

NEW ALBUM: THE BIG B's

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Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Bartók, Bernstein, Brubeck

Up to the time of Johannes Brahms, improvisation – in other words, a spontaneous performance without preparation – was an indisputable trademark of the great masters. Today, this discipline is almost forgotten: While making music spontaneously used to be a skill that every outstanding musician had to master, today the required precision of the everyday concert life displaces this skill – possibly also due to a lack of courage.

Great improvisers of the "classical period" were, among others, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms: all of them "patron saints" and idols of the Janoska Ensemble. Here began the search for other composers with the letter "B" to match – and they were quickly found: Bernstein, Bartók, Brubeck. And so the idea was born to present on one album the music of those composers who were true masters of the discipline of improvisation: The Big B's.

From Bach the Janoska Ensemble has chosen the incredibly beautiful Double Concerto for 2 violins and present here - probably for the first time since the Menuhin & Grapelli summit - a "Jazz meets Classic" version. This is a true world premiere!

And another world premiere: all 9 symphonies by Ludwig van Beethoven on one album. But how is that possible? With a simple trick: we compiled all the symphonies into a nine-minute medley which contains the respective main themes of Beethoven's Symphonies 1 to 9. In other words: "9 Symphonies in 9 Minutes" (and the Ensemble is precise to the second!). Thus, they transport Beethoven's timeless oeuvre into the present – and thereby bring it closer to today's audience, while still retaining their personal "Janoska Style".

A special concern for the Janoska Ensemble is the music of Bela Bartók. His music is at the same time their own musical roots and it was obvious that the Ensemble let their own improvisations flow into the Romanian folk dances here: Entirely in the style as they have been taught to do in their family for generations. And Brahms' Hungarian Dance fits in very well: in it, you can also hear the "musical upbringing", their roots...

And then Bernstein's brilliant overture "Candide": a big challenge, because this masterful work was written for a symphonic orchestra with a large percussion group, woodwinds, strings and brass section. The Janoska Ensemble worked especially long and hard on this piece to adapt it for the ensemble. And to quote Frantisek, "we tried to bring in new colors and come up with suitable effects..."

Jazz has a very special place in the repertoire of the ensemble: Dave Brubeck's "Blue Rondo à la Turk" inspired us - Roman tells - a lot and we managed to create a great new version of this "jazz classic"...

Of course, this album should not be missing pieces from the laboratory of the Janoska composition workshop itself: Roman's "¡Buenos días, Marco!", Ondrej's "Bagatelle pour Va-Le", František's "Bellissima Naomi" or a tribute to Beethoven's probably most famous theme "Für Elise" - all, of course, in the so-called "Janoska Style".

The "Janoska Style" is an exciting new musical vision, a joint creation by the composer and the performers: a mixture of classical music, jazz, pop and other style elements. Thus, their debut album, which was awarded gold within a few months, also bears the fitting title "Janoska Style" (Deutsche Grammophon 2016). Their second album "Revolution" (Deutsche Grammophon 2019) as well as the current album "The Big B's" (Deutsche Grammophon 2022) are also close to gold. [rcs]

"The Big B's" in Janoska Style: each musical number is unique, born from the magic of the moment.