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infinite heartbeat DUO SOL



MIKI TSUNODA VIOLIN CAROLINE ALMONTE PIANO

Infinite Heartbeat

	ERICH WOLFGANG KORNGOLD (1897-1957)	
[1]	Garden Scene from Much Ado About Nothing	5'23
	LILI BOULANGER (1893-1918)	
[2]	Nocturne	2'53
	JOHN CORIGLIANO (b. 1938)	
[3]	Andantino from Sonata for Violin and Piano	6'49
	ASTOR PIAZZOLLA (1921-1992)	
[4]	Milonga sin palabras	5'26
	MANUEL DE FALLA (1876-1946) arr. Paweł Kochoński from Suite Populaire Espagnole	[6'10]
[5]	Polo	1'15
[6]	Asturiana	1'51
[7]	Jota	3'04
	SERGEI RACHMANINOV (1873-1943)	
[8]	Vocalise, Op. 34 No. 14	5'17
	ROGER QUILTER (1877-1953)	
[9]	Drink to me only with thine eyes from Old English Popular Songs	2'43
	ASTOR PIAZZOLLA arr. Sofia Gubaidulina, Gidon Kremer, Vadim Sakharov; adapted Duo Sol	
[10]	Le Grand Tango	7'20

	FRANCIS POULENC (1899-1963)	
[11]	Intermezzo from Sonata for Violin and Piano	6'04
	STACY GARROP (b. 1970)	
[12]	Lotsachotomy from Neurotichotomy	2'42
	MATTHEW HINDSON (b. 1968)	
[13]	Little Chrissietina's Magic Fantasy	5'00
	STUART GREENBAUM (b. 1966)	
[14]	The Infinite Heartbeat from Sonata for Violin and Piano	5'03
	GORDON KERRY (b. 1961)	
[15]	Dream	2'27

Total Playing Time 63'16

Miki Tsunoda, *violin*
Caroline Almonte, *piano*

Duo Sol's *Infinite Heartbeat* operates almost as a 20th century travelogue, guiding the listener through a range of countries and eras – and making a quick detour to outer space. But even more than a geographical or temporal journey, *Infinite Heartbeat* is a journey through emotional states. Whether inspired by dance or song, each miniature is testament to the love affair between violin and piano, and the shared heartbeat of chamber music collaboration.

Erich Wolfgang Korngold's **Garden Scene** waltz, from a Viennese production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, provides a languid beginning to the duo's journey. Austrian composer Korngold was a child prodigy of the first rank. His pantomime *Der Schneemann* was performed by the Vienna Court Opera when he was just 13, so by 1920, when he provided the incidental music to Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*, he was already a seasoned professional. Originally scored for orchestra, the incidental music was commissioned for the play's season at the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna. When the season was extended, Korngold recast the music for violin and piano, performing the piano part himself. He later arranged a four-movement concert suite, and the 'Garden Scene' provides its most romantic moment.

Korngold was subsequently lured to Hollywood with another Shakespeare project: the soundtrack of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. It was here that he made his name, winning two Academy Awards with soundtracks that he designed as 'opera without singing'. These imaginative and narrative qualities are evident even in this early incidental music.

The **Nocturne** that follows hails from another prodigious hand. Composed when Lili Boulanger was a teenager, it has remained one of her most popular pieces. Boulanger came from a celebrated French family: her father, Ernest, was a composer, and her sister, Nadia, a composer and pedagogue. Lili Boulanger was ill for most of her short life, and died from intestinal tuberculosis in her early 20s. Music was of central importance to her, and she took private composition lessons, winning the Prix de Rome in 1913. Even on her deathbed, she dictated a final Pie Jesu to her sister. The genre of nocturne, or night song, was made famous by another tubercular composer, Chopin, whose influence is apparent. However, Boulanger infuses her version with an ardent impressionism. Scored for violin or flute, and piano or orchestra, the Nocturne blossoms after an opening of the simplest resources – a pedal C – and reveals Boulanger's supreme poetic gift.

American composer John Corigliano

describes his **Sonata for Violin and Piano** as a "tense, histrionic outgrowth of the 'clean' American sound of Barber, Copland, Harris and Schuman." Corigliano enumerates its American credentials as "its eclecticism, its rhythmic energy and its bright character." Composed in 1963, the sonata is deceptively straightforward, occasionally lurching into dark terrain. It is a defining work of Corigliano's 'first period', and won the Spoleto Festival Chamber Music Prize in 1964. The second movement, Andantino, contains moments of searing intensity, and reveals Corigliano's mastery of the violin. Such mastery might be partly genetic: Corigliano's father, the dedicatee of this sonata, was the concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic. Corigliano further exploited this expertise in his film score for *The Red Violin*. Like Korngold before him, he won an Academy Award.

Astor Piazzolla caused a revolution in his native Argentina, by injecting the genre of tango with influences of jazz and classical music. Such diverse inspirations reflect his upbringing: he moved to New York as a child, studied in Argentina with Ginastera, and worked in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. Piazzolla described Boulanger as a 'second mother', who made him "discover the musical world that I was waiting for for such a long

time." She advised him to concentrate on the tango, which he revolutionised and then disseminated throughout the world. **Milonga sin palabras** is one of Piazzolla's last works. A milonga is a tango comprising a syncopated duple meter, possibly of African origin. Dedicated to Piazzolla's wife, this 'milonga without words' was composed originally for the bandoneón (a relative of the accordion) and piano. It is a sumptuous, sensual work, tinged with a little nostalgia.

Manuel de Falla also studied in Paris, but flourished as a composer only upon returning to his native Spain, at the outbreak of the First World War. His **Suite Populaire Espagnole**, a collection of Spanish songs, dates from this time. These might be songs, but they are infused with the spirit of the dance. The intensely rhythmic Polo hails from Andalusia, and reflects the flamenco music of the Andalusian gypsies. A reflective Asturiana provides extreme contrast: stemming from the Asturias region in northeast Spain, the genre is sad and contemplative. The last dance, a Jota, dispels this mood with celebration. Operating in triple time, the Jota was designed to be performed by couples, accompanied by castanets. Paweł Kochoński arranged the *Suite Populaire Espagnole* for violin and piano, as *Seven Popular Spanish Songs*.

Sergei Rachmaninov's *Vocalise* is a song of a different sort. Rachmaninov composed the *Vocalise* in 1912, as the finale of his set opus 34. After many years of setting Russian texts to song, Rachmaninov economised in the *Vocalise*: the 'text' consists of a single vowel sound. This has made the *Vocalise* easy to transcribe, and few pieces contain so many versions for various instruments. Dedicated to the singer Antonia Nezhdanova, the solo part unfolds with Rachmaninov's signature nostalgia and breadth of line, accompanied by a piano part of sensuous harmony.

Whereas the *Vocalise* is replete with Russian melancholy, Roger Quilter's *Drink to me only with thine eyes* is the very model of an English art song. Quilter was emblematic of the Edwardian age, composing over one hundred songs, before succumbing to madness. Such was his affinity with his age that he subsequently fell into disrepute, and has only recently enjoyed a resurgence in popularity. 'Drink to me only with thine eyes' dates from 1921, and his collection *Old English Popular Songs*. It is a touchingly simple arrangement, based on Ben Jonson's love poem:

Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss within the cup,

And I'll not ask for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honouring thee,
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be.
But thou thereon didst only breathe
And send'st it back to me:
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear
Not of itself, but thee.

Piazzolla's *Le Grand Tango* for cello and piano was dedicated to Mstislav Rostropovich, and first performed in 1990. Duo Sol performs an edited transcription of Gidon Kremer's recorded version for violin and piano. It is an extended and varied work, full of immediate character changes, and a sense of improvisation. *Le Grand Tango* consists of three main sections: a driven and passionate opening, a more expressive and searching middle section, and a finale that builds to a higher plane. This is tango that transcends its origins, and operates as concert piece, replete with exciting *glissandi* and instrumental effects.

Francis Poulenc's *Sonata for Violin and Piano* is shrouded in tragedy. After two

early beginnings at violin sonatas, Poulenc was persuaded to attempt another by the young violinist Ginette Neveu in 1942. He took as his inspiration the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, who was killed by fascists in 1936. Poulenc had previously set three of Lorca's poems to song, and created this sonata as a memorial to him. The second movement, *Intermezzo*, has a Spanish flavour, and is prefaced by a quote of Lorca: "The guitar makes dreams weep." The sonata acquired a new level of tragedy in 1949, when Neveu was killed in a plane crash at the age of thirty. Poulenc revised the work, making it a memorial to her also.

Duo Sol met American-born composer Stacy Garrop at the Banff Centre of the Arts. Garrop describes her *Neurotichotomy* as a 'microscopic violin sonata'. The third movement, 'Lotsachotomy', operates almost as a microcosm of this CD, containing excerpts of tango, twelve-tone rows, and frenetic rhythms. Garrop marks it 'completely neurotic', and explains that it "has so many elements ... that I felt completely neurotic by the time I pinned a double bar to the piece, hence the title *Neurotichotomy*."

For the remaining three works on *Infinite Heartbeat*, Duo Sol returns to Australia. Matthew Hindson's *Little Chrissietina's Magic Fantasy* operates at a similar level of

intensity to 'Lotsachotomy'. Hindson composed it originally for two violins, and made this arrangement especially for Duo Sol in 2001, commissioned by Ars Musica through Musica Viva. As with much of Hindson's music, *Little Chrissietina's Magic Fantasy* takes the popular music genres of techno and death-metal as its inspiration. Arranging it for violin and piano created new possibilities in the piece. Hindson writes that "the extension of range that the piano offers meant that other techniques relating to techno music, in particular a very strong crotchet beat, could be directly stated in the piano part, rather than just being implied. In addition, there are short instances of techno-style piano writing within this new arrangement." The work is a virtuosic showpiece for the performers, and a visceral type of dance.

Stuart Greenbaum's *The Infinite Heartbeat* takes the listener to a much quieter place: outer space. 'The Infinite Heartbeat' is the third movement of Greenbaum's Sonata for Violin and Piano of 2000, dedicated to the violinist Marianne Rothschild. In his sonata, Greenbaum traces a journey out to space and back; in the quietness of such an environment, human presence stands out in stark relief. The cosmonaut, Aleksei Leonov, described the

silence of space as “unlike any I have encountered on Earth, so vast and deep that I began to hear my own body: my heart beating.” Greenbaum situates the human heartbeat in infinity.

Gordon Kerry returns the human heartbeat to earth, where he finds an even greater quietness, in his **Dream** of 1987. Composed for his niece, *Dream* is based loosely on a melody Kerry heard in a recording of a lands council meeting in the Kimberley. Kerry inflects this with a meditational quality, and spins it out so that it speaks, somehow, of the great quietness of our country. After so much dancing and so much singing, Duo Sol brings us back home, and leaves us in a place of repose.

Anna Goldsworthy

Duo Sol, pianist Caroline Almonte and violinist Miki Tsunoda, is one of the most dynamic chamber music partnerships in Australia. Duo Sol's performances have received the highest acclaim, winning first prize at Italy's prestigious International Chamber Music Competition, Premio Trio di Trieste in May 1999. The ensemble has also been a finalist at the ARD Music Competition in Munich and Premio Vittorio Gui in Florence.

Duo Sol has appeared extensively throughout Italy, United Kingdom, South America, Canada and Australia, including performances at the Teatro Coliseo in Buenos Aires, Palazzo Chigi in Siena, Hamarikyu Hall in Tokyo and the Melbourne International Festival. The duo has a regular concert series in Australia called Six in the City, which is made possible through the generous support of The Australian Financial Review.

Duo Sol's eclectic and wide-ranging repertoire takes in the sonatas of Mozart and Beethoven, the late Romanticists, through to Messiaen, Takemitsu, Schnittke and Piazzolla. The duo also maintains a strong commitment to performing works by Australian composers.

Since the formation of their ensemble five years ago, Miki Tsunoda and Caroline Almonte have been regular artists at the

Banff Centre for the Arts in Canada. With the support of the Australia Council, they recorded and produced their acclaimed debut CD on ABC Classics as Duo Tsunoda Almonte in 2000.

Soon after this recording was released, they changed their name to Duo Sol, a name with a special meaning to the group – Debussy's *Sonate en sol mineur* was the first piece performed by the ensemble.

Miki Tsunoda studied violin at the Liszt Academy in Budapest with Ferenc Halász, György Kurtág and András Mihály, and furthered her studies in Toronto with Lorand Fenyves. Caroline Almonte studied with Oxana Yablonskaya at the Juilliard School in New York. She began her studies with the Yamaha Music School, and later with Stephen McIntyre. She currently teaches piano at the University of Melbourne.

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