

Fairytale

DUO ARNICANS

Works for Cello and Piano
by Paul Juon and Jānis Ķepītis



PRIMA
CLASSIC

DUO ARNICANS

Florian Arnicans *cello*

Arta Arnicane *piano*



Fairytale

Paul Juon (1872-1940)

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 01 | Fairytale Op. 8 for Cello and Piano (1904) | 5:31 |
| | Sonata Op. 54 for Cello and Piano (1912) | |
| | <i>Composer's revised version</i> | |
| 02 | Allegro moderato | 9:21 |
| 03 | Andantino | 3:49 |
| 04 | Allegro risoluto | 5:33 |

Jānis Kēpītis (1908-1989)

Suite for Cello and Piano (1959)
'Three Episodes from the Fairy-tale Devil's Life'

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 05 | A Walk | 2:23 |
| 06 | Romance | 3:01 |
| 07 | Humoresque | 3:44 |
| 08 | Serenade in D Major (1939) | 4:40 |
| 09 | Scherzo (1964) | 2:01 |
| 10 | Romance in A Major (1965) | 4:52 |
| | Sonata for Harp and Cello (1974) | |
| | <i>Arrangement for piano and cello</i> | |
| 11 | Moderato | 5:02 |
| 12 | Presto | 3:35 |
| 13 | Adagio | 5:22 |
| 14 | Allegro moderato | 6:13 |







FLORIAN ARNICANS

Florian Arnicans has a rare gift for captivating and inspiring his audience with a sound and music experience that touches the soul. Born in Germany, Florian Arnicans began cello lessons at the age of 5 and quickly discovered his passion and vocation for music. After receiving initial artistic training at the Belvedere Music School in Weimar, he soon was in a position to take up studies at the Franz Liszt University of Weimar for highly gifted talents at just 17 years old. Brunhard Böhme, Johannes Goritzki, Patrick Demenga and Thomas Grossenbacher were among his principal teachers. Florian Arnicans has always been inspired by other instrumentalists. His foremost influencers were the pianist Homero Francesch and the violinist Pierre Amoyal, alongside whom he regularly performed as a soloist and chamber musician on the international stage.

Florian Arnicans feels particularly attached to the romantic era. Numerous CD and radio recordings testify to his artistry and have attracted positive reviews from around the world. In addition to his concert activities, Florian Arnicans is an avid teacher. He is a regular guest lecturer at master classes in the Czech Republic, Switzerland, and at the Latvia Music Academy. Florian Arnicans continues to be a sought-after soloist, chamber and orchestral musician. He

regularly plays alongside well-respected orchestras and at international music festivals such as the Bodensee Festival (2013), Bregenz Festival (2013), London Proms (2014), Lucerne Festival (2016) or the Menuhin Festival Gstaad (2018).

A significant step in Florian's musical and personal development was the founding of Duo Arnicans together with his wife and pianist Arta in 2013. The duo has since performed on numerous concert stages in Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain and Latvia, eliciting great enthusiasm from audiences.

ARTA ARNICANE

Communication with the audience, coupled with talent for creating a special concert atmosphere have taken the young Latvian pianist Arta Arnicane to a large variety of performance venues across the world. Her quality of winning listeners' full attention, combined with the warmth and intelligence of her programmes and interpretations, allows her to fascinate both small gatherings and large audiences in concert halls such as the Rudolfinum, Prague and the Zurich Tonhalle.

Born into a family with a strong and long-standing musical tradition, she started playing the piano and composing at the age of four. Supported by numerous scholarship awards and eminent artists such as John Lill and Homero Francesch, she has studied in several countries and graduated with distinction from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (2004), the Latvian Academy of Music (2008), and Zurich University of the Arts (2010 and 2012).

Her professors Sergejs Osokins, Norma Fisher and Homero Francesch influenced the artistic development of her personality and guided her into the international music scene. Arta Arnicane has won many prizes at international music competitions, including the Vianna da Motta (2001), Premio Iturbi (2010), and Prague Spring (2011) to name but a few.

Arta Arnicane is especially devoted to creating thematic and narrative programmes, as well as discovery and performance of rare repertoire. Her creative collaboration with conductor John Gibbons has included performances of both piano concertos by William Alwyn and the recording of the powerful and expressive piano concerto by William Wordsworth (Toccata Classics, 2019). She is also an enthusiastic chamber musician and performs regularly in a duo with her husband, cellist Florian Arnicans. This is the third album released by the Duo Arnicans, following the emotionally charged programme of Sonatas by F. Chopin and E. von Dohnanyi (2015) and the more lyrical album *Enchanted* (2018).



FAIRYTALE

I. PAUL JUON

Past centuries have witnessed several waves of emigration from the Swiss canton of Grisons. All manner of craftspeople, confectioners in particular, relocated to Venice, Spain and even farther afield. Russia was another favoured destination. One such confectioner from the Grisons was Paul Juon's grandfather. As a young man, he settled in Kuldiga (Goldingen) in what is present-day Latvia and started a family there with his wife of Finnish descent. A generation later, their son – the composer's father – moved on to Moscow where he became the director of a fire insurance company. His Russian wife bore him several children including Paul ('Pavel'), born in 1872.

In 1889, at the age of 17, Paul Juon was admitted to the Moscow Conservatory where he studied violin with J. Hřfimalý, and piano and composition with A. Arensky and S. Taneyev, a student of Tchaikovsky. From 1894 he continued his studies in Berlin, most notably with Woldemar Bargiel, the half-brother of Clara Schumann-Wieck. After graduating, Berlin remained his home for a long time. In 1906 Joseph Joachim appointed him to what is now the Berlin University of the Arts,

where he was a sought-after professor of composition until 1934 and taught a distinguished cohort of international students (among them H. Chemin-Petit, P. Jarnach, H. Kaminski, N. Skalkottas, P. Wladigeroff and S. Wolpe). He spent the last six years of his life until 1940 somewhat secluded in the Swiss town of Vevey on Lake Geneva, the home region of his second wife Marie, informally known as Armande.

Märchen ('Fairy Tale'), op. 8 (1904)
[dedicated in friendship to Otto Möckel]

Otto Möckel was a cellist as well as probably the most eminent among Berlin violin makers and appraisers at and following the turn of the century. His standard work on violin making, published in 1930, remains in circulation – with amendments – up to the present day. Möckel brought the young Juon to the attention of music publisher Robert Emil Lienau at a house quartet evening. This led to a friendship that his son, Robert Heinrich Lienau, described in a 1942 memoir as 'an ideal rapport between author and publisher'.

In this early work Juon already exhibits mastery over the interplay of musical structures. By bouncing the melody between the two instruments, inserting variations of the two principal subjects, shortening, etc., this basically simple A B A scheme expands to a lively five-part structure.

Juon held an interesting attitude towards the character descriptions (such as ‘fairy tale’) that he incorporated into numerous titles of works and individual movements. In an exchange of letters with Hans Chemin-Petit, his former student and later close friend with whom he corresponded intensively, he wrote on 3 April, 1939: ‘... I fully concur with your opinion regarding the character descriptions for the individual dances. I, too, am not enamoured of such programme details. On the other hand, it has been my experience that most listeners tend to be very appreciative of such hints. After all, they generally lack in fantasy and hence their imaginations need some tickling. I have frequently been asked: “What did you actually have in mind? What is the music meant to depict?” It’s hilarious!!!’

Sonata for Cello and Piano, op. 54 (1912)
[dedicated to Joseph Press]

Op. 54 in A minor represents Juon’s only cello sonata. Composed conventionally in three movements, it is dedicated to the cellist of the legendary Russian Trio (Vera Maurina, Michael and Joseph Press). Deeply rooted in Russian Romanticism, a promotional pamphlet from around 1924 characterises the work thus: ‘Of neo-Romantic character, fresh, sonorous, pleasing and zestfully written. This sonata – at once interesting and rewarding – should become a repertoire piece for every virtuoso!’

I would like to point out three intriguing observations: First, Juon made relatively numerous corrections to a work that was *already printed*: changes in tempo and dynamics, individual notes and chords, even whole passages that he pasted over the version as published:



Hence, this version can rightly be called a ‘second edition’. Here is its première recording.

Julius H. Block (1858–1934), amateur pianist and businessman, was born in South Africa and grew up in St. Petersburg, he was a resident in Berlin from 1899 and spent the last years of his life in Switzerland. Between 1890 and 1927, he captured music by celebrated composers and soloists on cylinders, the forerunners of gramophone records. His recording equipment was a phonograph given to him by Thomas Edison during a visit to the United States in 1889:

Mr. Block played us phonograph recordings of Russian ballads ('bylina' [Russian = epic poem]) sung by – (the name has slipped my mind). The austere purity of these songs indeed left the most powerful impression on me. For this, I thank Mr. Block!

Paul Juon, Berlin, 1913

Again, a decade later in 1923, he wrote in a letter to Ernst Scherwi, a conductor based in Chur (Switzerland): 'As we know, the impressions of youth are the strongest. Hence the reason for Russian folk music (which I love dearly, by the way) being a prime influence on my works.'

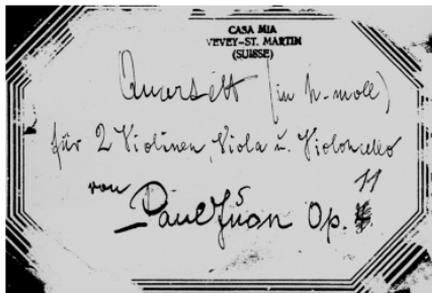
Die Bewegung zu dieser Sonate gab mir einer
 vor vielen Jahren Altsaxo, die ich in gedruckten
 Hause Herrn F. H. Bloks verlesen durfte. Herr
 Block hat mich durch sein Phonographen
 russische Balladen (byliny) hören, genau
 Sonate von dem alten – (sein Name ist mir
 oello und Klavier entfallen!). Bei Herrn Bloks
 dieser Gesänge hat den stärksten Eindruck
 I auf mich gemacht!
 Ich danke Herrn Block dafür

Paul Juon, Op. 54

P. Juon
 1923
 Here

Lastly, we must attempt to clarify the question of why the sonata is sometimes erroneously identified as no. 2. This is due to Juon having used the wrapper of a *Cello Sonata in B minor*,

op. 4 (1896), the score of which is lost, for his *B minor Quartet*, op. 11. So at first sight, it may be concluded that he destroyed that work... Or might he even have reworked the music into a string quartet? After all, it shares the same key and the same wrapper. And most notably, this being the late Romantic period, the piano was long established on an equal footing with the solo instrument. Might he have felt that his piano part called for enlarged string instrumentation?

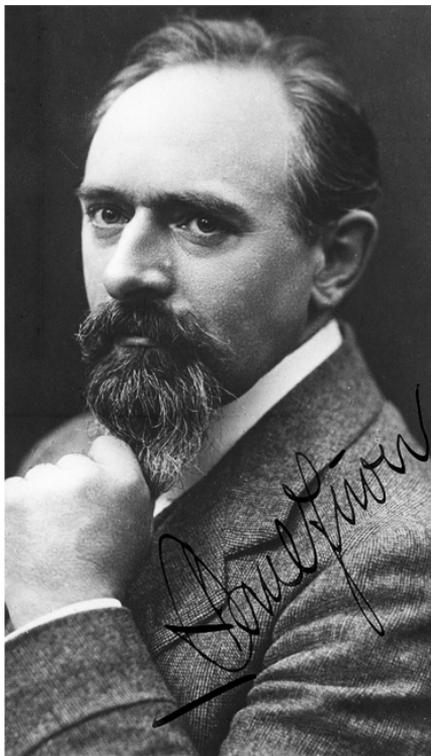


Among the entries in a handwritten catalogue of works that Juon drew up for his wife Armande appears the following:

Op. 4. Sonate in B. moll
 (1896) für Klavier u. Violoncello

[Incidentally, the First Symphony in F-sharp minor presents a somewhat similar case. This work originally bore opus number 6 and was composed in 1895. For unknown reasons, it was later listed as op. 10. Op. 6 was assigned to the song *Mörtelweibs Tochter* (after the text of Simplicius Simplicissimus) and is likewise dated 1895 in the aforementioned handwritten catalogue. There is a dated autograph of this song in the Lienau archive: 24.12.97 Berlin.]

Juon furthermore composed two works for solo cello and orchestra: the concert piece or triple concerto *Episodes Concertants for violin, cello and piano* op. 45, and *Mysteries* op. 59 (after Knut Hamsun) where, incidentally (refer also to the notes on *Fairy Tale*), in the pamphlet for a performance given in 1930 he comments on the problem of programme music: 'My piece – despite the reference to Hamsun's book – is not intended to be programme music. It was only written in the spirit of this book and maybe reflects something of its poetic mood. Those who have read the book might also be reminded occasionally of this or that episode from the story.'



Paul Juon

II. JĀNIS ĶEPĪTIS

Latvian composer, pianist and educator Jānis Ķepītis is perhaps most aptly described by a chamber music student of his, Jautrīte Putniņa, as 'a man with a miracle in his heart'. Contemporaries spoke of him as being prodigiously kind and witty, traits that are confirmed by his music. Anecdotes about his personality and musicianship reveal a consistent thread of humour and wit, along with a profound love of music and of his homeland.

Jānis Ķepītis was born on 2 January 1908, the son of a teacher and a seamstress. Both loved music and thus the boy was introduced to the piano at an early age. In school years he gained great popularity in his hometown of Valmiera as a musician and entertainer at social gatherings and dances. He played at theatre performances as well and was organist at the church of St. Simeon, where he also developed his improvisation skills. It was precisely this aptitude in the emerging composer that caught the ear of Jāzeps Vītols (1863-1948), a professor at the Latvian Conservatory. Jānis Ķepītis graduated from there in 1931 and proceeded to piano and conducting studies under the tutelage of Prof. Pauls Šuberts (1884-1945) and Jānis Mediņš (1890-1966), both leading Latvian musicians of the day. His extraordinary talent earned him a scholarship from the Latvian Cultural Foundation to further his education in Wiesbaden and Paris. Indeed, the influ-

ence of French music tradition is strongly perceptible in many of his instrumental works including the *Sonata for harp and cello*.

On completing his studies, Ķepītis embarked on an intense career both as a pianist and accompanist on Latvian national radio, and as a member of the Jāzeps Vītols Piano Trio alongside Voldemārs Rušēvis (violin) and Atis Teihmanis (cello). He continued working as a musician through the Second World War, to the extent that circumstances allowed. By 1945 he had completed his first opera (*The Marriage of Munchausen*) and a violin concerto. Thus he made a name as a flourishing composer for symphony orchestra as well as instrumental and vocal chamber music. He began teaching and became a professor of chamber music at the Latvian Conservatory, where he went on to head the department immediately post-war and continued to encourage and inspire students and colleagues there for the next forty years. Wanting nothing to do with the themes expected of composers in the Soviet era, Ķepītis dedicated his works to more abstract subject matter such as nature and fairy tales.

Suite (1959), subtitled '*Trīs epizodes iz pasaku velniņa dzīves*' ('Three Episodes from the Fairytale Devil's Life'), dedicated to the Latvian cellist Ernests Bertovskis, is among the finest examples. Its three movements – *A Walk*, *Romance* and *Humoresque* – are witty, cheerful and rather cheeky compositions evoking the somewhat simple-minded, gullible and yet wicked character of the fairy-

tale devil of Latvian folklore. Although the composer himself offered no particular narrative association, we are moved to include here a humorous tale from the traditional bedtime story repertoire:

One night, the Devil was passing by a mill and heard a mighty noise from within. He peeked inside and saw the miller, asleep and snoring. The Devil loved the sound and wanted to listen more, but the miller awoke and caught him by the tail. Thus began an uncanny fellowship: The Devil wanted the miller to teach him the art of snoring; the miller agreed on condition that he receive a batful of gold coins in exchange. To this the Devil agreed, and departed to collect the gold. Meanwhile, the miller placed his upturned bat atop a barrel and secretly cut a hole through. The Devil was surprised by how much gold he needed to pour into the bat before it was full, but eventually succeeded and so the snoring lessons began. The Devil had to observe the miller sleeping and snoring for hours at a time. And yet, no matter how hard the Devil himself tried to snore, he could not accomplish anything like the din his teacher made. The miller suggested he lie on his back, this being the best position for snoring. The Devil was unwilling, because that would pinch his tail. He demanded the return of his gold, but the miller insisted he would only accede if the Devil un-snored everything he had learned thus far. And so the Devil returned to hell with nothing, while the miller became a wealthy man.

Cellist Atis Teihmanis, also a member of the Jāzeps Vītols Trio, inspired Ķepītis to compose

many works for cello and piano including the *Sonata in E minor*, dated 1936. The *Serenade in D major*, composed in 1939, bears no dedication but was premiered by Teihmanis and the composer himself. The other two miniatures for cello and piano were composed much later: the *Romance in A major* dates from 1965 and is a most unusual piece considering its harmonic language and dreamy mood. The *Scherzo* (1964) was dedicated to the cellist Ilze Rugēvica. It harks back to *Humoresque*, the last movement of the *Suite*, including the association with the fairy-tale Devil and perhaps his rage at failing to snore and losing his gold!

Jānis Ķepītis was superbly generous with his compositions. Fellow musicians frequently inspired him to create new works, which he dedicated and gave as gifts in return. The *Sonata for harp and cello* is a fine example: composed in 1974, it was dedicated to a chamber music student of his, Dagnija Zilgalve and her husband, the cellist Viesturs Vecbāstīks, on the occasion of his departure for compulsory military service. According to Dagnija Zilgalve, who very kindly gave an interview to recount this interesting story, the main source of inspiration was the student ensemble's performance of the *Sonata for flute, viola and harp* by Claude Debussy. One day, Ķepītis brought to class the manuscript of the *Sonata for harp and cello* as a gift for Dagnija. As a fine pianist himself, Ķepītis composed for harp like he would for the piano. This makes the

harp part technically highly demanding to perform, even while it feels very natural and perfectly suited to playing on a piano. Nonetheless, Dagnija and Viesturs performed this piece on many occasions in the period following its composition. There is no particular thematic programme; Dagnija says that Ķepītis eschewed too much association with a specific story, as music ought to be more abstract and the programme should give way to emotions. And yet there are beautiful moments in the structure of this four-part sonata where movements interact and quote one another. In the third movement, so reminiscent of the *'Moonlight' Sonata* by L. van Beethoven, the first theme of the first movement returns as a fragile memory. Even if the composer denied any particular programmatic idea behind this work, the fourth movement with its solemn-spirited midsection calls out for association with a work by the Latvian poet Miķelis Krogzemis (1850-1879), better known under his pen name Auseklis. *Kurzemes Teika* ('The Legend of Kurzeme') recounts a symbolic folk legend from this region of Latvia about the Castle of Light, lost to the nation during the dark years of war and enslavement and then called upon by the people of Latvia to arise again in shining glory. The poem is best known through the choral masterpiece *Gaismas Pils* ('The Castle of Light') by Jāzeps Vītols, and it is possible that this beautiful sentiment is an implicit homage to Ķepītis' composition professor.



Jānis Ķepītis

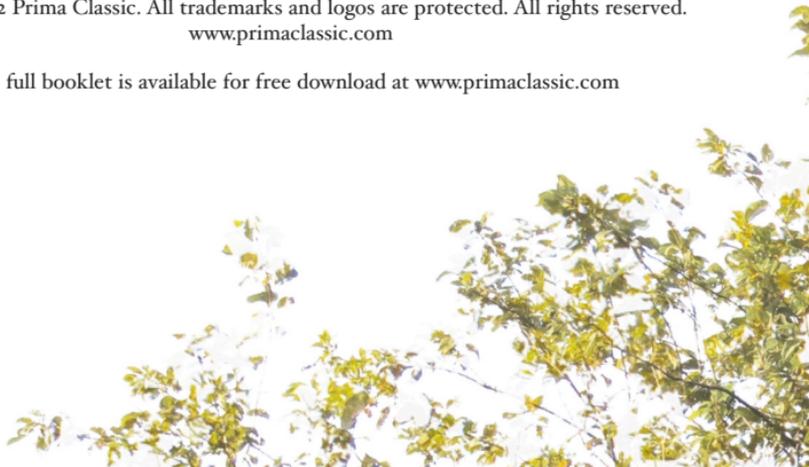


Recorded in April 2021 at the Latvian Radio Studio 1, Riga, Latvia
Recording engineer: Normunds Slava
Mastering: Edgardo Vertanessian
Produced by Duo Arnicans and Normunds Slava

Essay: Ueli Falett and Arta Arnicane
Translation: Jan Sinstadt
Photos: Tatyana Vlasova
Booklet: Carlos Céster
Design: Andrew Vlasov

Catalogue PRIMA015
© & © 2022 Prima Classic. All trademarks and logos are protected. All rights reserved.
www.primaclassic.com

The full booklet is available for free download at www.primaclassic.com





PRIMA
CLASSIC