FRANZ SCHUBERT

3 Sonatas (1816)

Peter Sheppard Skærved
violin
Julian Perkins
square piano

athene

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Three Sonatas (1816), Op. 137

Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano in D major, D.384				**14:25**
1	I	*Allegro molto*	6:23	
2	II	*Andante*	3:56	
3	III	*Allegro vivace*	4:06	
Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano in A minor, D.385				**22:06**
4	I	*Allegro moderato*	8:15	
5	II	*Andante*	5:50	
6	III	Menuetto: *Allegro*	3:04	
7	IV	*Allegro*	4:56	
Sonata No. 3 for Violin and Piano in G minor, D.408				**22:07**
8	I	*Allegro giusto*	6:57	
9	II	*Andante*	6:24	
10	III	Menuetto: *Allegro vivace*	3:01	
11	IV	*Allegro moderato*	5:44	
Total playing time:				**58:38**

Peter Sheppard Skærved (violin)
Julian Perkins (square piano)

YOUNG SCHUBERT – A VIOLINIST'S JOURNEY

For many years, I have been enchanted by Schubert's early works for the violin, his work with his violin-playing brother, Ferdinand (1794-1859), and the windows that this music and their collaboration opens into his mind and creative world. This resulted in two distinct approaches to the violin, and to its place as a chamber and solo instrument in Schubert's total output.

The first of these was a particularly virtuosic vision, audible in Schubert's earliest instrumental works; not only in the two major *concertante* works with orchestra (the *A Major Rondo* and the *D Major Konzertstück*), but also in the three early symphonies and even in the first significant orchestral work, composed before beginning lessons with Antonio Salieri. The ultimate evolution of this style is the fiendish violin writing of his late *G Major Quartet*, the *C Major Fantasie* and the *B minor Rondeau* – matched in these two last, by equally challenging pianism.

Schubert's other 'take' on the violin is that heard in the three *Sonatas* for piano and violin written in the spring of 1816; here the two instruments are woven together in perfect balance of technical and musical concision. At first sight, the writing might appear simple, but it is far from it. It takes a total command and understanding of any instrument to write for them with such succinctness and expressiveness.

The salient characteristic of the latter approach is economy, most obviously manifest in the chosen 'tessiturae' – the ranges of notes used on each instrument. The violin part reaches from the lowest open string on the instrument, G, to the E just over two octaves above middle C (this is an octave short of the range used, say, in the last String Quartet, the G Major). The piano range is from the F two octaves and a half below 'middle C' up to the G two-and-a-half octaves

above ‘middle C’, albeit used sparingly. Of course, this tells is a lot about the keyboard instruments available to Schubert in the 18-teens, but adds to the impression of laconic expression, or perhaps more particularly, of understated intimacy.

The use of narrow tessitura, and economy of means, was certainly not a feature of Schubert’s earlier works. His intensely dramatic *C Major/minor Overture D.9*, written in July of 1811, is marked out by vertigo-inducing violin writing, as are the three first symphonies. To me, it seems that the ‘modest’ writing in the three sonatas can be read as an aesthetic choice, a deliberate turn to classical economy of means, also reflected in the structure of three pieces as a group, both in intention and in composition. The exquisite manuscripts of the sonatas were dated by the composer – the first two ‘March 1816’ and the last the April of the same year. Perhaps more tellingly, Schubert inscribed ‘Sonata II’ and ‘Sonata III’ on the A minor and G minor works respectively, making it clear that this is how he viewed, and perhaps most importantly, composed the works. Such a grouping is the very essence of the classical style, reborn, if you like.

When the pieces were published, twenty years after their composition, and eight years after the composer’s death, the publisher, Anton Diabelli (1781–1858), kept them as a set. Diabelli had purchased a large tranche of Schubert’s works from Ferdinand after the composers’ death, and cannily released the unknown works piecemeal in the 1830s and 40s. He clearly viewed the three sonatas’ apparent simplicity as a money-making opportunity (the house which he founded with Pietro Cappi in 1817 made considerable profits from the burgeoning amateur market). So, the first edition of the works (1836) presented them as ‘Three Sonatinas Op 137’, implying that they were ideally suited for *dilettante* violinists and pianists. Inevitably, the perception grew, that these were pedagogical pieces (the same thing happened with Friedrich Kuhlau’s (1786-1832) eponymous Op 55 set, published in 1823). Consequently, they are treated with a certain affectionate condescension by ‘grown-up’ players, and almost never studied as the fascinating works they undoubtedly are.

Of course, this misapellation, as is often the case, yielded benefits. The last chamber work which Antonín Dvořák would write during his 1893 sojourn in America, was a *G Major Sonatina Op 100* for violin and piano. This work was written for his talented children to play, and the composer wrote that although it was '[…] intended for youths (dedicated to my two children), even grown-ups, adults, should be able to converse with it.' Its melodies, tessitura, and form are modelled on Schubert's three sonatas, and many young players (including me) grew up confusing the two composers as a result!

How and where should these works be played? Schubert and Beethoven's generation were determined to control the environments in which their chamber music was heard. Beethoven, famously, wrote to Sir George Smart (in 1816, as it happens) about his *F minor Quartet Op 95* that it was 'never to be played in public', and doubted whether his H*orn Sonata Op 17* would be loud enough to be heard in a hall hold about 100 persons. By the 1820s, the practice had grown, in Vienna, of presenting chamber works in non-salon environments, but this was the exception rather than the rule, and there was clear separation in the public mind between works intended for concert-style audition and those intended for intimate surroundings, which by definition, meant homes. Whatever its scale, a home is domestic: but intimacy certainly does not preclude profundity – indeed most of us experience the propensity of emotionally affecting situations in our homes, or those of others.

A number of times, in my early life as a musician, I heard performances of these works which attempted to resolve the questions surrounding these works through choice of instruments. When I was 13 or 14, I was struck by a performance of one of the sonatas given by Richard Burnett and my teacher, Ralph Holmes, using a Stradivarius violin and a Graf fortepiano. This combination had worked very well for Beethoven sonatas and Hummel fantasies, but I was dissatisfied with the results for these Schubert works. The combination of two such dramatic instruments overwhelmed the music, which was unable to take the strain. So, when Julian Perkins, many years later, said to

me: 'Have you thought about the Schubert Sonatas with a *Square Piano*?', I was immediately struck by the exciting possibilities that might result from bringing such instrumental delicacy, fragility even, to this music. We started experimenting, both in rehearsal and in public workshop settings, and a wealth of possibilities emerged. Some of these were practical, prosaic even, others had a dramatic impact on how we approached the material, even the integrity of the score itself.

The practical question the square piano raised was – how to sit? Like the clavichord, the player of a square piano, when the lid is open, plays facing into the instrument, and the sound reflects past them, to the audience, behind the player's back. It's very clear from the number of folding music stands fitted to the inside of the square piano cases, that an accompanying chamber musician would be expected to sit the same way, facing into the mechanism of the instrument, both sounds 'mixed' by the lid of the piano and reflected into the room (and by the wall against which an instrument like this was designed to be placed) in a manner not entirely dissimilar to the curved wall of Richard Wagner's orchestral pit at Bayreuth. Sitting like this knits the players together closely; the result is that the conventional chamber music to-and-from becomes redundant, like gesturing at a partner whilst holding hands. This, allied to the nature of Schubert's music, ensures that very particular freedoms emerge.

Benjamin Hebbert, luthier and historian, provided a further insight to the sound that we were looking for at one of the public workshops we presented in the year running up the recording. At that point, I still planned on using a 17th century Italian instrument. Ben was struck by the domestic intimacy and intricacy which the square piano was offering, and suggested that we might like to consider one delineation between violin making north and south of the Alps. The critical factor, he pointed out, for instruments in a chamber environment was the acoustics of the rooms being used. Most Italian instruments were made to be heard in rooms which, in part due to climate, were dominated by hard reflective surfaces – stone, terracotta, and plaster.

North of the Alps, 'German-speaking violins', if one might put it like this, were made for rooms filled with leather, fabric, carpets and wood. The result, if one generalises, is that the southern instruments were designed to function in rooms with lively acoustics, and tend to be 'projecting' instruments, whereas the 'north-of-the-alps' fiddles had to work in deader sound spaces, and needed to 'carry' their own acoustics with them. Violins built for such spaces tend not to project, but are full of nuance and colour, close up. 'Whatever violin you have for this project,' Ben observed, 'must be one of those'. He introduced me to the wonderful Leopold Widhalm (1722 – 1776) violin heard on this recording. This, combined with an extraordinary early Tourte bow, proved an intimate foil for the Clementi square piano which we chose.

D major Sonata, D.384

I *Allegro molto*

It's impossible to play this movement without talking about Mozart, most particularly the six sonatas which he dedicated to Maria Elisabeth, Electress of the Palatinate, in 1778. Schubert clearly began from the model which Mozart offered in that set of piano/violin sonatas. The first 12 bars of this movement are written by a composer who has the opening unison of Mozart's *E minor Sonata K.304* from that group in their ears and fingers. The use of various unison arrangements between piano and violin throughout the three Sonatas is fascinating, and drawing attention to the gesture, as Beethoven did in his *D Major Sonata Op 12 No 1* ensures that we listen out for the variants: it is clear that the composer was fascinated with the effect of all the possibilities.

Throughout Schubert's oeuvre, performers are faced with questions as to how the 'bridging material' over repeat sections should ideally work. His last great chamber work, the *C Major String Quintet* includes two moments where this question is asked (in the first and third movements), and many performers, myself included, have come to the conclusion that there are more possibilities than the score might apparently indicate. There's a similar case in point in this

movement, where the four bars before the development section only make sense if they are played only as the *Eingang* to the second half of the movement, and not as an upbeat to the exposition repeat. This is hardly controversial!

However, Julian and I found, as soon as we had opened this door, that questions emerged about the mechanism for playing the second-half repeat. Going from the ceremonial final D major chords, back to the haunted unisons that begin the development section did not seem to make sense (you will only discover this when you actually play the second half repeat, which so many people do not!), but a wonderfully spooky option emerged, when we took a direct route from the pianissimo cadence into the penultimate bar (unison D), straight back to the D sharp which begins the development. The resulting rising whole-tone scale followed by minor thirds and diminished fifth is too delicious, too Gothic, to eschew, and I felt that the Schuberts, improvisers to their bones, would love it, and probably did this (at least once or twice) when they played the piece. However, this is not presented as definitive or final option, or to suggest that the written/published score is *wrong*: rather, we have tried to respond as we imagine two composing/improvising musicians of the day might have worked with this material.

II *Andante*

This movement is in a romanza-form, 'ABA'. The outer sections are quite formal, even stilted), but enfold a 'deep romantic chasm' (as Coleridge puts it) in a luscious minor. In the opening 'A' section, the piano dominates. The violin only plays on the reprise of each phrase, and in lock-step with the keyboard, an octave below the right-hand melody, *inside* the piano sound (This makes so much sense to play with a square piano, where both players are effectively playing into the same instrument and sound space). However by the return of the 'A' section, the violin has declared independence from the piano, and weaves a simple division/ornamentation around the piano material, reminding me of the delicate flute writing in the slow movements of some mid-period

Joseph Haydn Symphonies, or in his *Sonata VII - "In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum"* from his *Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze*, which the young Schubert would have sung as a choirboy in the Imperial Chapel at the Vienna Hofburg.

The middle section of the movement is the first moment the Schubert allows the violin to truly sing. Here I sense the young *Lieder* composer. The rich texture and repeats of this section lend themselves to lyrical ornamentation: another improvisational response emerged at this point - dropping the violin-line down an octave, as if a baritone was singing the line, not a soprano.

III *Allegro vivo*

Johannes Brahms was fascinated with Schubert's early works (he owned the manuscript of the *B flat Major String Trio Movement*). I have always thought that he might have found certain satisfaction in the relationship between his three piano/violin sonatas and this set.

The most obvious place where this relationship is to be found is in the number of movements. Brahms' three sonatas have 3 movements, 3 movements (with two movements nested in one in the centre), and 4 movements respectively. Schubert's set is 3, 4, and 4. The inclusion of a minuet or scherzo movement in sonatas was far from a given, whereas, in the mature string quartets of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert himself, it was, and would be, a rule. The eschewal of a minuet/scherzo dance-movement in this first Sonata gave Schubert the excuse, or prompt, for a bucolic pastoral finale. As a result, the following finales could be dramatically poetic, as the composer had satisfied the need for dancing in the previous movements. This movement is a rare moment where Schubert worked 'democratically' (if I can put it like this) with the two players: they both play all the thematic material, which almost never happens again in the set.

A minor Sonata, D.385

I *Allegro moderato*

When we heard the sound of this movement on the Widhalm and the Clementi instruments, talk turned to the *gothic*. My first thoughts turned to paintings by Schubert's friend, the painter Moritz von Schwind (1804–1871), such as *Apparition in the Forest*, but Caspar David Friedrich's (1774–1840) *Monk by the Sea* and *Abbey in the Oak forest* (both painted in 1808-10), offered models of colour and drama equivalent to Schubert's miraculous writing. And for me, if there was one equivalence between these paintings and this music, it's the loneliness, even the alienation, heard in the music, through a gulf between two parts. One simple manifestation of this is that the violin is never allowed to play the long, wandering first subject with which the piano begins, neither in exposition nor recapitulation.

The mood of the writing, and the disconnect between the two players, felt and heard at dramatic junctures, encouraged me to explore the expressive, even expressionist possibilities of the vocal gestures – portamenti, dramatic lack of vibrato; which proved particularly powerful on the Widhalm instrument. This is the moment to talk about 'portes des voix'. The rules, as they were understood, of playing these vocal gestures were/are relatively simple. Firstly, there was a rule of symmetry, of balance. If a slide goes up, it needs must be balanced by a slide (or slides) coming down. Secondly, and this is important for the choices made in a movement like this: portamenti (to use the Italian) should be executed on 'weak intervals', being intervals without chromatic 'weight'. So, this device was expected on octaves, perfect fifths and fourths, major sixths, major thirds and seconds. Any decision to use it on 'strong intervals', such as, in reverse order, minor seconds and thirds, augmented/diminished intervals, major sevenths and so on, would be made for dramatic reasons, and were by nature, striking. In a movement such as this one, which has (to be crude) a 'haunted' quality, it is natural to apply the technique on such intervals. However, none of these usages 'works with modern ('traditional') vibrato.

The advent of a common use of constant vibrato in the mid-20th century, resulted in a widespread abandonment of the technique (and the rules) and an emphasis on upward glissandi, used primarily today on the aforementioned 'weak' intervals.

II *Andante*

It's difficult today, to grasp the association between hymn-like material and intensely Romantic emotion. Exploring this movement, Julian and I found ourselves remembering the famous (and to modern ears, mildly comic) 'Klopstock-moment' between Charlotte and Werther in Goethe's epoch-defining novel. The music is poised between strikingly formal statements of the hymn-like material, and two dramatically 'yearning' episodes. This is one of the moments in the cycle where Schubert strategically demarcated material for execution by one instrument or the other, but not both. In this case, the violin is given a sequence of 'reaching' slow octaves and tenths – 'breaths upward' if you like. I imagine that, here, Ferdinand would have taken the opportunity for expressive 'portes de voix', a device which the violin-centred material in the sonatas certainly demands. (see above for my more detailed exploration of this technique).

III Menuetto (*Allegro*)

The minuet section(s) here are distinguished by a charming contradiction between furious Gluck-ean bare octaves, all diminished fourths and clashing contrary motion, semitones, and the drooping, even wilting piano answer, which Julian noted in one rehearsal is 'pure Biedermeier'. The rising semitone of this provides the material for the trio section, which is a little exercise in democracy – the melody is heard in the violin, then the piano left hand (bass), then the right hand, and back to the violin. Imagining the back-and-forth between the brothers, Franz and Ferdinand, this is another spot where we indulged in octave transpositions.

IV *Allegro*

This melancholy movement inhabits a similar 'gothic' environment to the first. In the opening section, there's repeated use of a device which every Schubertian would come to recognise and love, the 'accent-diminuendo'. Most young string players learn how to do this playing the opening movement of the *A minor Quartet*, which, of course, begins with this gesture, on every bar, under weaving Alberti-figurations, underpinning the melody. Schubert's insistence on the violin playing the second-subject tune entirely in unison, inside the piano material, triggers a violinistic temper-tantrum of triplet quavers which provides the dramatic material for the movement. It's a charming vignette of the relationship between the two brothers, eventually resulting in a dramatic cadenza (written out – the violin part {Ferdinand} – and implied – the piano {Franz}).

G minor Sonata, D.408

I *Allegro giusto*

Schubert's use of G minor is particularly Mozart-ean here – there are echoes of the *25th* & *40th Symphonies*, not to mention the *String Quintet* in the same key, which elicited a similarly stormy mien from this young composer. Twelve bars into the first movement, the experimentation with unison writing between the players takes a new turn, when the violin, playing on the g-string doubles the piano left hand at the octave. Stated baldly like this, such a gesture might not seem worthy of note, but the low tessitura on the violin is striking, especially as it means that both melody lines are below the tremulous right hand of the piano. In this movement, as in the first movement of the first sonata, we found that it seemed most natural to place the repeats to reprises of the exposition and development before the finial cadences of each section. But, perhaps more notably, it seemed obvious that the dramatic *fermata* prior to the recapitulation was a place, on second playing, where a pianist of the early 1800s would be unable to resist extending the cadenza material which the composer has already provided.

II *Andante*

Playing these works, so full of repeats and reprises, the question of ornamentation inevitably arises. This *Andante* offers an example of how the composer did it, and how integrated it could be in his hands. From my perspective, it's a model for other places in the set of sonatas. This movement begins with a rising and falling violin motif 4th-6th, 3rd-5th, which is never heard in the piano. A memory of this figure initiates the middle section of the movement, augmented, both by being stretched thin over four bars, and shadowed with ghostly octaves in the piano. The piano response to this opening violin melody, from the 9th bar of the movement starts to introduce falling gestures of 'four demisemiquavers-quaver', which becomes the dominant figure of the middle section. When the violin reprises its opening figure, these drooping demisemiquavers trigger ornamentations, but now inverted, rising, even optimistic.

III Menuetto

This Haydn-esque minuet is disarmingly simple. A binary gesture of eight bars, *forte-piano* is repeated, *verbatim* four times. After the double bar, its variant is stretched to twelve bars, leading back to the opening figure, again. This obsessive repetition inevitably makes players and listeners long for something else, maybe a lyrical trio section? We are suitably rewarded.

The 'trio' section of this movement is all *Lied*, most particularly the sound world of *Gretchen am Spinnrade*, which Schubert had composed almost exactly two years earlier. It's exquisite, with the violin melody marked *Dolce*, and we are grateful, (perhaps the composer was too) to find ourselves, in the enchanted world of Goethe's *Faust*, from which the song was drawn.

The 'petite reprise 'was commonly used throughout the 18th century – it's demanded throughout the solo works of Giuseppe Tartini. This gesture is most often found in binary or ternary movements (divided up in repeating sections – though not all are as repetitive as this minuet!). At the end of the minuet before

the final two chords (which we chose to play only at the end of the complete movement), I inserted an unaccompanied 'petite reprise' – the drooping figure which I play throughout the movement - but with a simple double-stopped harmonisation.

IV *Allegro moderato*

At first sight, this finale might seem to be the slightest of the three in the set. The last movement of the *D Major Sonata* has 245 bars, the *A minor*, 311, but here, only 149. If nothing else, this illustrates why the convention of ignoring second repeats in Viennese classical/early romantic movements is ill-advised. When the repeats are observed, the movement is 298 bars long (and in our version is 308, as we simply can't resist playing the last ten bars twice). It's fair to say, that observing the repeats in these three pieces puts the lie to any idea of their being 'sonatinas'. In scale, the closest equivalent group would be Beethoven's three *Sonatas Op 30*.

This movement reintroduces a style of violin writing which is also heard in the pastoral finale of the first sonata of Schubert's set – today we might call it 'fiddling', and it includes elements that would later find their way into the American 'bluegrass' and 'mountain styles' which evolved over the following 100 years. One might call such playing 'rustic scrubbing', and it can be found in the more folk-music influenced chamber music of Haydn and Mozart (the finales of the *D Major Quartet Op 64 'The Lark'* and the *C Major Quartet K465 'Dissonance'* are great examples). Schubert's use of this violin technique to round off this cycle is a reminder that in the 18-teens, thousands of strolling musicians thronged Vienna, playing in the parks, courtyards and local eateries, accompanying the many sideshows and mountebanks who plied their trades on the streets. Their numbers grew so many that by 1821, the police started issuing permits, and only to veterans or the disabled. Healthy folk musicians were seen as at best, ne'er-do-wells, and at worst, a public menace!

Gothic Fest

It is always a treat to indulge in Mozartkugeln when visiting Salzburg. Dark chocolate, marzipan and nougat are an irresistible trio for this chocaholic minstrel. But what does such a confectionary delight actually have to do with Mozart? Are we to believe that his music is merely a sweetmeat?

The collective unconscious might say yes. For many, Mozart continues to be regarded as comfortable wallpaper music. Its translucent textures and clear musical syntax have become an easy passport to sophistication. Perish the thought that one might smudge the music's makeup and explore the darker sonorities of Mozart's oeuvre or, worse still, add ornaments – or 'em*blemish*ments'. Who are we to tarnish his perfect canvases with aural carbuncles?

Schubert's music sometimes suffers a similar fate. And what an ill-doomed fate it is. To convey only seamlessly spun lines and a beautiful blend of sounds is an abrogation of creative responsibility. How can one justify such an approach in light of the unexpected accents that pepper Schubert's scores, or the deliberate play with expectation when phrases are irregular and uncomfortable? Surely Schubert was not impervious to the then pervading influence of the Gothic. At a time when the salon – or *Schubertiad* – encouraged a cross-fertilization of the arts, it seems likely that the publication of *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley in 1818 had a powerful effect on Schubert's art. We need only recall the father's sheer terror in *Erlkönig* to realize that we are confronting a Gothic Horror Movement.

Such thoughts as these have spurred on Peter and me when performing Schubert's Sonatas (*not* 'Sonatinas') for Violin and Piano. We treat the score not as an 'Urtext' edition, in which the notation is often hallowed as the composer's final (and 'best') version, but rather what I teasingly call a 'Blurtext' edition – in which the work is a map that offers options rather than answers. For instance, we occasionally swap lines on repeats, add *fioriture* and cadenzas, and even

indulge in a *petite reprise* when concluding a dance. In short, we strive to interact creatively with the music.

Surprisingly, Schubert seems not to have owned his own piano in Vienna, the 'city of a thousand piano makers'. This reminds us that his culture was one in which a pluralist approach to keyboard instruments meant that one often used whatever was available. The so-called square piano is capable of great tonal subtlety and is not at all a poor cousin to the fortepiano. (Elgar even signed off some of his works on the soundboard of his Broadwood square.) Peter and I find that this seemingly diminutive instrument offers immediacy and nuance when playing Schubert's mercurial sonatas. What we offer here is just one of many ways of negotiating anew the treasures of his musical map.

The Performers

Peter Sheppard Skærved is known for his pioneering approach to the music of the past of our own time and the past. Over 400 works have been written for him, by composers Laurie Bamon, Judith Bingham, Nigel Clarke, Robert Saxton, Edward Cowie, Jeremy Dale Roberts, Peter Dickinson, Michael Finnissy, Elena Firsova, David Gorton, Naji Hakim, Sadie Harrison, Hans Werner Henze, Sıdıka Őzdil, Rosalind Page, George Rochberg, Michael Alec Rose, Poul Ruders, Volodmyr Runchak, Evis Sammoutis, Elliott Schwartz, Peter Sculthorpe, Howard Skempton, Dmitri Smirnov, Jeremy Thurlow, Mihailo Trandafilovski, Judith Weir, Jörg Widmann, Ian Wilson, John Woolrich and Douglas Young.

Peter's pioneering work on music for violin alone has resulted in research, performances and recordings of cycles by Bach, de Bériot, Tartini, Telemann, and, most recently, his project, 'Preludes and Vollenteries', which brings together 200 unknown works from the seventeenth century, from composers including Colombi, Lonati, Marini and Matteis, with the Wren and Hawksmoor churches in London's Square Mile.

His work with museums has resulted in long-term projects at institutions including the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, the Metropolitan Museum, New York City, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the British Museum, Galeria Rufino Tamayo in Mexico City, and the exhibition 'Only Connect', which he curated at the National Portrait Gallery, London. Most recently his 'Tegner' commissioned by the Bergen International Festival, is a close collaboration with the major Norwegian abstract artist, Jan Groth, resulting in a set of solo Caprices, premiering at Kunsthallen, Bergen, and travelling to galleries in Denmark, the UK and even Svalbard/Spitzbergen. Peter is the only living violinist to have performed on the violins of Ole Bull, Joachim, Paganini and Viotti. As a writer, Peter has published a monograph on the Victorian artist/musician John Orlando Parry, many articles in journals worldwide, and

most recently, *Practice: Walk*, for Routledge. Peter is the founder and leader of the Kreutzer Quartet and the artistic director of the ensemble Longbow. Viotti Lecturer at the Royal Academy of Music, he was elected Fellow there in 2013. He is married to the Danish writer Malene Skærved and they live in Wapping.

Described as 'exuberantly stylish' by the *Sunday Times*, **Julian Perkins** is Artistic Director of Cambridge Handel Opera and Founder Director of Sounds Baroque. He has appeared at the Salzburg Festival, Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms, and performed concertos with ensembles including Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Orchestra of The Sixteen and Florilegium. In addition to performing as the solo harpsichordist for productions at the Royal Opera House, Welsh National Opera and Northern Ireland Opera, he has featured on the BBC *Early Music Show* and played at venues such as London's Wigmore Hall, New York's Lincoln Center and Sydney Opera House. An avid recitalist, Julian has broken new ground at over a dozen international festivals in giving solo concerts on the clavichord. His various recordings have been described as 'monumental' (*American Record Guide*), 'a virtuoso showcase' (*The Guardian*) and 'exemplary' (*MusicWeb International*).

With Sounds Baroque, Julian has directed performances with Simon Callow, Peter Capaldi, Rebecca Evans, Dame Emma Kirkby, Mark Padmore, Christopher Purves, Timothy West and David Wilson-Johnson. He has also directed the Academy of Ancient Music, conducted eighteen Baroque projects with Southbank Sinfonia, and conducted opera productions for organisations including the Buxton International Festival, Cambridge Handel Opera, Guildhall School of Music & Drama, Kings Place, Netherlands Opera Academy, New Chamber Opera, New Kent Opera and Snape Maltings.

Julian read music at King's College, Cambridge, before pursuing advanced studies at the Schola Cantorum, Basle and the Royal Academy of Music, London. He is a visiting coach at the Royal Opera House, and regularly gives masterclasses at the National Opera Studio, music colleges and universities both in the UK and abroad.

www.julianperkins.com

The Instrument makers

MARTIN LEOPOLD WIDHALM (II)

Of all the violin makers of Germany that were active during Schubert's lifetime, Leopold Widhalm was the most famous name of all. This was the name used by a dynasty of makers, Martin Leopold I & II; the latter's brother Ignatus Gallus, and son, Johann Martin. The most respected authority on matters concerning old violins, Jacob August Otto, regarded Widhalm violins as second only to Jacob Stainer, amongst the German-speaking lands, a seventeenth century Austrian maker whose instruments were so highly sought after in the early nineteenth century that they regularly sold for higher sums than those attained for the classical Cremonese violins of Stradivari, Amati and Guarneri. In 1817 Otto was the violin maker to the Weimar court when he wrote his Treatise on violin making that underwent many reprints, and led taste for old violins in Germany and through translation, in England. In it he wrote that Widhalm's works 'so closely resemble Stainers in their exterior that it requires a great connoisseur to distinguish them from his'.

The earliest Widhalm was a lute maker from Horn in Austria who came to Nuremburg in 1745, and began to make violins shortly afterwards. Unsurprisingly for a dynasty that lasted for almost a century, their instruments are variable in quality, perhaps an indication of the economic changes that affected their business over time. Martin Leopold (I) died in 1776 and the years that follow show a distinct upturn in the quality of instruments that the firm made, perhaps because his sons, Martin Leopold (II) and Ignatus Gallus felt a pressure to re-assert the qualities that had given their father his fame. Hence the years immediately surrounding 1780 are considered a significant high-point in the history of the dynasty. Hitherto, violins followed a Stainer pattern quite faithfully, but during this period a small number of violins are known which experimented with a broader model that had been developed by Nicolo Amati in Cremona, known as the "Grand-Amati" pattern. This example from 1782 is one such example, applying everything that Widhalm understood of Stainer's arching to this broader shape. During this time, German violin making on the whole was incredibly conservative, mostly drawing from Stainer's legacy. Some makers made more direct attempts to simply copy Italian designs, but the blending of Italian and German ideas to create this particular kind of violin is of particular interest and highly unusual.

FRANCOIS XAVIER TOURTE

The bow for this recording is a very early and unusual example by the famous French maker, Francois Xavier Tourte that was probably made in his earliest period of manufacture around 1770-1780. In France, even as early as the seventeenth century the idea of taking older instruments and drastically improving them was commonplace. In the hands of the French in particular Flemish harpsichords could go through radical transformations known as *petit* and *grand ravelment*, that could be anything from an overhaul of the internal mechanism to update it all the way through to rebuilding the exterior case-work to fit to the latest fashions.

Hence the Tourte bow fits into the concept of *ravelment*, and began life as a much earlier bow which may have been prized for its playing qualities even though the pattern to which it was made had fallen out of fashion. The stick is made out of exceptionally dense snakewood, of the type in which the pattern that gives the wood its name is barely visible. Using Pernambuco wood, a species that the French had begun to use for bow making from around 1770, the sides of the handle have been built up, and half of the 'Cramer-style' head has been added. In looking closer at the remaining dimensions of the snakewood head, we see that it passed over the original mortise, and the dimensions fit within the tolerances of an early eighteenth-century pike-headed bow. Whilst very few modernised bows of this sort have survived, some testament to their cultural value at the time is found through other bows by Tourte and his contemporaries that emulated the characteristics of a modified bow. There is an ivory spline in the head of the bow that is necessary to strengthen the bond between the two pieces that it is made from, and a number of intact Tourte bows have a decorative spline emulating this fashion. Likewise, the ivory plateau upon which the frog is mounted terminates in a 'v' shape, emulating the vacant channel that was used for a 'clip-in' frog of the type that was common through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.. The frog, is also by Tourte, but in a style that may date as late as 1810 and was probably a replacement. The development of the Cramer bow, with a convex camber, and a tall head was the first major step forward towards the modern bow. It is Francois Xavier Tourte who is credited with the invention of the type that we know today, making this an immediate and particularly interesting precursor to it.

The Piano

Square piano by Clementi & Co., London, 1812

This mahogany-cased instrument, tuned at a^1=415Hz, has a compass of 5½ octaves from FF to c^3. Its single pedal sustains the sound by raising the dampers. While the action and soundboard are original, the instrument was restrung when it was restored by Lucy Coad in 2002. Clementi pianos tend to have a clearer, more 'fluty' sound than other English counterparts.

Clementi & Co. was overseen by the brilliant polymath Muzio Clementi. Known to generations of keyboard players for his series of 100 technical pieces *Gradus ad Parnassum* (delightfully sent up by Claude Debussy in 'Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum' from *Children's Corner*), Clementi's output includes over 70 piano sonatas. Much to Mozart's frustration, he was regarded as his equal in 1781 when the two competed in Vienna, apparently because of his ability to play thirds in both hands. Buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, the inscription on Clementi's gravestone describes him as 'The Father of the Pianoforte'.

Peter and Julian are very grateful to Michael Turner for lending them this instrument.

Recorded at St John the Baptist, Aldbury, Hertfordshire, England on 3 December 2015
Engineer – Jonathan Haskell (Astounding Sounds)
Producer – Peter Sheppard Skærved
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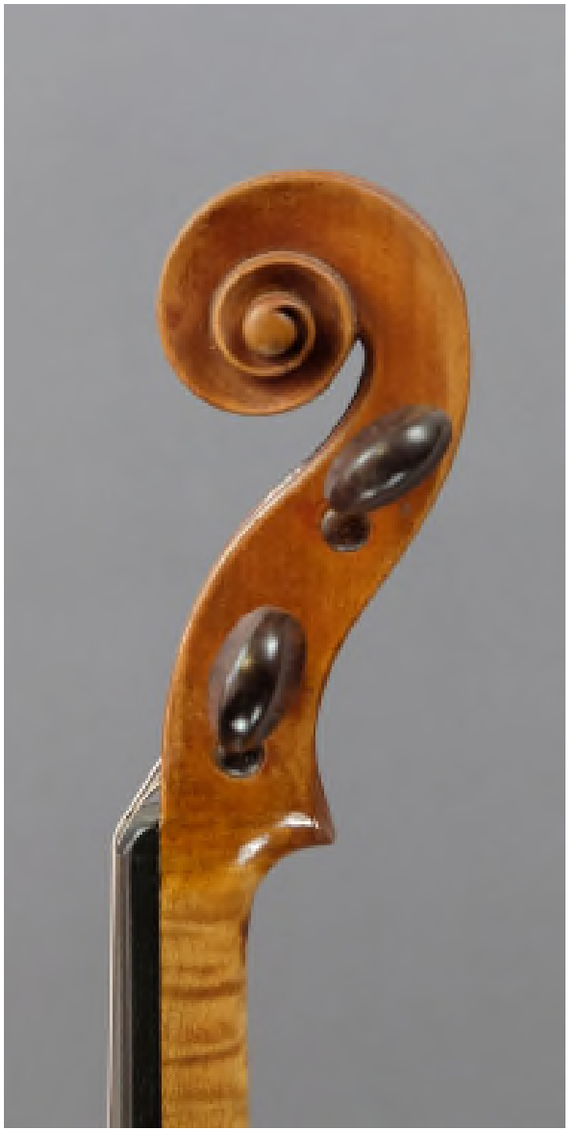
The Violin and Bow



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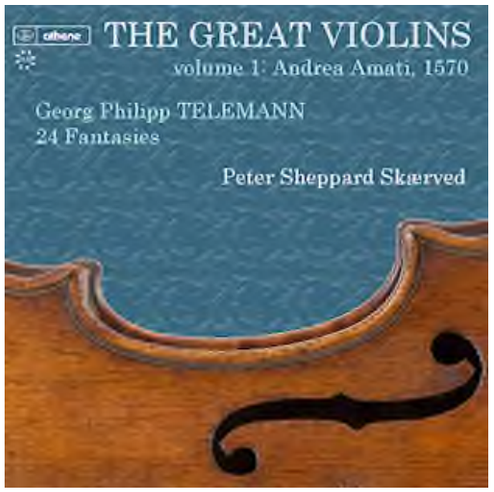

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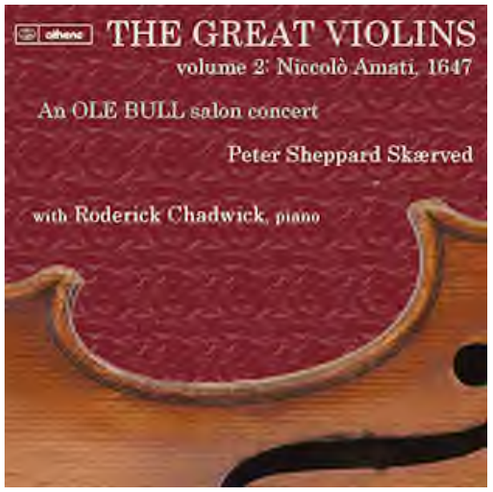

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