

Carl LOEWE

PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

GRANDE SONATE BRILLANTE IN E FLAT MAJOR, OP. 41

SPRING: A TONE POEM IN SONATA FORM, OP. 47

BIBLICAL PICTURES, OP. 96

EVENING FANTASY, OP. 11

WDR

THE COLOGNE
BROADCASTS

Linda Nicholson, pianoforte

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDING

CARL LOEWE Piano Music, Volume Two

Der Frühling. Eine Tondichtung in Sonatenform

(‘Spring. A Tone Poem in Sonata Form’), **Op. 47** (1824) **29:18**

1 I Der erwachende Morgen (L’aube du jour) (‘Break of day’) 12:04

Introduzione. Ben sostenuto in tempo di larghetto

Morgenfeier (Culte matinale) (‘Morning celebration’). *Allegro*

2 II Naturleben (Grand jour) (‘Nature’) 4:31

Allegretto con commodezza

3 III Gang zu ländlichen Gruppen (Vie champêtre)

(‘Walk to Rustic Groups’; ‘Country Life’)

6:20

Scherzo. *Presto*

Andantino

4 IV Tagesneigen (Le crépuscule) (‘Dusk’) 6:23

Allegro assai

Biblische Bilder (‘Biblical Pictures’), **Op. 96** (1844)

18:17

5 I Bethesda (St John, ch. 5, vv. 2–9) 6:22

Grave, non troppo sostenuto – Allegro assai – Tempo primo

6 II Gang nach Emmaus (‘The Road to Emmaus’)

(St Luke, ch. 24, vv. 28–29)

4:00

Adagio

7 III Martha und Maria (St Luke, ch. 10, vv. 38–42) 7:55

Allegro innocentemente, sempre piacevole – Recit. – Grave maestoso –

Adagio

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Grande Sonate Brillante in E flat major, Op. 41 (1819) | 24:41 |
| 8 I <i>Allegro</i> | 6:37 |
| 9 II <i>Andantino – Allegro agitato – Adagio non troppo lento</i> | 4:32 |
| 10 III <i>Scherzo. Allegro</i> | 2:18 |
| 11 IV <i>Allegro grazioso</i> | 4:55 |

| | |
|---|-------------|
| Abendfantasie ('Evening Fantasy'), Op. 11 (1817)* | 7:11 |
| 12 I <i>Andante – Allegro assai – Meno allegro, quasi alla Polacca – Allegro molto e con brio</i> | |

Linda Nicholson, piano Erard, Paris, c. 1839

TT 73:08

*FIRST RECORDING

CARL LOEWE: PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO

by Linda Nicholson

Though little known today, Carl Loewe was a renowned and highly respected composer and performer in his own time, a friend of Schumann, Weber and Mendelssohn. (He directed the first public performance of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and was soloist, together with Mendelssohn, in the latter's Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra.) He was proud to be christened 'the north German Schubert' when on a concert tour to Vienna,¹ and today is remembered chiefly as a composer of ballads or narrative songs (Goethe judged his version of *Erkönig* to be superior to Schubert's). But there is also a considerable body of music for solo piano, much of which is strikingly innovative in content, expression and harmony but is rarely, if ever, played. Loewe tends to be categorised retrospectively as a 'transitional' composer: his music has germs of ideas later taken up by 'greater' composers such as Wagner and Liszt, and yet he was unquestionably a brilliantly original composer, a major figure in ushering in the Romantic era.

A close contemporary of Schubert, Loewe was born on 30 November 1796 in Löbejün, a small mining town in Saxony between Halle and Köthen. He was brought up in a musical household, his father Andreas being the local cantor and a music teacher, and his mother, though untrained, playing the violin. Loewe's talent was recognised from an early age, and in 1807 he was offered a place in the church choir in Köthen, a small town principally known for its association with Bach, who was *Kapellmeister* at the local court from 1717 to 1723. Finding the musical education there unchallenging, Loewe was sent to Halle in 1809, where he studied with Daniel

¹ Letter to his wife dated 4 August 1844, quoted in Carl Hermann Bitter (ed.), *Dr. Carl Loewes Selbstbiographie*, Wilhelm Müller Verlag, Berlin, 1870, p. 357.

Gottlob Türk (1750–1813). Halle was an important university city in which Türk, as director of music of both city and university, was extremely influential. His fame as composer and pedagogue spread much further in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries thanks to his seminal *Klavierschule* (published in Halle and Leipzig in 1789) and to a number of teaching pieces. Curiously, he did not teach Loewe the piano, leaving him to learn by himself, but rather instructed him in the arts of composition and singing. As a boy Loewe was apparently already an accomplished singer, able to tackle the aria of the Queen of the Night from *The Magic Flute*, and his soprano developed into a fine tenor voice. The lack of keyboard instruction may explain why Loewe's piano works, though too demanding for an amateur pianist, never feature the extreme virtuosity of some compositions by Liszt and Chopin, and emphasise instead the expressive and acoustic properties of the instrument.

Loewe remained in Halle after Türk's death in 1813, continuing with his singing and compositional studies and, in addition, completing a degree in theology. He participated in the stimulating intellectual life of the city, and sang in many larger-scale choral works and operas as tenor soloist. His musical development flourished with the production of his first ballads, *Erlkönig* and *Edward*, and with meeting Carl Maria von Weber, whose style of pianism was to influence him considerably.

From the cosmopolitan and lively city of Halle, Loewe moved to Stettin in 1821, a rather dull provincial town then in Prussia (it is now Szczecin in Poland), where he was appointed music director. He had some regrets at not being posted to an important musical centre such as Paris or Vienna but nevertheless remained there until shortly before his death, which occurred in Kiel on 20 April 1869. In between his many duties as director of music at several institutions and the church of St Jacobi, he continued to compose, and he toured widely throughout Europe as both singer and pianist between 1826 and 1847. He was best known for the solo performances of his ballads, in which he frequently both sang and played the piano accompaniment.

Loewe did not care for the highly virtuosic school of Romantic pianism represented by Liszt, and indeed contemporary accounts of his playing describe it as being instead poetic, expressive and sensitive. One of his fans, a Frau Tilbein, wrote after a concert: 'It's a shame

that the magician Loewe has completely spoiled one's taste for the senseless clanging of charlatans.² He himself was aware that his technique was less sound than that of, say, Chopin or Mendelssohn, and Frau Tilbein was an astute enough judge to comment:

There are far better pianists – he agrees that [compared to them] he cannot play. But such organisation of the whole to form a complete picture, such excitement by such a childlike, erudite, harmless and simultaneously highly poetic man – that is a unique phenomenon.³

Der Frühling. Eine Tondichtung in Sonatenform, Op. 47 (1824)

Loewe's sonata *Der Frühling* was written in 1824 and in a letter dated 14 June 1829 was offered, along with three other sonatas, to the publisher Trautwein in Berlin. Loewe described the works as 'vier grosse Charactersonaten' ('four grand character sonatas'), a term which had been used by other composers (including Beethoven, to describe his sonata Op. 81a, *Les Adieux*). The term 'character sonata' indicates a work with a programme – extra-musical associations. Loewe reassured Trautwein that the sonata was by no means an outmoded form, but was, on the contrary, 'die allerwohlbegründetste und gar nicht zu verbessernde Form' ('the best-founded form, and not to be improved'). In spite of these reassurances Trautwein turned the sonatas down, and *Der Frühling* was eventually published in 1835 by Schlesinger in Berlin. It must then have gained some popularity, since a second edition was brought out in 1852.

It is informative that Schlesinger, in adding titles in French, should have called it a 'sonate pastorale' – which it plainly is, tapping into the early-Romantic mystical identification with nature and love of the countryside. The most obvious model is Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, which similarly has titles for each movement. Indeed, a number of themes in Loewe's sonata are closely related to some of those in the Symphony, but rather than being deliberate plagiarism and indeed reflecting Loewe's adulation of Beethoven, it may simply be that certain melodic or rhythmic features had specific bucolic associations at the time in central Europe.

² Quoted in John Salmon, *The Piano Sonatas of Carl Loewe*, Peter Lang, Bern, 1996, p. 20.

³ Quoted in Otto Altenburg, 'Carl Loewe: Beiträge zur Kenntnis seines Lebens und Schaffens', *Baltische Studien*, Vol. XXVI (Neue Folge), Gesellschaft für Pommersche Geschichte und Altertumskunde, Leon Gauniers Buchhandlung, Stettin, 1924, p. 262.

Loewe's own title 'Eine Tondichtung in Sonatenform' is equally revealing. To the best of my knowledge, Loewe was the first and only composer to apply the term 'Tondichtung' ('tone poem') to a work for solo piano; and he used it again for *Mazeppa*, Op. 27, a single-movement work.⁴ Generally tone or symphonic poems are orchestral works based on a non-musical source such as a poem, novel or painting, beginning with Mendelssohn's overture *The Hebrides* ('Fingal's Cave') – although Mendelssohn did not use the term 'tone poem' – and continuing with works by Liszt, Smetana and Richard Strauss. Loewe's *Mazeppa* is more closely related to these compositions in being in a single movement with recurring *leitmotifs*, but nevertheless his *Frühling* Sonata shares with them the use of descriptive writing, featuring quasi-orchestral sonorities, and themes which are closely related, even if they are not themselves motifs. (Many of them revolve around the submediant note, E, and all movements except the first feature offbeat accents.) Loewe's achievement in this work is in melding the old Classical sonata form, of which he was such a supporter, with a symphonic approach to sound and a simple Romantic spirit expressing the love of nature that his contemporaries happily shared.

Not all of his contemporaries, though: Schumann, always a stern critic of Loewe's writing, wrote in a review of the work that he disliked the deliberate naïveté of some of the themes and felt that a worthy piece of music should not be dependent on descriptive titles to explain what it is about:

Melodies and harmonies join each other naturally, often simply; the whole thing is perhaps too casually conceived. [...] any [tone] painting must contain music strong enough to survive on its own, so that the ear's pleasure does not depend on the eye.⁵

Nevertheless, he did add, in avuncular fashion, 'we imagine Loewe lacks a friend to give him advice, someone who can tell him this; we hope he will accept us in this capacity,

⁴ Recorded on Volume One of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0278.

⁵ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, 17 November 1835; translations from John Salmon, *The Piano Sonatas of Carl Loewe*, Peter Lang, Bern, 1996, p. 20.

since, for what it's worth, we value him so highly'. And he did conclude by saying: 'we strongly recommend this sonata'.

The first movement, 'Der erwachende Morgen' ('Break of day') [1], is in strict sonata form with a slow introduction. It begins mysteriously in G minor, accompanied by a quotation from the German poet, Ludwig Uhland:

Noch ahnt man kaum der Sonne Licht, noch sind die Morgenglocken nicht im finstern
Thal erklungen. Wie still des Waldes weiter Raum! Die Vöglein zwitschern nur im Traum,
kein Sang hat sich erschwungen.⁶

From long note-values with shimmering trills in the right hand that paint a misty dawn, there is a gradual increase in movement as the note-values become ever shorter to depict an increase in activity. Birds can be heard calling (Loewe had written an essay on bird calls), and the dawn progresses to bright sunshine as the music erupts into a joyful G major arpeggio to celebrate the day, 'Morgenfeier'. A more lyrical theme serves as a transition to the second subject, marked *con espressione religioso*. The development begins with an atmospheric horn-call (dismissed by Schumann as being too simple), over a long pedal bass. Both this passage, the following repeated-quaver figure and the ensuing section consist of new material, repeated sequentially in different keys to build up into a storm-like climax. The recapitulation is an exact repetition of the exposition, resulting in one of Loewe's more infelicitous modulations into the second subject.

'Naturleben', the second movement [2], is oddly translated into French as 'Grand Jour'. A quirky movement with the unusual time-signature of $\frac{4}{8}$, it is a mixture of sonata rondo and variations, as the theme alternates with other episodes, but is varied on each return. It is characterised by frequent offbeat accents, beginning with the opening theme, thereby giving the impression of a rather foursquare country dance.

'Gang zu ländlichen Gruppen' ('Walk to Rustic Groups') [3] depicts the contrasting groups who live in or visit the countryside. It begins with a contrapuntal theme that is

⁶ 'The sun's light can barely be sensed, the morning bells have not yet rung in the dark valley. How quiet it is in the wood's space! The birds only twitter in their dreams, no song has broken out yet' – from 'Morgenlied', the first of Uhland's *Wanderlieder* of 1806, published in 1815.

clearly related to that of the scherzo in Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, but continues with a vaguely modal section marked 'Da villa', representing bucolic peasants dancing with heavily accented hemiolas. A change of tempo to a suave $\frac{6}{8}$ *Andantino* introduces the sophisticated 'Dacitta' [*sic*] ('From the city'). All three sections are repeated, but with different modulations, and with the initial contrapuntal section being built up with faster note-values and octave jumps. The movement culminates with a thunderingly virtuosic rendering of the opening and a final rustic drone in the bass.

Whereas many Classical sonatas finish with a fast showpiece, here Loewe mirrors the slow build-up to daybreak in the opening movement with a gentle winding-down to represent the close of day [4]. The movement is in sonata form, though, unusually, the second theme, a Weberesque rising figure, is in the sub-dominant (C major) rather than the dominant. Striking features include Loewe's use of the full stretch of the compass at that period, creating deep, almost orchestral, sonorities; a dramatic cross-hand section that might recall Schubert were it not for the fact that Loewe could not have heard Schubert's music in 1824 (Schubert's sonatas were first published in 1826); and sliding chromatic modulations that prefigure those of Wagner. The movement as a whole has a static quality due to the many repeated-note figures (opening theme) and long pedal basses (the development), reinforcing the feeling of gradual deceleration, leading to the hymn-like coda, marked *adagio*.

***Biblische Bilder*, Op. 96 (1844)**

That Loewe should have written a set of pieces based on stories from the New Testament is not surprising. He was brought up in a religious household and he studied both music and theology in Halle, gaining a degree in the latter subject. Following his studies, his appointment in Stettin included serving as director of music at the St Jakobi church, and he wrote seventeen oratorios and a number of cantatas. Moreover, he himself disliked any music that might have been written, as he saw it, as mere show, and felt that it should always have a higher purpose (he particularly disliked Chopin's *Études*). His appearance has been described as having 'Simplicity,

uprightness and a sincere (because true) childlike quality,⁷ and these elements shine through in these three pieces perhaps more than in any other of Loewe's works.

Although pictorial illustrations of biblical stories have been legion over the centuries, musical representations are rare, and obviously more difficult to relate directly to the content. Of the three pieces in Loewe's *Biblische Bilder* ('Biblical Pictures'), the music of the first [5] may offer the most obvious illustration of the story. In Jerusalem there was a pool, known as Bethesda, the waters of which were stirred up by an angel at certain times, and whoever was the first to enter the pool thereafter might be cured of any disease or disability. Jesus visited the pool and found a sick man who had been paralysed for many years but was unable to enter the waters quickly enough after they had been stirred. Does the stumbling dotted figure of the opening depict his inability to walk, the harmonies and *appogiature* his deep sadness? And might the following swirling semiquaver section represent the waters that had been stirred up? Jesus, seeing the man's distress, cured him and bade him take up his bed, expressed by an *una corda* hymnal passage that ends with a plagal cadence. In the final section, marked *Più vivace, sentendo nuova sforza* ('Livelier, feeling new strength'), the dotted rhythm of the opening is transformed into a joyful paean of praise to the Lord, as the cripple is cured.

In 'The Road to Emmaus' [6] two disciples are travelling to Emmaus just after the Crucifixion and Resurrection. They are deep in discussion, bemoaning the events of the previous days, when Jesus appears to them, but in disguised form. They describe to Him their shock and distress at what has happened, but He comforts them and eventually they ask Him to join them for dinner. During the course of dinner they recognise Him and realise that He has indeed arisen. Loewe is quite specific about the verses to which he is alluding, which in fact only cover the last part of their walk and the invitation to dinner (but not the dinner itself). His movement has the direction *con malinconia santa* ('with holy melancholy') and takes the form of a set of variations in which the theme appears in different registers of the piano; the tension is built up through the use of increasingly complex harmonies and increased dynamics, climaxing in a *fortissimo*

⁷ Reinhold Sietz, *Carl Loewe: ein Gedenkbuch zum 150. Geburtstag*, Staufen, Cologne, 1948, p. 22.

with accents. The melancholy of B minor is finally resolved in the peace of the last two B major chords.

'Martha und Maria' [7] is a well-known tale, in which Jesus is visiting the sisters' house, where Martha is bustling about doing household chores while Mary chooses to listen to Jesus' sayings instead. Martha asks Jesus whether Mary should not be helping her instead of sitting around, but Jesus replies that Mary has chosen a higher way – to follow His teachings. One might draw parallels between the contrapuntal, busy writing of the opening *Allegro innocentemente, sempre piacevole* and Martha's running around working in the house. The ensuing *Recit.* could be her questioning Jesus, the emphatic *Grave maestoso* that follows His answer. The final *Adagio* offers some of Loewe's most affecting writing, a direct expression of his faith.

The *Biblische Bilder* could be criticised for being conservative for 1844 – pianistically, formally and harmonically. None of the three pieces introduces any imaginative use of piano sonorities; they are all in simple 'block' forms that repeat rather than develop their material; they modulate only to closely related keys; and none has the Wagnerian chromatic harmonies found, for example, in *Mazeppa* (1828) or the *Grande Sonate*, Op. 16 (1819).⁸ They are also technically easier than most of Loewe's other piano music. All of these points can be ascribed to the serious nature of the subject matter, and possibly to the kind of consumer for whom they were intended. Loewe must have been more than usually concerned to avoid any kind of empty virtuosic show in the piano writing; the forms are dictated by the stories; and in wishing to express the stories as directly and sincerely as possible, he is avoiding any overly complex harmonies. Moreover, this repertoire was probably intended for accomplished amateurs, who could combine music-making with worship. Thus the merit of the pieces lies precisely in their very simplicity and sincerity, an expression of Loewe's own character and beliefs.

⁸ Also recorded on Volume One of this series, Toccata Classics TOCC 0278.

Grande Sonate Brillante in E flat major, Op. 41 (1819)

For Loewe the challenge of writing his first sonata must have been huge. With his intense admiration for Beethoven and the latter's development of the sonata, in conjunction with Loewe's belief that the sonata was the 'best founded form, and not to be improved', it must have been hard to know how he could make his own mark in the medium. Still a student in Halle, and having recently met Weber, Loewe approached the form by thinking of it as a larger unit, linking the movements motivically while adhering to a Classical sonata structure. As usual, Schumann was scathing of his achievement, and felt that the use of a single motif was too obvious and simplistic. Nevertheless, Loewe's approach was novel and has the germs of the later-nineteenth-century idea of *Leitmotive*.

Much of the material of the *Allegro* first movement [8] is based on the opening two bars, which announce a dotted octave figure and then three falling notes in the left hand. This shape is taken up and repeated by the right hand, the dotted figure now following the pattern of three falling notes. The second theme, unusually in F major (the dominant of the dominant), is also based on the three falling notes, with a hiccupping accompaniment in the left hand. As in his later works, Loewe has a propensity to repeat blocks, building up to a climax with a long *crescendo* and increasingly virtuosic writing towards the end of the development. The development transforms the benign opening theme to create a menacing atmosphere with clashes of a ninth and diminished sevenths, after which the recapitulation slips in almost unnoticed. In terms of pianism, the movement is conservative, still Classical in the clarity of the textures, the influence of both Weber and Hummel very apparent.

The second movement [9], which begins with an *Andantino* marked *tenero con espressione* ('tender with expression'), is in a combined ternary/variation structure, all based once again on the three falling notes. The opening statement of the theme is typical of Loewe; rather rigidly in eight-bar phrases, with the same rhythm repeated every two bars, but with a touching directness of expression. In his review of Op. 41,⁹ Schumann

⁹ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, loc. cit.; translation in Salmon, op. cit., p. 217.

declared himself enraged by the ubiquity of the little three-note theme, but even he was moved to admit that Loewe's music was 'abounding in heartfelt and profound song'. In the first 'variation' a left-hand semiquaver accompaniment is added, which leads to the dramatic minor-key middle section, marked *Allegro agitato*, featuring the three falling notes both as theme and then as accompaniment. The third and last section, *Adagio non troppo lento*, states the theme twice, first with florid decorations in the right hand, then with a triplet accompaniment in the left. The movement winds down with some unexpected harmonies, including an augmented eleventh, all motion suspended for four bars before resolving into the home key of A flat major.

Loewe follows the normal Classical practice of having a scherzo as the third movement [10] but, unusually, it has no trio as such. It is nonetheless in ABA form and so is in some measure related to the scherzo/minuet-plus-trio pattern, although with no repeats. The two sections are more closely integrated than is normal with a scherzo and trio; the 'Trio' inverts the falling scale of the Scherzo, and extends the oscillating semiquaver figure from four notes to six. However, the two sections are strongly contrasted in character, the Scherzo being brilliant with numerous *sforzandi*, the 'Trio' graceful and charming. It hardly modulates, but is remarkable for the repeated use of an augmented eleventh over an unresolved bass line, so that the music seems to float, directionless.

Although Loewe was criticised for not having as fluent a technique as, for example, Chopin or Mendelssohn, this sonata-rondo finale [11] does make considerable demands on the player, involving both hands in leaps, arpeggios and almost unceasing running passages. The movement opens with the same scale as had featured in the 'Trio', thus drawing that movement, unrelated thematically as it is to the first two, into the overall scheme. There are awkwardnesses that reveal Loewe's inexperience: for example, the sudden twist into F major in the sixth bar, and the unconvincing chromatic scale before the third return of the theme. It is also obvious that Loewe had heard and admired Weber's piano music – at least two of the themes could have been written by him – and yet the movement successfully rounds off the sonata, drawing together the various threads and providing a fittingly virtuosic climax.

***Abendfantasie*, Op. 11 (1817)**

Although Loewe had written a number of ballads by 1817, the *Abendfantasie* ('Evening Fantasy') [12] is his first work for piano solo, published in 1828 by Wagenführ in Berlin. The improvisatory nature of the opening may give the listener a taste of Loewe's known talent for extemporisation: the first questioning, fragmented phrases lead to an explosive semiquaver passage, the material of which is then combined with the opening phrases. It's a curious work for a first attempt at composing for the piano, but already highlights certain characteristics of Loewe's writing: the deceptively organised symmetrical form (ABCBA), the return of certain motifs, and the use of sound for sound's sake (the middle, c, section, which repeats the same chord but leads nowhere). Loewe the innovator makes an appearance in the *alla Polacca*; this marking can be found in the works of earlier composers, but here is a clear precursor of Chopin's *Polonaises*, not only rhythmically but also in the decorative flourishes of the right hand (Chopin was only seven years old in 1817).

In his autobiography Loewe admitted himself that he hated altering anything he had written: 'Ich habe nie das Aendern an meinen Arbeiten geliebt. Manches blieb in ihnen zu wünschen übrig, doch wie einmal das Manuscript lautete, so musste es bleiben'.¹⁰ For me it is the immediacy of his expression, together with a charm and simplicity, that makes his music compelling. These characteristics, and the combination of elements of Classicism with a forward-looking Romanticism, should secure Loewe a firm place in the piano repertoire of the early nineteenth century. As Schumann said, despite his stringent criticism: 'We value him so highly'.¹¹

¹⁰ 'I have never liked altering anything in my works. Something might seem to be superfluous, but however it was in the manuscript, so it had to stay' – in *Dr. Carl Loewes Selbstbiographie*, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹¹ *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, *loc. cit.*; translation in Salmon, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

The Piano used in this Recording

Piano by Erard in Paris, production number 14.854, c. 1839, property of Westdeutscher Rundfunk. The keyboard cover is richly inlaid in brass with the company trademark: 'PAR BREVET D'INVENTION, ERARD, PARIS' ('By patent for invention, Erard, Paris'). Case of rosewood with carvings; compass CC-g4; two pedals, damping and *una corda*.

The piano-building firm of Erard had been established in the latter part of the eighteenth century by Sébastien Erard, an extremely talented maker of both harps and pianos. The modern piano is largely dependent on his inventions, in particular the 'double-escapement', which he patented in 1808 and further developed in 1821, through which it was possible to repeat notes much more quickly. Upon Sébastien's death in 1831, the firm was taken over by his nephew, Pierre, who continued to make fine instruments that were in demand worldwide. The Schumanns, Mendelssohn, Liszt and Brahms were all Erard enthusiasts, Brahms to such an extent that he refused to give the premiere of his First Piano Concerto in Hamburg in 1858 because the best instrument there, an Erard, was unavailable. The instrument used here is typical of the make at this period in its range of tonal colours, the contrast in sound between the different registers and a clarity that extends from the bottom to the top of the keyboard compass.



Photograph: Paul Müller



Photograph: Paul Müller

Linda Nicholson is one of the foremost keyboard players specialising in the performance of Baroque, Classical and early Romantic music on instruments of the period. She won the first two international competitions held for the fortepiano, the Concours International du Pianoforte in Paris and the Festival of Flanders Competition in Bruges, and since then has performed in major festivals and concert series throughout Europe and the Far East. Her broad repertoire encompasses solo works, chamber music and concertos.

She has performed many of the Mozart concertos with outstanding period orchestras, among them Les Arts Florissants, The Academy of Ancient Music, The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and the Cappella Coloniensis. With the last-named she made three albums of Mozart concertos in a co-production between Westdeutscher Rundfunk and Capriccio.

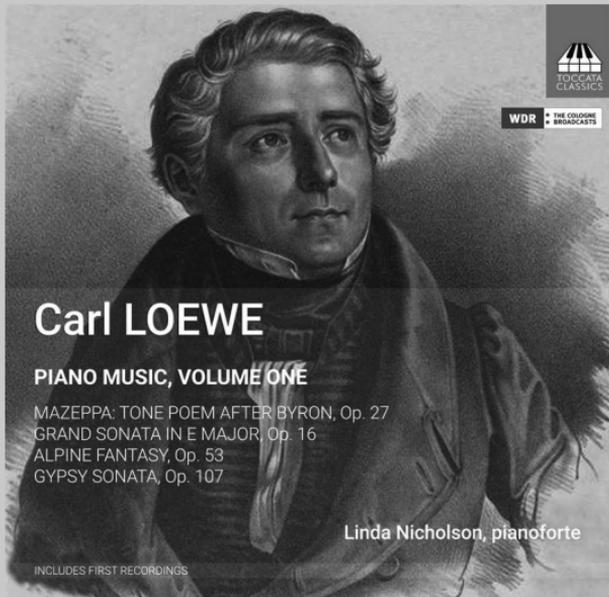
Linda is a founder member of the London Fortepiano Trio, and has worked for some twenty years with the distinguished violinist Hiro Kurosaki. Together they have recorded the complete violin sonatas of both Mozart (for Westdeutscher Rundfunk/Erato) and Beethoven (for Westdeutscher Rundfunk/Accent). Solo recordings in recent years – besides this series of Carl Loewe's complete piano music for Toccata Classics – include Mozart piano sonatas (Accent), which won the 'Diapason d'Or'; Beethoven *Bagatelles* and other pieces (also Accent); and *Discovering the Piano*, a compendium of the earliest works for the piano (Passacaille), which won the highest-rated 'Diapason d'Or' in February 2017.

In addition to her performing activities Linda teaches privately and gives masterclasses – for example, in Warsaw as part of the Early Music Festival in Wilanow and at the Konservatorium in Vienna. She has frequently been a juror for the fortepiano competition Musica Antiqua in Bruges.



photo: Christopher Sturman

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‘Linda Nicholson plays [...] with great character and it’s splendid how she brings such assurance to the upper and lower voicings [...]. In fact the registral changes are a most impressive component: both her playing and the piano’s particular sound. [...] This splendidly realised project has got off to an ebullient start. The WDR studio acoustic is very clear, [...] allowing for a great amount of detail to be savoured.’

Jonathan Woolf, MusicWeb International



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| <p>David MATTHEWS COMPLETE STRING QUARTETS, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE MATTHEWS TRANSCRIPTIONS COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR</p> <p>Wendell Quaker</p> | <p>Heinrich Wilhelm ERNST COMPLETE WORKS, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE WORKS, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE WORKS, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE WORKS, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE WORKS, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE WORKS, VOLUME TEN</p> <p>Sharon Lynn, viola Ian Robinson, piano</p> | <p>Charles O'BRIEN COMPLETE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC, VOLUME SIX</p> <p>Leslie Sampson, Oboe Paul Mann</p> | <p>Vlaslas JAKUBENAS THE SONG OF THE EXILES AND THE DEPORTEES COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> <p>Wojciech Muzniak, Oboe Justina Muris Esterne Aguilera, conductor</p> | <p>Pauline VIARDOT SONGS COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> <p>Ira K. Greenberg, Violon Lester Angeleri, piano</p> |
| <p>John WORGAN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> <p>Timothy Nelson</p> | <p>Grigori FRID COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE MUSIC FOR VIOLA AND PIANO, VOLUME TEN</p> <p>Alexander WUST</p> <p>Elena Artyukova, viola Christopher Gable, piano</p> | <p>Leonid SABANEYEV PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> <p>Jonathan Powell</p> | <p>Guy ROPARTZ PIANO MUSIC COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> <p>Stephanie McCaffan</p> | <p>Ernst KRENEK COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO CONCERTOS, VOLUME TEN</p> <p>Michael Epstein English Symphony Orchestra Kathleen Wozniak</p> |
| <p>William (William) GAYAX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> | <p>Erik FREY COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> | <p>Ferenc FARKAS COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> | <p>Mieczyslaw WYZANSKI COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> | <p>Joseph NYELANDT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TWO COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME THREE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FOUR COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME FIVE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SIX COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME SEVEN COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME EIGHT COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME NINE COMPLETE PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME TEN</p> |

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