



FRIEDRICH KUHLAU

Violin Sonatas Vol. 2

Duo Åstrand/Salo

FRIEDRICH KUHLAU (1786-1832)

Violin Sonatas Vol. 2

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Christina Åstrand, *violin* · Per Salo, *piano*

Violin Sonata in F minor, op. 33 (1821) 23:14

- 1 I Allegro con spirito 7:53
- 2 II Larghetto 7:06
- 3 III Rondo: Allegro 8:15

Trois Duos brillants, op. 110 (1830)

Three Brilliant Duos, original version for violin and piano

Duo No. 1 in B flat major 19:34

- 4 I Allegro non tanto 10:50
- 5 II Adagio patetico con molta espressione 4:40
- 6 III Rondo. Allegro ma non troppo 4:04

Duo No. 2 in E minor 17:39

- 7 I Allegro con affetto ma non troppo presto 7:44
- 8 II Adagio cantabile 3:48
- 9 III Rondo. Allegro poco agitato 6:07

Duo No. 3 in D major 18:54

- 10 I Allegro vivace con energia 8:27
- 11 II Andante con moto 4:49
- 12 III Allegro assai 5:38

Total 79:23

Friedrich Kuhlau was Danish music's most cosmopolitan personality at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He had a wide network abroad, and as a great admirer of Beethoven he fought for new tones in Danish musical life.

In human terms, too, Kuhlau stood out from the crowd; and not only because he was a German who never learned to speak Danish, and only had one eye. He was a restless soul who did not fit naturally into the small, homogeneous Copenhagen elite to which his audiences and patrons belonged. Instead, he preferred to live outside the capital.

If one reads through the ambiguous circumlocutions of the age the picture emerges of a warm, vital, but not very conformist man with a liking for jovial company, tobacco and wine – indeed something of an alcoholic. Like his model, Beethoven Kuhlau never married, or as cryptically remarked in a commemorative speech after his death: "He lacked many of the relationships and motives that are most congenial and encouraging to mankind. Music was his truest, almost his only female companion through the reefs of life".

Kuhlau was born in 1786 in the northern German town of Uelzen. As a boy, he lost his right eye in an accident, but this did not prevent him from aspiring to a future as a musician. As early as his teenage years he was active as a pianist and had his first compositions published.

In 1806 Kuhlau went to Hamburg, where he studied with the strict cantor Schwencke. But that same year the city was occupied by Napoleon's troops, and, in 1810, when the young men of the city began to be conscripted into the French army, Kuhlau left the danger zone and travelled to Copenhagen. The next year he made his debut as a pianist in a concert at the Royal Danish Theatre and was well received as an intriguing messenger from the continent.

For generations, Danish musical life had been dependent on immigrants and guests from the south. In 1813 Kuhlau too was granted Danish citizenship and the honorary title of Royal Court Musician with the duty of writing official cantatas and an opera every second year. These included epoch-making works in Danish music – the operas *Røverborgen* (The Robbers' Castle) and *Lulu* and the music for the national play *Elverhøj* (The Elf-Hill) which has over the years been performed over 1000 times at the Royal Danish Theatre. The *Elverhøj* music is based on Danish and Swedish ballads and became the clearest indication of a new national-romantic ideal in Danish culture of the time.

In short, Kuhlau was a leading figure in what posterity has dubbed the Danish Golden Age: the first half of the nineteenth century when the arts and sciences saw intense development, in stark contrast with the stagnating absolutism and the general impoverishment of the country.

Abroad, on the other hand, Kuhlau has passed into history as a flute composer. "The Beethoven of the flute" is the rather derogatory label that has stuck to him. Because he was never given a permanent position that matched his format, he had to exploit the fact that he could effortlessly write large quantities of high-quality music for the flute, one of the most popular instruments of the time. Kuhlau himself was not a flautist – a rumour that was already current in his own lifetime, but as he said, "I play this instrument very little, but I know it thoroughly".

The flute music and the National-Romantic works have overshadowed Kuhlau's other production, including his works for violin and piano, which encompass sonatas of several sizes. The **Violin Sonata in F minor, op. 33** was Kuhlau's first, written in 1821 and published the next year by the German publisher Simrock. It is dedicated to Louis Spohr, the famous composer and violinist, who was Kuhlau's schoolmate at the grammar school Katharineum in Brunswick. Their paths diverged, and while Spohr in time became the best-known German composer after Beethoven – and the leading violinist – Kuhlau faded somewhat from the picture when he moved north to Denmark. They probably met again in 1821, when Kuhlau was on a long tour of Germany and Austria. In the Sonata op. 33 Kuhlau gave his all to please and impress his famous friend – and surely he also wanted to measure himself against him?

Kuhlau is good at baiting the hook for the listener, and the first movement starts with a surprising theme in the left hand of the piano. At the same time, it represents something typical for Kuhlau – that he builds further on an idea from another composer. The theme is identical to a little 'storm motif' that Beethoven uses in his lied *Der Wachtelschlag*, a lied Kuhlau also used in his variation work op. 75 for piano duo. This parody technique had functioned as a quite normal practice for hundreds of years but a later age which above all demanded quite personal ideas viewed it as a sign of artistic weakness in a composer. But one must certainly call Kuhlau's idea of using the abrupt motif as an opening theme personal!

The storm motif smoulders on as a contrast to the lyrical major-key second subject, and on the whole, the movement has a striking agitation and dynamic. After the calm *Larghetto* of the second movement, the final movement is a large sonata-rondo whose turbulent character

and broad format echo the first movement. The piano part suggests that Kuhlau had precise knowledge of Beethoven's *Appassionata Sonata* (1805), also in F minor.

The sonata was given an excellent review in the leading musical journal of the time, the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, which did not dwell on the cue from Beethoven, but on the contrary considered the work original, well-rounded and carefully elaborated. In particular, the final movement was "full of fire and life, distinctive in its idea and execution, conceived in one piece, indeed in one breath, a truly masterly movement in every respect", as it said.

In 1830 an alternative version of op. 33 appeared, arranged for flute and piano by the French flautist Paul-Hippolyte Camus. It is not certain that Kuhlau was made aware of the arrangement, but he knew of Camus' existence and in fact planned to write a flute sonata for him. Because Kuhlau's name became so closely associated with the flute, the flute version of op. 33 has been more frequently played than the violin version.

The same dilemma affected his last three sonatas. In December 1829 Kuhlau mentioned in a letter that his op. 110 was in press. He called the works "three large sonatas for piano accompanied by violin or flute". He must have been very surprised the next year when his French publisher Farrenc published the sonatas as *Trois Duos brillants pour Flûte et Piano*. Gone thus were both the sonata designation and the violin as first priority.

Perhaps Farrenc thought – not wholly incorrectly – that the designation "piano sonatas accompanied by ..." was an obsolete formulation, and he certainly knew all about the fact that there were more sales in flute music than in violin music. In the printed edition parts for both violin and flute were given, but it was only in small print that it was mentioned that "the duos have even been written for violin and piano by the composer" – that is, that the violin version was not a secondary arrangement, but the real thing.

The three sonatas in op. 110 have ample first movements and characterful second and third movements. Like Kuhlau's three small violin sonatas op. 79 from 1827 they work both individually and as a trilogy. Both sets have a minor-key sonata placed in the middle and they save what is surely the most impressive sonata for the end. But the sonatas op. 110 are longer and more ambitious. They are a noble conclusion to Kuhlau's sonata production.

Duo No. 1 in B flat major begins in a calm, pastoral tone over a pedal point, and with assured timing, Kuhlau refrains from hinting at the tensions that follow later in the movement.

The slow second movement is surprisingly fervent, a melancholy movement in a major key which Kuhlau has described with the strong words *Adagio patetico con molta espressione*. The quick final movement, quite in keeping with the tradition, is a merry rondo and develops into a charming dialogue between the two participants.

Duo No. 2 in E minor has a romantic ambivalence and bitter-sweetness. The first movement in 6/8 time is full of inspiring ideas in a very well-wrought balance between hope and despondency. The slow movement in B major, too, which begins as a beautiful Alpine idyll, reveals hidden worries. The final movement is a surprisingly grave sonata-rondo with a syncopated first subject. The movement ends not in E major, as Kuhlau elegantly suggests, but in E minor, where all the unease had its beginning.

Duo No. 3 in D major opens with a grand first movement. The initial figure in triplets and the subsequent chromatic theme pull dynamically, each in its own direction, and the vital piano part contributes even more dramatic tensions. The dreaming second movement has an unworldly beauty, while the third movement is a virtuoso rondo in 6/8 which plays with the galloping hunt rhythm. This was to be Kuhlau's last sonata, but there is certainly no trace of either fatigue or any scarcity of ideas.

The 1820s had been a highly productive phase of Kuhlau's life in which he had created some of his best works. He reached a personal peak in 1825 when he was on his second journey to Vienna and was able to meet his great idol, Beethoven. They spent a few days together and emptied innumerable bottles, while they exchanged canons and subtle exercises in counterpoint. Beethoven jokingly called Kuhlau *der grosse Kanonier*.

But Kuhlau's unsettled life made him something of a stormy petrel. The fine honorary titles in Copenhagen were not followed by equally fine fees, and his income also had to extend to cover the maintenance of his aged parents as well as a foster-son and a sister who lived with him. Shortly after Kuhlau had sent op. 110 to his French publisher he was struck by disaster when a fire razed his thatched house in Lyngby. All his possessions were lost including an unknown number of manuscripts and unprinted works. The broken-down composer moved to Copenhagen, where he died of tuberculosis the next year, 46 years old.

Jens Cornelius, 2019

Duo Åstrand/Salo



Duo Åstrand/Salo

Christina Åstrand and Per Salo have played together for more than 20 years and have an extensive repertoire that ranges from J.S. Bach to completely new music. Danish music has a large place in the heart of both musicians and one of their objectives is to spread knowledge of Danish music both inside and outside Denmark.

Christina Åstrand and Per Salo are both members of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra – as concertmaster and pianist/organist respectively. In addition, both of them are extremely active as soloists and chamber musicians, performing at many festivals and concerts in most of Europe. The duo were Artists in Residence at the Rued Langgaard Festival in 2017. In recent years, Åstrand and Salo have researched Friedrich Kuhlau's music for violin and piano, and this has led to the discovering of a number of virtually unknown works, which in turn has resulted in this complete recording for Dacapo. So as to spread knowledge of Kuhlau's music, the duo has also prepared a complete musical score of all the sonatas, published by Edition-S.

Duo Åstrand/Salo have recorded numerous CDs – the main emphasis being on Danish music. These include violin sonatas by Carl Nielsen (awarded two prizes at Danish Music Awards 2007: Chamber Music Release of the Year and the P2 Prize – the special prize of the Danish listeners) and the complete violin sonatas by Niels W. Gade and Friedrich Kuhlau (Dacapo). In addition, they have recorded a CD with sonatas by Maurice Ravel, Ernst Bloch and Leoš Janáček – a special release that also includes a DVD with the three works filmed in DR's beautiful concert hall, DR Koncertsalen, in DR Byen, Copenhagen. Together with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, Duo Åstrand/Salo have commissioned a double concerto from the Danish composer Allan Gravgaard Madsen, which is to have its first performance in September 2019 at the DR Koncertsalen, Copenhagen.

Friedrich Kuhlau var dansk musiks mest kosmopolitiske personlighed i begyndelsen af 1800-tallet. Han havde et stort udenlandsk netværk, og som stærk Beethoven-beundrer kæmpede han for nye toner i det danske musikliv.

Også menneskeligt stak Kuhlau ud i mængden. Ikke kun fordi han var en tysker, der aldrig lærte at tale dansk og kun havde ét øje. Han var en urolig sjæl, der ikke rigtig passede ind i den lille, homogene københavnske elite, som hans publikum og velyndere tilhørte. I stedet foretrak han at bo uden for hovedstaden.

Læser man gennem datidens florumvundne omskrivninger, tegner der sig et billede af en varm og levende, men også utilpasset mand med hang til jovialt selskab, tobak og vin – nok faktisk et regulært alkoholmisbrug. Ligesom forbilledet Beethoven blev Kuhlau aldrig gift, eller som det forblommet blev sagt i en mindetale efter hans død: "Han savnede mange af de Forhold og Motiver som ere Mennesket de kæreste og meest opmuntrende. Musikken var hans troeste, fast hans eneste Ledsagerinde giennem Livets Skiær".

Kuhlau blev født i 1786 i den nordtyske by Uelzen. Som dreng mistede han højre øje ved en ulykke, men det forhindrede ham ikke i at stræbe efter en fremtid som musiker. Allerede i teenageårene var han aktiv som pianist og fik trykt sine første kompositioner.

I 1806 kom Kuhlau til Hamborg, hvor han studerede hos den strenge kantor Schwencke. Men samme år blev byen besat af Napoleons tropper, og da byens unge mænd i 1810 begyndte at blive tvangsudskrevet til den franske hær, forlod Kuhlau farezonen og rejste til København. Året efter debuterede han som pianist ved en koncert på Det Kongelige Teater og blev taget vel imod som en spændende budbringer fra kontinentet.

Dansk musikliv havde i generationer været afhængig af indvandrere og gæster sydfra. I 1813 fik også Kuhlau dansk indfødsret og hæderstitel af kongelig kammermusik med pligt til at skrive officielle kantater og hvert andet år en opera. Blandt dem var skelsættende værker i dansk musik, operaerne *Røverborgen* og *Lulu* og musikken til nationalskuespillet *Elverhøj*, som gennem årene er blevet opført over 1.000 gange på Det Kongelige Teater. Elverhøj-musikken bygger på danske og svenske folkeviser og blev den tydeligste markering af et nyt nationalromantisk ideal i tidens danske kultur.

Kuhlau var kort sagt en hovedperson i det, eftertiden har døbt den danske guldalder: En periode i første halvdel af 1800-tallet, hvor kunsten og videnskaben udviklede sig voldsomt, stik modsat det stagnerende enevælde og landets generelle forarmelse.

I udlandet er Kuhlau derimod gået over i historien som fløjtekomponist. "Fløjten Beethoven" er den ret nedladende etiket, han er blevet påhæftet. Fordi Kuhlau aldrig fik en fast stilling, der svarede til hans format, måtte han udnytte, at han ubesværet kunne skrive store mængder kvalitetsmusik for fløjte, der var et af periodens mest populære instrumenter. Selv var Kuhlau ikke fløjtenist – det rygte gik ellers allerede i hans egen levetid, men som han sagde: "Ich spiele nur wenig dies Instrument, aber ich kenne es genau".

Fløjtemusikken og de nationalromantiske værker har skygget for Kuhlaus øvrige produktion, blandet andet hans værker for violin og klaver, som rummer sonater i flere forskellige størrelser. **Violinsonaten i f-mol op. 33** er Kuhlaus første, skrevet i 1821 og udgivet året efter på det tyske forlag Simrock. Den er tilegnet Louis Spohr, den berømte komponist og violinist, der var Kuhlaus skolekammerat fra latinskolen Katharineum i Braunschweig. Deres veje skiltes, og mens Spohr efterhånden blev den mest kendte tyske komponist efter Beethoven – og den førende violinist – forsvandt Kuhlau lidt ud af billedet, da han flyttede nordpå til Danmark. De mødtes sandsynligvis igen i 1821, da Kuhlau var på en lang rejse til Tyskland og Østrig. I Sonaten op. 33 gav Kuhlau alt, hvad han havde, for at glæde og imponere sin berømte ven – og mon ikke han også gerne ville måle sig med ham.

Kuhlau er god til at slå en klo i lytteren, og 1. sats starter med et overraskende tema i klaverets venstre hånd. Det repræsenterer samtidig noget typisk for ham, nemlig at han bygger videre på en idé fra en anden komponist. Temaet er identisk med et lille "uvejrsmotiv", som Beethoven bruger i sin lied *Der Wachtelschlag* (en lied, Kuhlau også brugte i sit variationsværk op. 75 for firhændigt klaver). Denne paroditeknik, der havde fungeret som en helt normal praksis gennem hundredvis af år, blev senere opfattet som kunstnerisk svaghestegn af en eftertid, der forlangte helt personlige idéer frem for alt. Men personlig må man bestemt kalde Kuhlaus idé om at lade det abrupte motiv fungere som åbningstema!

Uvejrsmotivet ulmer videre som kontrast til det lyriske dur-sidetema, og satsen har i det hele taget en markant uro og fremdrift. Efter andensatsens svale Larghetto er finalen en stor sonaterondo, der i sin urolige karakter og brede format modsvarer førstesatsen. Klaverstemmen tyder

på, at Kuhlau havde et nøje kendskab til Beethovens *Appassionata*-sonate (1805), der også står i f-mol.

Sonaten fik en glimrende anmeldelse i tidens førende musiktidsskrift, *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, som ikke hæftede sig ved oplægget fra Beethoven, men tværtimod fandt værket originalt, helstøbt og omhyggeligt udarbejdet. Især finalen, "fuld af ild og liv, ejendommelig i sin idé og udførelse, gjort i ét stykke, ja i ét åndedrag, en virkelig mesterlig sats i enhver henseende", som der stod.

I 1830 udkom der en alternativ udgave af op. 33, arrangeret for fløjte og klaver af den franske fløjtenist Paul-Hippolyte Camus. Det er ikke sikkert, at Kuhlau blev gjort opmærksom på arrangementet, men han kendte Camus' eksistens og planlagde faktisk at skrive en fløjtesonate til ham. Fordi Kuhlaus navn var så tæt forbundet med fløjten, har fløjteversionen af op. 33 været mere spillet end violinudgaven.

Samme dilemma ramte hans tre sidste sonater. I december 1829 omtalte Kuhlau i et brev, at hans op. 110 var i trykken. Han kaldte dem "tre store sonater for klaver med ledsagelse af violin eller fløjte". Han må være blevet ret overrasket, da hans franske forlag Farrenc året efter udgav sonaterne som *Trois Duos brillants pour Flûte et Piano*. Væk var altså både sonatebetegnelsen og violinen som første prioritet.

Måske mente Farrenc – ikke helt forkert – at betegnelsen "klaversonater med ledsagelse af ..." var en forældet formulering, og at der var mere salg i fløjtemusik end violinmusik, vidste han bestemt alt om. I den trykte udgave var der vedlagt stemmer til både violin og fløjte, men kun med små bogstaver blev det nævnt, at "duoerne også er komponeret for violin og klaver af komponisten", dvs. at violinversionen ikke var et uoriginalt arrangement, men den ægte vare.

De tre sonater i op. 110 har fyldige førstesatser og karakterprægede anden- og tredjesatser. Ligesom Kuhlaus tre små violinsonater op. 79 fra 1827 fungerer de både enkeltvist og som trilogi. Begge sæt har en mol-sonate placeret i midten og gemmer den nok mest imponerende sonate til sidst. Men sonaterne op. 110 er længere og mere ambitiøse. Det er en fornem afslutning på Kuhlaus sonateproduktion.

Duo nr. 1 i B-dur begynder roligt og pastoralt over et orgelpunkt, og med sikker timing undlader Kuhlau at antyde de spændinger, som følger senere i satsen. Den langsomme andensats er overraskende inderlig, en sorgfuld sats i dur, som Kuhlau har betegnet med de stærke ord

Adagio patetico con molta espressione. Den hurtige sidstesats er helt efter traditionen en munter rondo og udvikler sig til en charmerende dialog mellem de to medvirkende.

Duo nr. 2 i e-mol har en romantisk tvetydighed og bittersødme. Førstesatsen i 6/8-takt er fuld af inspirerede idéer i en meget veltuneret balance mellem håb og mistrøstighed. Også den langsomme sats i H-dur, der begynder som en smuk alpeidyl, afslører skjulte bekymringer. Finalen er en overraskende alvorlig sonate-rondo med et synkoperet hovedtema. Satsen ender ikke i E-dur, som Kuhlau elegant antyder, men i e-mol, hvor al uroen tog sin begyndelse.

Duo nr. 3 i D-dur lægger ud med en storlået førstesats. Den trioliserede indledningsfigur og det efterfølgende kromatiske motiv trækker dynamisk i hver sin retning, og satsens vitale klaversats bidrager med endnu flere dramatiske spændinger. Den drømmende andensats har en verdensfjern skønhed, mens 3. sats er en virtuos rondo i 6/8, der leger med den galopperende jagt rytme. Det blev Kuhlaus sidste sonate, men der er bestemt ikke hverken træthed eller mangel på idéer at spore.

1820'erne havde været en meget produktiv fase af Kuhlaus liv, hvor han fik skabt nogle af sine bedste værker. Han nåede et personligt højdepunkt, da han i 1825 var på sin anden rejse til Wien og fik mødt sit store idol, Beethoven. De tilbragte et par dage sammen og tømte utallige flasker, mens de udvekslede kanoner og fiffige opgaver i kontrapunkt. Beethoven kaldte spøgende Kuhlau for "der grosse Kanonier".

Men Kuhlaus urolige liv gjorde ham til noget af en ulykkesfugl. De smukke hæderstitler i København fulgtes ikke af lige så fine honorarer, og hans indtægter skulle også række til at forsørge hans gamle forældre samt en plejesøn og en søster, der boede hos ham. Kort tid efter at Kuhlau havde afsendt op. 110 til sit franske forlag, blev han ramt af en katastrofe, da en ildebrand raserede hans stråttækte hus i Lyngby. Hele hans indbo gik tabt, også et ukendt antal manuskripter og utrykte værker. Den nedbrudte komponist flyttede til København, hvor han døde af tuberkulose året efter, 46 år gammel.

Jens Cornelius, 2019

Duo Åstrand/Salo

Christina Åstrand og Per Salo har spillet sammen i over 20 år og har et omfattende repertoire, som spænder fra J.S. Bach til den helt nye musik. Dansk musik har en stor plads i begge musikeres hjerte, og et af deres mål er at udbrede kendskabet til dansk musik både i og udenfor Danmark.

Christina Åstrand og Per Salo er begge ansat i DR SymfoniOrkestret – som henholdsvis koncertmester og som pianist/organist. Herudover er begge musikere yderst aktive som solister og kammermusikere, og de optræder ved mange festivaler og koncerter over det meste af Europa. Duoen var Artists in Residence ved Rued Langgaard Festival 2017. I de senere år har Åstrand og Salo forsket i Friedrich Kuhlaus musik for violin og klaver, og i denne proces har duoen genopdaget flere næsten ukendte værker, hvilket har resulteret i denne samlede indspilning for Dacapo. For at udbrede kendskabet til Kuhlaus musik yderligere har de desuden udarbejdet et komplet nodemateriale til alle sonaterne, udgivet af forlaget Edition-S.

Duo Åstrand/Salo har indspillet talrige CD'er – med hovedvægten lagt på dansk musik. Heriblandt violinsonater af Carl Nielsen (tildelt to priser ved Danish Music Award 2007: som Årets Kammermusikudgivelse samt P2 Lytterprisen) og samtlige violinsonater af Niels W. Gade og Friedrich Kuhlau (Dacapo). Derudover har duoen indspillet en CD med sonater af Maurice Ravel, Ernest Bloch og Leoš Janáček – en ganske særlig udgivelse, som også indeholder en DVD med videooptagelser af de tre værker, filmet i DR's smukke koncertsal i DR-Byen, København. Åstrand/Salo har sammen med DR SymfoniOrkestret bestilt en dobbeltkoncert hos Allan Gravgaard Madsen, som får sin uropførelse i september 2019 i DR Koncertsalen, København.

DDD

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