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CLASSICS

HAYDN

KEYBOARD WORKS, VOL. 1

PETER DONOHOE



FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN (1732-1809)

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CD1

- [1] Variations on *Gott erhalte den Kaiser*, [6.19]
Hob. i, 430

Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:42

- [2] Andante con expression [8.12]
[3] Vivace assai [3.10]

Sonata in A Major, Hob. XVI:26

- [4] Allegro moderato [5.25]
[5] Menuet al rovescio [2.04]
[6] Presto [0.50]

Sonata in D Major, Hob. XVI:51

- [7] Andante [3.30]
[8] Presto [2.14]

Sonata in C Major, Hob. XVI:48

- [9] Andante con expression [6.56]
[10] Presto [3.51]

Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:29

- [11] Moderato [7.04]
[12] Adagio [4.46]
[13] Tempo di menuet [4.19]

Divertimento in A-Flat Major, Hob. XVI:46

- [14] Allegro moderato [7.20]
[15] Adagio [7.04]
[16] Presto [4.13]

CD2

Sonata in E-Flat Major, Hob. XVI:28

- [1] Allegro moderato [8.41]
[2] Menuet [3.12]
[3] Presto [3.29]

Sonata in B-Flat Major, Hob. XVI:18

- [4] Allegro moderato [6.44]
[5] Moderato [5.57]

Sonata in F Major, Hob. XVI:23

- [6] Moderato [6.22]
[7] Adagio [5.32]
[8] Presto [3.55]

Divertimento in B-Flat Major, Hob. XVI:2d

- [9] Moderato [6.07]
[10] Largo [4.14]
[11] Menuetto [3.39]

Sonata in E-Flat Major, Hob. XVI:49

- [12] Allegro [7.23]
[13] Adagio e Cantabile [7.25]
[14] Tempo di minuet [3.53]

Total timings: [154.04]

PETER DONOHOE PIANO

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The history of critical or journalistic response to Haydn's music is mired in controversy. The same could, of course, be said of many other composers. For early lovers of Mozart, Beethoven represented a rude, sharp shock, a bucolic or rural alternative to Mozart's more formalised style and elegance. And moving on in time, Mendelssohn considered the finale of Chopin's Second Sonata unacceptable ('as music, I abhor it'), while, still later, the more conservative elements at the Paris Conservatoire hurled abuse at what they saw as Debussy's radicalism, his breaking of the rules, saying 'we have nursed a viper in our bosom.' The list is endless, confirming how easily opinion or subjectivity can be turned into fact. As Charles

Rosen so sardonically puts it, 'the history of music proceeds via reevaluation: the standard procedure is to discover greatness in the obscure, merit in the despised.'

Yet Haydn presents a special case. Critical opinion down the years can send even a music scholar's head spinning, lost in a mix of alternatives, of exultancy and bewilderment. Like the Fairy's response to Puck's question 'whither wander you?' in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he is left to 'wander everywhere'. Thus, for a north German critic Haydn was little more than a musical trickster or joker, degrading music 'into comic trifles'. Remarkably, even for Schumann,

whose genius as a composer was complemented by some of the most perceptive criticism in musical history, 'Haydn has left no deeper interest'. Per contra, Mozart could hardly have disagreed more, saying 'no-one can do it all, in jests and thrills, laughter and deep emotion – and all as well as Haydn does.'

Turning to our own times and the Piano Sonatas, many indelible insights come from two contemporary writers. One, in his potent defence of Haydn, insists that comedy (the most simultaneously celebrated and derided element in Haydn's music) as in Shakespeare's comedies, can lead to depth rather than triviality. Another hints at an ambiguity behind Haydn's twists and turns, together with his belief that the Piano Sonatas (no less than 62 in number) eclipse Mozart's, not only in number but in quality. The only other composer to write Sonatas (even if an entirely different format) of a no less quirky but profound beauty was Scarlatti. And Haydn is quick to admit his debt to C.P.E. Bach, whose seeming eccentricity was also viewed with suspicion and hostility ('his capricious manner, odd breaks, whimsical modulations and very often childish manner mixed with an affectation of profound science are finely hit off and burlesqued').

Embattled rather than merely defensive, yet another writer tells us that the description 'Papa' Haydn, let alone 'Grand Papa' Haydn, is one of the worst clichés in classical music. It disregards one of history's most innovative composers into a loveable but minor figure. He laments the practise among many pianists of using Haydn (or Scarlatti) as a preface or warm-up exercise before proceeding to more substantial fare (to, for example, Liszt and Rachmaninov; two composers he despises). 'Did Liszt or Clara Schumann ever play Haydn? – not a note.' Schnabel, too, while celebrated for his Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, was also indifferent to Haydn. He also notes that Glenn Gould's dismissal of Haydn in performances he considers 'bizarre' were recorded largely to show his superiority to Mozart ('I think Mozart's the most overrated composer by a mile'). Overall, the Sonata's neglect suggests a long-held assumption that they were written for amateurs, lady amateurs in particular, left to provide a suitable after dinner entertainment to go with the port and cigars, though occasionally with an abrupt termination, as in Mr Bennet (of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*) and his objection to his daughter's lengthy performance; 'you have delighted us enough.'

Today, there remain even celebrated pianists who remain hostile to Haydn ('Haydn dines with the aristocrats when he should be with the servants'). Yet the tide has surely turned and Peter Donohoe can join a sizeable number of pianists anxious to confirm Haydn's status, not only with String Quartets (his most celebrated genre) but in the Piano Sonatas and also much else in his prodigious output. Today he joins Brendel and Charles Rosen (most powerful and innovative voices when it comes to taking a necessarily fresh look at Haydn), with pianists such as Andrés Schiff, Mikhail Pletnev, Leif Ove Andsnes and Jean-Efflam Bavouzet.

Cradling his programme of Sonatas in a set of strongly contrasted Variations and a Divertimento, Peter Donohoe takes an enlivening slant, a sense of 'rediscovery' of Haydn's ambiguity, indeed, unique character. Affectionately known as the 'Emperor' Variations the miniature 'Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser' set are a tribute to Francis the Second, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and of the Austrian Empire with poetry by Lorenz Haszka and music by 'our immortal compatriot Haydn, who, I felt, was the only one capable of creating something that could be placed at the side of *God Save the King*' (the British national anthem and the inspiration for the Variations). Haydn's

musical response to this commission was brief, dignified and suitably ceremonial, remarkably so for a composer renowned or otherwise for his jocularly and high spirits.

The A-Flat Divertimento, on the other hand, is so much more than a diversion. Its title may declare that it was composed largely to entertain a wide audience (suitable as an accompaniment to 'table service') it contrasts an opening Allegro both haunting and virtuosic with a sustained and moving Adagio and a final Presto that sends the listeners out into the night with a renewed sense of well-being; 'of all's right with the world'.

All Haydn's Sonatas are both richly varied yet unified. By that I mean while all of them are notable for their musical vocabulary, alive with sufficient quirks and unexpected drama to turn your expectations topsy-turvy, they possess a strong sense of Haydn's overall mastery; of being, as it were, cut from the same cloth. The Sonata in D No. 42 opens with Andante espressione that is economical, direct and assured, the following Vivace more racy and virtuosic, with a brief spray of double notes and a surprise finish. And regarding the opening Andante, did Beethoven remember Haydn's use of dotted rhythms in his 'Hammerklavier' Sonata? Beethoven may have

said, 'I never learnt anything from Haydn' yet he dedicated his first three opus 2 Sonatas to him; a mixed response. The A Major Sonata No. 26 is, once more, a trap for the unwary or conventional. The opening *Allegro moderato* is bright and assertive though with flashes of introspection. There are octaves and repeated note surprises and a sense of tireless invention while the following Minuet replaces a more traditional grace and restraint with brisk assertion and piquancy. The final Presto offers a dazzling virtuoso end and the whole is a striking alternative to Mozart's very different world. No. 51 in D once again maintains the surprise element in its opening *Andante*, a vivifying turn to the musical argument, while the final Presto is as bright-eyed and mischief-making as even the most ardent lover of Haydn's humour could wish. And here it is perhaps apt to say that if Sviatoslav Richter chose Haydn and Prokofiev for his first London recital in 1961, he erased any radical sense of difference with a striking sense of relationship. Two seemingly disparate composers, separated by the centuries, were suddenly seen as having a love of the audacious if, in Haydn's case a desire to surprise rather than shock. Returning to the Sonata, there is a touch of solemnity in the Minuet, while the finale is all sparkling figuration, with a rush of semi-quavers to herald the close.

The dotted rhythms of No. 18 are again a reminder of Beethoven's extensive use in, crucially, the march from his opus 101 Sonata, which in turn leads to the second movement of the Schumann *Fantasia*. The second movement *Moderato* is striking and ceremonial. In Sonata No. 23 spritely figuration replaces any possibility of a vocal line with the basic F major tonality only outwardly firmly rooted, while the Presto finale, with its boldly skipping idea and tricky development, are further enhanced by a mischievous final fade-out.

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PETER DONOHOE

Peter Donohoe was born in Manchester in 1953. He studied at Chetham's School of Music for seven years, graduated in music at Leeds University, and went on to study at the Royal Northern College of Music with Derek Wyndham and then in Paris with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod. He is acclaimed as one of the foremost pianists of our time, for his musicianship, stylistic versatility and commanding technique.

In recent seasons Donohoe has appeared with Dresden Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic and Concert Orchestra, Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, St Petersburg Philharmonia, RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra, Belarusian State Symphony Orchestra, and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. He has undertaken a UK tour with the Russian State Philharmonic Orchestra, as well as giving concerts in many South American and European countries, China, Hong Kong, South Korea, Russia, and USA. Other past and future engagements include performances of all three MacMillian piano concertos with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra; a 'marathon' recital of Scriabin's complete piano sonatas at Milton Court; an all-Mozart series at Perth Concert Hall; concertos



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with the Moscow State Philharmonic Orchestra, St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra and the London Philharmonic Orchestra at Royal Festival Hall; and a residency at the Buxton International Festival.

Donohoe is also in high demand as a jury member for international competitions. He has recently served on the juries at the International

Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow (2011 and 2015), Busoni International Competition in Bolzano, Italy (2012), Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels (2016), Georges Enescu Competition in Bucharest (2016), Hong Kong International Piano Competition (2016), Harbin Competition (2017 and 2018), Artur Rubenstein Piano Master Competition (2017), Lev Vlassenko Piano Competition and Festival (2017), Alaska International e-Competition (2018), Concours de Geneve Competition (2018) and Ricardo Viñes International Competition in Lleida, Spain, along with many national competitions both within the UK and abroad.

Donohoe's recent releases include two volumes of Mozart Piano Sonatas with SOMM Records. Volume 1 was BBC Music Magazine's 'Recording of the Month' in April 2019; and volume 2 has received high praise from Gramophone Magazine, Classical Ear and Musical Opinion. Other recent albums include Stravinsky: Music for Solo Piano and Piano and Orchestra with the Hong Kong Philharmonic (SOMM); a new recording of Shostakovich's Piano Concertos and Sonatas with the Orchestra of the Swan, and an album of Shostakovich's 24 Preludes and Fugues (both Signum Records), which was described as 'thoughtful and poignant' by The Guardian;

an album of Scriabin Piano Sonatas (SOMM) which was called 'magnificent' by the Sunday Times; a recording of Witold Maliszewski's Piano Concerto in B flat minor with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra conducted by Martin Yates (Dutton Vocalion); and three albums of Prokofiev piano sonatas for SOMM, the third of which was released at the end of April 2016. The first Prokofiev album was described by Gramophone as 'devastatingly effective', declaring Donohoe to be 'in his element', and a review in Classical Notes identified Donohoe's 'remarkably sensitive approach to even the most virtuosic of repertoire'. His second Prokofiev album was given 5 stars by BBC Music Magazine, and the third album was highly praised by The Times, Birmingham Post, and Jessica Duchon. Other recordings include Cyril Scott's *Piano Concerto* with the BBC Concert Orchestra and Martin Yates (Dutton Vocalion), and Malcolm Arnold's *Fantasy on a Theme of John Field* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Martin Yates (also Dutton), for which BBC Music Magazine described him as an 'excellent soloist', and Gramophone stated that it 'compelled from start to finish'.

Donohoe has performed with all the major London orchestras, as well as orchestras from across the world: the Royal Concertgebouw, Leipzig

Gewandhaus, Munich Philharmonic, Swedish Radio, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Vienna Symphony and Czech Philharmonic Orchestras. He has also played with the Berliner Philharmoniker in Sir Simon Rattle's opening concerts as Music Director. He made his twenty-second appearance at the BBC Proms in 2012 and has appeared at many other festivals including six consecutive visits to the Edinburgh Festival, La Roque d'Anthéron in France, and at the Ruhr and Schleswig Holstein Festivals in Germany. In the United States, his appearances have included the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Cleveland and Detroit Symphony Orchestras. Peter Donohoe also performs numerous recitals internationally and continues working with his long-standing duo partner Martin Roscoe, as well as more recent collaborations with artists such as Raphael Wallfisch, Elizabeth Watts and Noriko Ogawa.

Donohoe has worked with many of the world's greatest conductors: Christoph Eschenbach, Neeme Jarvi, Lorin Maazel, Kurt Masur, Andrew Davis and Yevgeny Svetlanov. More recently he has appeared as soloist with the next generation of excellent conductors: Gustavo Dudamel, Robin Ticciati and Daniel Harding.

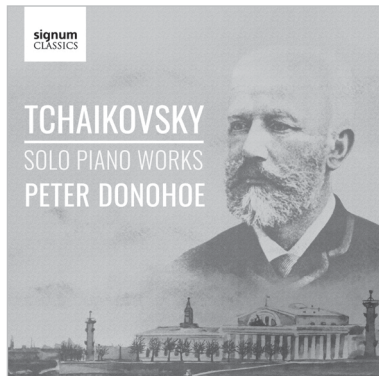
Peter Donohoe is an honorary doctor of music at seven UK universities, and was awarded a CBE for services to classical music in the 2010 New Year's Honours List.

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