

FRIEDRICH KUHLAU
Piano Quartets 1 & 2
Copenhagen Piano Quartet



FRIEDRICH KUHLAU (1786-1832) *Piano Quartets 1 & 2*
Copenhagen Piano Quartet

Benedikte Damgaard, *violin* Kristina Fialova, *viola*
Adam Stadnicki, *cello* Neel Bramsnæs Teilmann, *piano*

	Piano Quartet No. 1 in C minor, Op. 32 (1820-21)	33:54
1	I. Allegro	16:30
2	II. Adagio	8:36
3	III. Finale: Allegro	8:49
	 Piano Quartet No. 2 in A major, Op. 50 (1831-32)	38:50
4	I. Allegro	18:46
5	II. Adagio ma non troppo	8:02
6	III. Scherzo: Presto	5:52
7	IV. Finale: Allegro di molto	6:11

Total: 72:44



FRIEDRICH KUHLAU *by Jens Cornelius*

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 circumlocations 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. 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), *Lulu* and especially the music for the national play *Elverhøj* (The Elf-Hill) which has over the years been performed over 1000 times at the Royal 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.

In short, Kuhlau was one of the leading figures 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 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 salaried 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, the fashionable instrument 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 iconic national-romantic works have both overshadowed Kuhlau's other production. He was a highly prolific composer who besides his theatrical works also wrote piano music, violin sonatas and a masterly string quartet which according to plan was to be one of six. And then there are the three piano quartets, of which the first two are recorded here.

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PIANO QUARTETS 1 & 2 *by Toke Lund Christiansen*

"He'll end up writing his reputation away". This is how bombastically Kuhlau's contemporary composer colleague C.E.F. Weyse described Kuhlau's productivity, and it is true that Kuhlau's pen seldom lay idle. But Weyse may have been right in implying that Kuhlau's creativity moved at several levels of intensity. He wrote an easy-flowing succession of piano works, many of which are aimed directly at the amateur pianists of the time, and almost as many works (about 60 in all) had flautists all over Europe as their buyers. Kuhlau was constantly corresponding with the leading music publishers of the age. They ordered, and he delivered. Kuhlau would have preferred to concentrate on major chamber works, but the publishers put pressure on him to supply the most easily marketable music. "He can scribble down six flute duets in as many days". That's how dismissively it could be put – in this case in fact in a direct remark to Beethoven when Kuhlau was introduced to the maestro in Baden outside Vienna. Beethoven was almost deaf, and the remark has survived in Beethoven's conversation book for that late summer's day in 1825. But Beethoven gave Kuhlau a fine reception, and they developed a brief but intense friendship; undoubtedly the greatest moment in Kuhlau's life, for Beethoven along with Haydn and Mozart were his greatest models, whether he was writing for two flutes or for one of the most challenging ensembles of Classicism and Romanticism: the piano quartet.

Kuhlau's piano parts in all three of his piano quartets are demanding and virtuosic and testify that Kuhlau himself was an extremely competent pianist who in his very young years often presented himself as a piano soloist. In Copenhagen he made his debut in a Beethoven work, the quintet for piano and four winds in E flat major, opus 16.

In 1820 Kuhlau had drawn up his plan: in the course of the winter he would compose three piano quartets, and in December he offered them to the publisher Härtel in Leipzig. At first, though, he only managed to compose the first in C minor. He sent it to Härtel at the beginning of March 1821, and a few days later he embarked on a journey abroad that lasted most of a year, and which took in visits to Vienna, Munich Leipzig and Hamburg. The second piano quartet, in A major, opus 50, may have been composed during the journey, but perhaps more likely after his return. The quartet was composed the year after Schubert's A major quintet,

D 667, 'The Trout', but it must be considered highly doubtful that Kuhlau met Schubert or heard his music in Vienna. Kuhlau's A major quartet was not published, as originally planned, by Härtel, but in 1823 by Simrock in Bonn – a publisher Kuhlau later accused of lying about payments, specifically in the case of the A major quartet. The publisher claimed to have made a loss on the publication, but Kuhlau rejected the claim with the argument that the quartet was sold by music dealers all over Europe. "By the music dealer Lose [in Copenhagen] alone ... how many copies went through his hands?"

Piano Quartet No. 2 in A major Op. 50 was written in one of the most productive periods of Kuhlau's life. It was flanked by other major works such as the three quintets for flute and four strings, opus 51, and Kuhlau's masterpiece in the opera genre, *Lulu*. The quartet is dedicated to Kuhlau's pupil and friend Anton Keyper (1796-1861), an able 'musical amateur', who also sometimes assisted his teacher with simple arrangement tasks.

The quartet begins with a first movement that is as generous with its length as with its originality and energy. The main subject is presented first in the piano and then in the strings; the second subject has an almost Schubertian sweetness as it moves through each of the strings in turn, only to be taken over by the piano. As in Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' sonata in A major (1803), this is followed by Kuhlau with an F major movement, an Adagio, in the form of an air with among other things pizzicato accompaniment, which is followed by a Scherzo, Presto. This is the first time Kuhlau expands the sonata form to span four movements. The Scherzo in A minor is rhythmically supple, in a constant alternation between 3/4 and a reinterpretation as 2/4 (hemiolas). Surely Schumann knew this Scherzo and re-used the idea in his E flat major piano quintet (1842)? The trio section in Kuhlau is a Ländler in F major. The rest of the Scherzo leads on, accelerando, to a kind of leaping dance. The final movement, Allegro molto, is ingenious and humorous in its themes. Here Kuhlau demonstrates his contrapuntal mastery and the refined ear for harmony that one has to go to the greatest composers of the age to match.

The A major quartet was already performed several times during Kuhlau's lifetime, and surely this is the work we see on the music stand in Wilhelm Marstrand's famous oil painting *A Musical Evening at Waagepetersen the Wine Merchant's*? The painting was done two years after Kuhlau's death, and pays tribute to the composer, whose portrait hangs on the wall behind Weyse seated at the piano with the three strings.

Piano Quartet No. 1 in C minor Op. 32 is dedicated to the composer Andreas Romberg (1767-1821). Kuhlau and Romberg probably knew each other from their younger years in Hamburg, where Romberg played the violin in the orchestra of the Hamburg Opera from 1793, and until 1815 was a central figure in the musical life of the city. The idea of 'models' takes on a special meaning in connection with the piano quartet in C minor. Kuhlau often quite consciously used works for which he had a high regard as models for his compositions. He was himself responsible for the content and development of the music, but the formal scheme and certain melodic turns of phrase were often borrowed, not least from Mozart and Beethoven, and used as starting points for the composition.

The introduction to the first movement, Allegro, borrows its thematic material from Beethoven's Third Piano Concerto, which is also in C minor. The piano is so soloistically disposed, with sparkling semiquaver figures, that it tends towards the piano concerto. The movement is expansive and has the same length as the next two movements together. The second movement, Adagio, in A major, has an inward, cantabile feel. Particularly notable is the A flat minor section where the piano's dotted theme variation and a pizzicato cello accompany a melancholy duet of violin and viola. The energetic third movement, with a restless, searching first subject, soon progresses, first to a fugato passage and then to a regular fugue. The fugue and canon techniques were disciplines in which Kuhlau was a true master. All over Europe Kuhlau's canonic legerdemain was known, Beethoven joking called him "der grosse Kanonier". The movement culminates in a captivating C major coda section.

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THE PERFORMERS

Copenhagen Piano Quartet is a young piano quartet based in Copenhagen but with roots in Denmark, the Czech Republic and Poland, consisting of Benedikte Damgaard (violin), Kristina Fialova (viola), Adam Stadnicki (cello) and Neel Bramsnæs Teilmann (piano). The quartet has won the Val Tidone International Chamber Music Competition, Italy, in 2013, The Royal Danish Academy of Music's Chamber Music Competition 2012 and was a prize winner in the Danish Radio's Chamber Music Competition in 2014 and in the International Johannes Brahms Competition in Austria in 2012. CPQ was formed in 2010, and the four members have from 2012-15 studied as an ensemble in the soloist class of the Royal Danish Academy of Music under the guidance of chamber music professor Tim Frederiksen as well as pianist and lecturer Jens Elvekjaer (Trio con Brio Copenhagen). In master classes they have had the pleasure of working with capacities such as the Fauré Quartett, Leif-Ove Andsnes, Christian Ihle Hadland and Lars Anders Tomter. CPQ has received a grant from the prestigious Léonie Sonning Music Fund and the big Jacob Gade scholarship in 2013. The quartet has performed widely around Denmark and in Norway, Italy, Czech Republic, Germany and China.
www.copenhagenpianoquartet.com



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 passede naturligt 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 billedet 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. Musiken var hans troeste, fast hans eneste Ledsagerinde gennem Livets Skiær".

Kuhlau blev født 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. 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 Kgl. Teater og blev taget vel imod som en spændende budbringer fra kontinentet.

Dansk musikliv havde i generationer været afhængigt af indvandrere og gæster sydfra. I 1813 fik også Kuhlau dansk indfødsret og hæderstitel af kongelig kammermusikus med pligt til at skrive officielle kantater og hvert andet år en opera. Blandt dem var skelsættende værker i dansk musik, operaerne Røverborgen, Lulu og især 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 dansk kultur.

Kuhlau var kort sagt en af hovedpersonerne i det, eftertiden har døbt den danske guldalder, nemlig 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. "Fløjtes Beethoven" er den ret nedladende etiket, han er blevet påhæftet. Fordi han aldrig fik en fast lønnet stilling der svarede til hans format, måtte han udnytte, at han ubesværet kunne skrive store mængder kvalitetsmusik for fløjte, tidens modeinstrument. Selv var Kuhlau ikke fløjtenist – det rygte gik allerede i hans egen levetid, men som han sagde: "Ich spiele nur wenig dies Instrument, aber ich kenne es genau".

Både fløjtemusikken og de nationalromantiske ikonværker har skygget for Kuhlaus øvrige produktion. Han var en meget produktiv komponist, der udover sine sceniske værker også skrev klavermusik, violinsonater og en mesterlig strygekvartet, der efter planen skulle have været den første af seks. Og så er der de tre klaverkvartetter, hvoraf de første to er indspillet her.

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"Han skriver sig snart hæder og ære fra". Så bombastisk beskrev den samtidige komponist-kollega C.E.F. Weyse Kuhlaus produktivitet, og sandt er det, at Kuhlaus pen sjældent lå stille. Men Weyse kunne have ret i, at Kuhlaus kreativitet bevægede sig på flere niveauer af intensitet. Han skrev en letflydende strøm af klaverværker, hvoraf mange er rettet direkte mod samtidens amatørpianister, og næsten lige så mange værker (ca. 60 i alt) havde fløjtenister over hele Europa som aftagere. Kuhlau lå konstant i korrespondance med tidens førende nodeforlag. De bestilte, og han leverede. Kuhlau ville helst koncentrere sig om større kammermusikværker, men forlagene pressede ham til at levere den nemmest omsættelige musik. "Han kan smøre 6 fløjteduetter ned på 6 dage" ("Kuhlau schmiert 6 Flötenduetten in 6 Tagen hin"). Så nedsættende kunne det siges, og det endda som en direkte henvendelse til Beethoven, da Kuhlau blev introduceret for mesteren i Baden udenfor Wien. Beethoven var næsten død, og bemærkningen har overlevet i Beethovens samtalehæfte for den pågældende sensommerdag i 1825. Men Beethoven tog vel imod Kuhlau, og det udviklede sig til et kortvarigt, men intenst venskab. Utvivlsomt det største øjeblik i Kuhlaus liv, for Beethoven var sammen med Haydn og Mozart hans største forbillede; dét hvad enten han skrev for to fløjter eller for et af klassikkens og romantikkens mest udfordrende ensembler: Klaverkvartetten.

Kuhlaus klaverpartier er i alle hans tre klaverkvartetter krævende og virtuose og vidner om, at Kuhlau selv var en yderst kompetent klaverspiller, der i sine helt unge år ofte præsenterede sig som klaversolist. I København debuterede han i et Beethoven-værk, kvintetten for klaver og fire blæsere i Es-dur, opus 16.

I 1820 havde Kuhlau lagt sin plan: han ville i løbet af vinteren komponere tre klaverkvartetter, og han tilbød dem i december til forlægger Härtel i Leipzig. I første omgang fik han imidlertid kun komponeret den første i c-mol. Han sendte den til Härtel i begyndelsen af marts 1821, og få dage senere påbegyndte han en udlandsrejse, der varede det meste af et år, og som indbefattede besøg i Wien, München, Leipzig og Hamborg. Den anden klaverkvartet, i A-dur, opus 50, er muligvis komponeret under rejsen, men måske mere sandsynligt efter hjemkomsten. Kvartetten er komponeret året efter Schuberts A-dur kvintet, D 667, *Forellen*, men det må anses som meget

tvivlsomt, at Kuhlau har mødt Schubert eller hørt hans musik i Wien. Kuhlaus A-dur kvartet udkom ikke, som oprindelig planlagt, hos Härtel, men i 1823 hos Simrock i Bonn – et forlag, som Kuhlau senere anklagede for at lyve omkring afregninger og specifikt for A-dur kvartetens vedkommende. Forlaget hævdede at have tabt på udgivelsen, mens Kuhlau tilbageviste påstanden med den begrundelse, at kvartetten blev solgt fra nodehandlere overalt i Europa. "Alene hos nodehandler Lose" (i København): "Hvor mange eksemplarer er ikke gået gennem hans hænder?"

Klaverkvartet nr. 2 i A-dur op. 50 er blevet til i en af de mest produktive perioder i Kuhlaus liv. Den er omgivet af andre store værker som de tre kvintetter for fløjte og fire strygere, op. 51, og Kuhlaus mesterværk indenfor operagenren, *Lulu*. Kvartetten er tilegnet Kuhlaus elev og ven, Anton Keyser (1796-1861), en dygtig 'musikamatør', som tilmed undertiden hjalp sin lærermester med enklere arrangementsopgaver.

Kvartetten indleder med en 1. sats, der fremtræder generøs såvel ved sin længde som med sin originalitet og veloplagthed. Hovedtemaet præsenteres først i klaveret og siden af strygerne, sidetemaet har en nærmest Schubertsk sødme, når det bevæger sig på skift rundt blandt strygerne for siden at blive overtaget af klaveret. I lighed med Beethovens Kreutzer-sonate i A-dur (1803), følger hos Kuhlau en F-dursats, en Adagio, udformet som en arie med bl.a. et pizzicato-akkompagnement, der efterfølges af en Scherzo, Presto. Det er første gang, Kuhlau udvider sonateformen til at omfatte fire satser. Scherzoen i a-mol er spændstig i rytmen i en konstant vekslen mellem 3/4 og omdydning (hemiolier) til 2/4. Mon ikke Schumann har kendt til denne Scherzo og genbrugt idéen i sin Es-dur klaverkvintet (1842)? Trio-delen hos Kuhlau er en Ländler i F-dur. Scherzo-gentagelsen fører med et accelerando frem til en slags springdans. Finalen, allegro molto, er finurlig og humoristisk i sin tematik. Kuhlau viser her sit kontrapunktiske mesterskab og det forfinede harmoniske øre, som man skal til de største komponister i samtiden for at genfinde.

A-dur kvartetten blev opført talrige gange allerede i Kuhlaus levetid, og mon ikke det er dette værk, der står på nodelisterne på Wilhelm Marstrands berømte oliemaleri "En musikanten hos vinhandler Waagepetersen"? Maleriet blev til to år efter Kuhlaus død, men hvor komponisten hædres ved, at hans portræt hænger på væggen bag Weyse siddende ved klaveret i selskab med de tre strygere.

Klaverkvartet nr. 1 i c-mol op. 32 er tilegnet komponisten Andreas Romberg (1767-1821). Kuhlau og Romberg har givetvis kendt hinanden fra de unge år i Hamburg, hvor Romberg fra 1793 spillede violin i Hamburger-operaens orkester, og frem til 1815 var en central figur i byens musikliv. Udtrykket 'forbilleder' får i sammenhæng med klaverkvartetten i c-mol en særlig betydning. Kuhlau brugte ofte og helt bevidst værker, han satte højt, som model for sine kompositioner. Indhold og udvikling i musikken stod han selv for, men formskemaet og ofte tilmed visse melodiske vendinger blev lånt fra ikke mindst Mozart og Beethoven og brugt som afsæt for kompositionen.

Indledningen til 1. sats, Allegro, låner sin tematik fra Beethovens 3. klaverkoncert, som også står i c-mol. Klaveret er så solistisk anlagt, med perlende sekstendelsfigurer, at det tenderer til at være en klaverkoncert. Satsen er bredt ud og har samme længde som de følgende to satser tilsammen. Anden sats, Adagio, i As-dur, er indadvendt og sangbar. Særlig bemærkelsesværdigt er midterdelens as-mol afsnit, hvor klaverets punkterede temavariation og et cello-pizzicato akkompagnerer en melankolsk duet mellem violin og bratsch. Den energiske 3. sats, med et uroligt, søgende hovedtema, bevæger sig snart frem til først ét fugeret afsnit, og siden en regulær fuga. Fuga- og kanon-teknik var discipliner hvori Kuhlau var en sand mester. Over hele Europa kendte man Kuhlaus kanoniske kunststykker, og Beethoven kaldte ham spøgelfuld for "der grosse Kanonier". Satsen kulminerer i et medrivende C-dur koda-afsnit.

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DE MEDVIRKENDE

Copenhagen Piano Quartet er en ung klaverkvartet med base i København, men rækker i Danmark, Tjekkiet og Polen bestående af Benedikte Damgaard (violin), Kristina Fialova (bratsch), Adam Stadnicki (cello) og Neel Bramsnæs Teilmann (klaver). Kvartetten er vinder af Val Tidone International Chamber Music Competition i Italien 2013, Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatoriums kammermusikkonkurrence 2012, prismodtager ved P2s kammermusikkonkurrence 2014 i København og den internationale Johannes Brahms konkurrence i Østrig 2012. CPQ blev dannet i 2010, og de fire medlemmer har fra 2012-15 studeret som ensemble i solistklassen på Det Kongelige Danske Musikkonservatorium under vejledning af kammermusikprofessor Tim Frederiksen samt pianist og docent Jens Elvekjær (Trio con Brio Copenhagen). I masterclasses har de haft glæde af at arbejde med kapaciteter som Fauré Quartett, Leif-Ove Andsnes, Christian Ihle Hadland og Lars Anders Tomter. CPQ er modtager af et stipendium fra Léonie Sonnings Musikfond i 2013 samt Jacob Gades store legat ligeledes i 2013. Kvartetten har haft en omfattende koncertvirksomhed og har optrådt over hele Danmark, i Norge, Italien, Tjekkiet, Tyskland og Kina.

www.copenhagenpianoquartet.com

DDD

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