



## Four hands, 88 keys: Intimate piano psychograms from Olympus

With „Apollo & Dionysus“ the German-Greek sisters Danae and Kiveli Dörken are now, after several successful solo and ensemble recordings, presenting their first joint piano duet album: a studio debut with a sophisticated concept and breathtaking virtuosity.



DANAЕ & KIVELI DÖRKEN *KLAVIER*  
BERLIN CLASSICS COPRODUCTION WITH SWR2 LC06203  
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### APOLLO & DIONYSUS

MANUEL DE FALLA (1876 - 1946)  
[1] DOS DANZAS

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY  
(1809 – 1847)  
[2] SONGS WITHOUT WORDS OP. 38,  
NO. 6 „DUETTO“ (ARR. CZERNY)

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 – 1897)  
[3] UNGARISCHER TANZ NO. 4

MAURICE RAVEL (1875 - 1937)  
[4] DAPHNIS ET CHLOÉ SUITE NO. 2

REINHOLD GLIÈRE (1875 – 1956)  
[5] 12 MORCEAUX OP. 48, NO. 10  
“FUGHETTA”

PHILIP GLASS (\*1937)  
[6] FOUR MOVEMENTS FOR TWO  
PIANOS: III.

ALBERT ROUSSEL (1869 - 1937)  
[7] BACCHUS ET ARIANE SUITE NO. 1 “DANCE  
OF BACCHUS” (ARR. WOLFGANG RENZ)

REINHOLD GLIÈRE (1875 – 1956)  
[8] 12 MORCEAUX OP. 48, NO. 7  
“ARABESQUE”

FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY (1809 –  
1847)

[9] SONGS WITHOUT WORDS OP. 67, NO. 2  
(ARR. CZERNY)

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833 – 1897)  
[10] UNGARISCHER TANZ NO. 5

MIKIS THEODORAKIS (1925 – 2021)  
[11] ZORBA’S DANCE (ARR. FOR 4 HANDS BY  
DANAЕ & KIVELI DÖRKEN)

CLAUDE DEBUSSY (1862 – 1918)  
[12] RÉVERIE

Two sisters on one instrument. Each an exceptional pianist in her own right with an individual temperament; together, an inseparable single entity with identical musical DNA. **Kiveli** and **Danae Dörken**, an "orchestra of four hands" (Thüringische Landeszeitung), have been setting new benchmarks for years as a piano duo, both with their pianistic prowess (Kölnischer Stadt-Anzeiger: "**a miracle of ease, charm and feeling**") and their exceptional programmes. The two German-Greek sisters also regularly show that they are a born duo in every regard with their quirky and informative podcast "[The Sister Trill](#)", joint education projects ("Rhapsody in School" and "Klassik hautnah" or "MoToKey"/Tonal) and the Molyvos International Music Festival, which they founded in 2015 on the island of Lesbos.

**Greece, with its culture, is the real inner homeland** of the two sisters, born in Wuppertal and Düsseldorf. They began studying piano with Karl-Heinz Kämmerling at the ages of 11 and seven respectively as the youngest students in the history of the Hochschule Hannover, later continuing to work with Lars Vogt. During the summers of their childhood, their grandmother on Lesbos used to tell them stories of the Olympian gods. "*And, like many Greek children, we also visited the Oracle of Delphi,*" recalls Kiveli, the younger of the two, "*where we realised that a good decision always involves both divine characteristics: ratio and emotion.*"

**These two poles of human existence** – and particularly of artistic activity – are personified in Greek mythology by two gods: Apollo and Dionysus, sons of Zeus. The former stands for moderation, order and clarity, the latter for irrationality, chaos, amorphousness. **And the two Dörken sisters see themselves as embodying this bipolarity:** the chaotic, the wild – the Dionysian – aspects belong more to Kiveli's nature, the older sister says, while order and clarity – the Apollonian attributes – are more Danae's thing, according to the younger. Their new album, on which they present a very intimate look at their sisterly and artistic self-image with surprising and original repertoire combinations, thus bears the almost self-referential title of "Apollo & Dionysus".

The core of the new album is **Maurice Ravel's Suite No. 2 from "Daphnis et Chloé"**: *"This piece has a particular significance for us because the Dionysian and Apollonian energies in it are equally balanced," Danae says. "Apollo and Dionysus appear in it as advice-giving gods. The story illustrates very well what we want to express with the whole CD: that the synthesis of both worldviews, the rational, Apollonian one and the emotional Dionysian one, is important for discovering and developing one's own personality."* The two **"Songs Without Words" (Lieder ohne Worte)** op. 38 No. 6 and op. 67 No. 2 by Mendelssohn, in four-handed arrangements by Carl Czerny, can, however, definitely be assigned to the Apollonian side: since the mid-1800s, in the Jewish Hasidic tradition, the song without words was considered a higher form of art and the expression of spiritual purity. In contrast, the "Hungarian Dances" by Johannes Brahms (Nos. 4 and 5 are recorded here), which belong to the sisters' core repertoire, allow one to feel a kind of mediation between the two spheres in the way (purported) folk music is translated into a formal classical language: *"For us, these two dances, with their tempered exoticism, are a kind of synthesis of the Dionysian and the Apollonian."* The duo then becomes virtually ecstatic in **Manuel de Falla's "Dos Danzas"**, and a similar energy, verging on a complete loss of control, is displayed in the popular **"Zorba's Dance"** by **Mikis Theodorakis** in an arrangement by the Dörkens themselves: *"It is perhaps one of the best-known Greek party songs and thus clearly belongs to Dionysus's realm. For us, this melody and its sirtaki rhythm symbolise absolute joie de vivre, a celebration of the moment."* **Albert Roussel's "Danse de Bacchus"**, an excerpt from the "Bacchus et Ariane" Suite No. 2 in the arrangement by Wolfgang Renz, also expresses intoxicated abandonment: *"The way the piece is built up shows the effects of alcohol from slight tipsiness to uncontrolled staggering,"* says Danae. *"At one stage, things get very quiet; that perhaps represents the comatose consequences of wine. But then, a motive in the right hand of the first piano flashes a little mischievous or, better, diabolical grin that lets us know that the ecstatic dance will start all over again tomorrow."* The two pieces selected from the **"12 Morceaux" op. 48 by Reinhold Glière**, for their part, once more reflect the opposite aspect of the album's theme: *"The Arabesque is a short, passionate dance that carries you along immediately,"* Danae says. *"You feel straight away that you can't escape its unstoppable power. The Fughetta, on the other hand, is a very structured piece; everything has its place; there is a plan. Apollo also stands for coherence, and the way the voices and themes are organised here creates a perfectly constructed musical entity."* The same goes for the most modern piece on the CD: the third movement from **"Four Movements for Two Pianos" by Philip Glass** is based on mathematical order; it makes shifts in that order, along with the resulting new order, perceptible to the listener. The album concludes with **Claude Debussy's "Reverie"**: for the two pianists, *"a treasure full of nostalgia, whose melody depicts a musical utopia and thus points the way to Apollo's world."*

On "Apollo & Dionysus", Kiveli and Danae Dörken present a programme that is both innovative and clever, a kind of musical visiting card for this highly energetic, life-affirming, stylistically versatile pair of sisters with their breathtaking pianistic abilities. For them, the piano duet is **the most intimate form of chamber music** – "a highly exposed art form, side by side on the same instrument" – that requires the most profound trust. And that is precisely what is conveyed on this CD with a seldom-heard naturalness in the course of a captivating musical journey of four hands on 88 keys.



Friederike Eckhardt

Winsstraße 17  
10405 Berlin

+49 (0)30 - 440 307 11

friederike.eckhardt@schimmer-pr.de

www.schimmer-pr.de

## Piano duo concerts in 2023/2024

[06 August 2023](#) | [5 pm](#) | [Alte Kirche Spay](#) | [Spay](#) | [NRW](#) | [Germany](#)

IMUKO

Danae & Kiveli Dörken *Piano*

### „Apollo & Dionysus“

**Schubert** Fantasia in F minor for piano four hands, D 940, op. posth. 103

**Mendelssohn** Songs Without Words op. 38 No. 6 "Duetto" in A-flat major (arr. Czerny)

**Brahms** Hungarian Dances (Auszug)

**De Falla** Dos Danzas from the opera „La vida breve“

**Roussel** Bacchus et Ariane Suite No. 1 "Dance of Bacchus" (arr. Wolfgang Renz)

Ravel Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 2

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[11-19 August 2023 | Molyvos International Music Festival](#)

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[27 August 2023 | 6 pm | Helsingborg | Konserthuset | SE](#)

Helsingborgs Symfoniorkester  
Danae & Kiveli Dörken *Piano*  
Clément Mao-Takacs *Conductor*

**Poulenc** Concerto for Two Pianos in D minor  
Schubert Symphony No. 3 in D major D. 200  
**Mozart** Piano Concerto No. 10 for Two Pianos in E-flat major K. 365

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[24 September 2023 | AIMA Festival | Ayvalik | Cunda Bekir Coşkun Library Turkey](#)

Turkish-Greek friendship concert on the 100th anniversary of the exchange "Hand in Hand for Peace"  
Duo and other chamber music

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[13 October 2023 | 8 pm | Baden-Baden | Kurhaus Weinbrennersaal \(Baden-Württemberg, Germany\)](#)

Philharmonie Baden-Baden  
Danae & Kiveli Dörken *Piano*  
Heiko Mathias Förster *Conductor*

**Bruch** Concerto for Two Pianos in A-flat minor op. 88a  
Brahms Symphony No. 1 in C minor op. 68

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[7 November 2023 | 7:30 pm | Stadttheater Fürth \(Bayern, Germany\)](#)

Danae & Kiveli Dörken *Piano*

„Apollo & Dionysus“

**Schubert** Fantasia in F minor for piano four hands, D 940, op. posth. 103  
**De Falla** "Dos Danzas" from the opera "La vida breve"  
**Ravel** Suite No 2 from the ballet "Daphnis et Chloé"  
**Mendelssohn** Duetto No. 6 in A-flat major, op. 38, from "Songs Without Words" (arr. Carl Czerny)  
**Mendelssohn** No. 2 in F-sharp minor, op. 67, from "Songs Without Words" (arr. Carl Czerny)  
**Brahms** Hungarian Dances Nos. 1 to 10, WoO 1