

LUMINOUS SHADE

Maria du Toit & Nina Schumann



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Any person who is familiar with the acoustics of wind instruments, or has done some reading on the topic, is likely to have spent a fair deal of time considering the case of the clarinet. In acoustical terms, the instrument is little more than a cylindrical tube that is for all intents and purposes closed at the mouthpiece end (we can safely discount the bell attachment). However, the combination of single open end and a cylindrical bore results in an interesting set of acoustical properties, making the clarinet a favourite example in textbooks on acoustics. The clarinet provides, in practice as well as in theory, the stock example of the behaviour of an air column vibrating within the confines of a stopped tube. This physical arrangement displays some interesting acoustic quirks. For instance, a note played by making a string vibrate (such as that we find on a violin or cello, or in the heart of a piano), will excite the surrounding air in such a manner that the sound's component frequencies can be analysed as whole integer multiples of the lowest present frequency. With the clarinet, only odd-numbered multiples of the lowest frequency are present. This is the result of the pattern of air pressure fluctuations produced, which is constricted by the fact that one end of the instrument is open to the atmosphere. This physical quirk is also responsible for the fact that clarinets, with the aid of a register key, overblow by a twelfth, and

not an octave as we find with saxophones and flutes. Furthermore, because the relative energy of frequencies present in a tone determine its timbre, the clarinet's lack of even-numbered harmonics imbue it with its unique tone colour. It is in this manner that the clarinet family (which are all cylindrical tubes closed at one end) achieve their famously fluid timbre.

Of course, it is the clarinet's timbre, and not its description in acoustics textbooks, that is probably brought to the mind of the average music-lover. The tone colour of the clarinet has been exploited by a great many composers, although it is probably Mozart's initial efforts for the instrument that entrenched it as an essential hue on the orchestrator's palette. Indeed, the timbre of the clarinet has been held to be so crucial to orchestration that composers routinely scored the clarinet part for two instruments, one tuned in A and another in B flat (the former often being held to have a warmer and more mellow tone than its B flat compatriot, due to the differing resonance properties related to the size of the bore). Timbre is so important to the artistic conception of the clarinet that even the names of the different registers of the instrument are well-known to non-clarinet playing music lovers: the low, sonorous chalumeau register, the mellow mid-range clarino, and the shrill altissimo higher register. Incidentally, the chalumeau register gets its name from a Baroque forerunner of the clarinet, which was retained for

a period while the strength of the lower register of the modern instrument was still not perfected. Once these problems were ironed out, the chalumeau, which had been retained to play low register parts, was rendered completely obsolete. Subsequently, the lower register of the clarinet has been known as the 'chalumeau' register.

After Mozart's initial interest in the instrument, it didn't take long for composers to recognise the clarinet's potential in solo and chamber ensemble playing. The medium of the clarinet quintet – a string quartet plus a clarinet part – has proven a particularly good vehicle for the instrument's expressive powers. Mozart's clarinet quintet is a particularly fine example of early chamber work involving the modern instrument, and served as model for the famous quintet by Brahms.

Brahms would go on to write two sonatas for the instrument as well. Other Romantics writing well-known sonatas for the instrument included Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy and Camille Saint-Saëns. And wherever the Classical and Romantic masters have written prominent instrumental pieces, schools of virtuosity have been established. This recording is both a showcase of such mastery of the instrument, and a demonstration of how the repertoire has subsequently been expanded to further explore the potential of the clarinet.



An institution synonymous with instrumental virtuosity is the Conservatoire de Paris, which has since the latter half of the nineteenth century produced some of the world's most skilled performers of Western art music. The mystique surrounding the Paris Conservatoire is not simply because of the quality of instrumentalists produced by the institution, but also because many famous composers have been associated with it. Debussy, Ravel, Saint-Saëns, Honegger, Berlioz, Bizet, Franck, Ibert, Messiaen, Milhaud, Florent Schmitt, and Boulez were all students at the Conservatoire. Added to this list is Eugène Bozza (1905-1991), a composer well-known to wind players. Bozza was nothing short of a star student of the Conservatoire. During his studies there, the Frenchman picked up first prizes for violin performance, composition, and conducting. In 1934, with his early masterpiece *La légende de Roukmani*, Bozza laid claim to the most famous Conservatoire prize of them all: the prestigious Prix de Rome composition prize. His success at the Conservatoire was to stand him in good stead throughout his career, as he would go on to be a conductor of the Opéra-Comique and director of the Ecole Nationale de Musique in Valenciennes in northern France.

While it is as a conductor that Bozza mostly earned his bread and butter, it is as a composer that he will probably be best remembered. Bozza's output spanned several genres, including operas,

ballets, and choral music. His orchestral works included concertos and concertinos for trumpet, flute, piano, and violin. However, it is his chamber works that are most frequently performed today. Bozza was a prolific composer of chamber music, for ensembles both conventional (such as the standard string quartet) and unconventional (such as his *Luciollés* for six clarinets, his saxophone quartet, or other mixed combinations of woodwind instruments). He wrote several accompanied suites for solo instruments, including one for clarinet (1973).

The ethereal opening of Bozza's *Bucolique* serves not only to set the mood, but also to showcase fluidity of technique in both the clarinet and the piano parts. The form overall is fairly loose, with the music drifting from a dreamy wistfulness, through to fervently agitated fast tempo sections, such as the closing section. In the *Bucolique*, it doesn't take long before much of the register of the clarinet has been explored in an incredibly virtuoso fashion. This music has the undeniable stamp of a virtuoso Paris Conservatoire graduate. Indeed, the *Bucolique* was written for use in competitions and competitive examinations. The dedicatee was, after all, Ulysse Delécluse, a long-time clarinet professor at the Conservatoire.

We turn from one well-known tradition of art music to one that is perhaps not as well-known internationally – the Western art music tradition of South Africa. Of course, the fact that South Africa has a rich tradition of excellence in the field of art

music is evidenced by this very recording, which was recorded and produced in South Africa and features South African artists. But excellence of performance is not the only attribute of the South African art music scene, as the country also boasts a wealth of locally composed music.

South Africa is famous for its diverse cultures, and the correspondingly diverse types of music practised by the people who live there. However, it is also interesting to note that there has been a history of Western music since the beginning of colonialism with the arrival of European settlers accompanying the activities of the Dutch East India Company, around the middle of the 17th century. The complex political history of the region is such that it is inevitable that European music has been institutionalised by representation in universities and publically and privately funded arts programs. As a consequence, the region has produced several art music composers of international renown. Composers such as Roelof Temmingh, Kevin Volans, Stefans Grové, Arnold van Wyk, Gideon Fagan, Hubert du Plessis, Rosa Nepgen, Graham Newcater, Peter Klatzow and Hans Roosenschoon have all received considerable international recognition.

One of the best-known and most celebrated composers of the present generation is Hendrik Hofmeyr (b. 1957). After graduating from the University of Cape Town, Hofmeyr found himself in the position of being a conscientious objector

in Apartheid South Africa, a place where public defiance of State ideology was not tolerated gladly. A scholarship to study in Italy in 1981 provided the opportunity to avoid the attention of the authoritarian Nationalist government. This scholarship was to mark the beginning of a decade of self-imposed exile from his native country. Despite his political and humanitarian stance being antithetical to that of the Apartheid government, Hofmeyr's work did not go unnoticed at home. In 1988, his opera, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, received its première in the State Theatre, picking up the Nederburg Opera Prize and being declared winner of the South African Opera Competition. This was a major breakthrough for the young composer, but more prizes were to follow. International highlights included prizes from the Queen Elisabeth Competition of Belgium and the Dimitri Mitropoulos Competition in Athens, both awarded in 1997. Upon his return to South Africa, Hofmeyr held a lectureship at the University of Stellenbosch, before taking up his current professorship as Head of Composition and Music Theory at the University of Cape Town.

The work recorded here, *Canto Notturmo*, was commissioned by the Hugo Lambrechts Music Centre in Cape Town, on behalf of a young clarinetist named Danielle Rossouw. Hugo Lambrechts is a cornerstone of South African art music education, and has produced many students who went on to successful careers as performers. Indeed, Maria du

Toit herself was a student there! In 2010, *Canto Notturmo* saw its debut at what is another familiar feature of the South African musical scene, the Sanlam National Music Competition. Rossouw's rendition of the piece earned her the prize for the best performed South African work. With this recording, Maria du Toit gives the piece its recording debut. Hofmeyr himself describes the *Canto Notturmo* as "a sombre nocturne which exploits the clarinet's lyrical character and the dark timbre of its lower register. The musical discourse takes the form of an alternation between two closely related ideas, announced respectively by the piano and clarinet, with the first also serving as a background to the second."

Hofmeyr's *Canto Notturmo* is followed by a return to the Romantic era, with Rheinberger's *Clarinet Sonata*, op. 105a. This work is in fact a transcription of Rheinberger's earlier *Violin Sonata*, op. 105, a work that has not been represented as frequently in record catalogues as we would expect from its quality. Joseph Rheinberger (1839-1901) showed musical talent from a young age, being something of a child prodigy on the organ. He reportedly took up his first official church position as an organist at the age of seven. Given his father's financial security as an employee of the Prince of Liechtenstein, Rheinberger was able to explore his musical talents to the full, leading to studies at the Munich Conservatory. Rheinberger was to become not only an organist and composer, but also a conductor and a teacher. In fact, it is often for his

eminence as a teacher at Munich Conservatory that Rheinberger is remembered. Wilhelm Furtwängler, Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari, and Engelbert Humperdinck were all students of Rheinberger. However, so far as Rheinberger himself was concerned, performance and teaching were subservient to composition. Like Brahms, with whom he was friends, Rheinberger did not feel himself attracted to the New German School of composition pioneered by Wagner. Instead, he concentrated on abstract, non-programmatic music. He composed rigorously and diligently, writing and reworking as many as 100 works before feeling satisfied enough to publish a set of piano pieces as his op. 1 (1859). Today, Rheinberger's most valued works are probably his 20 organ sonatas.

As mentioned above, Rheinberger's Clarinet Sonata was transcribed from an earlier work for violin. The original Violin Sonata was written in 1877, the same year that Brahms's first two symphonies were premiered. The 1893 transcription for the clarinet involved a transposition to E flat minor from E that, while well within the capabilities of professional players, proves a challenge for amateurs. The US music school administrator Burnet C. Tuthill, son of the architect of Carnegie Hall and a composer and performer in his own right, wrote that Rheinberger's Clarinet Sonata was "Good to play at home, but in a rather mean key."



We return to the twentieth century with a work by the eminent US composer, Donald Martino (1931-2005). Martino was a well-known composer, having won a Pulitzer Prize for his *Notturmo* in 1974. Martino could count Roger Sessions and Milton Babbitt amongst his teachers, as well as Luigi Dallapiccola in Florence. Upon his return to the US from studies in Florence, Martino settled into university-conservatory life, teaching at Harvard, Yale and Princeton. His musical output was diverse, running the gamut from jazz inspired pieces to tonal, post-tonal and synthetic pitch set-based music. A clarinetist himself, a feature of Martino's work is the close study of the sound capabilities of individual instruments. As a result, he has composed works for combinations of instruments not often exploited by composers. For instance, in 1997 he published a concerto featuring a group of three solo clarinets, an ensemble he termed a 'superclarinet'.

The *Set for Clarinet*, composed in 1954, is a solo work for a single instrument. The word 'set' in the title shouldn't be taken to indicate a music-theoretical 'set' of pitch-classes. Rather, it refers to 'set' as it is understood in popular music, and especially in the domain of jazz gigging: a 'set' is comprised of several songs or pieces, played after each other, before the players take a break. Hence, an evening's live musical entertainment may involve three or four sets with breaks in between. For the musicians, the order of pieces is dictated

by a predetermined 'setlist'. This is, in essence, a program-list for the club musician. As a young clarinettist, Martino had aspired to a career in jazz before formal musical studies intervened. The Set for Clarinet calls upon the composer's experience as a jazz musician. The titles of the three movements reflect this heritage: 'Conservatory Stomp', 'Blues in E flat', and '10th Avenue Stomp'. Martino composed the work at the rate of a movement per day, by means of improvisation on his own clarinet. Evident in these movements is the three-part ABA form, which is also the most common formal arrangement in jazz. In addition, the work is marked by the frequent use of an octotonic (eight note) scale of the half-diminished variety, with alternating half- and whole-steps. This scale is well-known in jazz circles, providing structured pitch orders while still being ambiguous with regard to key.

Experience with forms of music other than Western art music also led Arthur Leslie Benjamin (1893-1960) to fame. Benjamin is best-known for his Latin-American inspired two piano piece Jamaican Rhumba (sic), published in 1938. This light-hearted composition was something of a hit, and transcriptions can still be found in numerous Examination Board syllabi some seventy years later. Many commentators have since tried to defend Benjamin as a 'serious composer' of 'serious music'. There can be no doubt, of course, that much of Benjamin's more serious work is of an extremely high quality. But to dismiss his lighter work would

be to misunderstand Benjamin's views on music. Benjamin himself advocated and composed music that was accessible and enjoyable for the average listener. An Australian by birth, Benjamin spent most of his career in London. He was both a student and later a staff member of the Royal College of Music, where he taught Britten. The cosmopolitanism of London exposed him to many varying sorts of music, including jazz, which he found particularly fascinating. Nonetheless, he composed much music that fitted well within the art music genre, including several operas, a symphony, and several works for solo instruments with orchestra.

Le Tombeau de Ravel, subtitled 'Valse Caprices', reflects the high esteem in which Benjamin held the famous French composer Maurice Ravel (1875-1937). Ravel himself had written a solo piano suite called Le Tombeau de Couperin, composed between 1914 and 1917, as a homage to the Baroque composer François Couperin. ('Tombeau' is literally translated as 'tomb', but is probably best interpreted as 'Homage' or 'Remembrance'.) The individual movements of Ravel's work were dedicated to soldiers with whom he had served in the First World War, and who had lost their lives fighting. Despite the title, Benjamin's Le Tombeau de Ravel is actually modelled after a different piece by Ravel altogether: Valses nobles et sentimentales, a set of waltzes published by Ravel in 1911. Benjamin's work is played through without pause, beginning with an 'Introduzione', followed by six waltzes, and



rounding off with a finale. Benjamin intended the work to be played either by viola or clarinet with piano accompaniment. It is worth noting that Benjamin felt that these two instruments, both famous for their timbral qualities, were best suited for communicating the musical ideas embodied in this piece.

Martian Negrea (1893-1973) was a Romanian composer, who, after initial studies in his native land, was taught by Eusebius Mandyczewski and Florent Schmitt at the Vienna Music Academy. He was also a student of Zoltan Kodaly in Budapest. Negrea's career was based in Romania, with teaching positions at Cluj and Bucharest Conservatories. He was fond of the folk music of Romania and especially his childhood Transylvania, and this influence found its way into his often pastoral music. Negrea also wrote several books on harmony, counterpoint, and other topics related to composition. In addition to chamber music such as the *Martie* featured here, his musical output included symphonic works, chamber music, choral music, and even film scores. The *Martie* featured here is not Negrea's only work for clarinet – he also wrote a *Suite* for clarinet and piano (op. 27, 1960).

In defiance of the political doctrines of Communist Romania, Negrea set the poetry of anti-communist Lucian Blaga (1895-1961) to music several times. The poet Blaga had earned the ire of the Communist authorities on account of his writings, and had actually been dismissed from his academic post due to his

political convictions. Blaga found such support from Romanian academics that he was nominated for the 1956 Nobel Prize for Literature. As an indication of the esteem in which he is held in his native land, a university in the Transylvanian city of Sibiu is named in Blaga's honour.

Negrea's *Martie* is to a large degree program music, inspired by a poem by Blaga with the same title. '*Martie*' translates to '*March*'. The poem, translated here into English in a paper by Felix Constantin Goldbach (in *Recent Advances in Acoustics & Music*), was part of an anthology of poetry by Blaga called *Poems of Light*, written in 1919. As is evident from this text, the title doesn't refer to a musical march, but rather to the month of the year and the prospect of the end of the winter period:

Out of a tangled flock of clouds
the wind spins
long threads of rain.
Fickle snowflakes
would land on the mud,
but as they loathe it -
they rise again
and fly to find
a nest of branches.
It's windy and it's cold -
and the buds
too greedy for light
now muffle
their ears in their collars.

Negrea's musical interpretation of this poem was written in 1959 for the clarinetist Aurelian Octav Popa. As with the piece by Hofmeyr, Negrea's *Martie* saw its debut at a music competition – namely, the Prague Spring International Music Competition, hosted by the Festival of the same name. One should not confuse this competition and festival with the political event known as the Prague Spring, which occurred nine years later, in 1968. Nonetheless, it is fitting, as the political aims of the Prague Spring would have been congruent with Blaga's ideals.

For the final piece on this program, we turn from poetry to tragic opera. Luigi Bassi's *Fantasia da Concerto su motivi del Rigoletto* is a rhapsodic interpretation of themes from Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Verdi's opera, based on a play by Victor Hugo and sporting a libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, saw its debut in 1851. The tragedy is centred on a court jester named Rigoletto, who desperately attempts to shield his daughter from the indecent appetites of his employer, the Duke of Mantua. Unfortunately, his daughter falls in love with the Duke, despite his infidelity. Rigoletto, bent on revenge for being earlier tricked into aiding the kidnap of his own daughter, conspires with an assassin to kill the Duke. Unfortunately, a tragic case of mistaken identity leads to the murder of his own disguised daughter through his actions, discovered only when Rigoletto seeks to dispose of the body.

Verdi's score is one of contrasts. The opera is set with both sparkling arias and moments of dark brooding. It also features Verdi's characteristic tunefulness. *Rigoletto* therefore proved to be an irresistible attraction to Luigi Bassi (1833-1871). Bassi, who shouldn't be confused with the Mozart-premièring baritone of the same name, studied at the Milan Conservatory under the clarinet maestro Benedetto Carulli. Bassi was regularly exposed to operatic music, as he led an esteemed career as the principal clarinetist at La Scala. In total, Bassi wrote 27 works for the clarinet, of which the *Fantasia da Concerto su motivi del Rigoletto* is probably the best known. Bassi's *Fantasia*, as the name suggests, takes substantial liberties with regard to Verdi's original musical ideas, and features free virtuoso variations based on themes from the opera. It is a fitting piece with which to round off Maria du Toit's program, as it showcases both lyricism and virtuosity – two essential characteristics of the instrument that du Toit so skilfully commands.

Barry Ross

Principal clarinettist of the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra in Cape Town (since 2002), Maria du Toit is not only recognized as a distinguished orchestral musician, but indeed as one of South Africa's finest solo instrumentalists. She has won first prize in six South African instrumental competitions, including ATKV forte (2001), PJ Lemmer overseas study competition (University of South Africa, 2001) and Mabel Quick overseas bursary competition (2002) among others, as well as second prize in the SASOL competition (1999). She is also the first prize winner of the international clarinet competition Jeunesses Musicales held in Bucharest, Romania (2006). Du Toit was also awarded a special prize at the 13th International Music Competition "Gheorghe Dima" that was held in Cluj Napoca, Romania (2011), for her performance of the piece „Martie“ by Marțian Negrea.

Du Toit's musical training began with piano lessons at the age of 8, and at age 15 she started playing the clarinet at the Hugo Lambrechts music centre in Cape Town. From 1996 to 1999 she studied music at the University of Stellenbosch under the tutelage of Jim Reinders, where she was awarded just about every possible study prize, merit bursary and academic award available at the university (including the Molteno prize for the best first year music student and the Konservatorium Stipendium for the best overall music student). After completing a bachelor's degree in solo clarinet cum laude (University of Stellenbosch) and a Performer's Licentiate with highest honours (University of South Africa), she was accepted to study at the Manhattan School of Music in New

York, where she studied clarinet under David Krakauer (2000). She was appointed first clarinet of the school's two top orchestras, the MSM Symphony and the MSM Chamber Sinfonia. Moving on to Europe, she studied with Bas de Jong at the Utrecht Conservatoire (Netherlands, 2000/2001) and finally with Bulgarian clarinet legend Petko Radev in Sofia (Bulgaria, 2003, 2004, 2006).

Du Toit has appeared on various occasions as soloist with the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra (1998, 2002, 2003, 2007 and 2010), as well as with the Free State Symphony Orchestra (2002, 2011) and the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra (2006, 2012). In 2012 Maria performed as soloist with the World Doctor's Orchestra, giving concerts in Cape Town, Elandsdoorn and Johannesburg. Later this year she will make her European debut, performing the Mozart Concerto in six major cities in the Netherlands with the Netherlands Student Chamber Orchestra, and giving three performances of the Nielsen Concerto with the Atheneum Chamber Orchestra (Netherlands). Active also as recitalist and chamber musician, her performance credits include the Stellenbosch International Chamber music Festival, Aardklop Arts Festival, Klein Karoo Klassiek, Darling Festival, Greyton Festival, Cape Town Concert Series, Stellenbosch Festival, International Classical Music Festival South Africa and UNISA Concert Series, among others.

Apart from her full-time position in the Cape Philharmonic Orchestra, Maria du Toit is also a part-time lecturer of clarinet at the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Cape Town College of Music.

MARIA
DU TOIT



Nina Schumann was born into a musical family and received her early music tuition from Rona Rupert and Lamar Crowson. Nina's first appearance with an orchestra was at the age of 15, and her talent captured the attention of the public when she won the Fifth National Music Competition for high school pupils in 1988. She went on to win the Oude Meester Music Prize (1989), the Forte Competition (1990), and during 1991 both the Wooltru Scholarship and the Adcock-Ingram Music Prize. She has over 140 concerto performances with orchestras in South Africa, Germany, Portugal, Scotland, Armenia and the U.S.A. to her credit, and some 40 concertos in her repertoire.

In 1993 Ms Schumann won the SAMRO Overseas Scholarship Competition and was awarded the Jules Kramer and Harry Crossley Bursaries for Overseas Study by the University of Cape Town. She crowned these prizes by winning the sought-after SABC Music Prize as well as the Oude Meester National Chamber Music Competition. International prizes followed: she won the prizes for the Best South African Pianist in the 1993 UNISA International Piano Competition, Finalist and Special Prize Winner at the Shreveport Concerto Competition (1996) and Third Prize in the Casablanca International Piano Competition (1997). After completing her MMus at UCLA, Nina enrolled for the Doctorate of Music at the University of North Texas under the tutelage

of Van Cliburn-winner, Vladimir Viardo. She received several academic prizes: Dean's Medal (UCT), Best Performer (UCLA), Best Performer (UNT), Best Pianist (UNT) and Best Doctoral Student (UNT). Following her appointment as Associate Professor and Head of Piano at the University of Stellenbosch in 1999, Nina transferred her Doctorate to UCT from which she graduated in 2005. In 2009 she was awarded the UCT Rector's Award for Excellence in recognition of contribution to the music field.

Solo-career and academic life aside, Nina has formed an internationally recognized duo with her husband, Luis Magalhaes. Their CDs have received rave reviews from international publications such as Diapason, International Record Review, Allmusic.com and American Record Guide. Their own record label, TwoPianists, is distributed worldwide by Naxos, thereby ensuring immediate international market access for the South African and international artists they are committed to record. In two consecutive years the TwoPianists label won the South African Music Award for the Best Popular Classical Album. In 2011 American Record Guide named Nina and Luis' duo CD Editor's Choice and Nina also received the German Critics Choice Award for Shakespeare Inspired, in collaboration with mezzo-soprano Michelle Breedt.

NINA
SCHUMANN



EUGÈNE BOZZA (1905-1991)

1 7:40 **Bucolique**

HENDRIK HOFMEYR (1957-)

2 4:29 **Canto Notturmo**

JOSEPH RHEINBERGER (1839-1901)

Sonata for Clarinet and Piano op.105a

3 9:34 Allegro non troppo

4 6:25 Andante molto

5 6:18 Non troppo allegro

DONALD MARTINO (1931-2005)

A Set for Clarinet

6 3:35 Allegro

7 3:56 Adagio

8 2:27 Allegro

ARTHUR LESLIE BENJAMIN (1893-1960)

9 14:35 **Le Tombeau de Ravel**

MARȚIAN NEGREA (1893-1973)

10 1:51 **Martie**

LUIGI BASSI (1833-1871)

11 12:20 **Fantasia da Concerto su motivi del Rigoletto**

TOTAL: 70:00

Recorded at: Endler Hall, Stellenbosch University,

South Africa, 14 – 17 November 2011

Artists: Maria du Toit (clarinet), Nina Schumann (piano)

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Photos: Retha Fergusson

Program notes by: Barry Ross

Graphic Design: Glitz-design

Bösendorfer 280 Model

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