Selby Abbey.

Adrian is well known as an organ recitalist, having played at all the principal venues in the UK and toured across Europe, Australia and the United States. He has made a dozen solo CDs, mostly of Romantic music from England, France and Germany; and won the top prizes when he gained his fellowship of the Royal College of Organists.

He studied at the Royal College of Music – with Herbert Howells among other fine teachers – and at King's College, Cambridge, where he was both the Organ Scholar and an Academic Scholar. He has received conducting tuition from several important teachers over many years, most recently Sir Mark Elder.

Hailed by *Gramophone* as a 'symphonic conductor of stature', the conductor, cellist, composer and author **Kenneth Woods** has worked with the National Symphony Orchestra (USA), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and English Chamber Orchestra. He has also appeared on the stages of some of the world's leading music festivals, including Aspen, Scotia and Lucerne. In 2013, he took up a new position as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the English Symphony Orchestra. In 2015 he became the second Artistic Director of the Colorado MahlerFest, the only American organisation other than the New York Philharmonic to receive the Gold Medal of the International Gustav Mahler Society.

Woods was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra of the Swan in 2010 and during his tenure lifted that orchestra to a new level of international renown. With them, he recorded the first complete cycle of the symphonies of Hans Gál, paired with those of Robert Schumann, among the most widely praised classical recording projects in recent years, highlighted in National Public Radio's 'All Things Considered', 'Performance Today', BBC Radio 3, the Sunday *New York Times*, *The Sunday Telegraph* and *The Washington Post* and was an 'Editor's Choice' in *Gramophone*. Among his other recordings are Schoenberg's chamber-ensemble versions of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (for SOMM), which won the coveted 'IRR Outstanding' rosette from *International Record Review*, and *Spring Sounds, Spring Seas*, a MusicWeb 'Record of the Year'. His recordings with the English Symphony Orchestra and English String Orchestra include the Elgar Piano Quintet as orchestrated by Donald Fraser, and the first volume of this series of the complete piano concertos of Ernst Krenek was a *Sunday Times* 'Best of 2016'.

Woods is a widely read writer and frequent broadcaster, and his blog, 'A View from the Podium', is one of the 25 most popular classical blogs in the world. He has spoken on Mahler on NPR's 'All Things Considered' and BBC Radio 4's 'Today' programme and is a frequent commentator on BBC Radio 3.



The **English Symphony Orchestra** is an ensemble which in recent years has become synonymous with artistic excellence, innovative and visionary programming, distinctive commissioning, ground-breaking recording, a welcoming and immersive concert experience, transformative youth programmes and service to the community. Since the appointment of Kenneth Woods as the orchestra's new Artistic Director and Principal Conductor in 2013, the orchestra has re-emerged as a major force in British musical life, presenting 2015 and 2016 *Classical Music Magazine* 'Premieres of the Year', and releasing a triumphant series of recordings, including Donald Fraser's orchestration of the Elgar Piano Quintet (Classic FM Disc of the Week). Highlights of recent seasons include triumphant debuts in LSO St Luke's, St John's, Smith Square, and Elgar Concert Hall. In 2016–17, the orchestra will be appearing at The Bridgewater Hall, King's Place and Cheltenham Town Hall.



Founded in 1978 by William Boughton, the ESO has a long and distinguished history of collaboration with legendary figures of British music-making. Vernon ("Tod") Handley became the orchestra's second Principal Conductor in 2007, and led the orchestra until his death a year later. Over the years, the ESO has worked extensively with Stephen Isserlis, Nigel Kennedy, Daniel Hope, Nicholas Maw, Yehudi Menuhin (who was appointed the ESO's Principal Guest Conductor in 1991) and Michael Tippett. British music has always been a central part of the Orchestra's mission. Appropriately for an orchestra based in Elgar's home town, the ESO has made many acclaimed recordings of that composer's music, and that of major twentieth-century British composers, including Bridge, Britten, Butterworth and Vaughan Williams. John McCabe served as the Orchestra's Composer-in-Association from 2013 till his death in 2015. Following McCabe's death in 2015, the ESO appointed Philip Sawyers as 'John McCabe Composer-in-Association'.

In 2016–17, the ESO embarked on its most ambitious endeavour to date, 'The 21st C. Symphony Project', which was triumphantly launched with the premiere of Philip Sawyers' Third Symphony in February 2017, and continues with the premiere of David Matthews' Ninth in 2018.



Recorded on 5–7 September 2016 in Wyastone Concert Hall, Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, Wales
Engineer: Ben Connellan
Producer: Michael Haas

This recording is dedicated to the memory of Gladys Nordenstrom Krenek (1924–2016), without whose generous support and inspiration this project would have never materialised. She was a remarkable presence in Ernst Krenek's life for almost half a century and her effort in keeping his legacy alive cannot be underestimated.
Mikhail Korzhev

Booklet notes: Peter Tregear, Kenneth Woods and Mikhail Korzhev
Cover design: David M. Baker (david@notneverknow.com)
Typesetting and layout: KerryPress, St Albans

Executive producers: Antje Müller, for the Ernst Krenek Institut, Krems; Martin Anderson, for Toccata Classics

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