

VIOLIN PLUS ONE



DVOŘÁK
TCHAIKOVSKY
CHAUSSON
SVENDSEN
MASSENET
BLOCH
SAINT-SAËNS

PIET KOORNHOF, violin
ALBIE VAN SCHALKWYK, piano



DE 3577



VIOLIN PLUS ONE

ANTONIN DVOŘÁK: Romance, Op.11

PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY: Sérénade mélancolique

ERNEST CHAUSSON: Poème, Op. 25

JOHAN SVENDSEN: Romance, Op. 26

JULES MASSENET: Méditation from Thais

ERNEST BLOCH: Nigun from Baal Shem

CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS: Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28

Piet Koornhof, violin ♦ **Albie van Schalkwyk**, piano

Total Playing Time: 67:01

Violin Plus One—who needs an orchestra?

The works on this album are known in two versions: for violin with orchestra, and for violin with piano, all by the composers themselves, except for the Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso by Saint-Saëns, of which the transcription for piano was done by Georges Bizet. We hope you'll agree that these versions for two instruments have their own particular merits.

I had long wished to record an album with my good friend and colleague, Albie van Schalkwyk, who is widely regarded as the dean of collaborative pianists in South Africa. For over 30 years we have regularly played together in duo recitals, piano trio concerts, and various ensembles as founding members of the South African Chamber Music Society. At last we buckled down to make a duo recording, and ended up making two. The other one, **Frolov & Friends**, has already been released by Delos.

Czech composer Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904) drew much inspiration from the folk music of his native Bohemia. He was instrumental in fostering national musical traditions, both in his homeland and also in America, where he served as music director of the National Conservatory in New York, and where he composed some of his

most famous compositions, including the Symphony No. 9 "From the New World," his magnificent Cello Concerto, and his String Quartet in F, the "American." The **Romance, Op. 11**, composed at the request of Josef Markus, leader of the Provisional Theatre Orchestra in Prague, is based on the slow movement of Dvořák's String Quartet No. 5 in F minor, which he composed in 1873 when he was still relatively unknown. The Quartet was not performed or published in his lifetime. The Romance, however, received its first public performance in 1877 in Prague, and was published in 1879, while the composer's version for violin and piano was published in 1915. The work follows a palindromic rondo form (A-B-A-C-A-B-A).

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893) composed his **Sérénade mélancolique** for violin and orchestra (or piano) in 1875, shortly after completing his First Piano Concerto. It was first heard a year later, performed by Adolph Brodsky, who stepped in to replace the work's dedicatee, Leopold Auer, when he backed out of the first performance. Several years later the same thing occurred, when Auer, as dedicatee of Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto, again declined to give the première, ostensibly because the work was "unplayable." Once again, it was Brodsky who rose to the challenge. The Sérénade was published three years after its first performance.

French composer Ernest Chausson (1855-1899), composed his best known work, the **Poème**, for violin and orchestra, Op. 25, in 1896 while he was on holiday in Florence. It was in response to a request by the famous Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe for a concerto, which Chausson regarded as too huge an undertaking. He suggested a shorter work for violin and orchestra instead, that "will be in very free form with several passages in which the violin plays alone." The first manuscript of the work carries the title, *Le Chant de l'amour triomphant*, suggesting that it might have been inspired by a short story of the same title by Ivan Turgenev. Turgenev's story is about a love triangle between a painter, his young wife, and a violinist, reminiscent of Turgenev's own lifelong infatuation with the mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot, who was married to a much older man, and whose one daughter and son might even have been fathered by Turgenev. Chausson's *Poème* brims with intense romanticism, and it is not difficult to imagine much of it as being programmatic. There are three versions of the *Poème*, by the composer himself: one for violin and orchestra, one for violin and piano, and one for violin, piano and string quartet. Some of the pianistically awkward passages are often adapted, as they are in this recording.

Johan Svendsen (1840-1911) was a Norwegian composer, conductor and violinist, who spent

most of his life in Denmark. He learned both the clarinet and the violin from his father, and later studied at the Leipzig conservatory. There he took violin lessons from Ferdinand David, but when he developed problems with his hand he switched to studying composition with Carl Reinecke. His attention gradually shifted to conducting and eventually he was appointed principal conductor of the Royal Theater Orchestra in Copenhagen, where he lived until his death. He was very popular in both Norway and Denmark but did not enjoy wide international acclaim. While his compositions as a student for chamber ensembles showed great maturity and received many prizes and accolades, the majority of his output was for orchestra and large ensembles. His most famous composition is undoubtedly the **Romance, Op. 26**.

Méditation from the opera *Thaïs* by French composer Jules Massenet (1842-1912) is another staple of violin repertoire. Originally scored for violin and orchestra, it has been transcribed for many instruments and combinations. The opera, based on a novel by Anatole France, tells the story of a young priest who seeks the salvation of a courtesan named Thaïs. The *Méditation* is a dramatic interlude between Acts II and III, representing Thaïs's spiritual awakening. It symbolizes her inner struggle as she meditates on the direction of her life. The music's dramatic tension and soaring

melody depict Thais's spiritual awakening as she decides to change her ways and convert to Christianity.

Nigun (Improvisation) for violin and orchestra or piano by Swiss-American composer Ernest Bloch (1880-1959) is the second and best known of a set of three pieces, called "Baal Shem: Three Pictures of Chassidic Life," published in 1923 and dedicated to the memory of his mother Sophie, who had died two years earlier. The work was inspired by two charismatic personalities: Israel Baal Shem Tov, the founder of modern Hasidism, and Swiss violinist André de Ribaupierre, who gave the first performance of Baal Shem in Cleveland, where Bloch was founder and director of the Cleveland Institute of Music from 1920 to 1925. Although coming from a Western European Jewish tradition, Bloch was deeply influenced by the mystical Hasidic movement of Eastern Europe, with its emphasis on song, dance and ecstasy as channels of direct communion with God. "Nigun" means "tune" in Hebrew and Yiddish, and in the Hasidic context refers to a type of song that is meant to transport listeners to transcendental realms of spirituality. Nigun is the centerpiece of Baal Shem and has taken its place in the repertoire for violin and piano as a standalone work.

The **Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28** by Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921) for violin and orchestra is one of the best known showpieces in the violin repertoire. Originally intended as the rousing finale to Saint-Saëns's first Violin Concerto, it was composed in 1863 for the Spanish virtuoso Pablo Sarasate. That the work found much favor is indicated by the fact that the piano reduction of the orchestral score was done by Bizet, most famous for his opera Carmen, and the transcription for two pianos made by Claude Debussy. *Capriccioso* means "free, lively, in a capricious and fantastic style" (and whimsical, one might say). It certainly is a fun piece, filled with verve and heartfelt tunes. It is technically challenging but composed with keen understanding of the violin's capabilities.

— Piet Koornhof

South African violinist **Piet Koornhof** has performed in Southern Africa, Europe, North America, Russia, Singapore and New Zealand, and has made CD recordings for Koch Discover International and Delos with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Italian flutist Raffaele Trevisani, American pianist Thomas Hecht, the South African Chamber Music Society (which he founded), the Potch Trio, and South African pianists Albie

van Schalkwyk, Truida van der Walt and Bernarda Vorster.

In addition to the standard repertoire, Piet has a special interest in performing twentieth and twenty-first century chamber music that is accessible and infrequently encountered.

Piet was born in South Africa in 1961. He made his concert debut at the age of nine while he was a pupil of Alan Solomon. As a youngster he twice represented South Africa as soloist with the South African National Youth Orchestra on tours to Europe and Israel with conductors Alberto Bolet and Avi Ostrovsky. He was awarded scholarships by, among others, the Southern African Music Rights Organisation, Anglo American Corporation, the Aspen Music School and the Juilliard School, where he studied with Dorothy DeLay.

Piet also took part in master classes by Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman and Sergiu Luca. After his return to South Africa in 1986 he acquired the degree DMus in musical performance from the institution where he is now an associate professor -- the School of Music of North West University in Potchefstroom, South Africa. He is married to Esmie, a violinist and schoolteacher, who is the mother of their three children, Gerhard, Hannes and Elrie.





Albie van Schalkwyk is one of the leading chamber musicians and vocal accompanists in South Africa. He has also performed as an orchestral soloist and solo recitalist, given master classes for singers and accompanists, worked as a music producer for the South African Broadcasting Corporation and arranged music for various combinations, including Broadway musicals and operas for 2 pianos and orchestral pieces for 3 to 8 pianos.

Van Schalkwyk's partnership with Austrian cellist Heidi Litschauer produced two major tours through South Africa as well as annual visits to Austria, where he played chamber music with visiting international artists and worked as repetiteur at the summer school of the International Neuberg Kulturtag from 1988-2011.

His interest in vocal music culminated in the formation in 1994 of The Songmakers' Guild, a Cape Town organization providing a regular platform to performers in the field of art song. He spent his 2002/3 sabbatical working as coach in the Vocal Department of the Mozarteum Music University in Salzburg, Austria.

In 2009 the South Africa Academy of Arts and Sciences awarded him the Huberte Rupert Prize for his contribution to ensemble playing and teaching over more than 30 years.

Van Schalkwyk completed his Ph.D. in Music at the University of the Free State in May 2012. He was Associate Professor in Piano and Chamber Music at the South Africa College of Music, University of Cape Town, from 2009 and retired at the end of 2017 to start his own private studio, the Musicumbrella Piano Studio.

Recorded: 11-13 December 2016 (tracks 1,3,6,7) and 11 December 2018 (tracks 2,4,5), in the Conservatoire Hall, School of Music, North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus.

Producer: Piet Koornhof

Sound engineer: Stefan van der Walt

Piano: Steinway

Violin: Boris Sverdlik 2002

Photographs: Johann du Toit of PictureCafé, Potchefstroom, South Africa

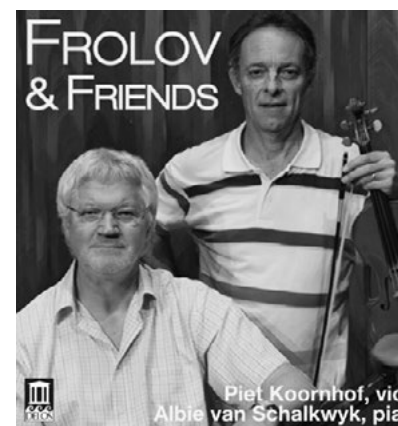
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DE 3479
On Fire
Piet Koornhof, violin
Bernarda Vorster, piano



DE 3529
Baltic & Beyond
Piet Koornhof, violin
Thomas Hecht, piano



DE 3557
Frolov & Friends
Piet Koornhof, violin
Albie van Schalkwyk, pian

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1. **ANTONIN DVOŘÁK: Romance, Op.11** (11:59)
2. **PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY: Sérénade mélancolique** (8:59)
3. **ERNEST CHAUSSON: Poème, Op. 25** (15:11)
4. **JOHAN SVENDSEN: Romance, Op. 26** (7:48)
5. **JULES MASSENET: Méditation from Thaïs** (4:56)
6. **ERNEST BLOCH: Nigun from Baal Shem** (8:03)
7. **CAMILLE SAINT-SAËNS: Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso, Op. 28** (9:45)

Piet Koornhof, violin
Albie van Schalkwyk, piano

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