



Scandinavian Classics

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

CHAMBER WORKS

ANTON KONTRA, NIELS ULLNER, ANNE ØLAND



The Hungarian composer, **Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967)** was an ardent collector and documenter of his country's folkloristic music - as were his fellow countryman, Béla Bartók and, for instance, Edvard Grieg in Norway. He simply toured the country taking "lessons" in Hungarian folk music. At the same time, he wrote down his discoveries with great respect for their tonal character. We have to regret in Denmark that 19th century composers like Kunzen, Kuhlau, Weyse, Berggreen and Rung, all of whom used folkloristic material in their compositions, lacked interest in the genuine, oral tradition of folk music. They were content to adapt the material available to the prevailing perception of tonality and in doing so the truly Danish element must be taken as having largely disappeared in favour of the German-influenced Romantic tradition.

Besides his research work, Kodály was employed as teacher of composition and theory at the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest. He became one of the great names in music teaching - not only nationally, but also internationally. His system for the development of musical awareness in children and young people has benefited generations of music lovers and is still used universally today. Nevertheless, he found time to compose and was much admired for his - relatively limited - production. The way in which he "mirrors" folk music without direct citation is some proof of his greatness. He does not "borrow" from folk music, but communicates the feelings it has given him in his own expression. Moreover, his almost inhumanly difficult compositions present a colossal challenge to ambitious instrumentalists, although none could accuse him of shallowness on these grounds.

Anton Kontra was born and educated in Budapest. At the time of the Hungarian crisis in 1956 he arrived in Sweden where he, with his orchestra, attracted attention not only as a virtuoso on the violin but also on the vibraphone! In 1965 Anton Kontra came to Denmark, where he became the admired and highly respected concertmaster of the Copenhagen Philharmonic Orchestra, an appointment he held for 25 years. Here he founded in 1974 the Kontra Quartet, which is one of the most sought after ensembles in Denmark. In 1990 he returned to Sweden where for ten years he has functioned as the chief concertmaster of the Malmö Symphony Orchestra, alongside his world-wide career as soloist and quartet first violinist.

The cellist **Niels Ulner** was born in Copenhagen in 1956. He trained under Asger Lund Christiansen and Pierre Fournier, Geneva. Already during his training he was made a permanent member of the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, which he left to take up a position as first solo cellist with the Malmö Symphony Orchestra in 1985. He has made several recordings as soloist with the MSO. He played chamber music with many of the world's most prominent musicians - in the sonata repertoire most often with the pianist, Anne Øland. He has received the Jacob Gades Legat and the artist's prize awarded by music critics.

Anne Øland was born in Denmark in 1949. She studied at the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen under Professor Herman D. Koppel. She has appeared several times as a soloist with the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra and with the other six large Danish orchestras. At the moment Anne Øland is recording all the Beethoven piano sonatas.

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

(1882 - 1967)

CD 1

Sonata for Cello and Piano, op.4 (1910)

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| 1 | I. Fantasia: Adagio di molto | 7:33 |
| 2 | II. Allegro con spirito | 9:19 |

Duo for Violin and Piano, op.7

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| 3 | I. Allegro serioso, non troppo | 9:29 |
| 4 | II. Adagio | 7:51 |
| 5 | III. Maestoso e largamente, ma non troppo lento. Presto | 8:54 |

Adagio for Violin and Piano (1910)

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| 6 | Adagio | 7:42 |
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Total Time: 51:06

CD 2

Sonata for Cello, op.8 (1915)

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| 1 | I. Allegro maestoso ma appassionato | 8:26 |
| 2 | II. Adagio con grand' espressione | 11:28 |
| 3 | III. Allegro molto vivace | 10:32 |

Total Time: 30:37

Anton Kontra - violin
Niels Ullner - cello
Anne Øland - piano