

NAXOS

Eugene

ZÁDOR

Piano Quintet

(version for piano
and string orchestra)

**Accordion
Concerto**

**Suite for Brass
Instruments**

**Hungarian
Fantasy**

**Budapest Symphony
Orchestra MÁV**

Mariusz Smolij



Eugene Zádor (1894–1977)

Accordion Concerto • Romance • Suite for Brass Instruments Berceuse • Hungarian Fantasy • Piano Quintet

Eugene Zádor lived a life dedicated to music. His overriding goal was always to communicate to listeners, and he wasn't interested in any music that failed to celebrate the human spirit. Apart from his 'day job' as the exclusive orchestrator for Miklós Rózsa's film scores from the early 1940s to the mid-1960s, he composed concert music in many genres, including operas, songs, chamber music and symphonic works. He delighted in exploring unusual ensembles and was commissioned by many of his fellow musicians to expand the repertoire for their instruments. His work was often critically acclaimed, and – more important to him – well-received by his audiences.

Zádor's *Accordion Concerto* is one of a series of concertante works he composed for what he called 'underprivileged' instruments, including trombone, cymbalom and double bass. It was written in 1972 for acclaimed American accordionist Anthony Galla-Rini, who had made his debut on the vaudeville circuit at the age of four in 1908 and continued to play for nearly a century until his death in 2006. Galla-Rini contributed significantly to the development of the instrument and helped to establish it as a legitimate orchestral voice beyond its role in dance bands and popular music. The concerto was not the composer's first brush with the instrument, however, since he had previously used it in his opera *The Inspector General* and *Five Contrasts* (Naxos 8.572548).

Like all Zádor's work, the concerto is consistently tonal but coloured by a distinctive wash of 20th-century musical vocabulary: 'I was more concerned with the communicative aspects of the music than with new developments', observed the composer – something he might well have said about his entire output. Galla-Rini premiered the work in Los Angeles; the conductor was Manuel Compinsky. Several additional performances followed throughout the state and beyond. The soloist also prepared a version of the string parts for accordion ensemble.

The buoyant first movement (*Allegro moderato*) is a moment of pure C major sunshine. The soloist enters immediately to introduce the first thematic idea, which is then completed by violins. Soloist and strings continue to chatter back and forth, developing the idea through a series of tonal shifts that lead to a new section that is, if anything, even more lively, alternating measures of 3/4 with stretches of 2/2. The first theme returns in truncated form, leading to a coda based on the contrasting central panel of this A–B–A structure.

Heavy clouds move in for the second movement (*Moderato*). Eerie, brief chromatic figures in the strings alternate with an expansive C minor idea that climaxes each time in a pungent bi-modal cadence. Midway through the movement, Zádor takes a new path (*poco sostenuto*) that leads to a march-like section (*Moderato*) with a new idea from accordion alternating with the opening chromatic figure from the strings until the soloist returns to the original expansive line and its biting, major/minor cadences. In the final measures, the strings play the melody and the accordion hints at the opening chromatic motif, bringing a satisfying symmetry to the movement's close.

Continuing the meteorological analogy, a roll of thunder from timpani and flashes of lightning from xylophone kick off the final movement. The soloist introduces the principal theme of this rondo form, featuring prominent 'Hungarian snaps' in its rhythmic profile. Zádor develops this quite extensively, introducing contrasting material along the way but always returning to his main idea. A grand pause sets up the final section: a spirited *zingaresca* that features some virtuosic playing from the soloist. Once underway, this gypsy dance propels the concerto swiftly to its exhilarating conclusion.

Zádor composed his lovely *Románc* ('Romance') for cello and piano sometime in the early 1920s. He dedicated it to his beloved niece Eva Zádor, who was born in Hungary in 1920. After the Second World War, Zádor helped Eva, her husband and their two sons come to the United States and build a new life for themselves. The soloist weaves a free-flowing, rhapsodic melody over a gently rocking accompaniment. The work is through-composed, although the opening phrase returns both in the middle and at the end of the piece. This arrangement for string orchestra was made by conductor Mariusz Smolij.

The *Suite for Brass Instruments* demonstrates Zádor's mastery of orchestration, conjuring a wide spectrum of sonorities – solos to hefty *tuttis* – from a modest ensemble of a dozen instruments (four horns, four trumpets, three trombones and a tuba). Composed in 1961, the work is dedicated to Austrian conductor Gustav Koslik, who at the time was music director of Vienna's Tonkünstler Orchestra. The Westminster Brass Ensemble, featuring such distinguished players as trumpeter Philip Jones and horn player Alan Civil, made the first recording of the piece in 1967. It was also championed by Lester Remsen and the Los Angeles Brass Society.

The *Suite* opens with echoing, fanfare-like figures characterised by crisp dotted rhythms and intervals spanning fourths and fifths – we are not far here from the world of Rózsa's *Ben-Hur*, a score which Zádor had orchestrated two years earlier. The texture thickens and the dissonance level rises before the composer shifts gears to a martial passage in which trumpet carries the melody. The fanfares return and after a *meno mosso* bridge passage the composer strikes up a new idea that includes elements of both the fanfares and the march.

The contrasting middle movement is a contemplative *Andante* in A–B–A form. In its opening and closing sections, Zádor develops a four-note, rising-and-falling motif that relates to the fanfare idea of the first movement with its prominent use of fourths. In the contrasting midsection, solo trumpet takes the lead supported by terse interjections from the rest of the ensemble. Triplet figures open the last movement (*Allegro non troppo*), which is based almost entirely on a rising motif introduced by trombones and tuba. Zádor develops it contrapuntally (with the next voice taking it up just one measure later) and brings it back at half tempo in a chorale-like passage near the end (preceded by a return of the triplet figures). The *Suite* concludes with what the unidentified note-writer of the Westminster Brass recording described as 'a rousing *tutti* climax of extraordinary brilliance'.

Berceuse started out as a lullaby set to lyrics by Henry Reese: 'In tender moonlight, God sheds his grace on your beloved, newborn face...' Reese, a friend of the composer, was an actor, singer, writer and Los Angeles-based arts administrator whose translations of opera libretti were heard in productions by NBC Opera Theatre and The Metropolitan Opera (*Eugene Onegin*). The song was arranged for violin and piano (with some embellishments to the vocal line) by violinist François D'Albert, a friend and compatriot of the composer who won the Hubay prize at the Liszt Academy of Music in 1937 and later became a French citizen. It has been further arranged for this recording for solo violin and string orchestra by conductor Smolij. It is, as to be expected, simple in form yet evocative in its occasionally chromatic harmonies. (It is worth noting in this context that Zádor himself did several arrangements for string orchestra of works by other composers, including Schubert, Haydn, Liszt, Bach and Rachmaninov.)

Hungarian Fantasy was originally composed for violin and piano. Although the exact date of composition is unknown, a letter exists in the Zádor archives from Jascha Heifetz dated 15 June 1943. Apparently Zádor had written to ask the great violinist if he thought the work should be orchestrated. 'I liked the piece very much' Heifetz replied, but he suggested that – given the limited chances of seeing it performed with orchestra – 'It might therefore be worth your while to do a typical piano part.' Zádor complied, but now Smolij has brought the piece full circle with this arrangement for soloist and string orchestra.

The piece breaks down into three broad sections, each developing a different Hungarian-flavoured tune that, while original, has many characteristics of native folk song, particularly in its rhythms and modal harmonies. The first (*Moderato*) bears a stamp of brooding melancholy, beginning in the low-to-mid range of the violin and only later ascending to the showier stratosphere. The second (*Commodo*) (9 c. 3:49 on this album) also begins low but is more extroverted in nature, suggesting the spirit of a measured peasant dance. Zádor subtly segues into the final section (at c. 6:03), which presents a much livelier and sunnier dance (mostly in the major mode). Comprising the second half of the piece, it explores and develops its material with a greater range of expression and compositional technique than the first two parts. It also includes a cadenza, allowing a virtuosic opportunity for the soloist to balance soul with showmanship.

Zádor's *Fantasy* is, in many ways, the embodiment of his debt to the music of his native land. It is a perfect example of this observation about the composer from music historian David Ewan: 'His Hungarian background is probably the

greatest single influence on his style. Some of his most frequently performed works reveal their national identity in melodies that simulate the sensuousness and languor of gypsy tunes and rhythms that are a carryover from gypsy dances. But Zádor does not believe in quotations or adaptations; all the materials he uses, however derivative, are exclusively his.'

The *Piano Quintet* predates Zádor's move to the United States by six years. Composed in 1933, it earned the composer a coveted Hungarian National State Prize. It is a traditional, formal work in four movements. The chamber music texture has been expanded to full strings (again by Maestro Smolij) for this recording, albeit with some string solos for additional colour diversity.

The first movement (*Allegro con spirito*) contrasts two themes, both in duple-compound metre – the first a lively idea in the strings and the second (at 10 c. 1:20) more legato and led by piano. This suggests the beginning of sonata form, and Zádor does go on to develop both ideas extensively, but there is no clear-cut recapitulation of the two themes – only a brief coda based on the first.

The thick textured second movement (*Tempo moderato*) brings with it a surprisingly 'bluesy' character. Strings slowly unfold a long-lined melody under which the piano plays fistfuls of chords in a hypnotic dotted rhythm that continues throughout the movement – almost without a break. The music flows inexorably along, moving from peak to peak with solos from viola and violin providing timbral variety.

The third movement (*Vivace*) is a Classically inspired scherzo and trio with two aptly contrasting themes. The first is a light-hearted tune started by the pianist, playing mostly in octaves, against a constant triplet pulse from strings. Those roles are reversed briefly at 12 c. 1:23, but the pianist soon resumes the lead, expanding from octaves to chords. For the trio section, Zádor goes back to the 6/8 metre of the opening movement, ending with a transitional passage (back in 4/4) before repeating the scherzo *da capo*, with no changes. The quicksilver conclusion (*Allegro molto*) uses just one theme that the composer subjects to multiple treatments, including a fugal passage. A fleeting return to the opening of the movement begins the propulsive drive to the final chord, which, after a grand pause, puts an exclamation point on this prize-winning quintet.

Frank K. DeWald

Photo © Laura Pedrick



Mariusz Smolij

Mariusz Smolij (b. 1962) has led over 140 orchestras on four continents, appearing at some of the world's most prestigious concert halls. In North America he has collaborated with the Houston Symphony, Lyric Opera Orchestra of Chicago and the New Jersey Symphony among many others. Elsewhere, he has directed concerts at the Tonhalle (Zurich), Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), National Centre for the Performing Arts (Beijing), and Warsaw National Philharmonic Concert Hall, to name a few. A founding member of the Penderecki Quartet, he has served as associate conductor of the Houston Symphony and music director of the NFM Lutosławski Philharmonic, International Festival Wroslavia Cantans and Toruń Symphony Orchestra (Poland), and is currently music director of the Acadiana Symphony in Louisiana and Riverside Symphonia in New Jersey. For Naxos, he has recorded music by Andrzej Panufnik, Tadeusz Szeligowski, Miklós Rózsa, Eugene Zádor, Ernest Bloch and Romuald Twardowski. His album of works by Polish composer Grażyna Bacewicz won a 2015 Fryderyk Award (Naxos 8.573229). In 2019 the president of Poland awarded him the Knight's Cross of the Order of Merit for the promotion of Polish culture. www.mariuszsmolij.com

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Anna Górecka, Piano

Anna Górecka is passionate about the rich and varied music of the 20th and 21st centuries, with a special place in her repertoire for the compositions of her father, Henryk Mikołaj Górecki. In 1991 she graduated with distinction from the Academy of Music in Katowice where she studied with Andrzej Jasiński, later continuing her education with Wiktor Merzhanow. Górecka is a laureate of piano competitions in Senigallia, Hamburg (the International Johannes Brahms Competition) and the Polish Piano Festival in Słupsk. She has performed at the Berliner Philharmonie, the Grand Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, Bösendorfer Saal in Vienna, Colston Hall in Bristol (now Bristol Beacon), Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre, Festival Hall in Osaka, Palau de la Música Catalana in Barcelona, Hermitage Theatre in St Petersburg, National Philharmonic in Warsaw and NOSPR in Katowice, among others. Górecka is a professor at the Academy of Music in Katowice. Her students have enjoyed significant success at both Polish and international competitions. www.gorecka.pl

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Richárd Rózsa

Richard Rózsa began his musical education at a young age at the Music Academy of Debrecen. After graduating with a Master of Music in Performance Cello and Teaching from the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest he continued his studies with Gustav Rivinius in Saarbrücken. Rózsa began his orchestral career as a member of the Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra, going on to play in the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra, with whom he made numerous recordings, before becoming principal cellist of the Hungarian State Opera Orchestra. He has performed with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe since 2014, and is currently principal cellist of the Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV. A prolific international chamber musician, he regularly collaborates with Maxim Vengerov and Gustav Rivinius, among others. In 2005 he performed for the Spanish Royal Family on one of the Stradivaris of the Madrid Royal Palace. He is also committed to contemporary music and regularly appears at the Hungarian Radio Classical Music Series.

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Dávid Pintér

Violinist Dávid Pintér studied at the Béla Bartók Conservatory and Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest before continuing his studies with Ulf Hoelscher at the Academy of Music in Karlsruhe. He completed his education at the Doctoral School at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music summa cum laude in 2016. Pintér has won prizes in numerous competitions, including the 2005 Canetti International Violin Competition, and has participated in masterclasses with Ulf Hoelscher, Vilmos Szabadi, Ferenc Szecsódi, Simon Standage, Olaf Adler, Zakhar Bron and Eduard Zienkovsky. From 2011 to 2018 he was section leader of the Hungarian State Opera Orchestra, and he is currently concertmaster of the Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV. He has been a professor at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music since 2012. He regularly participates in chamber music productions, and is a founding member of the Dohnányi Quartet, with the ensemble releasing its debut album in 2017.

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Klaudiusz Baran

Praised as a versatile artist of extraordinary musical sensitivity, Klaudiusz Baran has changed the perception of the accordion in Poland through charismatic, inventive and expressive performances. His musical interpretations, while respectful, feature an abundance of invention, interweaving unique performances and genuine expression. His musical creations have met with enthusiastic critical acclaim, and been awarded prizes at numerous competitions. In 2003 Baran was the first accordionist to receive the Fryderyk Award (Chamber Music Album of the Year) for his album *Piazzolla – Tango*, recorded for Sony Classical, and in 2019 he was awarded Album of the Year – Symphonic Music and Most Outstanding Recording of Polish Music by the same institution for *100 for 100: Musical Decades of Freedom – VIII 1988–1997* (PWM Edition). www.klaudiuszbaran.com

Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV

The Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV is one of the leading orchestras in Hungary. It was founded in 1945 after the Second World War by the president of the Hungarian State Railway (MÁV). The orchestra's repertoire ranges from Baroque to contemporary works, with an audience of over 50,000 people annually, reaching out to many more through radio and television broadcasts and online platforms. Successful tours have gained the orchestra acclaim across Europe and South America, as well as in China, Egypt, Hong Kong, Japan, Lebanon, Oman and South Korea. During its more than seven decades of activity, it has worked with numerous world stars including Kiri Te Kanawa, Helen Donath, Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, Andrea Bocelli, Roberto Alagna, Ruggiero Ricci, Elisabeth Leonskaja and Lazar Berman, among many others. Numerous internationally celebrated conductors have conducted the orchestra, including Kurt Masur, János Ferencsik, Zoltán Kodály, Miklós Rózsa, Lamberto Gardelli, Franco Ferrara, Roberto Benzi, Angelo Ephrikian, Arvid Jansons, Herbert Blomstedt, James Levine, Jesús López Cobos, Charles Dutoit, Leonard Slatkin, Muhai Tang, Thomas Sanderling and Gábor Takács-Nagy. www.mavzenekar.hu

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Devoted to music that celebrated the human spirit, Eugene Zádor took pleasure in composing for unusual ensembles. One such example of what he called ‘underprivileged’ instruments was the accordion and his delightful concerto for the instrument is tonal but coloured by a communicative, contemporary vocabulary. As befits the man who was Miklós Rózsa’s exclusive film-score orchestrator, Zádor finds glorious sonority and colour in the *Suite for Brass Instruments*. The evocative smaller pieces have been arranged by Mariusz Smolij as has the characterful and wide-ranging *Piano Quintet* of 1933 that won the Hungarian National State Prize.



Eugene ZÁDOR (1894–1977)

Accordion Concerto (1972)	15:35	8 Berceuse (c. 1972) (version for violin and string orchestra)*	3:05
1 I. Allegro moderato	4:38	9 Hungarian Fantasy (c. 1943) (version for violin and string orchestra)*	12:29
2 II. Moderato	5:25	Piano Quintet (1933) (version for piano and string orchestra)*	25:10
3 III. Rondo alla zingaresca	5:28	10 I. Allegro con spirito	7:15
4 Romance (‘Románc’) (early 1920s) (version for cello and string orchestra)*	3:54	11 II. Tempo moderato	6:57
Suite for Brass Instruments (1961)	13:20	12 III. Vivace	7:52
5 I. Allegro moderato – Vivo	5:36	13 IV. Allegro molto	2:53
6 II. Andante	4:41		
7 III. Allegro – Molto vivo	2:58		

* arr. Mariusz Smolij (b. 1962)
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Dávid Pintér, Violin 8 9 • Richárd Rózsa, Cello 4
Klaudiusz Baran, Accordion 1–3 • Anna Górecka, Piano 10–13
Budapest Symphony Orchestra MÁV
Mariusz Smolij

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