



Simply Brilliant!

Starling Chamber Orchestra

Kurt Sassmannshaus, director

Grieg	<i>Holberg Suite, Opus 40</i>
Britten	<i>Simple Symphony, Opus 4</i>
Maurer arr. J. R. Cassidy	<i>Sinfonia Concertante for Four Violins in A minor, Opus 55 (world premiere recording)</i>

Tania Davison, Jessica Park, Eun-Mee Jeong, Timothy O'Neill, violinists

Program Notes

Edvard Grieg (1843–1907)

Holberg Suite, Opus 40

The *Holberg Suite*—or *From Holberg's Time: Suite in the Olden Style*—originated in 1884 as a piano composition to celebrate the bicentennial of the birth of Ludwig Holberg (1684–1754), the founder of modern Danish literature. Grieg was commissioned to write a cantata for male voices for the jubilee, but his dissatisfaction with the piece contributed to his offering a second piece for the occasion—the *Holberg Suite*. On December 7, 1884, the cantata was given its premiere, and Grieg himself performed the *Holberg Suite* on the piano. Early in 1885 he arranged the Suite for string orchestra, in which version it seized the public's attention and gained considerable recognition for the composer.

Because Holberg flourished at the height of the Baroque period, Grieg decided to honor him by using musical forms and idioms common to that time, hence the sequence of movements—Praeludium, Sarabande, Gavotte, Air, and Rigaudon. Despite its references to Baroque form, Grieg's lush harmonic touches, intricacies of scoring, and dynamic contrasts proclaim its nineteenth-century outlook.

—adapted from a program note by Jane Vial Jaffe and used by permission of the Aspen Music Festival

Benjamin Britten (1913–1976)

Simple Symphony, Opus 4

Benjamin Britten began to compose almost as soon as he could hold a pen in his hand. During his years at school he wrote incessantly—sonatas, symphonies, songs, chamber music—and a considerable number of these pieces were played and tested within the school setting by students or older musician friends. Consequently, practically none of the published works falls under the category of juvenilia.

The *Simple Symphony* dates from 1934; it is the work of a young man hardly twenty years old. The alliterative titles of the movements point clearly to the composer's intention of regarding his work as a fun piece, and that it certainly is. The movements follow each other according to the traditional precept (with the Sentimental Sarabande taking the role of the slow movement), but the execution of the movements themselves is rather sketchy—there is no full recapitulation in the first movement, and the folk dance elements of the last movement are not altogether worked out. Yet we don't miss anything, because perhaps we feel that whatever is not there might easily have been provided, that the composer, no matter what he gives or what he withholds, is in supreme command.

While being short, crisp, and concise, the work is really by no means "simple." With its contrapuntal craft and cunning, it is a sophisticated little creation, really the work of a young master.

—adapted from a program note by Kurt Oppens and used by permission of the Aspen Music Festival

Ludwig Wilhelm Maurer (1789–1878)

Sinfonia Concertante for Four Violins in A minor, Opus 55

arr. J. R. Cassidy (*world premiere recording*)

Ludwig Wilhelm Maurer was born in Potsdam in 1789 and died in St. Petersburg in 1878. During the Napoleonic wars he went to Russia, where he found employment as the director of the musical establishment of a wealthy nobleman. After having played and traveled extensively in Europe, he went back to Russia in 1833, where the Czar offered him all the opportunities that his musical organizations, many of them still in an infant stage, could provide. For more than three decades Maurer conducted the symphony concerts in St. Petersburg. As an old man he taught extensively and wrote books on violin technique.

Maurer was known as a brilliant violin virtuoso; his playing has been described as an ideal combination of the French and Viotti schools. The *Concertante* for four violins (published in 1831) was his great popular success. A fun piece and an oddity as a four-violin concerto, the *Concertante* relies on post-Classical thematic material, with a touch of Weber and Spohr in the first movement and a definite French flavor in the last.

The Starling Chamber Orchestra plays a version arranged for four violins and strings by J. R. Cassidy.

—adapted from a program note by Kurt Oppens and used by permission of the Aspen Music Festival



Kurt Sassmannshaus

Kurt Sassmannshaus, violinist and conductor, is considered one of today's preeminent violin pedagogues. He received his Master's degree from the Juilliard School, where he was a scholarship student of Dorothy DeLay. He also studied with Miss DeLay as a scholarship student at the Aspen Music Festival and School, and won first prize in the International Chamber Music Competition in Colmar, France. Mr. Sassmannshaus is currently Chairman of the String Department at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

Mr. Sassmannshaus' multifaceted career as a violinist, pedagogue and conductor has taken him to many parts of the world to perform and hold master classes. He has conducted the Starling Chamber Orchestra in many major European concert halls and at New York's Lincoln Center.

Mr. Sassmannshaus directs the renowned Starling Preparatory String Project and the Starling Chamber Orchestra at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. In 1987, he founded the Starling program as an integrated advanced pre-collegiate program for highly talented young string players. London's *Strad* Magazine called the program "a virtual laboratory of excellence." Germany's *Neue Musikzeitung* called the program simply, "the first address for the best."

Mr. Sassmannshaus works in close association with Dorothy DeLay both in Cincinnati and at the Aspen Music Festival and School.

Starling Chamber Orchestra

The Starling Chamber Orchestra is comprised of thirty-three superbly talented young musicians, ages twelve through eighteen. These outstanding young artists have been selected from throughout the United States and abroad to participate in the Starling Preparatory String Project, the internationally renowned training center at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

The young artists meet every Saturday in Cincinnati for private lessons, orchestra rehearsals, chamber music coaching, and lessons in theory, ear training and composition. Master classes are offered by Dorothy DeLay and members of the LaSalle and Tokyo string quartets. Professional accompanists are available for lessons. Some students travel long distances by car or airplane to participate in this optimal educational program—a program that offers performance opportunities as an integral part of the Starling philosophy. The Starling Preparatory String Project has become America's premier training ground for young soloists by providing its students with an unprecedented number of solo opportunities with orchestra.

The Starling Chamber Orchestra has a busy international touring and recording schedule. Since 1992, the orchestra has performed on three major European tours. In June 1995 the SCO performed two concerts in Istanbul's historic Hagia Irene as part of the International Istanbul Youth Festival, and in 1997 played four successful concerts in Korea before returning to the Aspen Music Festival. During the 1997–98 season, the Starling Chamber Orchestra performed three subscription concerts at the Aronoff Center for the Arts in Cincinnati, as well as concerts in Tennessee and Aspen.



Orchestra for the Arte Nova Classics/BMG label.

Mark Lyons Photography

Tania Davison, age 19 at the time of this recording, began violin studies at age five. At age ten, she began violin studies with Kurt Sassmannshaus at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music as a Starling Preparatory String Project student. Tania has spent numerous summers studying at the Aspen Music Festival & School in Colorado, where she performed the Stravinsky Violin Concerto with Aspen's Young Artists Orchestra in 1996. In 1995 she performed as soloist with the Springfield Symphony and Dayton Philharmonic, and also recorded Giornovich's Violin Concerto No. 8 with the Starling Chamber



Jessica Park, age 14 at the time of this recording, has been called "an exceptional violin talent" by the *Frankfurter Neue Presse*. She began violin studies at the age of four, and at the age of seven she made her first public appearance as soloist with the Starling Chamber Orchestra. In 1993, at the age of nine, Jessica became the youngest soloist to perform with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra when she played under the baton of Keith Lockhart. She was a soloist on all three of the SCO's European tours and has appeared as soloist with the Young Artists Orchestra at the Aspen Music Festival. Jessica has studied with Kurt Sassmannshaus in Cincinnati and Aspen since 1990. In 1998 she performed as soloist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and associate conductor John Morris Russell, and in the spring of 1999 she gave a recital in Graz, Austria under the auspices of the Karl Böhm Foundation.



Eun-Mee Jeong, age 15 at the time of this recording, lives in Lookout Mountain, Tennessee. She travels to Cincinnati weekly to study with Kurt Sassmannshaus and to participate in the Starling Preparatory String Project. Eun-Mee has performed as soloist with the Starling Chamber Orchestra and the Chattanooga Symphony on several occasions. In 1993, at the age of eleven, she won the Tennessee Music Teachers Association Competition. In February 1997, she appeared as soloist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in a performance of Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3 in G Major, K. 216. In May 1999, Eun-Mee was the featured soloist in a Cincinnati performance of "Ferdinand the Bull" for Speaker and Solo Violin with guest narrator Henry Meyer.



Timothy O'Neill, age 17 at the time of this recording, is a recent alumnus of the Starling Preparatory String Project. He began violin studies at the age of three and has studied with Kurt Sassmannshaus since he was seven. He has been a scholarship student at the Aspen Music Festival and in 1998 entered his freshman year at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. Timothy has appeared frequently as a soloist with the Starling Chamber Orchestra, and as the winner of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition, he performed as soloist with the combined CSYO/Cincinnati Symphony in 1996. A talented composer, Timothy has studied with Gerhard Samuel and George Tsontakis; currently he studies with Joel Hoffman.



Photo by Alex Irvin

Simply Brilliant!

Grieg: *Holberg Suite*, Opus 40

Prelude
Sarabande
Gavotte and Musette
Air
Rigaudon

Britten: *Simple Symphony*, Opus 4

Boisterous Bourrée
Playful Pizzicato
Sentimental Sarabande
Frolicsome Finale

Maurer: *Sinfonia Concertante for Four Violins in A minor*, Opus 55
arr. Cassidy (*world premiere recording*)

Allegro
Andante
Allegro

Starling Chamber Orchestra (ages as of November 1, 1997)

Violin

Peter Adams	14	Cincinnati, OH
Esther An	17	Cincinnati, OH
Breana Bauman	15	Cincinnati, OH
Mark Byers	15	Cincinnati, OH
Kathryn Eberle	15	Nashville, TN
Alison Finger	16	Louisville, KY
Eun-Mee Jeong	15	Lookout Mountain, TN
Olivia Johnson	12	Cincinnati, OH
Elise Kotheimer	14	Louisville, KY
Ryan Miller	15	Middletown, OH
Timothy O'Neill	17	Cincinnati, OH
Richard Pan	14	Lexington, KY
Jessica Park	14	Villa Hills, KY
Michelle Satris*	17	Clemson, SC
Spencer Toppell	17	Portland, OR
Xiao-Xian Wang	15	Wuhan, China
Annie Wolaver	14	Nashville, TN
Ye-Young Yi	12	Cincinnati, OH
Sarah Zun	15	Cincinnati, OH

Viola

Jacob Adams	16	Cincinnati, OH
Jill Fratianne*	16	Cincinnati, OH
Christian Kaufmann	13	Louisville, KY
Kelly Kaufmann	17	Louisville, KY
Daniel Kwon	16	Cincinnati, OH
Alexander Wolaver	12	Nashville, TN

Cello

Eric Byers	17	Cincinnati, OH
Kezia Engelbrecht	16	Winchester, KY
Erin Finger	13	Louisville, KY
Stephan Giepner	16	Essen, Germany
Chad Leezer	14	Louisville, KY
Samantha London	11	Dayton, OH
Kathy O'Neill	14	Cincinnati, OH
Sam Zun*	17	Cincinnati, OH

Double Bass

Christopher Ewan	21	Cincinnati, OH
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*denotes soloist in *Holberg Suite*

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Tania Davison, Jessica Park, Eun-Mee Jeong, Timothy O'Neill, violinists

Grieg: *Holberg Suite*, Opus 40

Track 1: Prelude = 2:42

Track 2: Sarabande = 3:43

Track 3: Gavotte and Musette = 3:39

Track 4: Air = 6:29

Track 5: Rigaudon = 4:09

Britten: *Simple Symphony*, Opus 4
(Oxford University Press. ASCAP.)

Track 6: Boisterous Bourrée = 3:16

Track 7: Playful Pizzicato = 3:28

Track 8: Sentimental Sarabande = 6:59

Track 9: Frolicsome Finale = 3:08

**Maurer: *Sinfonia Concertante* for Four
Violins in A minor, Opus 55**

arr. J. R. Cassidy (*world premiere recording*)

Track 10: Allegro = 7:57

Track 11: Andante = 3:23

Track 12: Allegro = 8:30

Total: 55:23

Maurer recorded in Corbett Auditorium, University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, December 1997. Grieg and Britten recorded in Joan & Irving Harris Concert Hall, Aspen Music Festival and School, Aspen, Colorado, June 1998.



Producers: Catherine Carroll, Matthew Reichert,
Brittany Kotheimer

Recording Engineer: Thomas Haines

Digital editing: Thomas Haines

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