



CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 43121

OYSTER DUO

NICHOLAS SCHWARTZ
DOUBLE BASS

ANNA FEDOROVA
PIANO

Stolen Pearls

GINASTERA
SCHUMANN
SCHUBERT
GERSHWIN
BLOCH
SHOSTAKOVICH
RACHMANINOFF
BOTTESINI





Many people ask, "Why the name 'Oyster Duo'?" Having met on the sands of the Brazilian coast, we bonded over the mutual love of the oyster! The oyster is a sophisticated, refined delicacy that tastes of the boundless sea, which not unlike the music, can even have an aphrodisiac effect! When we were thinking about the name for our duo, we considered the oyster's delicate and refined qualities, yet wild taste of the sea. Similarly, we believe that sophisticated music making must still be played with freedom and abandon. We also happened to be eating oysters at that moment!

To make music at the highest level, you have to live it, be it ... own it! The problem is, since the collection of original double bass repertoire is rather limited, we resorted to 'stealing' a few gems composed for other instruments. Almost all of the pieces presented on this album were never intended to be played on the double bass, but after a few minor alterations we can now present them in a new light that we believe is completely convincing and which leaves no guilty nostalgia for the instrument for which they were written. Some of the pieces are beloved and some are perhaps a bit less known, but all share what we consider to be "pearls" of the repertoire.

Conceived with pencil and paper, scissors and glue, our arrangements of Ginastera and Gershwin's

compositions were adapted to what you'll hear on this album. On the other hand, the pieces by Bloch, Rachmaninoff and Shostakovich required very little adaptation, naturally suiting the profound depth and expression of the double bass. The celebrated works of Schumann and Schubert (regularly performed by many instrumentalists) are shown here in a new shade of light by a larger, lower contender. At last, Bottesini's 'Tarantella' which was written by the hands of a double bass player, for the double bass player, showcases the virtuosic capabilities of the instrument; a victory lap and a happy ending!

In our opinion, the double bass is an incredibly vocal instrument that rivals the cello in an expression similar to the human voice. With its incredibly long strings, the bass has a power of speech that (in sensitive hands) directly speaks to the listener. Its rich tonal colors suit a vast variety of musical styles from all over the world. By listening to this album, we hope that the experience will change your perception of the double bass and appreciate how these 'Pearls' of the repertoire shine in a new light!

We hope you enjoy our music as much as we enjoy oysters!

Nicky & Anna



NICHOLAS SANTANGELO SCHWARTZ

Nicholas Santangelo Schwartz has distinguished himself as one of the most compelling and accomplished bassists on the international concert stage. He is a laureate of multiple international competitions, including being the youngest winner ever of the International Society of Bassists Solo Competition and its commissioned prize. He was also the first double bassist to win the Stulberg International String Competition (in a unanimous vote) and the Bach Festival Society Award in its 43 year history.

In 2013, Nicholas became a member of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, widely known as one of the greatest orchestras in the world. He formerly played with the Berlin Philharmonic as a member of the Karajan Academy, and in the USA with the Boston Symphony and Pops Orchestras. In addition to being a long time member of the Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra, Nicholas has been a guest artist at multiple international chamber music festivals around the world and regularly performs with artists such as Rosanne Philippens, Dana Zemtsov, Daniel Rowland, Maja Bogdanovic, Eldbjørg and Ragnhild Hemsing, Benedict Kloekner, Kirill Troussov, Maximilian Hornung, Olivier Patey, Linus Roth and Alexei Ogrintchouk.

In addition to being a world class bassist, Nicholas is also an active cellist. He is the only classical performer who plays at an artistic level on each instrument and is often heard at concerts on both the double bass and cello. He feels equally at home in other musical genres having his first success as a jazz bassist as a winner of the Grand Prize at Carnegie Hall in the Chamber Music Foundation of New England International Chamber Music Competition. He subsequently shared the stage with legendary artists such as Mark O'Connor, Russell Malone and Clark Terry.

In 2020 Nicholas became a Guest Professor of double bass at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague. He enjoys teaching privately and giving master classes whenever possible and he is a mentor in the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra Academy program. Originally from Brookline, Massachusetts (USA) Nicholas resides in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

On this recording, Nicholas plays a double bass by Gaetano Antoniazzi (1872, Milan). Nicholas is a sponsored artist of Pirastro strings.

www.nicholassantangeloschwartz.com

ANNA FEDOROVA

Anna Fedorova is one of the world's premier young pianists. From an early age, she demonstrated an innate musical maturity and astounding technical abilities. Her live recording of Rachmaninoff's 2nd Concerto has more than 30 million views on Youtube and is highly acclaimed by critics and world renowned musicians. She regularly performs at the world's most prestigious concert halls such as the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, New York Carnegie Hall, Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, Zurich Tonhalle, Théâtre des Champs Elysees in Paris, Bunka Kaikan in Tokyo and many others.

As an orchestra piano soloist, Anna has performed with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic, Tokyo Symphony, Yomiuri Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, Utah Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Hong Kong Philharmonic, the Netherlands Philharmonic, and many others. Called the «house pianist» (Telegraph) of the Concertgebouw, Anna has performed there more than 30 times as well as in numerous online and televised appearances. Anna is currently artist-in-residence at the Haarlem Philharmonie in the Netherlands. She is a regular guest at leading music festivals such as the Annecy Music Festival, Menuhin Festival in Gstaad (Switzerland), Ravinia Festival in USA and the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris.

Anna graduated from the Lysenko School of Music in Kyiv with Borys Fedorov and the Accademia Pianistica in Imola, Italy with Leonid Margarius. She received her master's degree and artist diploma at the Royal College of Music in London under the guidance of Norma Fisher.

www.annafedorova.com



STOLEN GEMS FOR THE HONEST FINDER

In this programme two musicians travel criss-cross through two centuries and six countries in search of melodious gems. Gems that really belong to somebody else's 'domain'. For here we listen to the giant of string instruments, the double bass, as it whets its appetite on the melodious and virtuosic repertoire of its smaller siblings, the violin, viola and cello. Surely, the double bass can sing compellingly too, and tackle the most daredevil escapades? Yes, it can, and in so doing it surfaces from those low and hidden orchestral depths in which its life and lot usually lie. For this recording the double bass and its faithful friend the piano have journeyed extensively, bringing home a rich booty of musical discoveries, 'stolen gems' from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From Argentina, Germany, Austria, the USA, Russia and Italy.

The metamorphosis of Ginastera

The Argentine Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983), one of the most imaginative composers of twentieth-century South America, offered our two roaming musicians one of their most delightful discoveries. His attractive and often hallucinating music is an ingenious mixture of spicy Argentinian folk rhythms and modern composition techniques kindred to those of Manuel de Falla, Béla Bartók and Igor Stravinsky. Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires to a Catalan father and an Italian mother. He died in Geneva at the age of sixty-seven: for at least the third time, the ground had become too hot under the feet of this immigrants' son, due to the repressive regimes of his fatherland, and he breathed his last breath as an emigrant in Switzerland.

With his *Cinco canciones populares argentinas* opus 10 (Five Argentinian Folk Songs; 1943), Ginastera was out to elevate the precious heritage of folk song into the realm of high art, and to drape it in a cloak of modern sounds stitched with spicy dissonances. He did this, nota bene, in wartime and from the USA, where he resided for three years to study with Aaron Copland. The songs are largely based on original Argentine melodies and texts, as appears from the titles, although some were entirely new compositions. In the first and last songs in particular we clearly hear strains of

Argentinian folklore, with its playful rhythms and light touch. The first is a little love song with a wink: 'A mi me gustan las ñatas y una ñata me ha tocado' ('I love pugnosed girls and one has caught my eye'). Ginastera was probably referring to his fiancé Mercedes de Toro, since she was nicknamed 'Ñata' (nose, or conk), writing these five songs as a wedding present. The second one is a melancholy, slow dance song about unrequited love, while the third is a syncopated scarf dance from Peru. After the wonderful lullaby Arroró the little cycle ends with a varied and exuberant 'cat dance'.

Schumann's youthful love

Schumann's *Fantasiestücke* opus 73 have been pinched by the double bass from the cello repertoire, although these three pieces were originally written for the clarinet. For the young Robert Schumann the cello was a close love, even though he usually composed for his own instrument, the piano. The *Fantasiestücke* opus 73 are contrastive character pieces akin to the Songs without Words by his good friend Felix Mendelssohn. Tenderness and vitality alternate charmingly, as do major and minor, gladness and gravity, dreamy lyricism and fervent elation, and all this in a continuous dialogue between the two instruments.

Posthumously rediscovered

The artistic life of Franz Schubert in Vienna was almost literally supported by a circle of faithful friends, known as the 'Schubertians'. They usually played piano and chamber music and sang songs, generally with the composer at the grand piano. Thus, through his music, Schubert desired to beautify his own life and that of others. At the request of his comrade Vincenz Schuster, in 1824 he composed a sonata for a curious instrument which had recently been invented by the Viennese guitar maker Johann Georg Stauer: the arpeggione, a sort of cross between a guitar and a cello, with a sound similar to the viola da gamba. When the *Sonata for arpeggione and piano in A minor* was published in 1871 the arpeggione had very nearly been forgotten, so it was usually played on the cello or viola. And now on the double bass.

Classical and blues hand in hand

In 'Old Europe' classical music and pop are traditionally rather separate entities. Times have nonetheless changed. Composers in the USA smoothly entered - and do still enter - into mixed marriages between classical, jazz, blues and musical. As did George Gershwin (1898-1937), who was born in New York to Russian-Jewish immigrants. In America he became famous with his successful Broadway musicals, but he viewed himself more as a serious 'classical' composer, and was intent on bringing the worlds of classical music and jazz closer together. He did as much in his 3 *Preludes* written in 1926, of which we hear the second: a three-minute blues by a composer well versed in classical tools.

A prayer by Ernest Bloch

The Swiss-American composer Ernest Bloch (1880-1959) has always remained very much in the shadow of music history, despite becoming well known through such immortal works as *Schelomo* and *Nigun*. Was this because he was a composer without a fatherland, as he described himself? Afflicted by two world wars, this Jewish musician settled twice in the USA. Bloch has been called a 'Hebrew prophet' by reason of the Jewish flavour of his music, such as the triptych *From Jewish Life* for cello and piano, which dates from 1924, when he had just obtained American citizenship. In this piece Bloch clearly wished to express a personal voice, that of a Jew. We hear the first movement, *Prayer*, a meditative but also emotionally intense and expressive prayer without words.

An Adagio by Shostakovich

As is widely known, Dmitry Shostakovich suffered for much of his life from the censure and threats of the Soviet political system. One moment he was awarded state prizes and promoted as the great example, and the next he was publicly disgraced and had to try to save his skin by writing accessible music for film and ballet. And so, things went after the enormous scandal caused by his opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, which enraged Stalin in 1936, forcing the composer to water down the

wine in works such as his ballet music for a collective farm entitled 'The Clear Stream'. The recording features a melodious *Adagio* from this work, with a wonderful solo, originally for the cello, but why not on the double bass?

'Sing for me no longer'

Sergei Rachmaninoff composed songs over a period of more than twenty-five years, from his student days until his departure from Russia in the wake of the 1917 revolution. He never turned to song again, nor to opera, and indeed his source of inspiration, the Russian language upon which he had fed so avidly, seems to have dried up. The *Romances*, opus 4 are fruits of Rachmaninoff's later student days. A great favorite is the third song, '*Ne poi krasavitsa*' (*Sing for me no longer*), opus 4 no. 4; set to a text by Alexander Pushkin about a beautiful Georgian woman, its exotic coloraturas and almost oriental intervals are entrusted here to the strings of the double bass.

Tarantella

The final piece is by the Italian Giovanni Bottesini (1821-1889), one of the most virtuosic double bass players in history. In his day he was not without reason called the 'Paganini of the double bass'. He even had precise command of the very highest range, and he wrote superb and moving romantic pieces in which he smoothly applied the concept of belcanto to this 'basso profundo'. This exuberant final number, Bottesini's own virtuosic Italian dance the *Tarantella*, is a great example. The double bass is back home in a treasure chest of its very own!

Clemens Romijn

Translation: Stephen Taylor

"It's as if this often unwieldy-seeming instrument had been created to confide the deepest secrets of the soul. The virtuosity is dazzling, but maybe even more so is the communicative interiority of the most intimate passages. The couple play with such unanimity that you might almost think they were married."

Benjamin Zander,
Conductor of the Boston
Philharmonic Orchestra





COLOPHON

Production

Channel Classics Records

**Producer, recording engineer,
editing, mastering**

Jochem Geene

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Two Oysters, Jean Bernard, 1824
(Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Liner notes

Clemens Romijn

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Studio Van Schuppen

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2017

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Shostakovich's *Adagio*: ©MUSIKVERLAG
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Schoeps MK4 - MK8 - ORTF - B&K 4006

Digital converter

Horus / Merging Technologies - DXD

Editing software

Pyramix

Cables

XLR

Mastering Room

Speakers

Studer A723 Active

Amplifiers

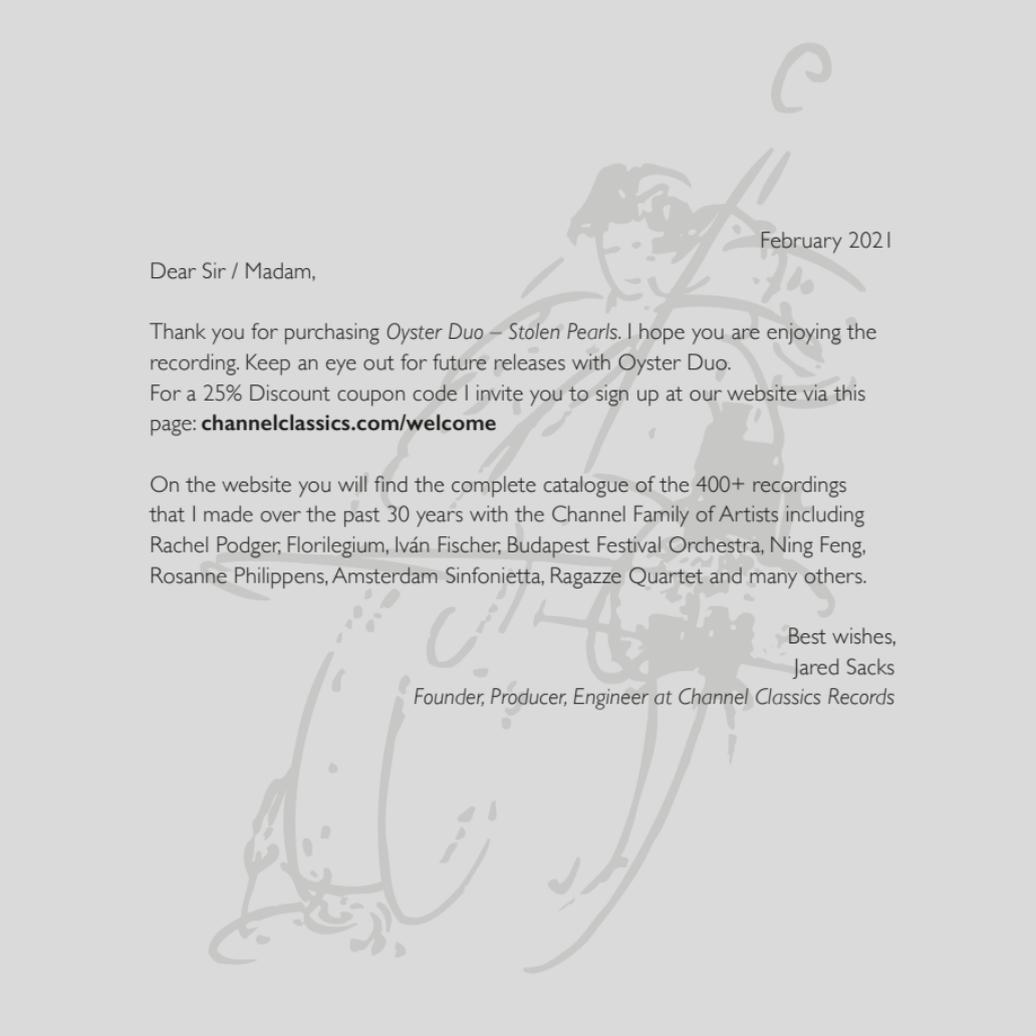
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Best wishes,
Jared Sacks

Founder, Producer, Engineer at Channel Classics Records

OYSTER DUO

NICHOLAS SCHWARTZ
DOUBLE BASS

ANNA FEDOROVA
PIANO

Stolen Pearls

- Alberto Ginastera** 1916-1983
Cinco Canciones Populares Argentinas, Op. 10 (1943)
- | | | |
|---|-----------|------|
| 1 | Chacarera | 3.38 |
| 2 | Triste | 2.07 |
| 3 | Zamba | 1.00 |
| 4 | Arrorró | 1.01 |
| 5 | Gato | 1.57 |

- Robert Schumann** 1810-1856
Fantasiestücke, Op. 73 (1849)
- | | | |
|---|-----------------------|------|
| 6 | Zart und mit Ausdruck | 3.22 |
| 7 | Lebhaft, leicht | 3.50 |
| 8 | Rasch und mit Feuer | 4.23 |

- Franz Schubert** 1797-1828
Arpeggione Sonata in A minor, D. 821 (1824)
- | | | |
|----|------------------|-------|
| 9 | Allegro moderato | 12.30 |
| 10 | Adagio | 4.17 |
| 11 | Allegretto | 9.23 |

- George Gershwin** 1898-1937
12 *Prelude No. 2*
Andante con moto e poco rubato (1926) 4.11

- Ernest Bloch** 1880-1959
13 From Jewish Life, B. 54:
'Prayer' (1924) 4.25

- Dmitry Shostakovich** 1906-1975
14 From The Limpid Stream,
Ballet Suite No. 2, Op. 39a:
II. Adagio (1951) 5.58

- Sergei Rachmaninoff** 1873-1943
15 From 6 Romances, Op. 4:
'Ne poi krasavitsa' (1890-93) 4.29

- Giovanni Bottesini** 1821-1889
16 *Tarantella* 5.52

Total time: 73.12