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PIANO

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

PIANO WORKS BY
FAIK BEY FRANZ DELLA SUDDA
'DER PASHA'
FRANZ LISZT'S PUPIL FROM ISTANBUL

ZEYNEP ÜÇBAŞARAN

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FAIK BEY FRANZ DELLA SUDDA (1859–1940)
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ZEYNEP ÜÇBAŞARAN, *piano*

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Signed E. della Sudda at the upper left. 485 x 635 mm (19 1/8 x 25 in.). Private collection, California, c/o Stephen Ongpin Fine Art, London, UK. Used with permission.

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3	MAZURKA-CAPRICE (1909)	02:40
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WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

TOTAL TIME: 62:58

FAIK BEY FRANZ DELLA SUDDA (1859–1940) **'DER PASHA' – PIANO WORKS**

During his days in Weimar, Franz Liszt taught a number of pianists who later became world renowned. Carl Tausig and Hans von Bülow are from his so-called first generation of pupils there; and the most memorable names among his pupils from 1882 to 1886, his second generation of students, are perhaps Eugen d'Albert, Moriz Rosenthal, Alexander Siloti, Emil von Sauer, Walter Bache and Martha Remmert.

Among this second generation was Liszt's one and only Turkish student, Faik Bey Franz Della Sudda from Istanbul, whom Liszt affectionately called 'Der Pasha'.

Faik Bey Franz Della Sudda (1859–1940) was born in Istanbul. He was the son of the famous Ottoman pharmacist Faik Pacha Georges (Giorgio) Della Sudda, and the grandson of the equally illustrious pharmacist Faik Pacha Francesco Della Sudda. The pianist's brother was the painter Emilio Della Sudda, and the brothers were members of the highest intellectual circles in Europe.

'Der Pasha' gave a banquet in honour of Franz Liszt's 72nd birthday, he clinked glasses with Richard Wagner at the première of *Parsifal*, and gave numerous recitals in cities such as Berlin, Paris, Leipzig and London.

The descriptions of Della Sudda's interaction with Liszt in the maestro's masterclasses in Weimar come to us through the writings of his co-pupils who were privileged to take part and who were recording these musical events for posterity. We have information on his recitals in Europe and the varying responses to his playing by the music critics of the time. Later, back in Istanbul, he lived an increasingly isolated life. He had no friends, no money, no property to speak of, and he did not maintain positive relations with the more affluent Della Suddas residing in the city. In 1940 he died poor and alone. No one acquired a burial plot for him. The old virtuoso was buried in a pauper's grave in Istanbul.

Faik Bey Franz Della Sudda was known by various names: Francesco Della Sudda, F. Della Sudda, Faik Bey Francesco Della Sudda, Francesco della Sudda Bey, Faik Bey François Della Sudda and Franz Della Sudda.

We do not know about Faik Bey Franz Della Sudda's childhood, nor his first piano teachers in Istanbul. His later teachers in Europe were none other than the eminent pianist-composer pedagogues Theodor Kullak and Theodor Leschetizsky. The circumstances of the young pianist's first meeting with Liszt are not recorded. It is probable that like other students of the master, Della Sudda came to the Weimar house carrying a reference letter, possibly from Theodor Leschetizsky, which, once presented to Liszt, and after playing for him, would've secured his place as a student.

For most of Liszt's second generation students the reminiscences and the published records indicate that meeting with him and being accepted as one of his students was a life altering experience. These meetings with Liszt and the anecdotes on his piano pedagogy were recorded in detail by Amy Fay, Carl Valentine Lachmund, Frederic Reisberg and Liszt's German assistant Alexander Wilhelm Gottschalg.

Franz Liszt's last period of teaching in Weimar took place in his house Hofgärtnerei. For his pupils and many others who took part in the classes during this period, Hofgärtnerei was almost a sacred place. There were also many visitors and dilettantes who were able to gain admission to the master's classes as a part of the audience, later to proclaim themselves 'students of Liszt' because of this privilege. These of course were not really Liszt's pupils. In this sense Della Sudda was one of the 'real' students of Liszt.

Alexander Siloti notes that the lessons were held three days a week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday afternoons from 2pm to 4pm. Liszt did not want his students to dress up for the lessons as he did not want the underprivileged students to be intimidated. What counted for him was the music only. It is important to note that Liszt never charged his students a fee for his lessons.

From 1882 through the end of the first decade of the 20th century, Della Sudda gave several concerts in Europe. News and reviews of these concerts appeared in numerous publications in Europe, some in the United States and Australia. He has drawn many accolades from the press and from critics: 'The most remarkable, graceful, and brilliant pianist of the present age', 'The great Turkish pianist', 'One of the many powerful exponents of the Liszt school', 'Ottoman pianist of exceptional facility of execution', 'A pianist of the very first order, and, added to a brilliant and refined technique, his playing has the keenest poetic originality.'

His concerts won him many fans as reflected by the assessments that appeared in the press: 'F. della Sudda Bey's concert was an unquestionable victory for the artist', 'The young artist displayed the high qualities which place for him in a very special place among the most remarkable masters of the keyboard', 'Mons. Della Sudda's pianoforte solos bespoke the true artist whose soul was in his work', 'His delicate touch and great virtuosity was warmly applauded', 'Mr. Della-Sudda stands out for his completely masterful playing, which unites energy with grace and charm and which is the characteristic of a first-rate virtuoso.'

The news of his debut performance at Princes' Hall in London on 15 June 1895 appeared in the press in England, Germany, France and in Australia. The praiseworthy comments were: 'The debut here of pianist Mr. della Sudda from Constantinople was an undoubted success', and, 'Mr. Della Sudda's brilliant and distinguished playing won the votes of many fans at Princes' Hall.'

Following one of his concerts, an English newspaper used the following glowing words: 'A specialty of his playing is that he seems to grasp the pith and soul of the work he is interpreting, and then renders the meaning of the composer in a manner intelligible to even those who have little or no knowledge of music, which is not always the case with executants who depend for effect more on dash and brilliancy. This faculty is a gift, and it is one that renders Mons. Della Sudda's playing attractively fascinating.'

Le Monde illustré said after a recital of his at Salle Érard in Paris: 'At a time when talent is common currency, and where so many pianists compete with each other for virtuosity and brilliance, it is rare to discover among the number a true artist, an original and personal nature, and that is why we particularly enjoyed the exceptional gifts of Mr. Della Sudda.'

Faik Bey Franz Della Sudda's works for solo piano were published in Europe. These compositions are dedicated to the elite of the European society, among them royalty, ambassadors, musicians such as Paderewski, and friends. Reviews concerning his compositions for the piano were also generally positive: 'Very effective and have considerable musical merit', and 'Elegant and fanciful'.

The Musical Times of 1 September 1910 considers the merits of Della Sudda's compositions: 'Pianoforte Works, By. F. della Sudda [Ries & Erler, Berlin.] The composer of these short pieces for the pianoforte is evidently an earnest-minded musician of individual views and aspirations. The thought and care which he has expended in the harmonising of his melodies and the varying of his rhythms reveal a true artistic sense, A *Mazurka* and *Mazurka-Caprice* are published together. Both are elegant and fanciful, and reveal some power of thematic development. A second book contains a charming *Wiegenliedchen*, a highly emotional slow movement entitled *Resignation* and a short *Ballade* of considerable originality...'

Another review of Della Sudda's *Mazurka* and *Mazurka-Caprice* is found in *The Times* of 5 January 1911 in which the critic uses the phrase 'F. della Sudda's *Mazurka* and *Mazurka-Caprice* are very effective and have considerable musical merit.'

Della Sudda's piano music is characterised by its melodic nature, written in a singing style. His compositions are predominantly tranquil and picturesque. While he employs a range of dynamics, his central tendency is towards softer expressions in his music. He frequently utilises repeats and incorporates ornaments. His composing style is complex and pianistically unorthodox.

This world première recording consists of the following tracks:

In der Hängematte (*Cantabile*, F sharp major)

The piece paints a picture of a lazy summer afternoon. The melody given to the soprano line is accompanied by the gentle flow of sextuplets in the left hand.

Mazurka (*Allegretto*, G major)

This work opens with a sense of mystery. The left hand suspends a long G, while the right hand descends chromatically, creating a feeling of anticipation. By bar 16, the key of G major is firmly established. In the right-hand theme there is a charming triplet figure that adds a touch of playfulness. A contrasting middle section takes us to G minor. Here, the music explores a series of key changes, building a sense of drama. The main theme returns, initially with a burst of energy, but then gradually subsides, ultimately leading to a peaceful resolution.

Mazurka-Caprice (*Vivace*, A major)

The beginning has a strong emphasis on the left hand with an accented, crushed note, establishing the rhythmic pulse. The main theme is then introduced, followed by brief interludes before its return. The chordal structure is interrupted by fast short passages that act as a transition to the return of the theme. The middle section contrasts with the opening, presenting a softer, sentimental melody played in the soprano register. This section explores a different key before returning to the main theme which returns with a forceful statement, concluding the piece with double-*forte* chords.

Menuet (*Allegretto giocoso – Piacevole*, D major)

This playful minuet opens with the hands moving together a third apart. Lower mordents add to the whimsical character. The contrasting middle section, in B flat major, offers a pleasant interlude with the melody carried by the right hand and simple accompaniment in the left. After the A section returns, the composer concludes the piece with a final touch of humour – two crushed notes playfully shared between the hands.

Lacerta, kleiner Walzer (*Allegro*, F major)

The composer creates a captivating effect of a lizard through the continuous movement of the mezzo line. Perhaps the composer had the image of a waltzing lizard in mind when he composed this 'little waltz'. The B section is in the minor mode, with the singing part given to the left hand. The middle section is expressive and gentle.

Wiegenliedchen (*Sostenuto e cantando sempre*, E major)

The lullaby has a dense and sustained texture, yet it is simple. The melody lies in the soprano range. The composer uses a chordal structure rather than arpeggiation, but still, the lullaby flows smoothly.

Resignation (*Molto lento*, A major)

It is in the minor mode and rather dark in mood. The composer uses dissonant chords, as if one is lamenting and weeping.

Ballade (*In modo popolare, C minor*)

The *Ballade* is in a calm mood, resembling a folk song. The composer's idea is very similar to Liszt's *Hungarian Melody No. 1* (from *Magyar dalok, S242*).

Petite Valse No. 2 (*Tempo giusto, C major*)

The *Petite Valse* has a pleasant character, depicting a scene of dancers waltzing together on the dance floor. The middle section features trills, contributing to its playful nature. The transition back to the opening theme spans four bars and has a dream-like quality. The composer frequently uses upper mordents throughout.

Aubade (*Allegrement – Allegretto scherzoso, E flat major*)

The composer directs the opening to be guitar-like, played exclusively with broken chords and using only the soft pedal. This introduction smoothly transitions to the main theme, assigned to the tenor range. The melody flows gracefully, while the right hand accompanies with brief, broken chords, creating a striking contrast. The piece follows a rondo form, where each recurrence of the theme is elaborated upon and the texture grows denser. Through soft, sentimental, and continuously flowing passages, the composer vividly portrays the serenity of a morning.

Ländliche Mazurka (*Moderato – Intermezzo pastorale, C sharp minor*)

The mazurka starts with chromatic descending crushed notes, evoking a sense of anticipation. These are then echoed by dotted notes, creating a dialogue-like exchange between the two elements. The middle section adopts the stylistic essence of a Hungarian peasant song, with the composer opting for C sharp major to convey a pastoral scene. The piece concludes with a return to the opening section.

Venezia

I. Gondoliera funèbre (*Lento, G minor*)

The gondoliera's ambiance is achieved through the utilisation of ascending arpeggios, contributing to its very sustained and tranquil character. The composer incorporates arpeggios into the melodic line by distributing them between both hands, creating a challenge to perform the melody uninterrupted. Set in G minor, it is in a sorrowful mood. The composer frequently employs *ppp* (*pianississimo*) dynamics here. The final bars feature ascending arpeggios, gradually fading away, effectively concluding the piece.

II. Sonntagsglocken (*Molto lento*, C major)

In this piece, the composer juxtaposes sustained notes with short left-hand passages, creating a dynamic contrast. Powerful bell-like effects are achieved through the use of pedalling, enhancing long sustained *forte* passages.

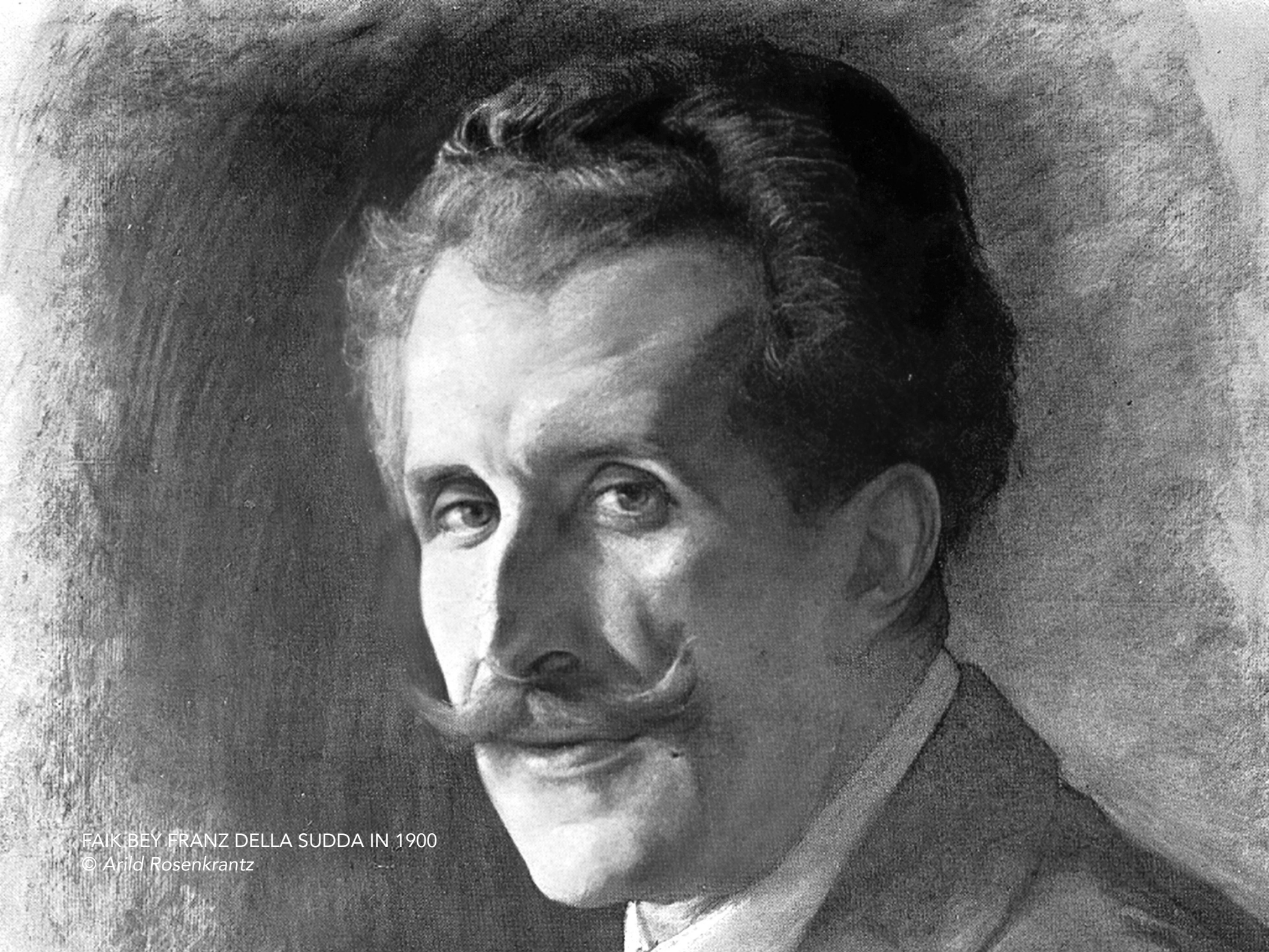
III. Barcarolle-Sérénade (*Moderato assai – Andante comodo – Allegretto tranquillo*, C sharp minor)

The piece begins with rapid arpeggios in the introduction, setting the stage for a dense, monotonous theme. The triplets in the right hand evoke the sensation of a rocking boat. Transitions between themes are characterised by dissonance, adding tension to the piece. Compared to the other works, the *Barcarolle* is lengthy and features numerous dissonant chords and passages. It concludes with fading arpeggios, bringing the piece to a gentle close.

Walzer (*Vivace – Tempo giusto*, D flat major)

The brisk opening passage paves the way for a graceful and playful opening theme. The second theme, tender and delicate, unfolds in the soprano range. The middle section gains momentum with the *perpetuum mobile* of the right hand. In the Coda, the theme is elaborated with arpeggios, accompanied by contrasting motion in octaves, culminating in *forte* chords.

Ömer Eğecioğlu



FAIK BEY FRANZ DELLA SUDDA IN 1900
© Arild Rosenkrantz

ZEYNEP ÜÇBAŞARAN

Zeynep Üçbaşaran began her music education at the age of four at the Istanbul Municipal Conservatory. She went on to study for her Concert Artist Diploma at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest before undertaking advanced studies at the Hochschule für Musik Freiburg and obtaining her Master's and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees from the University of Southern California. Among other professional awards, including the American Liszt Society Award, she was a prize-winner of the Los Angeles International Liszt Competition in 1996 and 2000. Üçbaşaran has given solo recitals and chamber music concerts in many countries. Her critically acclaimed discography spans the music of Liszt, Schubert, Mozart, Scarlatti and Beethoven alongside 20th-century composers such as Bernstein and Muczynski, and her album, *The 3-Piano Project*, includes the première recording of Saygun's *Poem, Op. 73*. In 2011 her performance of the works that Franz Liszt played in Istanbul in 1847 was broadcast by the European Broadcasting Union as part of his 200th birthday celebrations, and a compilation of these selections, *Liszt in Istanbul*, was released in 2013. Üçbaşaran has given masterclasses and lecture recitals across the United States, Brazil, Spain, Sweden, Iceland and Turkey. In 2019 she performed in a four-piano project as part of the 2019 International Istanbul Music Festival.

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FRANZ LISZT'S PUPIL FROM ISTANBUL



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Franz Liszt taught a number of pianists who went on to achieve world renown, but Faik Bey Franz Della Sudda was his only student from Turkey, whom he affectionately called 'Der Pasha'. Della Sudda's European concerts saw him acclaimed as 'the most remarkable, graceful, and brilliant pianist of the present age'. With his own lyrically picturesque but complex and unorthodox compositions aimed at society's elite Della Sudda moved in exalted circles until his return to Istanbul where he eventually died isolated and alone. These world première recordings of Della Sudda's piano music are performed by the prize-winning Turkish pianist Zeynep Üçbaşaran.

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