GILBERT JOHNSON, TRUMPET
MASON JONES, FRENCH HORN AND ALTO HORN
HENRY CHARLES SMITH, TROMBONE
ABE TORCHINSKY, TUBA

GLENN GOULD *Members of The* PHILADELPHIA BRASS ENSEMBLE

HINDEMITH *The* COMPLETE SONATAS *for* BRASS *and* PIANO

M2 33971

Columbia

MASTERWORKS

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Paul Hindemith 1895–1963

The Complete Sonatas for Brass and Piano

Die Sonaten für Blechbläser und Klavier
Les Sonates pour cuivres et piano

Sonata for French Horn and Piano

1	I. Mäßig bewegt	6:42
2	II. Ruhig bewegt	6:32
3	III. Lebhaft	8:22

Sonata for Bass Tuba and Piano

4	I. Allegro pesante	4:22
5	II. Allegro assai	1:43
6	III. Variationen. Moderato, comodo –	2:20
7	Scherzando, l'istesso tempo – Allegro –	1:40
8	Lento – Allegro –	1:54
9	Wie am Anfang des Satzes	2:29

Total Time 36:12

Mason Jones french horn [1–3]
Abe Torchinsky bass tuba [4–9]
Glenn Gould piano

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Sonata for Trumpet and Piano

1	I. Mit Kraft	5:31
2	II. Mäßig bewegt – Lebhaft	3:01
3	III. Trauermusik. Sehr langsam – Ruhig bewegt –	6:38
4	Alle Menschen müssen sterben. Sehr ruhig	2:24

Sonata for Alto Horn in E-flat and Piano

für Althorn in Es-Dur · pour cor alto en *mi* bémol

5	I. Ruhig bewegt	2:52
6	II. Lebhaft	5:16
7	III. Sehr langsam	3:18
8	Das Posthorn (Zwiegespräch)*	1:08
	The Posthorn (Dialogue) · Le Cor de postillon (dialogue)	
9	IV. Lebhaft	2:52

Sonata for Trombone and Piano

10	Allegretto moderato maestoso –	3:46
11	Allegretto grazioso –	4:00
12	Lied des Raufbolds. Allegro pesante –	2:33
	Swashbuckler's Song · Chanson de battaileur	
13	Allegro moderato maestoso	3:38

Total Time 47:17

Gilbert Johnson trumpet [1–4]
Mason Jones alto horn [5–9]
Henry Charles Smith trombone [10–13]
Glenn Gould piano

*Dialogue recited by Mason Jones & Glenn Gould

Recording: Eaton Auditorium, Toronto,
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Alfred Einstein once said of Paul Hindemith (1895–1963): "He is simply a musician who produces music as a tree bears fruit, without further philosophical purpose." The remark came fairly early in Hindemith's career and certainly was later open to modification in light of the extensive theoretical writing and teaching he had generated. Still, there is more than a kernel of truth in Einstein's words, and it is an observation that remains valid for the German composer's entire creative lifetime. Composing had to go on, no matter what the circumstances surrounding him, and no matter what musical forces were at hand: music had to be made.

In this, Hindemith resembled his great Baroque and Classical predecessors – Bach in Leipzig, Mozart in Salzburg, Haydn at Eszterháza – who found in the circumstances of their world not obstacles to their imagination but realities that they could structure and that would in turn stimulate their own invention. Throughout his life, Hindemith was ever the practical, productive musician. ("He thumps no tubs, and he makes the best of modern life," wrote Sir Donald Francis Tovey.) The existence of the series of twenty-five sonatas that came after 1935 is, therefore, not to be ascribed to an abstract ideal of writing material for as many instruments as he could think of or to a, perhaps, concomitant instinct for self-display, but to a much more basic wish to answer the need for solo music for these instruments.

It is important to remember that Hindemith was an accomplished performer (indeed, his last years witnessed more activity as a conductor than as a composer) and a musician accustomed to working before an audience. As a youth, he played piano, violin, viola and drums in dance and café orchestras – an exposure that, during his first years of compositional experimentation, found reflection in such modish, joke-filled works as the *Kammermusik No. 1* or the little marionette opera *Das Nusch-Nuschi.*

Eventually Hindemith became proficient on fourteen instruments. As a violinist, he occupied the concertmaster's seat in the orchestra of the Frankfurt Opera and for several years (1923–39) was the violist with the Amar Quartet. (His expertise with the viola garnered him the honor of premièring William Walton's Viola Concerto in London, in 1929.) His first series of solo sonatas, all for string instruments, coincides with the early part of this period. In the late 1920s, Hindemith embraced the linear, contrapuntal tenets of neo-Classicism. These he succeeded in truly making his own, for when, a decade after, his writing displayed a full spectrum of emotive nuance – one thinks, of course, of *Mathis der Maler* – it was solidly bolted to a neo-Classical framework. At the same time he became a prolific producer of *Gebrauchsmusik* – literally, music made primarily to be useful in some way, either because of its playability, its design to suit the *ad hoc* requirements of certain instruments or groups, its support of an instructive purpose, or its status as an adjunct to some other form of communication. And so Hindemith found himself writing much diverse music – for unaccompanied chorus, for military band, for film and for radio, a *toccata* for player piano, a ballet score for mechanical organ, a trio for heckelphone, piano and viola, the 1931 *Konzertmusik* for trautonium, a great deal of material specifically intended for amateurs, the children's opera *Wir bauen eine Stadt* and, with Bertolt Brecht, the audience-participation opera *Lehrstück.*

The composer eventually expressed dissatisfaction with this period – both with the didactic rationale behind his compositions ("music for which no use can be found, that is to say, useless music, is not entitled to public consideration anyway") and with the term *Gebrauchsmusik* itself. In any case, the typically Weimar-epoch idealism of the movement was not to be countenanced after 1933 by circumstances over which he had no control, and *Gebrauchsmusik*, at least as Hindemith had advocated it, disappeared from the German scene to be replaced by the perverted notions regarding *Volk* and *Kunst* of National Socialism. Nevertheless, the *Gebrauchsmusik* concept of the composer as someone who responds to needs for music continued to hold validity for Hindemith after the movement no longer existed.

In the mid-1930s, disliked and mistrusted by the Nazis – although certainly not persecuted nor his music entirely suppressed – he traveled to Turkey, where he was asked to restructure that young republic's musical life. When he settled down as head of the music department of Yale University in 1942, he entered on a continuation of the role of composer-as-teacher he had first assumed at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik in 1927. At Yale, he was a force behind the growing enthusiasm for playing old music on rare, ancient instruments.

Rare instruments, at least in the sense that they seldom appear in a solo capacity, figure prominently in the twenty-five post-1935 sonatas. In addition to two sonatas for violin, one for viola and one for cello, he composed a sonata for double bass. The woodwind works include sonatas for flute, oboe and clarinet, as well as for English horn and bassoon. For keyboard, three solo piano sonatas are joined by one for piano four-hands, one for two pianos and three for organ. There is also a sonata for harp. In addition to the five brass sonatas of this recording, he composed one, unaccompanied by piano, for four horns (1952). In 1939, when Hindemith indicated that the Trumpet Sonata could also be played by a "clarinet in B-flat or any other instrument of approximately the same range (oboe, violin, viola)," and when he similarly sanctioned the 1943 Alto Horn Sonata being executed by horn or saxophone, he had, indeed, renewed his commitment to the playing of a work as being the prime goal of a composer's efforts.

The five solo brass sonatas present a curious mixture of tradition and originality. Harmonically, except for one arresting departure, they adhere to the precepts Hindemith had developed in his treatise *Unterweisung im Tonsatz* (translated as *The Craft of Musical Composition*) and his long-held opinion that tonality was "a natural force, like gravity." Their melodic impulse also rarely falters. In actual form, however, the sonatas by no means provide the expected: each work imposes its own shape. They do not follow at all the nineteenth-century sonata concept; they are simultaneously more of the twentieth century, in their freedom from Romantic-era structure, and more antique, in that they hark back to the Baroque idea of a sonata as a juxtaposition of movements in various moods. They are, as Heinrich Strobel, Hindemith's contemporary and chronicler, describes them, "sonorous events wittily assembled."

The Sonata for Horn and Piano (1939) boasts a first movement strong in rhythmic propulsion, rich in lyrical ideas for both brass and keyboard. There is an interplay of motifs in this movement – one instrument suggesting, the other responding – that, after a spirited coda, carries over into the second.

Here, too, the piano paves the way for the gentle, stately expansiveness of the horn line, which is supported but not overshadowed by the piano's explorations of upper-register configurations. The third movement contrasts a fast and slow section, the sprightly first statement returned to after a somber middle and subjected to an elaborate development succeeded by a broad coda.

The Sonata for Bass Tuba and Piano (1955) is Hindemith's last sonata for any instrument. Along with the Sonata for Four Horns of 1952 and the ones for cello of 1948 and double bass of 1949, it stands conspicuously outside the nine-year span (1935–43) that encompasses the rest of his great second sonata series. Its most arresting feature is that Hindemith, the adamant anti-dodecaphonist, resorts to a twelve-tone row for the theme of his third-movement variations: it's a mere flirtation, for Hindemith hedges his serial bets by repeating notes within the tone row, but it is there, nonetheless. The first movement, after the opening tuba statement, requires the piano to take the initiative, the tuba acting more as accompanist than accompanied for this free-form fantasy with coda. The lively, one-and-a-half-minute-long middle movement brings a greater synchronization – synchronization through syncopation – of the two instruments and some tart treble exhortations from the piano. The tuba assumes the lead entirely in stating the theme of the final movement. After three variations, a cadenza-like section for the tuba is punctuated by arpeggiated piano chords containing all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. The recapitulation involves an embroidering treble *perpetuum mobile* for the piano before the startlingly quiet triadic close.

In spite of Hindemith's suggestions for instrumental substitutions, the Sonata for Trumpet and Piano (1939) proclaims itself from the first as being superbly geared to the brilliant coloristic properties of the brass medium. The A-B-C-A-C-B-A blueprint of the first movement accommodates mighty, soaring motifs for the trumpet and fanfares over chordal tremolos in the piano that affirm the primacy of tonality. In the second and third movements, tempo contrasts are emphatic; in the second, a triplet-punctuated opening that alternates with a more rapid section, where the trumpet comments lightly before the first part, is returned to in a heavily altered form. The restless introduction of the piano to the third movement (*Trauermusik* – "Music of Mourning") prepares for evocative trumpet calls utilizing the interval of the fourth, both in its perfect and augmented forms. A section marked "With quiet motion" follows. The dirge, with its anxious motif, reappears, to be succeeded by the trumpet sounding the chorale melody "Alle Menschen müssen sterben" above insistent, dramatic chords in the piano. All resolves with striking simplicity.

The Sonata for Alto Horn (1943) follows a quite different pattern: it contains four movements, two of which are in fast tempo and each of these follows a shorter slow one that functions as a prelude-introduction. By contrasting a somewhat frantic solo built on a triplet sixteenth-note pattern for the piano and an *espressivo* motif for the horn, the finale illustrates the thesis Hindemith promulgated in a dialogue he wished to have read before its playing (performed here by Mr. Jones and Mr. Gould):

The Posthorn

Horn Player:
Is not the sounding of a horn to our busy souls
(even as the scent of blossoms wilted long ago,
or the discolored folds of musty tapestry,
or crumbling leaves of ancient yellowed tomes)
like a sonorous visit from those ages
which counted speed by straining horses' gallop,
and not by lightning prisoned up in cables;
and when to live and learn they ranged the countryside,
not just the closely printed pages?
The cornucopia's gift calls forth in us
a pallid yearning, melancholy longing.

Pianist:
The old is good not just because it's past,
nor is the new supreme because we live with it,
and never yet a man felt greater joy
than he could bear or truly comprehend.
Your task it is, amid confusion, rush, and noise,
to grasp the lasting, calm, and meaningful,
and finding it anew, to hold and treasure it.

The last three lines could not be a clearer statement of what Hindemith considered the duty of a creative being.

The Sonata for Trombone and Piano (1941), like the Alto Horn Sonata, is in four movements, but very differently proportioned. It begins with a highly charged allegro that is almost programmatic in its heroic exuberance, but this is a heroism that appears, comically enough, to have some holes in it. The miniature second movement is dominated by the piano, and the trombone, with only a few measures allotted to it, readily mutters a soft assent. Next comes the scherzo, a rollicking, blustery Swashbuckler's Song. Again one senses that heroic poses are getting a thorough ribbing. A sterner, more majestic working-out of the material heard in the first movement brings the Sonata to an end.

HARVEY E. PHILLIPS