

Liszt to Milhaud :

A Journey with Piano Four Hands



Zeynep Ucbasaran and Sergio Gallo

play music by Liszt, Bizet, Gounod, Godard, Dvořák and Milhaud

Liszt to Milhaud

Franz Liszt (1811-1886)

Two Scenes from Lenau's *Faust*, S.599

- | | | | |
|---|-----|-----------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I. | Der nächtliche Zug | 11:42 |
| 2 | II. | Der Tanz in der Dorfschenke | 10:49 |

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Slavonic Dances, Op. 46

- | | | | |
|---|------|------------------|------|
| 3 | I. | No. 1 in C major | 4:24 |
| 4 | II. | No. 2 in E minor | 4:52 |
| 5 | III. | No. 8 in G minor | 4:12 |

Charles Gounod (1818-1893), arr. H. Engelmann

- | | | | |
|---|--|--|------|
| 6 | | Love Duet from <i>Faust</i> ("O nuit d'amour") | 3:24 |
|---|--|--|------|

Benjamin Godard (1849-1895)

- | | | | |
|---|--|------------------------------|------|
| 7 | | Berceuse from <i>Jocelyn</i> | 2:32 |
|---|--|------------------------------|------|

Georges Bizet (1838-1875)

- | | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------|------|
| 8 | | Overture from <i>Carmen</i> | 1:59 |
|---|--|-----------------------------|------|

Charles Gounod (1818-1893), arr. W.P. Mero

- | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------|------|
| 9 | | Waltz from <i>Faust</i> | 3:27 |
|---|--|-------------------------|------|

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974)

- | | | | |
|----|--|------------------------------|-------|
| 10 | | Le Boeuf sur le toit, Op. 58 | 17:15 |
|----|--|------------------------------|-------|

Total playing time:			64:40
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Zeynep Ucbasaran and Sergio Gallo – four hands at one piano

A Journey with Piano Four Hands

Before the invention of the radio, the only way to hear music was to play it yourself or to be within ear-shot of others who were playing. Quite a contrast to today, when you can hear every kind of music imaginable at the touch of a button.

In the mid-19th century, composers arranged their symphonies, operas and string quartets for two people to play together while sitting at one piano. This intimate experience of creating and listening to music while sitting side by side at home understandably produced a large market for music for piano four-hands. Music education, piano production and music publishing were all flourishing—additional factors that contributed to the popularity of piano music for four hands.

Zeynep Ucbasaran and **Sergio Gallo** have been performing music for piano four-hands since 2005. Both pianists share the same enthusiasm for the repertoire. With its wonderful range of sonorities, the piano can create orchestral and operatic textures, as exemplified by the pieces on this album. The composers of these pieces wrote them in both piano duet and symphonic forms, usually but not always producing the orchestral versions first. In addition, the pianists present very effective arrangements of excerpts from well-known operas.

Franz Liszt composed the *Two Episodes from Lenau's Faust* for orchestra between 1856 and 1861. Liszt had turned to the legend of Faust earlier for his towering *Faust Symphony*. One of the greatest pianists of all time, Liszt himself was identified by some of his contemporaries with Faust, claiming (whether they believed it or not) that his astonishing technique and brilliance at the piano could only be explained by a pact with the devil.

Liszt arranged a piano duet version of the two episodes after his original orchestral pieces. The first episode, “Night Procession,” is rarely played while the second, “The Dance in the Village Inn,” was titled “Mephisto Waltz” in the piano four-hands version and has achieved wide popularity. A program note in the orchestral score tells how Mephistopheles plays the fiddle while Faust waltzes with a beautiful woman during a wedding celebration.

Antonín Dvořák wrote his *Slavonic Dances, Op. 46*, in 1878. Originally for piano four-hands, the dances were inspired by the hugely successful *Hungarian Dances* by Johannes Brahms. Propelled by the vigor characteristic of much of Dvořák's music, the dances display his skill at varying rhythms, textures and tonal colors. Dvořák did not use actual folk tunes, but the melodies and rhythms of the dances resemble folk songs and dances from his native Bohemia.

The set of pieces opens with a lively presto, and although minor keys alternate with major throughout the dance; the mood is festive throughout the movement. The graceful and somber melody of the second dance provides a contrast to the first. The last of the set may have been inspired by the Gypsy violinists heard throughout the Austro-Hungarian empire in Dvořák's day.

At the request of his publisher, Dvořák orchestrated the dances, and after the premiere of the symphonic version in Dresden, Dvořák's reputation as a composer soared.

Like Liszt, **Charles Gounod** was inspired by the Faust legend, and his opera, based on Goethe's version of the myth, made him famous. It tells how Faust sells his soul to the devil for youth, power and wealth. Maneuvered by Mephistopheles, the beautiful Marguerite falls in love with Faust and they pledge their love to each other in song.

The exuberant waltz from Gounod's *Faust* is heard near the end of Act II. It offers respite from the heavy themes of the opera, as the villagers dance and sing about the waltz itself, calling it a light breeze, noise and joy.

Benjamin Godard's operatic masterpiece, *Jocelyn*, was premiered in Brussels in 1888. The enchanting "Berceuse" (lullaby) from this opera is Godard's most famous piece; it is known in English as "Angels Guard Thee." The piano four-hands version showcases Godard's melodic gift and the uncommon beauty of this song.

Georges Bizet's *Carmen*, one of the most popular operas of all time, features some of classical music's most memorable tunes. The *Overture* combines the excitement of the bullfight with the romance and passion that unfold during the opera. Bizet's brilliant melodies shine in this version for piano four-hands.

Le Boeuf sur le toit, Op. 58 is one of **Darius Milhaud's** best-known works. It was written in 1919, upon Milhaud's return to Paris after two years in Brazil, and premiered in 1920 as a ballet with full orchestra. Milhaud was inspired by the popular music he heard in Brazil, and he described *Le Boeuf sur le toit* (the Ox on the Roof) as "a ballet about the carnival in Rio." Milhaud mixed Brazilian popular music, folk music and dance rhythms with original music, at times simultaneously employing themes in two wildly different keys.

Named after a popular Brazilian song, *Le Boeuf sur le toit* was hugely successful as a ballet—so much so that a trendy Paris nightclub took the name. For two years, the group of composers known as *Les Six* (of which Milhaud was a prominent member) gathered every week on Saturday evenings at Milhaud's home and then went frequently to the Boeuf-sur-le-toit, where they met singers, painters, writers and other creative Parisians.

Liszt

Dvořák

Gounod

Godard

Bizet

Milhaud



The musicians

Pianist **Zeynep Ucbasaran** began her music studies at the age of four at the İstanbul Conservatory. She received a Concert Artist Diploma from the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, and after advanced studies at the Hochschule für Musik, in Freiburg, Germany. She earned her MA and DMA degrees in Piano Performance from the University of Southern California.

Ucbasaran has won professional awards such as the American Liszt Society Award, and she was a prize-winner in the 1996 and 2000 Los Angeles Liszt Competitions. She was designated a “woman of distinction in the year 2003” by the Daughters of Atatürk organization in the United States.

Ucbasaran has given recitals and concerts in many countries, making her Wigmore Hall debut in November 2004. She has given master classes and lecture recitals throughout the United States, and in Brazil, Spain, Sweden and Turkey. In addition to concertizing as a solo performer, she has toured with international musicians in various chamber music configurations. In 2019, as a part of the 47th İstanbul International Music Festival, Ucbasaran performed a four-piano recital with George Lazaridis, Cyprien Katsaris and Janis Vakarelis as the “Four Musketeers of the Piano.” These collaborations will continue into the future.

Her recordings on the Eroica label include the scherzos and polonaises of Chopin, the complete piano sonatas of Mozart, music by Liszt, Schubert, Scarlatti and Beethoven; and twentieth-century composers including Leonard Bernstein and Robert Muczynski.

Ucbasaran’s recording of the piano music of Ahmet Adnan Saygun is found on the Naxos label. Her recordings have been received with acclaim: *Gramophone* magazine remarked that “An agreeable elegance pervades pianist Zeynep Ucbasaran’s playing.”

As a part of the “3 Piano Project” she has performed and recorded music for three pianos with her colleagues Sergio Gallo and Miguel Ángel Ortega Chavalas. *The 3 Piano Project* album includes the premiere recording of Saygun’s *Poem, Op. 73* for three pianos (Divine Art DDA 25207)

Ucbasaran’s performance of the works that Franz Liszt performed in İstanbul when he visited the city in 1847 was broadcast by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to all of Europe as part of the celebration of Liszt’s 200th birthday in October 2011. A compilation of these selections interpreted by Ucbasaran was released in 2013 under the title “Liszt in İstanbul.” She has recently completed her solo project of recording the complete set of Mozart’s variations for piano. The *All Music Guide* raved, “As a Mozart player, Ucbasaran touches the sublime.”

For more information, please see her website, www.zupiano.com

A Steinway artist, **Sergio Gallo** specializes in the repertoire of the Romantic period, especially Liszt and his contemporaries, including Schumann, Henselt, Brahms, and Chopin. He has also championed the work of composers in Brazil, the nation of his birth. Gallo has recorded several acclaimed CDs for the Eroica label, with forthcoming projects on the Naxos, Grand Piano and Quartz labels. Sergio Gallo's recent release of Liszt's transcriptions of operas by Meyerbeer received a four star rating from *BBC Magazine*. His recent recording of music by Villa-Lobos garnered high praise from *Gramophone* magazine: "splendid playing of a lively programme . . . [a] nuanced performance . . . played with exceptional artistry") and Bradley Bolen wrote in *American Record Guide*: "It is hard to imagine a pianist leaving me with a more intense feeling of nobility." In 2011, Gallo won the Global Music Award of Excellence for his album *Mostly Villa-Lobos: 20th Century Piano Music from the Americas*.

Gallo has performed with orchestras throughout the Americas and worldwide. In the last decade, he has performed in Turkey, Brazil, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Serbia, Portugal, Korea, Taiwan, Canada and China, as well as in recitals given across the United States. Since his Brazilian national radio debut in 1986 on Radio Cultura, São Paulo and his European radio debut in 1988 on Radio France, Paris, Gallo's performances have been regularly played on classical music radio outlets around the world. His performances of Liszt's Hungarian *Fantasy L.123*, Schumann's *Concerto in A minor, Op. 54*, and Tchaikovsky's *Concerto No. 1 in D-flat Minor, Op. 23* were highlighted in 2011 Atlanta symphonic performances.

Sergio Gallo is the winner of concerto competitions of the Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra and of the University Symphony in Santa Barbara. He has received a grant from the Henry Cowell Incentive Funds at the American Music Center in New York to record works by Cowell, and this recording has been featured in the program "Piano Matters" with David Dubal. Gallo twice received a Challenge America Fast-Track Grant award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Gallo earned the Diplôme d'Excellence at the Conservatoire Européen de Musique de Paris, a Post-Graduate Certificate at the Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest, an M.M. and Artist Diploma at the University of Cincinnati; and the Doctorate of Musical Arts from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1998. Gallo took part in the Daniel Barenboim Workshop for Pianists and Conductors at Carnegie Hall in 2000, and participated in the Orchestra Stabile Summer Festival in Bergamo, Italy, the Sergei Rachmaninoff International Courses in Piano Performance in Tambov, Russia and the Seminaire Jean Fassina in Paris. He is Professor of Piano Performance at Georgia State University in Atlanta, and is an affiliated artist of the Rocky Ridge Music Academy in Estes Park, Colorado.

For more information please see www.naxos.com/person/Sergio_Gallo/239123.htm



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The 3-piano Project

Zeynep Ucbasaran,
Miguel Ortega Chavaladas
& Sergio Gallo



Server Acim: Fikir Hücreleri
Edson Zampronha: S'io esca vivo
Ahmet Adnan Saygun: Poem, Op. 73
José Zárate: Petit Nocturne Noir
Kamran Ince: Requiem for Mehmet
Luigi Dallapiccola: Musica per tre pianoforte

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Sergio Gallo

Zeynep Ucbasaran

