



## Norman O'Neill

(1875–1934)

Piano Trio in A minor op. 7  
Soliloquy for Double Bass and Piano  
Sonata in A minor  
for Violoncello and Pianoforte  
Suite in B minor  
for Violin and Pianoforte

Fabian Rieser, violin  
Fátima Agüero Vacas, double bass  
Ensemble Color  
Florian Streich & Sarah Hiller

MDG 903 2237-6



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RECORDING



### different

By chance, young English-speaking people meet in the years 1890 to 1910 in the composition class at Dr. Hoch's conservatory in Frankfurt. The "Frankfurt Group" participates in the spirit of optimism of the Fin de Siècle, and yet everyone draws its own conclusions. Today, the members of Ensemble Color teach at the conservatory themselves and go in search of traces of their predecessors. In a first episode, the ensemble dedicates itself to the work of Norman O'Neill - a remarkable expansion of the repertoire that arouses curiosity for more.

### linking

The very first bars of the Piano Trio op. 7 make one sit up and take notice: Inventive in melodic invention, O'Neill cannot deny his English origins. One looks in vain for harmonic-expressive experiments, as others did at the beginning of the 20th century, in O'Neill's work. And yet the young Englishman finds his very own tonal language in the combination of the classical-central European tradition, as taught at the highest level by Dr. Hoch, with the idiom of his homeland.

### trying

Thus "Soliloquy" for double bass and piano is entirely British: the "soliloquy" is only sparingly commented on by the piano, so that Fátima Agüero Vacas can indulge in her thoughts in "splendid isolation". The cello sonata dates from O'Neill's last days of study in Frankfurt. Wide melodic arcs not only make the cellist's (Florian Streich) heart beat faster; at eye level, especially in the variation movement, pianist Sarah Hiller also gets her money's worth.

### enchancing

And the four-movement suite, which violinist Fabian Rieser creates together with Sarah Hiller, also surprises with melodic ideas of beguiling beauty. This meritorious discovery impressively proves that even at the beginning of the 20th century, a scandal is by no means necessary to create something new and individual. It will be interesting to see what other hidden treasures can be found in the Frankfurt Group's collection!