

# Simply Brilliant! Starling Chamber Orchestra

Kurt Sassmannshaus, director

Grieg

Holberg Suite, Opus 40

Britten

Simple Symphony, Opus 4

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

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 iuvenilia.

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.

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#### **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

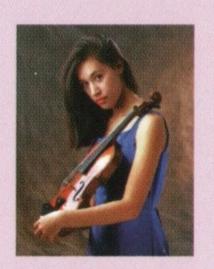
Aspen Music Festival and School.

#### **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.



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 Giornovichi's Violin Concerto No. 8 with the Starling Chamber

Orchestra for the Arte Nova Classics/BMG label.

Mark Lyons Photography



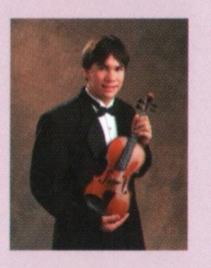
Jessica Park, age 14 at the time of this recording, has been called "an exceptional violin talent" by the *Frankfurter Neue Presse*. She began violin studies at the age of four, and at the age of seven she made her first public appearance as soloist with the Starling Chamber Orchestra. In 1993, at the 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

T7: 1:

#### **Simply Brilliant!**

Grieg:	Holberg	Suite,	<b>Opus</b>	40
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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 Allegro Violins in A minor, Opus 55 Andante arr. Cassidy (world premiere recording) Allegro

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

Violin			Viola		
Peter Adams	14	Cincinnati, OH	Jacob Adams	16	Cincinnati, OH
Esther An	17	Cincinnati, OH	Jill Fratianne*	16	Cincinnati, OH
Breana Bauman	15	Cincinnati, OH	Christian Kaufmann	13	Louisville, KY
Mark Byers	15	Cincinnati, OH	Kelly Kaufmann	17	Louisville, KY
Kathryn Eberle	15	Nashville, TN	Daniel Kwon	16	Cincinnati, OH
Alison Finger	16	Louisville, KY	Alexander Wolaver	12	Nashville, TN
Eun-Mee Jeong	15	Lookout Mountain, TN			
Olivia Johnson	12	Cincinnati, OH	Cello		
Elise Kotheimer	14	Louisville, KY	Eric Byers	17	Cincinnati, OH
Ryan Miller	15	Middletown, OH	Kezia Engelbrecht	16	Winchester, KY
Timothy O'Neill	17	Cincinnati, OH	Erin Finger	13	Louisville, KY
Richard Pan	14	Lexington, KY	Stephan Giepner	16	Essen, Germany
Jessica Park	14	Villa Hills, KY	Chad Leezer	14	Louisville, KY
Michelle Satris*	17	Clemson, SC	Samantha London	11	Dayton, OH
Spencer Toppell	17	Portland, OR	Kathy O'Neill	14	Cincinnati, OH
Xiao-Xian Wang	15	Wuhan, China	Sam Zun*	17	Cincinnati, OH
Annie Wolaver	14	Nashville, TN			
Ye-Young Yi	12	Cincinnati, OH	Double Bass		
Sarah Zun	15	Cincinnati, OH	Christopher Ewan	21	Cincinnati, OH

<sup>\*</sup>denotes soloist in *Holberg* Suite

## Simply Brilliant!

## Starling Chamber Orchestra

Kurt Sassmannshaus, Director

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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