TOCCATA CLASSICS

Charles-Valentin ALKAN

THE COMPLETE TRANSCRIPTIONS, VOLUME ONE: MOZART

THAMOS, KING OF EGYPT, K345: NE PULVIS ET CINIS SUPERBE
SYMPHONY NO. 40, K550: MENUET AND TRIO
PIANO CONCERTO NO. 20 IN D MINOR, K466
STRING QUARTET NO. 18, K464: ANDANTE
SYMPHONY NO. 39, K543: MENUET

José Raúl López, piano

FIRST COMPLETE RECORDING

CHARLES-VALENTIN ALKAN: COMPLETE TRANSCRIPTIONS – VOLUME ONE, MOZART

by José Raúl López

Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, the art of the piano transcription became almost inseparable from the act of musical creation. From the late eighteenth century the growing indulgence in musical consumption by the nascent middle class in economically prosperous European cultural centres had coincided with the gradual hegemony of the piano as the preferred household instrument – often both for economic and social reasons. A natural outcome of the popularity of the piano was an almost obligatory, often commissioned, transcription of virtually every published symphonic, choral and operatic (even chamber) score for – at minimum – two- and four-hand versions. Artistically and commercially, transcriptions had a multiplier effect: a century before recording was invented, the transcriber acted as a disseminator of the original compositions and, in the process, wetted the public's appetite, perpetuating the cycle.

The artistic quality of such reductions varied widely, from proficient efforts to run-of-the-mill hackwork carried out by students, aspiring unknown composers eking out a living until their fortunes would turn, and apprentices. A casual listing of nineteenth-century transcribers offers a glimpse of the European musical establishment and includes major composers such as Brahms, who seemed particularly fond of the task where his own music was concerned; acknowledged pupils of master composers (Hummel/Mozart; Liszt's pupils August Stradal, Raff and von Bülow); and colleagues (Moscheles/Beethoven, Brahms/Kirchner), future eminent conductors (Bruno Walter/Mahler); and soloists/teachers (Eduard Steuermann/Schoenberg).

Two towering figures who stood far above the rest of the field were Franz Liszt and Charles-Valentin Alkan, both of whom, fortunately, left a written testament that summarises their roles as transcribers as only fellow-creators of such prominence could be equipped to do. Liszt's tenet originated during his initial transcriptions of Beethoven's Symphonies Nos. 5, 6 and 7 – completed in 1837 – and appeared in 1840 as a Preface to the transcription of the Fifth Symphony published by Breitkopf und Härtel.[1] In it he laments the many mediocre transcriptions already then in existence,

[1] Imre Mező, 'Liszt's transcriptions for piano of the Symphonies by Beethoven', transl. Erzsébet Mészáros, *Ferenc Liszt: New Edition of the Complete Works*, Series II, Transcriptions, Vol. 17, Editio Musica Budapest, Budapest, 1992, p. xviii.

though 'the most imperfect piano arrangement will now and then reveal traces […] of a master's inspiration'.[2] After praising the latest developments in piano construction, which enable it to faithfully reproduce the many orchestral textures – minus true contrasting tone-colours and massed volume – Liszt declares:

> I will be satisfied if I stand on the level of the intelligent engraver, or the conscientious translator, who grasps the spirit of a work and thus contributes to our insight into the great masters and to our sense of the beautiful.[3]

Alkan's published creed dates from 1847 and introduced his first series of transcriptions, aptly titled *Souvenirs des concerts du Conservatoire* and published by the Berlin-based A. M. Schlesinger and its Parisian counterpart, Brandus et Cie. An additional 'Conservatory series' followed in 1861 and the *Souvenirs de musique de chambre* appeared around 1870, both published by Richault. All three publications contain six transcriptions, each of selected orchestral, vocal and chamber music 'gems' by a wide array of – as Alkan himself put it in his 1847 preface – 'Divine Genii',[4] including Bach, Handel, Gluck, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, von Weber, Marcello, Grétry (perhaps divinity should be denied him for the moment) and an anonymous composer of the *Rigaudons des petits violons et Hautbois de Louis XIV*. Alkan's preface[5] could be interpreted to mean that the First Series was not, in fact, commissioned and that his decision to transcribe the pieces stemmed in part from having heard performances of the works. There is much in common with Liszt's declaration, including respect for the original creation and a rational justification for the use of the instrument as a medium based on the technical advances in manufacture, added compass, and so on. What is fascinating about Alkan's preface is the clarity with which he reveals his working methods and proceeds steadfastly to demonstrate in his own transcriptions. He exults the capabilities of the piano, declaring that

> these sonorities are wide-ranging if one knows how to obtain them through various methods of attack, through the intelligent use of certain fingerings, hand-crossing, etc.[6]

He comments candidly on the crux of the matter:

[2] Alan Walker, *Reflections on Liszt*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 2005, pp. 16–17.
[3] *Ibid*.
[4] Ronald Smith, *Alkan*, Vol. 2: The Music, Kahn & Averill, London, 1987, p. 176 (republished in *Alkan; The Man, the Music*, Kahn & Averill, London, 2000).
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] *Ibid*., p. 175

> It is this instinct, this tact which guides the intelligent musician when he wants to make the piano reproduce the great magical accents of an orchestra and a choir; which suggests to him at one moment how to combine the chords in a particular way, at another moment to write some part or other at this octave rather than that, to emphasise this, to lighten that; in fact, to use a thousand ingenious methods to arrive not at a mathematical similarity, but a faithful, relative, moral one.[7]

This is a paramount lesson in the art of transcription, which for Alkan is more than a compendium of acquired tricks: it is a moral calling, a religious act, much in keeping with his Judaic background. Although Toccata Classics has released a series of recordings of transcriptions of composers 'by Arrangement', including two CDs of 'Mozart by Arrangement',[8] the complete transcriptions presented here for the first time appear under Alkan's authorship to celebrate the spiritual unity between two Classicists separated only by a few decades, and they take their place at the start of a project to record, again for the first time, all of Alkan's transcriptions, the most neglected part of his already neglected output.

Piano Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K466

The publisher Simon Richault (1805–66) commissioned Alkan's transcriptions of Beethoven's Piano Concerto in C minor, Op. 37 (first movement only), and Mozart's complete Piano Concerto in D minor, K466, around 1860.[9] The choice of both concertos was a natural one, for they had long entered into the venerated pantheon of musical deities revered by nineteenth-century Romantics, sharing common aesthetics such as a predilection for minor keys, expected *Sturm und Drang* pathos and an apotheosis in the major-key endings – curiously, though, Liszt omits any reference to Mozart concertos in his catalogue of public performances.[10] Alkan, as a noted exponent of the 'classics', was an ideal candidate, perfectly suited to accomplish the task. It was Alkan's own partiality for works written during the Classical era that generously supplied his own public programmes, solo recitals and the few orchestral appearances. In 1833, for instance, he took part in a performance, conducted by Habeneck, that included Beethoven's 'Triple' Concerto, Op. 56;[11] and the programmes that comprised the 'Petits Concerts' he played during the 1870s at the Salle Erard contained many compositions – including several of the transcriptions in this recording – by Mozart: solos and a four-hand sonata (unidentified) with the young Saint-Saëns; Haydn,

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] Both releases feature transcriptions of violin sonatas: Alexander Kniazev's of the three sonatas K301, K376 and K391 for cello and piano can be found on TOCC 0002 and Stephen Yates' of K376, K378 and k380 for two pianos on TOCC 0250.

[9] Smith, *op. cit*., p. 178.

[10] Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Virtuoso Years*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York: 1983, p. 445.

[11] Ronald Smith, *Alkan*, Vol. 1: The Enigma, London: Kahn & Averill, 1976, p. 21 (republished in *Alkan; The Man, the Music*, *op.cit*.).

Gluck, Beethoven and, additionally, Baroque masters such as Bach, Scarlatti, Handel and Couperin, further cementing Alkan's reputation as a classicist.[12]

It is fascinating to compare Johann Nepomuk Hummel's solo transcription of K466 (possibly dating from 1828–35) – complementing Hummel's chamber transcription of K466 and other Mozart concertos for piano, flute, violin and cello[13] – with Alkan's, for the results reveal considerable differences: a time-span of more than a quarter-century, substantial technical differences in the development of the piano and the physical approach to it, and a profound change in the conception of the work itself, particularly in the composition of cadenzas. In Hummel's transcription, during the opening orchestral *tutti*, the characteristic syncopations of the opening theme are dispensed with in favour of easier-to-perform, continuous quavers. Alkan [11] fastidiously adheres to the orchestral score, demanding an unpedalled control of the syncopations with minute contributions from the pedal only, to accentuate the 'horn' entrances in bars 10 and 12. Even the repeated notes in the violas (bars 28–31; 00:54–1.02) are presented as broken octaves, whereas Hummel treats the bass line as simple octaves. A fleeting look at the first F major second-theme group reveals, in Hummel, the presentation of the theme as single notes, sharply contrasting with Alkan's octave-doubling, as indicated in the score between oboes and bassoons. At bars 47–52 (1:30–1:43), Hummel succumbs to Alberti-bass patterns, and yet Alkan manages to convey both the bass line alongside that of the violins, brilliantly achieved through minor-octave displacement and judicious use of pedal effects. Hummel casts the closing phrase of the orchestral exposition in a perfunctory manner, avoiding the inclusion of the second-violin line, which Alkan manages with subtle and effective hand-distribution.

Both transcribers fall prey to curious idiosyncrasies in the opening solo line: at bar 81, Alkan rhythmically distorts Mozart's line, and Hummel does so in bar 87. In the course of the movement, Alkan's prowess as a transcriber generates several noteworthy moments, such as bars 121–23, 133–34, 137–38 and 141–42 (3:57–4:40), where he includes as much of the instrumentation as possible through astute hand-crossings and use of the pedal. In the development, both Alkan and Hummel coincide a good deal in their treatment of bars 230–54 (7:29–8:13), with the exception of Alkan's insistence on including the 'triplet' figure every time – varying the octave register – and his extended pedal markings, which would be best employed judiciously with today's instruments.

Alkan's cadenza, though not as epic or colossal as the one he penned for the first movement of Beethoven's Op. 37, is nonetheless gargantuan by Mozartean standards. It eschews any expectation of

[12] *Ibid*, pp. 62–63.

[13] Joel Sachs, 'A Checklist of the Works of Johann Nepomuk Hummel', *Notes*, Vol. 30, No. 4 (January 1974), pp. 732–54.

empty virtuoso display, and its 79 bars are conceived as an integral exploration and commentary of the organic motivic cells of the movement and their transmutation into unsuspecting territory. A prime consideration for Alkan is the examination of the Neapolitan (E flat) tonality and its dormant capacity for generating large-scale structures. Mozart delegates to the E flat tonality the expected duties of a Neapolitan passing chord – which is built on the flattened second degree of a major or minor scale, often used (chromatically for colouristic effects and smooth voice-leading) before cadences. The two fleeting occurrences of the Neapolitan chord in the orchestral exposition, although memorable and colourful ones, leave the door open for further exploration and Mozart seizes the opportunity by featuring it in one of the utterances (one of the most radiant at that) of the opening solo line during the development (bars 220–30; 7:09–7:29) at a critical time, unleashing the sequence that will eventually usher in the recapitulation. Hummel instantly recognises the latent quality of the E flat tonality from the onset of his cadenza, but relegates it primarily to its traditional usage, as found in K466, save for four solid bars of it before the final cadential preparation. Beethoven, too, immediately grasps the structural significance of E flat in his (1809?) cadenza, published in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode* in 1836, and astutely uses it to introduce B major as a mediant modulation for the second-theme group, a move that did not escape Alkan's gaze if one can believe he may have known of the existence of the cadenza in 1860. The Neapolitan factor appears fleetingly yet unmistakably sculptured in bars 56–58 just before the final cadence. Curiously, Beethoven's cadenza also includes the rhythmically distorted opening solo line (bar 46) reproduced (coincidentally?) in Alkan's transcription (bar 81). One wonders as to the cause of this corrupted version, for in a two-piano arrangement of K466 published by Johann André in 1809 (as Op. 54), the bar in question is rendered as respectfully as in any Urtext edition from the late twentieth century.

Alkan's cadenza begins in a fragmentary manner, inquisitively delving into the interval of a second, one of the chief structural motifs of the movement, and launches a pre-empted move (bars 375–81; 12:27–12:41), unsuccessfully, to introduce the E flat tonal centre by using the orchestral material that originally presented the Neapolitan passing chord. A second attempt (bars 383–88; 12:45–12:56) firmly veers the tonal centre to E flat major and presents one of Alkan's ingenious cross-pollinations: the opening theme of Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony, K551, for it shares both the syncopated accompaniment and melodic contour of K466. The second phrase of the Symphony further unfolds E flat for eighteen bars, replete with Alkanesque good humour, until the enharmonic dissolution into B major for the second-theme group, borrowing Beethoven's tactic. The climactic point is reached at bar 434 after a sequential iteration, culminating in a brilliant series of interlocked chord trills that stubbornly refuse to cede any tonal ground. Powerless to sway the implied dominant chord in E flat, Alkan gruffily forces compliance in an ascending

scalar passage which spans virtually the entire compass of the instrument. The final eight bars of the coda are painstakingly transcribed, using meticulous restraint.

The *Romanza* [12] requires a distinct approach, for the musical dialogue is often antiphonal, especially in the major-key sections. Alkan's solution is primarily aimed at the textural and sonic differentiation between solo and *tutti* and he uses widely arpeggiated chords and doublings – all made possible by the use of the pedal – to 'thicken' the texture. In the middle G minor episode (bars 84–118; 5:01–7:31), Alkan's imaginative employment of hand-crossings, arpeggiated tenths in the bass and abundant pedalling all conspire to recreate this multi-textural structure into a feat of superb pianism. In the coda (bars 146 to the end; 9:08), Alkan meticulously notates every possible voice to be held – often unpedalled – and arrives at a perfect rendition of the last two bars, reproducing the B flat chord held by the winds while the last five notes are sounded. My recommendation: pianists should take the last D–F–D with the right hand crossing over.

Few orchestral passages are said to have dissuaded Liszt from attempting to transcribe them – the opening of Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64, and Mozart's G minor Symphony, K550 among them. Perhaps the opening *tutti* of the third movement of K466 [13] could be added to the list – and yet Alkan triumphs in conjuring the 'diablerie' of Mozart's score (bars 31–64; 00:30–1:04) through a myriad of pianistic devices. As an example, the use of 'blind thirds' in bars 112–18 (1:54–2:00), and their corresponding ones, bars 291–97 (5:10–5:16), and in the coda (bars 541–46; 9:43–9:49) renders these passages efficiently playable, without a loss of the essential elements, since in Mozart's Concerto the passages in question appear a tenth apart in the solo part and pose no major technical hurdles – perhaps only to his immediate generation – but become impractical when additional orchestral material is included, as with Alkan. Another felicitous moment is the care with which Alkan presents the accompanimental support in bars 139–47 (2:20–2:30) and its corresponding counterpart in the recapitulation (bars 302–10; 5:21–5:30). Especially in the latter, Alkan brilliantly captures the duet between flutes and bassoons without advertising the numerous changes in fingering required to accomplish it. The antiphonal dialogue in bars 247–62 (4:28–4:43) between winds and piano is masterfully rendered through laser-like register changes. Curiously, Alkan does not provide a 'lead-in' at the fermata in bar 167, possibly because he preferred to hold his creative powers in reserve, lest his fecund imagination cause the movement to expand beyond acceptable Classical decorum (is this perhaps why, aware of what he had done to the cadenza in the first movement of Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto, he didn't transcribe the other two movements?). I have therefore provided a short 'lead-in' at bar 167 (2:51–3:07), taking the inverted equivalence of the chromatic ascent in bars 330–34 (5:49–5:55), thus prolonging the dominant by descending to the lowest register 'A' – already explored by Alkan in the first-movement cadenza – using the inversion of the main arpeggiated motif of the third movement

Whereas the first-movement cadenza remains steadfastly serious – as serious as Alkan can be expected to behave – the cadenza in the third movement confirms his personality as that of a maverick. As duly noted in Ronald Smith's exemplary study,[14] it begins in a coruscating 'cavalry' style representing an unfolding of the dominant harmony for some 25 bars (6:10–6:39), partly achieved by focusing on E–F as an interlocking chordal trill that not only continues to explore the unifying interval of a second in the Concerto but mutates into the main theme of the *Romanza* (6:40–6:56). Alkan the alchemist summons his compositional wizardry and concurrently presents motifs from all three movements in a sequential tour de force (bars 388–422; 6:57–7:32). The E flat tonality returns to state the main phrase of the second-theme group of the finale, further unifying the work, in Alkan's mind, as that of an 'arch' form. The last part of the cadenza reiterates the 'cavalry' style that initiated it, this time prolonging B flat major until the E–F motif proceeds cadentially as expected (7:55–8:36). The two *tutti* passages at bars 501–6 (9:01–9:07) and 513–18 (9:13–9:19) creatively vary the 'orchestration', and bars 525–39 miraculously succeed in integrating orchestral and solo textures, a feat much more clearly achievable in Alkan's Erards than in today's Steinways.

Symphonies No. 39, K543, and No. 40, K550: Two Minuets

Early in his reluctant and scarce public appearances, Alkan tackled the task of transcriber in a two-piano, eight-handed version – lamentably lost – of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony with a distinguished array of his Parisian colleagues;[15] six years later, in 1844, he presented the solo transcription of the Minuet and Trio from Mozart's Symphony in G minor, K550 [3].[16] As Ronald Smith has aptly written,[17] the pianistic transfer is not without thorny moments, usually in the form of chordal structures that must, of necessity, be arpeggiated/broken to accommodate most mortals. The muscularity of the Minuet proper contrasts starkly with that of the Trio, where the player must remain ever so attentive to voicings – implied, over register changes – to conjure up a suggested instrumentation. Smith adds, not unreasonably, that Alkan's 'arrangement is not the best, but the only possible one'.[18]

The Minuet from the Symphony in E flat major, K543 [1], is among the contents of the first transcription series (*Souvenirs des concerts du Conservatoire*) that appeared in 1847 and as such is a model lesson in the art as it remains texturally subordinate to the spirit of the orchestration, and yet adjusts it ever

[14] *Op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 180.

[15] Alkan, his teacher Pierre Zimmerman, Chopin and his pupil Adolphe Gutmann: *cf. ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 23.

[16] *Ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 176.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 178.

so slightly to the registral capabilities of the instrument and, during the *da capo* repeat, takes the creative initiative to vary the presentation of the material. It is in the Trio, again, where Alkan's mastery manifests itself: amidst the lovingly placed slurs and *staccato* marks, Alkan further clarifies the orchestration by suggesting a necessary change in dynamic levels and the addition of the *una corda* pedal to produce an echo effect, distinguishing the timbral differentiation between clarinet and flute (bars 45–52; 1:56–2:08). The *da capo* repeat, as noted previously, is cleverly enhanced through the addition of octaves and filled-in chords, producing an added masculine grandeur.

Thamos, King of Egypt, K345

The incidental music to *Thamos, König in Ägypten*, K345 (336a), a 'heroic drama' by Tobias Philipp Freiherrn von Gebler (1726–86) was initially composed by Mozart in 1773, later expanded by additional choruses (possibly in 1779–80) and destined for a theatre troupe under the direction of Johann Heinrich Böhm, active in Salzburg during Mozart's last years in the city.[19] The chorus, 'Ne pulvis et cinis superbe',[20] an addition from the 1779–80 revision, is not found in the original Gebler drama, and uses a text attributed to Andreas Schachter.[21] A subsequent Latin text – with Christian religious overtones – was affixed to the chorus and it is by this title that the Alkan transcription was published in the second collection of *Souvenirs des concerts du Conservatoire* in 1861. The dramatic scene is conceived for the High Priest Sethos and a choir of priests and priestesses.

What could possibly have attracted Alkan to this chorus? Like the Concerto, K466, the Motet [2] is cast in the Mozartean tragic key of D minor and culminates as exultation in the parallel major, satisfying the dramatic catharsis favoured by the Romantics. Surely the textural make-up of its opening strikes at the core of a transcriber's arsenal, testing his mettle: how to navigate tremolos in second violins and violas concurrently with a minor-second figure ever-present in the first violins, a dactylic rhythmic formula in cellos and basses and a menacing *basso* vocal line that must project. Alkan rises to the test, balancing the multi-texture, placing the *tremolando* figures and dactylic rhythm in the left hand in the lowest register, with the interspersed first-violin line an octave lower, then the vocal line reinforced as octaves in the middle register, consummately solving the dilemma.

In the ensuing *Allegro*, Alkan expertly manipulates the registration to insure optimal inclusion

[19] Maynard Solomon, *Mozart*, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 1996, pp. 226–27.

[20] It seems reasonable to assume that Alkan was aware of the meaning of the words sung in this chorus. The text and translation are therefore given in the Appendix on p. 11.

[21] Mozart, 'Chöre und Swischenaktmusiken zu Thamos, König in Ägypten', in *Neue Ausgabe: sämtlicher Werke*, Serie II: Bühnenwerke, Bärenreiter-Verlag, Kassel, 1956, p. 135.

of detail. For instance; the string lines of bars 57–61 (3:47–3:56) – and corresponding bars of the recapitulation – are slightly varied and compressed as scales in thirds played by the left hand so as to allow the choral part to be enunciated by the right. At bars 65–68 and 139–44 (3:59–4:07 and 5:58–6:06), the violins' high-register semiquavers are spared any change, prompting Alkan creatively to shift the chorus parts an octave down with the pulsating bass line in octaves. This tactic proves highly effective in the coda (bars 179 to end; 6:53 onwards) and propels the ending as massively as can be imagined.

String Quartet in A major, K464: *Andante*

After an entire concerto, two symphonic menuets and a choral work, an *Andante* movement from the String Quartet in A major, K464, completes Alkan's Mozart transcriptions. Its publication (1869–70) in the collection *Souvenirs de musique de chambre* places it among the last batch of transcriptions. Planned as a theme [4] with six variations and a coda, this quartet movement proves a perfect vehicle for the piano and, despite several treacherous moments where the player's hands are stretched beyond the norm, it unfolds with grace and fluidity. It is clear from the thoughtful and strategic pedal markings that Alkan perhaps envisioned a *style sévère*[22] approach in an effort to convey the medium as classically as possible, but this pedantry need not be taken at face value in performance and the pedals can and should be employed much more than indicated. Variation I [5] does not present any special problems, lying comfortably within the hands but Variation II [6] can benefit from generous pedal-use in order to balance and colour the interaction between the viola demisemiquavers and the cello line, which necessitates frequent stretches in its new pianistic garb. In Variation III [7] Alkan prescribes a specific fingering to ensure precise articulation and adherence to slurs. Variation IV [8], in the parallel minor, presents the first of several technical hurdles when trills and inner accompanimental lines struggle for comfort, and yet it is beautifully laid out. At bar 89, an oversight or printing error shows d^3 as the highest voice, but the quartet score clearly prints f^3, and so I have elected to play the d^3 as written the first time and f^3 on the repeat. The contrapuntal dialogue in Variation V [9] is generally fluidly conceived, though a few instances are awkward and Alkan provides the necessary hand-distribution in conjunction with the pedal to relieve the difficulty. Variation VI [10] forces the player to obey the single pedal mark as indicated and rely primarily on the smoothest finger/hand legato as to not interfere with the staccato octaves in the left hand.

[22] A style of performance that stresses several of the characteristics of the traditional French piano school at its best, among them clarity of execution, a strict rhythmic discipline and, at its worst (and this is, of course, relative), a marked detachment from emotional commitment, a criticism Alkan was accused of on more than one occasion (*cf.* Smith, *op. cit.*,Vol. 1, p. 96).

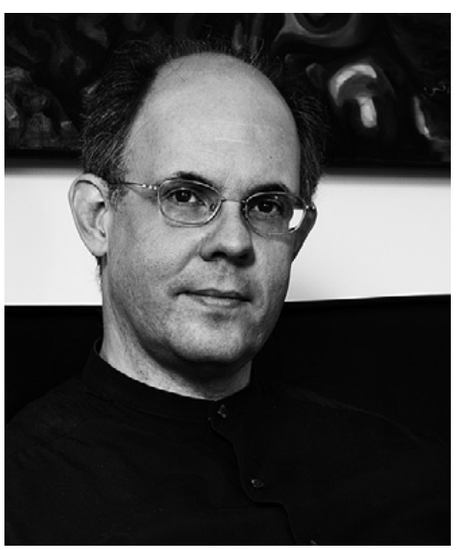
Appendix

Ne pulvis et cinis superbe

Ne pulvis et cinis superbe te geras,
Irati ne numinis fulmina feras;
Fulmen et grando et horrida mors,
Hominis perfidi justa sunt sors.
Nos, pulvis et cinis, timentes, trementes,
Prostrati ploramus ad te.
Da lumen, juvamen
Ut sancta sequentes mortales
erecti sint spe.
Summe Deus!
Miserator!
Da pugnanti gratiam
Et fidelis munerator,
Da vincenti gloriam.

While you proudly rule amid dust and ashes,
and send lightning to strike
when the divine will is enraged,
the lot of wicked man is just.
We, are dust and ashes, fearful, trembling.
We prostrate ourselves and cry out to you.
Give light,
that sacred hope may be raised
in the hearts of obedient mortals.
Highest God!
Merciful one!
Grant favour to those who struggle.
Rewarder of faithfulness,
give glory in victory.

Translated by James Scavone with Mark Shapiro © Monmouth Civic Chorus



José Raúl López is Coordinator of the Keyboard Department at Florida International University in Miami and President of the South Florida Chapter of the American Liszt Society. He is a founding member of the Deering Estate Chamber Ensemble and co-founder of The Deering Estate 'Living Artist Concert Series': collaborative concerts revolving around environmental and ecological preservation concerns involving historians, living composers, writers and visual artists. A versatile pianist and enthusiastic performer of chamber music, López's interest in contemporary music has resulted in frequent world premieres and collaborations with composers along with the keen pursuit of resurrecting rarely heard works by Romantic and Classical composers. He received his MM and DMA degrees from the University of Miami School of Music, where he studied with Dr Rosalina Sackstein, a former pupil of Claudio Arrau and Rafael de Silva. He has recorded for the SNE, Albany and Innova record labels. His previous recording for Toccata Classics presented the complete piano music of Riccardo Malipiero (TOCC 0129).

His website can be found at www.joselopezpiano.com.

Recorded at the Concert Hall of the Nicole and Herbert Wertheim Performing Arts Center
at Florida International University, Miami, on 18 December 2013 (Motet, K464; Minuets, K543 and K550), 15, 17 and 19 December (Concerto, K466) and 22 December 2014 (*Andante*, K464)
Engineer: Paul Griffith
Piano technician: Arturo Hendel
Steinway piano

Music published by Gérard Billaudot (public domain)

Booklet essay: José Raúl López
Cover design: David M. Baker (david.baker@me.com)
Design and layout: Paul Brooks (paulmbrooks@virginmedia.com)

Dedicated to the memory of William Waterhouse (1931–2007)

Executive producer: Martin Anderson

TOCC 0240