

# KALEIDOSCOPE

KRIS GARFITT *trombone*

SERI DAN *piano*



The dictionary defines '*Kaleidoscope*' as 'any complex pattern of frequently changing shapes and colours'. In this exciting new recording by Kris Garfitt, winner of the prestigious 2022 *ARD Competition in Munich*, you will encounter a huge variety of the many voices that composers have given to the trombone as a solo instrument.

Although we are used to hearing trombones as a trio or quartet in orchestras and ensembles, it might surprise the reader to learn that the instrument has been used as either a soloist or an obbligato from the Renaissance through to the present day. Schütz, Leoni, Viadana and Caldara represent the earlier period, but it was particularly popular through the Classical period of the Habsburg empire, with composers as varied and distinguished as Biber, Fux, W.A. and Leopold Mozart, Johann Michael Haydn, Wagenseil, Albrechtsberger and even Beethoven in his *Equali* for four trombones, all exploiting the unique colour of the instrument.

These writers were often inspired by contemporary trombone virtuosos such as Leopold Christian, Roman Korner, Anton Bachschmidt and particularly Thomas Gschlatt, effectively Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's trombonist, who was the first trombonist to be appointed as a prestigious '*Kammermusiker*' (Chamber musician) in Salzburg in the latter half of the 1700s.

Our first piece takes us far away from the Classical world to the middle of the twentieth century. The Ballade by the Swiss composer *Frank Martin* (1890–1974) was commissioned for the 1940 Geneva Competition and is one of what he referred to as six ‘informal and epic’ works with the same title composed between 1938 and 1972 for alto saxophone, flute, trombone, cello, piano and viola. Martin considered himself a late developer and having thoroughly immersed himself in the serial technique of the Second Viennese school, felt that as a fifty year old, his compositional voice had finally arrived at a degree of maturity. The effects of his studies can be heard in the opening solo where the falling and rising melody, although based on a ten note serial row, falls into three distinct arpeggios which harness the theme securely to the tonal world.

Its technical demands are not especially excessive, but the musical language displays the trombone as a possessor of both nobility and nimble humour. Jumping to the other side of the Atlantic, the Uruguayan trombonist and writer *Enrique Crespo* (1941–2020), began his career in Montevideo and Buenos Aires, but won a scholarship to study in Berlin in 1967 and upon graduation in 1969, became principal trombone in the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra. Later, in 1980, he moved to work in the same position with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra. He was a founding member of German Brass in 1985, a popular decret for which he wrote many arrangements in a wide variety of styles, from Baroque to jazz. This eclectic quality is immediately apparent in his Improvisation No. 1 for Trombone Solo, which abounds with flamboyant flourishes, wailing vocal like lines and a 7/8 riff which all culminate in an exciting acceleration then a majestic slowing down to the finishing line.





It is one of the mysteries of trombone repertoire that the origins of one of its truly stalwart pieces, played in recitals and auditions worldwide, are still unsure. Richard Wagner said of the German romanticist *Carl Maria von Weber*, (1786–1826), to whom the Romance is commonly attributed, “There never lived a more German composer than you.” Praise indeed. Unfortunately, in the catalogue compiled by Wilhelm Jähns, containing the complete works of Weber, there is not a page that even hints at either the trombone or the piano part. The Weber scholar John Warrack is also

of the opinion that it 'suggests none of Weber's stylistic individualities' and was written at a later date. Carl and Weber are extremely common German names, so the possibility of misappropriation is also not out of the question. Additionally, the piece contains low notes that would have been impossible on the tenor trombone, as the F valve needed to obtain them was only fully developed in 1930, four years after Weber's death. It looks far more likely that the Romance was written with the bassoon in mind and that these extreme notes, (which are printed as an alternative), were edited out or written as an ossia so that it could be played on the trombone. The fact that trombonists, with their relative dearth of quality solo music, 'borrowed' a work alleged to have been written by a distinguished composer is understandable. What is perhaps more sad is that the actual writer of what is certainly a moving and highly competent composition, has remained anonymous. *Georg Friederich Handel* (1685-1759), the Baroque master, has been wittily described as 'a German writing Italian music in England' and is best known for his impressive large-scale works, the anthems, operas and oratorios. What may come as a surprise is that he was also

a most proficient composer of intimate chamber music, with the Trio Sonatas Opus 2 HWV 393, first printed in 1722, (five years before he became a British subject), serving as particularly fine examples of the genre. Although officially designated as being for two violins or flutes, performance practice of the time meant that there was much flexibility in instrumentation, and as this eighth sonata has been performed by cellists for some years, a trombone version seems entirely appropriate.

One of the most distinguished organists and composers of the French Romantic school was *Alexandre Guilmant* (1837-1911), who wrote his *Morceau Symphonique* in 1902 as one of the contest pieces set by the Paris Conservatoire for its trombone class. It was dedicated to Théodore Dubois, the winner of the prestigious composition prize, the Prix de Rome, who became Director of the Conservatoire from 1896. As Dubois was also an organist, there has been some unwarranted speculation that the *Morceau* was originally written with organ accompaniment, but the handwritten title page and the nature of the piano writing, which is on two staves rather than the three usually used for the

organ, make it abundantly clear that this is not the case. Its moving opening minor key lyricism and the following triple time vigour, characterised by rapid rising scales, have made this a standard work for all trombonists.

With its story of a black jazz musician's fortunes, the opera *Jonny spielt auf*, ('Jonny strikes up') by the young Austrian *Ernst Krřenek* (1900–1991), was a roaring success in Europe for many years after its 1926 premiere in Leipzig. This popularity grew to such an extent that even though he resisted the common reference to it as a 'jazz opera', Krřenek was accused by some of Populism. The politics of National Socialism inevitably tried to bring the piece into disrepute, using one of the opera's advertising

posters as a feature in a 1938 exhibition of *Entartete Musik*, or degenerate music. Unsurprisingly, Krřenek moved to the United States in the same year, initially to teach, but also to expand his writing style. This espoused many trends, from the jazz influences of Milhaud and Weill, post romanticism, right through to the discordant atonality of the Second Viennese School and beyond. The *Five Pieces for Trombone and Piano* are definitely in the latter category. They were written in 1967 as a commission from the avant-garde trombonist and composer, Stuart Dempster (1936–). Dempster is probably best known for asking Luciano Berio (1925–2003) to write his ground-breaking *Sequenza V* in 1966. The pieces begin with a two page glossary of signs and instructions for the performers, including barking and muttering, throat-clearing, rolling the bell on the piano strings, and playing and singing simultaneously for the trombone, while the pianist, as an extension to conventional technique, is required to perform various forms of manipulation of the strings and body of the instrument with the hands and fingers. The result is a series of highly entertaining virtuosic movements that shock, bewilder, momentarily soothe,





but always surprise the listener. Some compositions have gained a certain notoriety on their instruments and the *Pièce en E bémol mineur* by *Guy Ropartz* (1864–1955) is undoubtedly one of these. As with *Guilmant's Morceau Symphonique*, it was written in 1908 as a contest piece for the Paris Conservatoire. Persuading such a distinguished musician to find time between his third and fourth symphonies to pen something rather special for the trombone must have been a considerable coup. Ropartz was a busy man, director of both the Nancy and Strasbourg conservatoires and became the conductor of the *Philharmonic Orchestra of Strasbourg*. As a native of Brittany he was massively influenced by his Breton heritage, setting the words of local writers and even writing three collections of his own poetry. His output was prolific in a wide variety of musical domains – orchestral, chamber, sacred, vocal, piano and organ. So what is it that makes this piece for trombone and piano so notorious? Opening with a slow imposing piano solo, and following it with expressive trombone writing, the music changes key to B minor and increases in speed, with a dialogue of increasing intensity between the two



musicians. Unexpectedly the music accelerates to a coda of fast triplet quavers, ending on a high E flat that can unnerve even the most confident of players. It is most fitting that Kris Garfitt brings his recital to an end with this magnificent virtuoso flourish.

*Professor Eric Crees  
London, November 2022*

# KRIS GARFITT

*Kris Garfitt* is first prize winner of the International ARD Music Competition in Munich, a Courtois Performing Artist and Solo Trombonist of the WDR Symphony Orchestra. On top of this he has had competition success as the Gold Medal winner of the 2019 Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition in London, and is first prize winner of the 2022 International Soloists Competition in Grenchen, 2019 Jeju International Music Competition, the 2019 International IPV (International German Trombone Association) Competition in Germany, 2018 International Tenor

and Bass Trombone Competition in Budapest and the 2018 International Juozas Pakalnis Competition of Wind and Percussion Instruments in Vilnius. As well as winning the first prize in the ARD Competition, he also won the 'audience prize' plus numerous 'special' awards. He graduated in 2015 from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London with a First Class Honours Degree. During his time at Guildhall he received regular lessons with Eric Crees, Peter Gane and Christopher Houlding and later with Fabrice Millischer of Freiburg Musikhochschule and Guilhem Kusnierek





at the Hochschule for Music Saar. From 2016 until 2020 Kris was working as a member of the German Radio Philharmonic, and since 2021 is the solo trombonist of the WDR Symphony Orchestra. Besides regular concerts with his orchestra, he has performed as guest solo trombonist with many of Europe's leading orchestras such as the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra in Munich. He is fortunate enough to have been a member of both the European Union Youth Orchestra and Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester and

travel extensively throughout the world, performing in all of Europe's major concert halls and festivals such as The BBC Proms and Salzburger Festspiele. Alongside his orchestral career, Kris also manages to navigate a busy schedule as a soloist. Shortly after winning his job in 2016 Kris experienced an increased interest and love of the trombone's wonderful solo literature, leading him to start a duo with the exceptional Korean pianist, Seri Dan. Together they perform regular recital concerts throughout Germany and worldwide. He performs regularly as a concert soloist with world class ensembles such as the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Munich Chamber Orchestra. In season 2023/2024 alone, Kris will perform as a soloist throughout Germany with the Deutschen Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Robert-Schumann-Philharmonie in Chemnitz, Hamburger Camerata, Hofer Symphony Orchestra, Südwestfalen Philharmonic, Göttingen Symphony Orchestra, Bergische Symphony Orchestra and Vogtland Philharmonic plus numerous orchestras in Switzerland, Spain, Poland, Austria etc.

# SERI DAN

*Seri Dan* grew up in Seoul, Korea, and started playing piano when she was 7 years old. At the age of 11, her piano teacher noticed that she also had a talent for singing, so she started taking piano and singing lessons at the same time. Seri won a classical vocal competition in Seoul the following year. After finishing elementary school, she decided to focus just on her piano playing, attending the Kaywon High School of the Arts. She got her Bachelor's degree with full marks at the Kyunghee University, studying with Prof. Hyo-Sun Lim on a full scholarship. In 2016 Seri moved to Germany and began her piano masters degree under the tuition of Prof. Alfonso Gómez and Tamara Stefanovich at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg. It was during her time in Freiburg that she met trombonist Kris Garfitt and began collaborating in several concerts and recordings. After achieving her Master's degree with full marks at all

three graduation recitals, Seri went on to the Hochschule für Musik Mannheim to study Korrepetition (collaborative piano) under Chiaki Ohara.

Since meeting Kris Garfitt, they are playing recital concerts regularly throughout Germany, England and across Europe. Seri has also accompanied Kris in several major international music competitions such as the ARD Music Competition in Germany, Royal Over-Seas League Music Competition in London, Jeju International Music Competitions and IPV (International German Trombone Association) Competition, where he was always awarded the first prize.

Seri has regularly performed in chamber music projects and worked as a piano accompanist for the Germany Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. Since 2020, she is working as a collaborative pianist and chamber music assistant at the Hochschule für Musik Saar, in Saarbrücken, Germany.

Seri was also the official accompanist of many international trombone competitions, such as the IPV International Trombone Competition 2020 and the Michel Becquet Trombone Competition 2023.



# GUILHEM KUSNIEREK

Versatility and curiosity might be the best words to describe *Guilhem Kusnierek's* way of thinking. Soloist, teacher, chamber and orchestral musician, he is always looking to expand his ways of expressing himself through music.

As a soloist, Guilhem Kusnierek is a prize winner in many international competitions such as Lieksa (Finland), Porcia (Italy) and Jeju (South Korea). Most significantly, in 2015, Guilhem won the third prize at the 64th edition of the International Music Competition of

the ARD in Munich. Together with his duo partner, the world-renowned pianist Christopher Park, his first solo album “Hindemith in Paris” was born.

Guilhem has performed with many of Europe's biggest orchestras (Mahler Chamber Orchestra, WDR Sinfonieorchester, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Les Dissonances).

He won his first orchestral position as principal trombonist in the Orchestre



National de Montpellier at the age of nineteen and since 2010 is the co-principal trombonist of the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern.

Passionate about baroque music, in 2016 he won the first prize in the only existing international baroque trombone competition, of RICA in Toulouse. He has performed with many of the most prestigious baroque ensembles such as the “Concert Lorrain”, “Arsys Bourgogne” with Pierre Cao, “Pulcinella” with Ophélie Gaillard and the “Insula Orchestra” with Laurence Equilbey. Guilhem Kusnierek is trombone professor at the Hochschule für Musik Saar in Saarbrücken. 2023 will see his european tour with his conference “Musician, know yourself!” about the psychology of musicians.

As a M&W performing artist, Guilhem Kusnierek performs on a M&W 322 2R trombone.

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|-----|---|------|
| 1.  | FRANK MARTIN - <i>Ballade</i>   | 8:03 |
| 2.  | ENRIQUE CRESPO - <i>Improvisation No. 1 for Trombone Solo</i>               | 5:42 |
| 3.  | CARL MARIA VON WEBER - <i>Romance</i>                                       | 7:35 |
|     | GEORG FRIEDRICH HANDEL - <i>Trio Sonata in G minor, Op. 2 No. 8 HWV 393</i> |      |
| 4.  | <i>I. Andante</i>   | 3:54 |
| 5.  | <i>II. Allegro</i>  | 2:08 |
| 6.  | <i>III. Largo</i>   | 3:46 |
| 7.  | <i>IV. Allegro</i>  | 2:16 |
|     | <i>with Guilhem Kusnerek (trombone)</i>                                     |      |
| 8.  | ALEXANDRE GUILMANT - <i>Morceau Symphonique, Op. 88</i>                     | 6:29 |
|     | ERNST KRENEK - <i>Five Pieces for Trombone and Piano, Op. 198</i>           |      |
| 9.  | <i>I</i>  | 2:29 |
| 10. | <i>II</i>   | 2:58 |
| 11. | <i>III</i>  | 1:11 |
| 12. | <i>IV</i>   | 2:44 |
| 13. | <i>V</i>  | 1:25 |
| 14. | GUY ROPARTZ - <i>Piece in Eb Minor</i>                                      | 6:50 |