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BRILLIANT CLASSICS
Rheingold
Music by Reinecke, Wagner, Bruch & Silcher
Karin Strobos mezzo-soprano
Ciconia Consort The Hague String Orchestra
Dick van Gasteren conductor

Rheingold

Carl Reinecke (1824-1910)
Serenade for String Orchestra in G minor Op.242 (1898)

1.	Marcia	3'22
2.	Arioso	3'46
3.	Scherzo	3'15
4.	Cavatine (solo: William McLeish)	5'57
5.	Fughetta giocosa	4'22
6.	Finale Allegretto	5'18

Richard Wagner (1813-1883)
Wesendonck Lieder (1857)
Arranged by Gerhard Heydt (Laurentius Musikverlag)

7.	Der Engel	3'10
8.	Stehe still!	4'02
9.	Im Treibhaus	5'53
10.	Schmerzen	2'25
11.	Träume	4'21

Max Bruch (1838-1920)
Concerto for String Orchestra (Octet) in B-flat Op. posth. (1920)

12.	Allegro moderato	9'32
13.	Adagio	6'38
14.	Allegro molto	5'51

Friedrich Silcher (1798-1860)

15.	**Die Loreley** (text: Heinrich Heine) *Arranged by Dick van Gasteren*	2'48

Karin Strobos *mezzo-soprano*

Ciconia Consort *The Hague String Orchestra*
Dick van Gasteren *conductor*

"***The whole history of Europe lies in this river***" Victor Hugo, *Le Rhin*

The Rhine is the inspiration source to many romantic and folkloric works of music during the nineteenth century. Carl Reinecke, Richard Wagner and Max Bruch wrote, in their own romantic idiom, compositions about the Rhine. They shared a great affinity for the high romance of fairy tales, sagas, knight stories, folk music and mythology (including mythology of the Rhine); and were, so to speak, the musical equivalent to the stories of the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, or the medieval *Nibelungenlied*. The title of this CD has been chosen in honour of the composer whose lifework, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, is dedicated to the gold of the Rhine.

Heinrich Carsten Reinecke (1824-1910)
The German pianist, conductor and composer Carl Reinecke was born in Altona, which was under Danish rule until 1864. His father, (Johan Peter) Rudolf Reinecke, was a music teacher who taught his children privately. He was a strict and demanding father, who nevertheless cared for them intensively, played with them and told them fairy tales.

Supporting himself on a scholarship from the Danish king, Christian VIII, Reinecke used his first study-visit to Leipzig, from 1843 to 1846, to further develop himself as a composer and as a pianist. Here he studied under Felix Mendelssohn, Robert Schumann and Franz Liszt.

In 1851, after previously serving as the court pianist of Christian VIII in Copenhagen, he was appointed as a professor at the Conservatory of Cologne. He was subsequently appointed as the conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig (a position he held for 35 years) and was also appointed as professor of both composition and piano at the Conservatory of Leipzig. His students included Edward Grieg, Leoš Janáček, Isaac Albeniz, Felix Weingartner, Max Bruch and Cornelis Dopper.

Hans Christian Andersen's mystical fairy-tale world was an important source of inspiration for Reinecke. He composed numerous fairy-tale operas, as well as the art song *Die Ritter vom Rhein*: "Ich weiss einen Helden von seltener Art" (*The knight of the Rhine*: "I know a hero of rare kind"). For Reinecke (who despite his talents and achievements lacked self-confidence and, for his own good, was all too modest) this fairy-tale world was a hidden realm where he could escape to and enter the world of children as a composer, writer and teacher.

The late, six-movement *Serenade for Strings* shows Reinecke's fairytale-like romantic composition style. It received a resounding endorsement from Arthur Nikisch, Reinecke's successor at the Gewandhaus Orchestra, who also conducted the premier performance in Leipzig on 10 November 1898.

Wilhelm Richard Wagner (1813-1883)
It was Wagner's dream to be as successful as a poet, director, set designer and architect, as he was as a composer, conductor, singer and violinist. This led to him becoming one of the most important opera composers of all time. He is responsible for introducing through-composed scenes to the opera style, the use of the 'Unendliche Melodie' (infinite melody), and Leitmotif (short, recurring musical phrase). His operas are 'Gesamtkunstwerke' (total work of art), where all art forms serve one cohesive whole.

In his magnum opus, the tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen* (written between 1853 and 1874), Wagner combines old Norse and German sagas with German medieval *Nibelungenlied*. The Rhine plays an important role in this 16-hour Cycle.

In the early 1850's Wagner began studying Schopenhauer's philosophy and, around this time, met Mathilde Wesendonck (whom he became infatuated with), a writer and the wife of Wagner's patron, the merchant Otto Wesendonck. Both Schopenhauer and Mathilde Wesendonck had an influence on his compositions, namely the *Wesendonck Lieder* and *Tristan und Isolde*.

The *Wesendock Lieder* are a song cycle for female voice and piano from 1857, composed on five poems by Mathilde Wesendonck. Wagner wrote to Liszt in 1854: "*Seeing as never in my life have I been allowed to taste the luck of love, I would like to build a memorial for my most beautiful dreams, where this love can fully blossom from start to finish.*" Musically speaking, the songs *Im Treibhaus* and *Träume* are preliminary studies for the opera *Tristan und Isolde*: they can be heard in the prelude before the third act and in the duet in the second act.

The *Wesendock Lieder* have often been arranged and orchestrated. To commemorate Mathilde's 29th birthday in 1857 Wagner arranged the song *Träume* for violin and chamber orchestra. Felix Mottl arranged the song cycle for full orchestra. The arrangement for strings, recorded on this CD, was written in 2006 by Gerhard Heydt and published by Laurentius Musikverlag.

Max Christian Friedrich Bruch (1838-1920)
The German composer, teacher and conductor Max Bruch studied with Ferdinand Hiller and Carl Reinecke. He won competitions, composed music for the theatre, concert hall and church, and was appointed to various prestigious roles. Bruch enjoyed enormous popularity and was awarded three honorary degrees. He was one of the most prominent 19th century German composers, though his composition style was extremely traditional and conservative. Bruch held the works of Brahms and Mendelssohn in high regard and was opposed to the 'New German School' of Liszt and Wagner. By the turn of the century he was completely out of step with the advances of Mahler, Reger and Richard Strauss, let alone the innovations of Schönberg.

Bruch cherished an interest for melodic material from different ethnic sources. As such he wrote works based on Russian, Scottish, Jewish, Swedish and Celtic melodies, in addition to his native German folk songs. Born in Cologne, and subsequently working as a conductor in Koblenz am Rhein, Bruch was, like Reinecke and Wagner,

also inspired by the myths around the Rhine. In 1863 he composed the opera *Die Lorely*, of which Pfitzner organised a re-enactment in 1916.

"*The string octet, his last work, was composed in 1920 just seven months prior to his death. The newly completed Octet was itself a reworking of a quintet (now lost) which he has composed in the previous year. The autograph MS of the octet disappeared until 1986 when Lion Heart Autographs (of New York City) offered it for sale. The string octet is indicated by the composer in the autograph MS to be suitable for either soloist or string orchestra. It is not surprising then that the work, when later assigned by the heirs to Publishers Simrock, was re-titled Concerto for string orchestra (Octet).*

As his final composition the octet stands as Max Bruch's musical last will and testament. Its melodic felicity, wide range of musical expression, and traditional harmonic style, all hallmarks of the composer's style, suggest the severely strained conditions under which the composer labored in its final days and the optimism which would have been necessary to sustain him. His beloved wife Clara died just seven months earlier (27 August 1919). Their son Hans passed away in 1913. His material standard of living in Germany had fallen dramatically as a consequence of the First World War". Thomas Wood, 1996

Philipp Friedrich Silcher (1789-1860)
The German composer Friedrich Silcher is mostly known for his art songs. In Germany he is seen as the forefather of the popular choir repertoire and is often referred to as the 'Kleinmeister'. Silcher initially studied pedagogy, before becoming a student of the composer, Johann Nepomuk Hummel, and devoting himself entirely to music.

For 43 years he was the musical director at the Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen and was co-founder of the Akademische Liedertafel and the Schwäbische Sängerbund. Silcher was especially dedicated to a musical education for the whole

population. He turned more than 320 song texts into easy to learn music for various choir ensembles and wrote at least 250 other piano works and arrangements based on themes from sonatas and symphonies – all in service of the general education. In 1851 he published his treatise on theory *Harmonie- und Compositionslehre*.

Although there were more than forty sung versions of the poem *Die Loreley* by Heinrich Heine in circulation during the 19th century (including those of Franz Liszt and Clara Schumann) it is Silcher's version that is certainly the best known. Over time it became to be known as a rather sentimental folk song and it is claimed that it became so popular that even the Nazi Party did not dare to ban the work (Heinrich Heine was Jewish) and attributed it to an unknown German poet. *Die Loreley* also found an international audience and it is still without a doubt Silcher's best known work.

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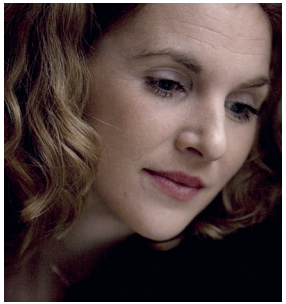
English translation: Madelin Luimstra



Dutch mezzo-soprano **Karin Strobos**' career took off in 2011 after she substituted in the role of Octavian under the baton of Sir Simon Rattle in Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* at the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam. Her performance attracted a great deal of critical acclaim and the Dutch press spoke of a dream debut. She has followed this up by starring in further Dutch National Opera productions in the roles of Flora (*La Traviata*) and Phénice (*Armide*).

Strobos studied with Henny Diemer for her Master's degree at the Conservatory of Utrecht where she graduated with Distinction. Her training has also seen her take lessons from Brigitte Fassbaender, Iris Dell'Acqua, Gemma Visser, and Margreet Honig. With her trio, Strobos-Bercken-End, she won the 'Debuut Publieksprijs', and in addition to this also won the 'Grachtenfestivalprijs' in 2011 and the 'Gouden Viooltje'.

Between 2009 and 2011 Strobos was a member of the resident company of Opera Zuid, Netherlands, culminating, amongst others, in the lead-role in Rossini's *La Cenerentola*. With the Nederlandse Reisopera she sang the roles of Cherubino, Flora, Rosina, and Der Komponist (*Ariadne auf Naxos*). Between 2014 and 2019 she was a member of the resident soloist ensemble of Aalto-Musiktheater in Essen, Germany, where she performed in roles such as Cherubino, Charlotte, Suzuki, Zerlina, Idamante, Dorabella, Rosina, Elvira, Adalgisa, Siébel and Amando. She now frequently returns to Aalto-Musiktheater as a guest soloist.

In addition to opera repertoire, Strobos regularly performs as a soloist with the Residentie Orkest, Nederlands Philharmonisch Orkest and Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest, amongst others, where her concert repertoire includes works such as Mahler's *Symphony No.4* and *Lieder eines Fahrenden Gesellen*. In 2012 she made her debut with the Radio Filharmonisch Orkest, under the baton of Edo de Waart, during the Saturday Matinee at The Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, singing two movements specially composed for her by Willem Jeths in his *First Symphony*.

Ciconia Consort, The Hague String Orchestra, is a Dutch string orchestra consisting of twenty young musicians under the leadership of Dick van Gasteren. The orchestra was founded in 2012 and its home base for concerts is the Nieuwe Kerk (New Church) in The Hague. Their concerts are predominately of a thematic nature and often combined with other disciplines such as: theatre, literature and science. Concert programs regularly touch upon contemporary social issues. The orchestra has built up an extensive repertoire, performing music from all style periods, with an emphasis in late-romantic and modern works. Apart from the well-known works for strings, the orchestra has also revived quite a few forgotten masterpieces, Dutch premieres and world premieres, such as Willem Mengelberg's *Sinfonietta for String Orchestra* and Willem van Otterloo's *Prelude, Dance and Epilogue* for clarinet and string

orchestra. Little known compositions like *Symphonie n° 1 pour orchestre à cordes* of Jaques Castérède and *Sur les flots lointain* of Charles Koechlin have been recorded by Ciconia Consort on the CD *French Music for String Orchestra*. This debut-CD (2018) and the CD *American Pioneers* (2020), both on the 'Brilliant Classics' label, have received worldwide critical acclaim. Ciconia Consort has collaborated with soloists such as Lavinia Meijer, Isabelle van Keulen, Peter Gijsbertsen, Paolo Giacometti, Pieter Wispelwey and scientists and writers as Pieter Waterdrinker, Maarten van Rossem, Rosita Steenbeek and Willem Otterspeer. The orchestra has been heard on International radio in programmes such as *Avondconcert, Vrije Geluiden, Muziekfabriek, Muziekwijzer*, *Record Review* (BBC Radio 3) and ABC Classic, and seen on Dutch television NPO2.

Since its founding in 2012, **Dick van Gasteren** has been Ciconia Consort's conductor and artistic director. Van Gasteren is also regular guest conductor of the Orquesta Simón Bolívar, performing symphonies by Schumann, Bruckner and Mahler, amongst others. Moreover, he regularly conducts other Venezuelan orchestras from 'El Sistema' such as Juan José Landaete and Teresa Carreño. As professor at the Conservatorio Inocente Careño de Venezuela, he gives lessons and masterclasses in orchestral conducting to talented young students.

Dick van Gasteren studied cello, orchestra conducting, art history and law. He received his cello lessons from Anner Bijlsma at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, and he studied orchestral conducting with Jan Stulen. He continued his study with Bernard Haitink in London, whom he later assisted during the 'Mahler Festival Amsterdam' in 1995. Van Gasteren was a laureate of the conductor masterclass of the Accademia Musicale Chigiana in Siena and the Wiener Meisterkurs. His concert programme conducting credits include the Limburgs Symfonie Orkest, Noordhollands Philharmonisch Orkest, Nürnberger Symphoniker, and Wiener Klangforum Orchester. He has also earned a reputation as an opera conductor, performing operas such as *Othello, Don Pasquale, Elektra* and *Die Fledermaus* with the Oldenburgisches Staatstheater. At the Royal Theatre, The Hague, he has conducted Constant van de Wall's Dutch-Indonesian opera *Attima*.

Dick van Gasteren has presented two episodes of the popular Dutch children's educational television series 'Het Klokhuis' which were centred on the profession of conducting. His book *Over jeugdorkestenen de didactiek van het dirigeren* (On Youth Orchestras and the Didactics of Conducting) was published in Dutch by Walburg Pers in October 2010. It has subsequently been translated into Spanish and now serves as teaching material for 'El Sistema' conductors in Venezuela.

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Wesendonck Lieder – Richard Wagner
Text by Mathilde Wesendonck
(1828-1902)

Der Engel
In der Kindheit frühen Tagen
Hört ich oft von Engeln sagen,
Die des Himmels hehre Wonne
Tauschen mit der Erdensonne,

Daß, wo bang ein Herz in Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt verborgen,
Daß, wo still es will verbluten,
Und vergehn in Tränenfluten,

Daß, wo brünstig sein Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung fleht,
Da der Engel niederschwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel hebt.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, ferne jedem Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

Stehe still!
Sausendes, brausendes Rad der Zeit,
Messer du der Ewigkeit;
Leuchtende Sphären im weiten All,
Die ihr umringt den Weltenball;
Urewige Schöpfung, halte doch ein,
Genug des Werdens, laß mich sein!

Halte an dich, zeugende Kraft,
Urgedanke, der ewig schafft!
Hemmet den Atem, stillet den Drang,
Schweiget nur eine Sekunde lang!
Schwellende Pulse, fesselt den Schlag;
Ende, des Wollens ew'ger Tag!
Daß in selig süßem Vergessen
Ich mög alle Wonnen ermessen!

Wenn Aug' in Auge wonnig trinken,
Seele ganz in Seele versinken;
Wesen in Wesen sich wiederfindet,
Und alles Hoffens Ende sich kündet,
Die Lippe verstummt in staunendem
Schweigen,
Keinen Wunsch mehr will das Innre
zeugen:
Erkennt der Mensch des Ew'gen Spur,
Und löst dein Rätsel, heil'ge Natur!

Im Treibhaus
Hochgewölbte Blätterkronen,
Baldachine von Smaragd,
Kinder ihr aus fernen Zonen,
Saget mir, warum ihr klagt?

Schweigend neiget ihr die Zweige,
Malet Zeichen in die Luft,
Und der Leiden stummer Zeuge
Steiget aufwärts, süßer Duft.

Weit in sehnendem Verlangen
Breitet ihr die Arme aus,
Und umschlinget wahnbefangen
Öder Leere nicht'gen Graus.

Wohl, ich weiß es, arme Pflanze;
Ein Geschicke teilen wir,
Ob umstrahlt von Licht und Glanze,
Unsre Heimat ist nicht hier!

Und wie froh die Sonne scheidet
Von des Tages leerem Schein,
Hüllet der, der wahrhaft leidet,
Sich in Schweigens Dunkel ein.

Stille wird's, ein säuselnd Weben
Füllet bang den dunklen Raum:
Schwere Tropfen seh ich schweben
An der Blätter grünem Saum.

Schmerzen
Sonne, weinest jeden Abend
Dir die schönen Augen rot,
Wenn im Meeresspiegel badend
Dich erreicht der frühe Tod;

Doch erstehst in alter Pracht,
Glorie der düstren Welt,
Du am Morgen neu erwacht,
Wie ein stolzer Siegesheld!

Ach, wie sollte ich da klagen,
Wie, mein Herz, so schwer dich sehn,
Muß die Sonne selbst verzagen,
Muß die Sonne untergehn?

Und gebietet Tod nur Leben,
Geben Schmerzen Wonne nur:
O wie dank ich, daß gegeben
Solche Schmerzen mir Natur!

Träume
Sag, welch wunderbare Träume
Halten meinen Sinn umfangen,
Daß sie nicht wie leere Schäume
Sind in ödes Nichts vergangen?

Träume, die in jeder Stunde,
Jedem Tage schöner blühn,
Und mit ihrer Himmelskunde
Selig durchs Gemüte ziehn!

Träume, die wie hehre Strahlen
In die Seele sich versenken,
Dort ein ewig Bild zu malen:
Allvergessen, Eingedenken!

Träume, wie wenn Frühlingssonne
Aus dem Schnee die Blüten küßt,
Daß zu nie geahnter Wonne
Sie der neue Tag begrüßt,

Daß sie wachsen, daß sie blühen,
Träumend spenden ihren Duft,
Sanft an deiner Brust verglühen,
Und dann sinken in die Gruft.

Die Loreley – Friedrich Silcher
text by Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)

Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten,
Daß ich so traurig bin,
Ein Märchen aus uralten Zeiten,
Das kommt mir nicht aus dem Sinn.
Die Luft ist kühl und es dunkelt,
Und ruhig fließt der Rhein;
Der Gipfel des Berges funkelt,
Im Abendsonnenschein.

Die schönste Jungfrau sitzet
Dort oben wunderbar,
Ihr gold'nes Geschmeide blitzet,
Sie kämmt ihr goldenes Haar,
Sie kämmt es mit goldenem Kamme,
Und singt ein Lied dabei;
Das hat eine wundersame,
Gewalt'ge Melodei.

Den Schiffer im kleinen Schiffe,
Ergreift es mit wildem Weh;
Er schaut nicht die Felsenriffe,
Er schaut nur hinauf in die Höh'.
Ich glaube, die Wellen verschlingen
Am Ende Schiffer und Kahn,
Und das hat mit ihrem Singen,
Die Loreley getan.

CICONIA CONSORT

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