

**Nicolas Roudier** was born in 1994 in France and began modern horn at age 4. In 2007, he won first prize at the Artistic Competition of Epinal, before studying in Switzerland with the former principal horn of New York Philharmonic. He completed there a Bachelor degree in 2015 and a Master degree in 2018. He then turned to historical horns, and went to study at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. In 2020 he graduated with a second Master's in Early Music, and in 2021 with the Artist's Certificate. He is now based in the Netherlands and since then has played with some of the greatest ensembles in Europe. His instrumental collection brings together horns from the late XVIII<sup>th</sup> century to the present ; he is fascinated by their history, diversity, and impact on historically informed performance. As a researcher he was awarded several academic prizes for his works, and appeared as a lecturer in several symposiums. He was supported in his research and musical production by the Adriana Jacoba Fondation, the Countess of Bylandt Fondation and the Fonds Podiumkunsten.

**Anders Muskens** is a Canadian early keyboard specialist and director of *Das Neue Mannheimer Orchester*. He began piano studies at the age of 4 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and completed an Associate Diploma in modern piano from the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto under the tutelage of Dr. Irina Konovalov. He completed a Masters in historical performance at the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague in 2019 under Dr. Bart van Oort and Petra Somlai for fortepiano, with Fabio Bonizzoni and Patrick Ayrton for harpsichord. From 2016-2020, he held scholarships from the Edmonton Community Foundation and the Adriana Jacoba Fond. He has received recognition as an international artist and has performed in both Europe and North America.

## The duo

The Muskens-Roudier Duo was created in 2019 by Nicolas Roudier and Anders Muskens to bring together exceptional horns and pianofortes from 1800 to 1900, and play late-classical and romantic music with a heartfelt historical approach. The duo is based in The Hague, Netherlands, and gives concerts on an international scale. Nicolas and Anders share the same ever-growing interest for period instruments and their diversity of sounds, identities, colours and nuances. They joined forces to present an original and multi-faced horn & piano duo that switches instruments and personalities according to the repertoire played. The duo constantly aims to expand the borders of historically informed performance by bringing forgotten repertoire forward, combining rare instruments and looking for new and original ways to bring early music to the public.

## Program notes (in order)

L.J.F. Hérold (1791 - 1833)

### Duo for Horn and Pianoforte in E-flat Major (1810)

18 min

Son of a pianist, Louis-Joseph-Ferdinand Hérold was already playing and composing small pieces by the age of seven. He entered the Conservatoire National de Paris at age fifteen and studied with Louis Adam and Etienne Méhul. In 1810 he won the famous First prize of the Conservatory with one of his compositions and the Prix de Rome two years later. This playful and melodious Duo was written in December 1810 but was not published before 1888. It features a very virtuosic piano part, and a demanding hand-stopping technique from the horn in the middle register. The Muskens-Roudier Duo realized the very first recording of this piece in their album « A Horn Story ».

L. Van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

### Sonata for Horn & Pianoforte in F op.17 (1800)

15 min

Eight years into his Viennese career, Beethoven wrote his Horn Sonata in collaboration with Jan Vaclav Stich, known as Giovanni Punto, one of the greatest horn players of their time. They premiered the Sonata together on April 18th 1800 during a recital at Vienna's Burgtheater. Beethoven claimed to have written the horn part only the night before and to have improvised the piano accompaniment live at the concert. The audience demanded to hear it a second time, and so they repeated it with Beethoven improvising again. Punto was a *Cor Basse* - a low horn player, and so the piece features his signature moves such as extreme low range of the instrument, difficult hand-stopping technique in the middle register and agile arpeggios. This Sonata is one of the earliest known works for horn and piano.

## L. Van Beethoven (1770 – 1827)

### Alla ingharezse, quasi un Capriccio in G major, op. 129 (1795)

5 min

This short piece known as the 'rage over a lost penny' is one of Beethoven's most famous compositions – and one of the most famous in the piano repertoire. Its popularity has even brought it immortality in the form of cell phone ringtones. Diabelli completed the fragmentary work and published it in 1828. At the end of the first line he noted : 'This completed capriccio was found among Beethoven's effects and is called 'The Rage over a Lost Penny, Vented in a Capriccio!' True, just such an inscription was added to the autograph – but not by Beethoven. When he wrote the piece in 1795 he called it a 'Little Capriccio' and gave it the tempo mark 'Alla ingharezse, quasi un capriccio'. 'Ingharezse' is a misspelling of 'ongarezse' – Hungarian – and thus fervent and bubbly, but without rage and without a penny ! Nevertheless, Diabelli's title hit the nail on the head and has been accepted as the work's programme ever since.

## C. Gounod (1818 - 1893)

### 3 Melodies for Piston Horn & Pianoforte (c1840)

12 min

A crucial innovation was made at the beginning of the XIXth century : the piston. Initiated by the German horn player Stoelzel, it was first meant as a fast and practical way to change crooks, meaning the key in which the instrument plays. But soon it became obvious that this invention could extend the horns abilities and technique : with the use of the pistons only, the horn could be a chromatic instrument without using the hand in the bell. The question whether to use the pistons or not, and how to use them, became a controversial debate that will last until the end of the century. It opposed the « traditional » players who cared about the charm of stopped notes, the « progressive » ones who considered the new possibilities given, and those who suggested a middle ground by combining both techniques. Charles Gounod was one of them - and the first of the 6 Melodies presented here is played with this approach. By having the choice of using pistons or hand technique, stopped sounds become an effect and possibilities are endless, making interpretations even more personal and various. This melody is chosen from the *Six Mélodies pour le cor à pistons* dedicated to the horn manufacturer Raoux, and its lyricism is very reminding of vocal music.

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***Encore if necessary - surprise !***