



OUR Recordings Digital EP Release

CAT NR: 9.70892



I.	MODERATO, GRADUALLY FASTER	9:43
II.	SLOW MOTION	6:08
III.	FAST, GRADUALLY FASTER	5:33
	TOTAL	21:34



Photo: Lars Skaaning

When approached by TRIO CON BRIO COPENHAGEN – three world class musicians – with a view to write a piece for them, I only hesitated for as long as it took me to take a stroll to the top of my driveway and back again before accepting, already having begun rubbing my hands. The time-honored concept “Piano Trio” (any normal person would assume it’s a composition for three pianos, but the classical music vocabulary is not known for its breathtaking logic) is terrifying enough for any composer today, but being of mature age with most of my future behind me, I plunged in, as it were, writing a three-movement composition for piano, violin and violoncello. Title? “Piano Trio”!

Plain and simple – but playing it is no simple undertaking. Therefore, when I showed up at the first rehearsal, it was with great humility and some anxiety as well – for what if the Trio thought I’d gone to unnecessary extremes, had been the cause of sleepless nights, weeping and the gnashing of teeth’s? However, there was no reason to panic for neither the Trio nor yours truly.

They were, needless to say, extremely well prepared, and – as is always the case with top players early on during the learning process – the technical stuff was already in place, so we just had to focus on the music and, I’m tempted to say, the sensual-spiritual aspects of performing the piece.

Not surprisingly they all had questions about my thoughts of the individual phrasing of the musical lines. Furthermore – being the composer – I was the only one who could get the odd misprints (which always happens here and there in a newly printed score) out of the way.

I stayed for a couple of hours, and when I left, it was with a great sense of relief and expectation.

There’s not much to say about the music, which is just “itself”, with no hidden agenda. However, I can say, without spoiling the plot, that the “homerun” of both outer movements are relentless white-knuckle rides towards the abyss, so please be warned. In the middle movement, though, peace and quiet prevail...

Poul Ruders, December 2021



Photo: Jes Vang

How does one describe a phenomenon like Poul Ruders? No sooner have you found the “mot juste” than something in the music clamours to contradict it. He can be gloriously, explosively extrovert one minute – withdrawn, haunted, intently inward looking the next. Super-abundant high spirits alternate with pained, almost expressionistic lyricism; simplicity and directness with astringent irony.

Try and restrict the language to technical matters and the paradoxes continue: few composers on the contemporary scene are so versatile, so accomplished, so obviously in command of their tools and materials, and yet the music can give the impression of dancing on the edge of a precipice. It is a language of extremes, commandingly integrated – and perhaps all the more startling for that.

Finding his voice has taken him longer than many other composers, he admits, but it has also been an adventure – a period of experimentation and discovery which has led him in all manner of directions, metaphorically and literally; confronting American minimalism in the early eighties and developing his own perspective; making London his spiritual home later in that decade and employing the peculiar English technique of ‘change-ringing’; exploring – in his own words – female values in the nineties as a vital counterbalance to the world of violence and desolation he had opened up in his previous works.

In his opera *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1996-98) – more than in any of his other works – Ruders draws together the themes which have preoccupied him for so long: The apocalyptic, the elemental and the human, aching tenderness, grotesque irony, despair – however, also, as in the closing pages of the *First Symphony* (1989), a flicker of hope. For Ruders, perhaps, ‘The One True Path’ is that there is no path at all. And thus the adventure continues.

©Stephen Johnson



Photo: Nikolaj Lund



Soo-Jin Hong, violin – Soo-Kyung Hong, cello – Jens Elvekjaer, piano

Acknowledged as one of the world's finest piano trios, the multifaceted members of TRIO CON BRIO COPENHAGEN are not only performing artists who tour extensively, but also esteemed recording artists, artistic directors and educators. Founded at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna in 1999, the trio is now based in Copenhagen and tours worldwide.

All three members of the trio knew right from the start that they would find their musical identities as a piano trio: "There is something about the configuration of a trio, about that triangle, that somehow focuses and amplifies the special understanding that we have as people and as musicians. It is both a freedom and a fulfillment."

The Trio was born out of an idea of the coming together of 'musical pairs' – of the two Korean-born sisters, Soo-Kyung Hong (cello) and Soo-Jin Hong (violin), and the husband of Soo-Kyung, the Danish pianist Jens Elvekjaer. They quickly gained a reputation for their fresh and contemporary approach to the core repertoire, as put in words by Danish Broadcasting Corporation's Esben Tange: "Works by Beethoven, Schubert and Brahms are transformed in their hands into the alive-and-kicking music of today". Winning most of the major competitions for piano trio – including the ARD (Munich), Vittorio Gui (Florence), Trondheim Competition (Norway), Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson (USA), Allianz Prize (Germany) and the prestigious P2 Artist's Prize (Denmark) – they are regularly heard at the world's leading concert series and venues, like Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Wigmore Hall, Berlin Philharmonie – Pierre Boulez-Saal, Concertgebouw, Elbphilharmonie, Seoul Arts Centre, Louvre in Paris, and of course their beloved "home venues": DR Koncerthuset and the Tivoli Concert Hall in Copenhagen.



Photo: Dejan Bulut

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TRIO CON BRIO COPENHAGEN plays a central role in Scandinavia's vibrant contemporary music scene. Leading composers have dedicated works to the Trio, like Per Nørgård who in 2012 dedicated a piece celebrating his 80th birthday in 2012 to the Trio. They also in 2012 premiered Sven-David Sandström's *Triple Concerto*, a work marking the composers 70th birthday. In January 2016 they presented the world premiere of Bent Sørensen's *Triple Concerto* with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, a work that won the prestigious Grawemeyer Award.

The ensemble's recordings have received tremendous critical acclaim. The latest album of Shostakovich and Arensky trios (Orchid Classics) was a Gramophone "Editor's Choice" and also singled out by BBC Music Magazine as a "Chamber Choice" of the month. The disc also won the German Record Critics' Award (Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik) among other winning artists including the Berlin Philharmonic, Frank Peter Zimmermann, and Quatuor Ebène. An album featuring the complete Beethoven piano trios (Orchid Classics) received broad, enthusiastic praise from critics and fans alike, with the BBC Music Magazine naming it "a triumph." The Trio has also recorded works composed for them by leading Scandinavian composers, including Per Nørgård, Bent Sørensen and Sven-David Sandström.



Photo: Nikolaj Lund

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Reviews:

"One of the greatest performances of chamber music I've ever encountered"
American Record Guide.

"We can now see the TRIO CON BRIO as the worthy successors of the legendary Beaux-Arts Trio. That says it all!" Diapason

"Radiant Russian memorials and unforgettable playing..." BBC Music Magazine.

"Superb... Any group would be hard-pressed to imitate this blend of verve and poise..." Gramophone

"TRIO CON BRIO COPENHAGEN scale Tchaikovsky's heights with the verve their name suggests. Every phrase soar and pulsates with the excitement of a fresh discovery as the Copenhagen players go the full distance with playing of skin-rippling sensitivity... sensational playing..." (Tchaikovsky and Smetana recording) The Guardian

"I was struck... by the feeling of improvisation; of three players moving forward together into a strange and wonderful new world..." (The complete Beethoven piano trios) Gramophone.

Classic FM, UK chose TRIO CON BRIO COPENHAGEN's Mendelssohn album as the *Best Chamber Music Disc of the Year*.



Photo: Private

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TRIO CON BRIO COPENHAGEN serves as artistic directors of the annual festival, Chamber Music at Lundsgaard and the Hellerup Chamber Music Society in Copenhagen.

Soo-Jin plays an *Andrea Guarneri* violin, Soo-Kyung plays a *Grancino* cello and Jens is Denmark's first *Steinway Artist*. On this recording, he plays a Steinway D-274. Both string players are endorsed by *Jargar Strings* and *Thomastik-Infeld* Vienna.



Photo: Private

Recorded in the Concert Hall of The Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen on May 13, 2023

Producer, recording and balance engineer: Preben Iwan

Editing, mix and mastering: Preben Iwan

Executive producer: Lars Hannibal

Cover photo: Nikolaj Lund

Artwork and cover design: CEZBP/OUR Recordings

Piano tuning: Marc-Tell Klein

Recorded in the DXD audio format (Digital eXtreme Definition, 352.8 kHz/32bit).

Pyramix DAW system with Horus preamps/converters.

Microphones: Decca Tree with 3x DPA 4006-TL, 2x DPA 4006 -TL

violin DPA 4011, cello 2 Neumann U89, piano 2x DPA 4015-TL.

Monitored on B&W 802D Nautilus Diamond speakers.



Photo: Nikolaj Lund

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AUGUSTINUS FONDEN

STIFTET 25. MARTS 1942

