



## Brilliant simplicity

Simon Höfele issues his first concerto album on the Berlin Classics label



Johann Nepomuk **Hummel**:

TRUMPET CONCERTO IN E MAJOR

[1] I. Allegro con spirito [2] II. Andante [3] III. Rondo. Allegro

Joseph **Haydn**:

TRUMPET CONCERTO IN E-FLAT MAJOR

[4] I. Allegro [5] II. Andante [6] III. Finale. Allegro

Aaron **Copland**:

[7] QUIET CITY

Alexander **Arutjunjan**:

TRUMPET CONCERTO IN A-FLAT MAJOR

[8] Andante maestoso [9] Allegro energico [10] Meno mosso [11] Tempo I.  
Allegro energico

Simon Höfele *Trumpet*

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (1.-6.)

BBC National Orchestra of Wales (7.-11.)

Duncan Ward *Conductor*

Berlin Classics / Edel Germany // 0301314BC //

Release: January 31, 2020

The 25-year-old German trumpet player Simon Höfele is releasing his fourth album on the Berlin Classics label, setting new “standards” with these recordings of classic repertoire by Haydn, Hummel, Arutjunjan and Copland. Duncan Ward, one of the most remarkable conducting talents in Europe, is in musical charge of the two accompanying BBC orchestras.

He embodies a new generation of musicians like almost no one else: enterprising, spontaneous, free-spirited, laid-back, without any fixed career agenda, enthusiastic and curious about every kind of music-making. Whether as soloist, chamber musician or university professor (as he has recently become). And, of course, he possesses incredible talent, something that has catapulted him into the first rank of European trumpeters. Simon Höfele, who is just 25 years old, has already conquered most of the continent's concert halls at a whirlwind pace, is a sought-after dedicatee and first interpreter of numerous new works and would like audiences “*that sit and listen at first and then get up and dance by the end.*” With Höfele, a former pupil of Reinhold Friedrich, one senses that “classical” music is on its way to a promising future when artists like him get passionate about it, draw something individual and timeless from its masterpieces and render this relevant to the here and now. This is what happens on the current CD by Höfele, whose title, “Standards”, makes it a bit of a wolf in sheep's clothing: the very well-known pieces from the basic repertoire that it features, from Haydn to Copland, are given anything but standard interpretations. But, as Höfele stresses, this is “*not just for the sake of being different, but because I simply feel this music differently.*”

On his last album, “Mysteries”, the Darmstadt-born trumpeter had presented only avant-garde works – and very successfully at that: “*What unprecedented pyrotechnics! What a wealth of rhythms, tone colours, voices, singing! ... And the excitement is contagious, thanks to the passion and perfection,*” wrote Eleonore Büning as Höfele was presented with the German Record Critics' Award. With his new CD, “Standards”, Simon Höfele now joins a recording tradition of almost measureless dimensions – and acoustic déjà-vus are inevitable: “*Every child who plays trumpet hears Haydn, Hummel and Arutjunjan, and for good reasons. These works are*

*just brilliant in their simplicity.*” Here, simplicity is, of course, a relative term that can easily be misleading. The structure and tonality of the classical works are easier to comprehend, while in the case of Copland and Arutjunjan, neoclassical elements quickly create a sense of familiarity for listeners. But precisely this is the supreme challenge for interpreters: to take listeners along with them onto new paths when playing supposedly well-known works and to highlight and bring across the new and modern aspects of very familiar pieces.

The **trumpet concertos** by **Joseph Haydn** (1796) and **Johann Nepomuk Hummel** (1803) – both composers were active at the court of the music patron Nicholas II, Prince Esterházy when they wrote the works – are a part of the basic repertoire of every trumpet player. They mark the transition from the valveless natural trumpet to the revolutionary keyed trumpet. The enthusiasm for the new technical possibilities and extended range offered by this brass instrument is reflected in these two works, as it is in the buoyant, unpretentious playing of Simon Höfele, who succeeds in showcasing the tonal flexibility of the modern trumpet in its best light without losing sight of a sense of classical balance. The Hummel concerto, written seven years later than Haydn's work, goes even further in its exploitation of the instrument's virtuosic potential, thus giving Höfele, who previously held a scholarship from the Hummel Society in Weimar, a perfect opportunity to demonstrate his immaculate technique paired with a stylistically flawless interpretation.

As a **BBC New Generation Artist**, Höfele was given the chance to record his new CD with two highly respected orchestras of the United Kingdom's public-service broadcaster: the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (Haydn & Hummel) and the BBC National Orchestra of Wales (Arutjunjan & Copland). They are directed by one of Europe's biggest young conducting talents, the 30-year-old Briton **Duncan Ward**, who already has an outstanding reputation in Germany as the former assistant of Simon Rattle at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. “Working with Duncan is very intuitive. We have very similar ideas about the music. I think that partly has to do with the fact that we are of a similar age and are thus on the same wavelength,” Simon Höfele says.

The concerto of 1950 by **Alexander Arutjunjan**, who was born in Yerevan in what is now Armenia, is today one of the most-played trumpet concertos from eastern Europe, along with Shostakovich's op. 35. It is regarded as a “phenomenal stamping ground” (L. Speckmann) for every virtuoso. In Höfele's case, it is also one of his favourite pieces: “Because of the very spontaneous way it is written, particularly in the slow parts, you can give it a very personal shape – for me, it is one of the best trumpet concertos around.” The CD “Standards” is rounded out with an around 10-minute composition by **Aaron Copland** from 1940 with the title “Quiet City”. It has its origins in the incidental music for an experimental play that, according to Copland's memories of it, was a “realistic fantasy” that “imagines the night thoughts of many different people in a great city” - and never even made it onto the stage. The composer subsequently turned parts of the score into a suite, while reducing the originally large-scale instrumentation to trumpet, cor anglais and strings. It was the birth of an audience favourite in which the trumpet seems to be given a kind of warning, psychological role. It is a little El Dorado for every virtuoso, including Höfele, who, summing up the whole programme of this album, says: “*What arises in me in these recordings is the whole primaeval love of music.*”

 Sabine Knodt

Auf Rheinberg 2  
50676 Köln

+49 (0)221 - 168 796 25  
sabine.knodt@schimmer-pr.de  
www.schimmer-pr.de