

Program notes by Peter Roennfeldt – Fortepiano and Friends 2003-2009

No.1 – *The French Connection*, 7 May 2003

Schobert – Violin sonata in A Op.9 No.2

Jadin – Sonata in C minor Op.5 No.3

Mozart – Sonata in A minor K.310 and *Variations on 'Hélas, j'ai perdu mon amant'* K.360

The music of France in the late 18th century could not but be affected by dramatic political events. Between the 1760s and the 1790s, Paris witnessed the reign of the last of the Bourbon kings Louis XVI and his Austrian queen Marie Antionette, the storming of the Bastille, the Reign of Terror, the execution of the monarchy, and the rise of Napoleon. The *Ancien Régime* had produced the circumstances which supported major musical traditions at the Opéra, the Chapelle Royale, and various concert venues such as the Concert Spirituel. Such was the musical life in Paris when Mozart visited first in the early 1760s and again in the late 1770s. By the 1790s much of this had been disbanded or reinvented, with an emphasis on publicly subsidised music with the establishment of institutions such as the Paris Conservatoire in 1795. The commercial side of music was also affected by political events, with varied fortunes of publishing houses or piano making firms such as Pleyel.

Tonight's program samples some of the music composed in France by its resident or visiting musicians. Mozart is clearly the most familiar of these nowadays, while the significance of Jadin, Schobert and Dussek becomes clearer on examination of their musical connections and life events. Schobert was already well established in Paris when the Mozart family visited in 1763. During his second visit in 1778, Mozart could have accepted a position as organist in Versailles – patronage through the royal connections of the Austrian-born Marie Antionette would have followed. The Bohemian pianist Dussek, however, did work closely with the French court, causing him to flee in 1789 and not return for another 15 years. Jadin, on the other hand, came from a local family of musicians, was born in Versailles, and later took up a position of piano professor in the newly established Conservatoire.

Johann Schobert was probably born in Silesia c.1735, and arrived in Paris in 1760 where he joined Gossec's chamber orchestra. Although the young Mozart wrote rather disparagingly of Schobert's 'envy and jealousy' the influence on the younger composer is clear. The advances Schobert made within the 'accompanied' keyboard sonata are reflected in several of Mozart's early violin works (those up to K.15), while the second movement of his early piano concerto K.39 is an arrangement of a Schobert violin sonata. While the violin part in his *Symphonie (Sonata) Op.9 No.2* on the whole plays a secondary role to the piano's right hand, its removal or absence can not be contemplated – in this sense it is a true obbligato part. Composed in three movements, the work begins with a dynamic timbre reminiscent of the Mannheim orchestral style. This is followed by a typically French siciliano (similar to the theme of first movement of Mozart's Sonata in A, K.331) and Menuetto. In an age when life and survival was comparatively tenuous, Schobert joined the list of promising careers cut tragically short – he and his family died from mushroom poisoning in 1767.

Hyacinthe Jadin is something of a musical enigma. His virtuoso gifts are evident in his solo keyboard sonatas, which were published in sets of three during his last years. The predominance of minor keys, explosive brilliant passages, and unexpected turns of phrase demonstrate a skill for creating an individual voice. These characteristics can be seen in the *Sonata in c minor Op.5 No.3*, which appeared in about 1795 by which time Jadin was a prominent figure in Parisian life. His debut at the Concert Spirituel occurred only months before the fall of the Bastille, after which he spent several years working as accompanist in the main theatres, followed by concerts for the Institut National de Musique, the forerunner of the Conservatoire. In an age when other artists were struggling for survival and support, Jadin had a rare combination for musical creativity and adaptability.

The visits of Mozart to Paris are well documented. While he repeatedly criticized the local fashions for virtuoso display and bombast, Mozart knew how to capitalize on such trends to create some of the most unusual works in his entire output. After visiting Mannheim where the vibrant school of orchestral music was in its last days, Mozart arrived in Paris in March 1778, only to experience the life changing event of the unexpected death of his mother four months later. Hints of his growing independence from fatherly dominance are seen in some of his letters, but after some months of indecision and additional visits to various cities, he returned to his birthplace Salzburg by the end of the year. The visit to Paris was not without its benefits however – a chance to renew his acquaintance with Johann Christian Bach who was then visiting Paris, several performances of chamber works and the 'Paris' Symphony, and contacts with publishers, were opportunities which Mozart did enjoy. In 1782 for instance, he published three sonatas composed variously in Mannheim and Paris as his Op.4 – this set comprises the three sonatas K.309-311 inclusive.

Whereas the other sonatas of this set are bright and orchestral in tone, the *Sonata in A minor K.310* is considerably darker in mood. While it is inadvisable to directly link too many personal events to specific works by Mozart, knowing that his beloved mother had died around the time of this work's germination does provide a point of reference. No

other piano work is an incessant in its energy (the first movement hardly breathes!), or as dark in its textures - the pounding chords of the opening sound to best advantage on the fortepiano with its comparative clarity. Such aspects are often associated with Schobert, who is again an influence here - in the second movement Mozart quotes one of violin sonatas Op.17. Several years later Mozart recalled his Parisian experiences with his charming but not necessarily innocent *Variations on 'Hélas, j'ai perdu mon amant'* K.360. Most typically French is the 6/8 time signature, and possibly also the thicker keyboard textures and virtuoso brilliance much admired by Parisian audiences.

About the instrument

This fortepiano was acquired by Queensland Conservatorium in 2000 with assistance from a Griffith University Research Infrastructure Grant. It was previously owned by Cornell University under the curatorship of the eminent fortepianist Malcolm Bilson. The instrument is about twenty years old, having been built by Bakemann in Seattle in the style of Walther c.1795. Walther's instruments were highly regarded by composers such as Haydn, and represent one of the final phases of the Viennese style instrument. As such, there are no foot pedals - only a knee lever (moderator) for sostenuto, and a mute stop which produces an actual *una corda* (one string per notes rather than the normal two). The range is 5 octaves plus one note. Characteristics of the tone are high level of clarity in all registers, and the extreme sensitivity to nuance which invites the player to investigate the finest details of articulation.

No.2 - The English Connection, 5 September 2003

JC Bach - Sonata in G major Op.17 No.4

Haydn - *Arianna a Naxos* HXXVIb:2

Clementi - Sonata in b minor Op.40 No.2

Beethoven - Seven variations on *God save the King* WoO 78

London was one of the most cosmopolitan musical centres during the 18th century. Since the early 1700s many Italian or Italian-trained singers, instrumentalists and composers were welcomed to England, notably Handel, Bononcini and Geminiani. This trend continued later in the century, with composer-performers such as JCBach, Clementi, Dussek, and others taking up residency there for substantial periods. Visits by the Mozarts and Haydn confirmed London as a focal point for the musical world, a phenomenon which continued in the early nineteenth century with musicians such as Moscheles resident there and others such as Mendelssohn making frequent visits.

England also has a close link with the early development of the fortepiano, with a rare combination of creative endeavour, musical excellence, and the manufacturing base as the British Isles took the lead in the early years of the industrial revolution. Particularly during the years of the Seven Years' War and later the French Revolution, London benefited from various émigrés, both musicians and instrument builders, taking up residence. Thus the careers of J.C.Bach (who is credited with the first public solo performance on the new instrument in 1768), and the touring virtuoso Clement (who also established his own piano business comprising teaching, publishing and manufacturing) sit fortuitously alongside those of Schudi, Broadwood and Pleyel whose pianos were highly regarded. Both the pianos of Broadwood and the works of Clementi were much admired by Beethoven, who preferred richer orchestral sonorities over the more transparent approach of the Viennese style. This program offers a snapshot of this seminal period in the life of the piano, namely the 'English school'.

Johann Christian Bach, the youngest son of the Leipzig master, had settled in London in 1761 after several years' working in Italy in opera and catholic church music. Thus his German background has been largely Italianised before his arrival in England, much like Handel several decades before. The pre-eminence of the Bach family in keyboard music however is undeniable, as demonstrated in his two sets of important solo sonatas Op.5 (1768) and Op.17 (1779). The *Sonata in G major Op.17 No.4* is representative of these publications, being in two movements with a preference for the lighter textures of the 'style galant'. A notable resemblance with the sonata's opening theme and that of Mozart's Sonata in B flat K.333 is reminiscent of the close relationship these two composers had – their acquaintance commenced in the early 1760s during the Mozart family's extended visit to London, and was renewed in the late 1770s when both composers were visiting Paris.

The inclusion of the cantata *Arianna a Naxos* in this program is due to the fact this work was one of the most popular works by Haydn at the time of his first London visit – the composer himself played the piano part at a performance in February 1791, soon after his arrival. The work was repeated soon afterwards due to popular demand. Haydn's late piano sonatas and trios are clearly influenced by the current English style developed by Clementi, with richer textures and fuller chords in the low range, dazzling virtuosity and rather dramatic internal contrasts. Some of this approach is also seen in the keyboard writing in this cantata, though the choice of F minor as the key of the closing section can also be traced to Haydn's emotive 'Sturm und Drang' period of the early 1770s. The story of the abandoned Arianna has inspired settings from Monteverdi through to Richard Strauss – Haydn's is one of the most inspired examples, with careful depiction of the mood changes and the protagonist's inner torment. Contemporary reports in the English press indicate that this cantata definitely added to Haydn's stature, although he was primarily recruited by Salamon to produce orchestral works for his highly popular concerts: "Nothing is talked of – nothing sought after by Haydn's Cantata ... it abounds with such a variety of dramatic modulations ... that is touched and dissolved the audience. They speak of it with rapturous recollection, and Haydn's Canata will accordingly be the musical *desideratum* for the winter." Rossini considered it to be Haydn's best vocal work apart from his oratorios – high praise indeed. The work is structured in a series of accompanied recitatives and arias, the second of which breaks into a furious tempo in the minor mode which is unrelenting in its tension until the very end.

Clementi's claim to being of Italian background is balanced by his migration to England around 1766 at the age of fourteen under the protection of his patron, Peter Beckford. When he commenced his busy touring schedule, contact with the continent was renewed, but increasingly Clementi was identified with an English dialect in terms of keyboard composition. His technical demands outstrip those of his contemporaries in some respects – double thirds, octaves, thicker chords, as well as a strong preference for lyrical writing in the middle register. His large stable of students furthered this style of playing – Cramer, Therese Jansen (for whom Haydn wrote several works), and later John Field. Through publications he also influenced the young Beethoven, in technical terms as well as formal aspects such as the use of slow introductions and developmental techniques. All of these features abound in the *Sonata in b minor Op.40*

No.2, published in 1802 at the time of the composer's most expansive works and the height of his international reputation. The resemblance to Beethoven can be seen in the expansive introduction and the vigorous themes of the first movement. The brief slow movement is in fact also in the form of an introduction, breaking off abruptly before the impatient theme of the finale appears – the return of the slow section before the coda is another formal experiment which would have been of interest to Beethoven.

Beethoven is represented on this program because of his anglophile interests noted above, and also because of the theme of these variations, the national hymn *God save the King*. It is unclear why the composer was interested in setting this and another patriotic British song 'Rule Britannia' in 1802, while he was working on his 'Eroica' symphony which was conceived as a homage to Napoleon. Quite possibly Beethoven accepted a commission from an anglophile colleague, momentarily putting aside his egalitarian political views. The connection with the British Isles did however continue in various ways, notably with his settings of dozens of folksongs which were published between 1814 and 1822. The *God save the King variations* are rather conventional, but hallmarks of the composer's athletic keyboard style abound – marchlike rhythms, chords alternating across multiple registers, and the hymnic slow section before the exuberant finale.

No.3 - Keyboard works by Franz Josef Haydn, 6 April 2005

Sonata No.41 in A major HXVI:26

Trio No.40 in f sharp minor HXV:26

Sonata No.46 in E major HXVI:31

This year *Fortepiano and Friends* focuses on the keyboard works of Franz Josef Haydn. While not a virtuoso performer himself, Haydn had a lifelong association with the keyboard family in various roles from composer, teacher, director, and only occasionally as soloist. As was the practice in the 18th century, most composers directed their larger works from the keyboard, whether or not the continuo function was any longer required for musical purposes. For example, it was accepted, and in fact expected, that Haydn would appear 'at the keyboard' when he presented his latest sets of symphonies at the renowned London concerts in the 1790s.

The works chosen for this year's concerts are deliberately balanced and contrasted in terms of mood, key, and instrumentation. Tonight's concert features two sonatas and a trio, all in sharp keys, while the second and final concert in November features two trios and a sonata, all in flat keys. In both instances, the central work is in the minor mode, while the outer works on each program are in major. Furthermore, the sonatas all come from the decade leading up to 1780, while the trios all date from the 1790s.

Such was Haydn's interest in the keyboard medium – after composing sonatas extensively for patrons, students and colleagues in his earlier years, trio 'accompanied' sonata with violin and cello eventually took pre-eminence in his later output, with nearly thirty works composed after 1784, of which about half are associated with his London visits of the 1790s or the period immediately thereafter. In contrast, there are only ten solo piano sonatas from the same period, with only three being written in the 1790s. Therefore, in many ways the mature trios reflect a continuation and further exploration of the keyboard medium to which he had contributed since the 1760s, with the cello performing a bass line role not unlike the baroque continuo function in its doubling of the pianist's left hand, and the violin being a close partner or collaborator with the right hand.

The *Trio in f sharp minor HXV:26* is comparatively more introverted, with only brief moments of brilliance or rhythmic energy. The remote keys which Haydn explores become more of the musical focus – as far afield as E flat minor in the first movement, and the extremely bright parallel key of F sharp major in the middle section of the Minuet finale. F sharp major is also the key of the middle movement, which was virtually adopted verbatim as the slow movement of Symphony No.102, also composed for London in 1794-5. This work is one of a set of three works dedicated to Madame Rebecca Schroeter, widow of the composer Johann Samuel Schroeter, and who became a close acquaintance of Haydn during his London visits.

No.4 - Keyboard works by Franz Josef Haydn, 2 November 2005

Trio in B flat Hob XV:20

Sonata in c minor Hob.XVI:20

Trio in A flat Major Hob XV:14

This year *Fortepiano and Friends* focuses on the keyboard works of Franz Josef Haydn. While not a virtuoso performer himself, Haydn had a lifelong association with the keyboard family in various roles from composer, teacher, director, and only occasionally as soloist. As was the practice in the 18th century, most composers directed their larger works from the keyboard, whether or not the continuo function was any longer required for musical purposes. For example, it was accepted, and in fact expected, that Haydn would appear 'at the keyboard' when he presented his latest sets of symphonies at the renowned London concerts in the 1790s.

The works chosen for this year's concerts are deliberately balanced and contrasted in terms of mood, key, and instrumentation. The first concert featured two sonatas and a trio, all in sharp keys, while the second and final concert presented tonight features two trios and a sonata, all in flat keys. In both instances, the central work is in the minor mode, while the outer works on each program are in major. Furthermore, the sonatas all come from the decade leading up to 1780, while the trios all date from the 1790s.

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The *Trio in A flat Major Hob XV:14* was published in 1790, only a few months before Haydn left on his first trip to London. The work was performed there, by 'Master Hummel at Mr. Salomon's Concerts' and therefore one might well consider this work as a summation of the idiom alongside his London symphonies. The experimentation with modulations to, or juxtapositions with, distant keys is one of the many striking features – the development section in the first movement moves to B major, while the slow movement is in E major / minor. The connection to the spirited finale is immediate and surprising, setting the mood for a comical and capricious finale.

The connection with Haydn's London visits is also clear in the case of the *Trio in B flat Hob XV:20*, being composed and published there in 1794. The dedication to Princess Maria Esterhazy is rather poignant, as she was recently widowed at the age of 25. The virtuoso writing of the first movement is rather orchestral in nature, possibly being influenced by the robust English pianos that the composer would have encountered. Other points of interest are the slow movement's variations on a theme which is first heard played by the left hand alone, and the minor key episode in the finale for violin solo which is in the style of a rather rustic waltz.

No.5 Works by Mozart for fortepiano – with and without friends, 19 May 2006

Sonata in A K.331

Quartet in E flat K.493

Concerto in C major 'a quattro' K.415

This evening's program highlights the major instrumental genres through which Mozart explored the texture and tone colour of the fortepiano – the solo sonata, the chamber work, and the concerto. A gifted performer himself, the keyboard served him well throughout his career as a vehicle for his dual virtuoso capabilities as both soloist and composer. The piano was in particular demand in Vienna as one of the greatest instrumental innovations of the late 18th century – Mozart himself described the city as 'Klavierland' when he settled there permanently in the early 1780s. Nearly every household of means boasted an instrument as well as one or more students, creating plenty of work for an itinerant teacher, and also providing the basis of an informed public who might be interested in attending a concert of newly composed works. While much has been written about Mozart's lack of success in gaining regular employment with an understanding patron in his adult years, it is clear that his spirit could not be tamed by the conventional demands of a provincial court setting, as was the case in Salzburg. The works presented tonight each demonstrate an aspect of the composer as an individual voice.

The *Sonata in A major K.331* is unique amongst Mozart's keyboard output – none of the movements conform clearly to the classic sonata form, but instead adopt in turn the outlines of Theme and variation, Minuet and trio, and Rondo. The musical ideas are also rather cosmopolitan, with a rather French sounding theme for the first movement (Mozart wrote this work in Paris), while the Rondo is one of the most celebrated cases of Turkish or Janissary music. Thus the composer balances the elegance of the salon with the raucousness of the military band. The derivation of the 'alla turca' style is quite interesting in that just one hundred years earlier Vienna was suffering its greatest political threat, besieged by the invading Ottomans from the East. Now this exotic influence pervaded a large number of works by western composers – percussive marchlike rhythms, and strong but unsophisticated harmonies.

There appear to be no clear precedents for the unique combination of piano and three string instruments prior to Mozart's two quartets which appeared in 1785 and 1786. While the first of them was criticised for being 'too difficult' for a keen amateur to perform, as well as being in the dark but highly personal key of G minor which it shares with the 40th symphony and other works. The *Quartet in E flat K.493*, on the other hand, is much more amenable and lyrical in mood, but no less interesting in terms of the interplay of instrumental lines. The slow movement is particularly rich in harmonic development and melodic elaboration in the piano part.

The set of three concertos K.413-415 were the first that Mozart composed upon arrival in Vienna. Like the other works on this program, they were quite suitable for a domestic as well as a more public performance situation, in that the wind and brass parts were dispensable. First presented in Vienna concerts in 1781-82, they were published two years later with the indication that an 'a quattro' rendition was quite suitable. The work has all the hallmarks of a typical concerto, but with some particular points of interest such as the opening which is rather similar to the another C major concerto, K.467 with marchlike rhythms. The finale is quite unusual in that two episodes in the minor mode appear quite unexpectedly, the latter with texture changes including pizzicato strings and plaintive viola phrases.

No.6 – Fifty years of music 1757-1807, 18 May 2007

CPE Bach – *L'Auguste* H.122 (1757)

JC Bach - Sonata in D Op.5 No.2 (1768)

Clementi - Duet Sonata in Eb Op.14 No.3 (1782)

Reinagle – 'Philadelphia' Sonata in E (1790)

Dussek - *The Sufferings of the Queen of France* (1793)

Beethoven - Variations on *Rule Britannia* WoO 79 (1803)

Tomasek - Eclogues No.5 and No.6 from Op.35 (1807)

During 2007 the Queensland Conservatorium celebrates its first 50 years since its establishment in 1957 – by way of parallel, this program features works from exactly two centuries prior, namely 1757-1807. Just like the past half century, the late 1700s saw dramatic changes in society and the arts. Most significantly, these years saw a transition from the patronage system that offered a modicum of security in return for 'music on demand', to a situation where the freelance composer might conceivably survive on his commissions, publications and performances.

Only one of the composers represented on this program held long-term positions at courts or with civic employers (CPE Bach), while others benefited from honorary royal and aristocratic appointments which yielded occasional commissions (JC Bach, Dussek). The dawning age of entrepreneurialism is best illustrated by the others who between them demonstrated all the options then available, including self-promotion through commissioned works and concert-giving (Beethoven, Reinagle and Clementi), the latter even extending to piano manufacture and publishing, and the 19th century concept of institutionalised teaching through setting up of a conservatory (Tomasek).

The music selected from these composers' considerable output for the keyboard represents connections with their local context, their patrons, or in some cases the political events of the day. *L'Auguste* is a short character piece in the style of a polonaise. It was composed by CPE Bach in the late 1750s, at a time when he was writing a number of keyboard works personifying people in his social circle, but this work unlikely to be connected with a particular person. By this time, his younger half-brother was seeking his musical destiny far away from his German roots, firstly in Italy and eventually in England. Published in 1768, his 6 sonatas Op.5 appeared in London just as the new fortepiano was gaining public attention through his own efforts and that of his contemporaries. These sonatas are clearly directed towards the burgeoning market of the domestic music-loving amateur, with both energetic and lyrical effects being achieved through rather simple means.

Also recently arrived in England was the Italian Clementi, who began his musical career as the protégé of a wealthy aristocrat, but soon became a very public identity as performer and composer. His duet sonata from Op.14 comes from the early 1780s, around the time of his continental tour which included the famed encounter in a 'competition' with Mozart at the Imperial court in Vienna.

The monarchical system and the socio-political context which supported these types of music-making were increasingly being challenged, firstly with the American wars of independence, the French Revolution and the period of Napoleon. Coming from an Austrian émigré family then living in England, Alexander Reinagle settled in 1786 in the newly established United States of America, even being appointed as music teacher to one of George Washington's daughters. His 'Philadelphia' Sonatas of the early 1790s are imbued with the vivacity of a newly emerging society, and also traces of the 'expressive' style of CPE Bach, whom Reinagle had met in 1784.

The political events in Paris produced a number of commentary works, but possibly none more explicitly than Dussek's *Sufferings of the Queen of France*. The composer was personally affected by the imprisonment and execution of Marie Antoinette in 1793 since only a few years previously he had enjoyed working at Versailles prior to fleeing to safety in England when hostilities broke out. This instrumental melodrama traces the queen's last days in a most descriptive suite of short pieces culminating in an 'Apotheosis'. The well-known story of Beethoven's disenchantment with Napoleon at the time of his self-coronation as Emperor is linked to a number of his instrumental works. By way of showing supporting for Nelson and the English navy as it fought against the French, he produced piano variations on the two most recognisable British patriotic songs during 1803 – 'God save the King' and 'Rule Britannia'.

This program concludes with two examples of the short piano character piece which was to interest 19th century composers far more than the classical sonata. Tomasek was the one of the most important musicians based in Prague at this time, but is also recognised as an early influence on Viennese musicians such as Schubert through his aphoristic piano works – the *Eclogues* Op.35 demonstrate a new approach to keyboard writing that was akin to the 'song without words' phenomenon much admired by music lovers in the new era of middle class domestic music making.

This 50 year journey demonstrates the transition from the classical sonata and variation forms which preoccupied the composers of the late 18th century, to the dawn of the romantic era with its fascination for the piano miniature. It also

shows how the fortepiano had transformed itself from an experimental alternative to the harpsichord in the mid-1700s, to being the instrument of choice for domestic entertainment and concert performance in the early 1800s. As well as being a purely artistic endeavour, piano music also has the potential to comment on social and political events of the day – such was the mood amongst artists and audiences during this most eventful half-century.

No.7 – *The Fortepiano in Italy and the Iberian peninsula, 26 October 2007*

Pistoia – Sonata No.1 in G minor from *Sonate di Cimbalo*

Galuppi – Sonata in A major

D.Scarlatti – Sonata in B minor K.97 and Sonata in D K.492

Soler – Sonata in D minor R.25 and Sonata in F R.5

Arriaga – ‘Estudios de character’ No.2

Boccherini – Quintet in C major *The Nightwatch in Madrid* G.409

The fortepiano was invented in Italy in the early 1700s and was soon adopted throughout Europe, including the various countries of the Mediterranean. Explorers from these same countries had for several centuries ventured into the New World, and explored parts of the Asia-Pacific region. This program traces a musical journey of experimentation and discovery during the 18th century through solo and duo works by Italian and Iberian composers.

The solo keyboard sonata was primarily a Mediterranean phenomenon until the middle decades of the 18th century. During that time the preference was for single movement works or a two movement plan, with each movement normally in two parts, each of which might be repeated with embellishments. The composers represented on this program are some of the key contributors to this genre, and who collectively laid the groundwork for the late 18th century classical sonata. At this stage however, the format was relatively simple, with each section concluding with the same material, the first in a related key, and the final section being in the home key. Keyboard style developed rapidly through this medium, with many of the features of true piano technique being evident in the works of Italian and Iberian composers.

Based in Florence, Giovanni di Pistoia had the opportunity to observe the fortepiano in its earliest stages of development, and as far as can be determined, was the first composer to write specifically for it. His Opus One publication *Sonata Da Cimbalo di piano, e forte ditto volgarmente di martelletti* appeared in 1732, with clear indications of dynamic variation other than the simple echo effects. The *Sonata No.1 in G minor* is in 5 movements, comprising three of the typical dance forms and two opening movements, all in binary form, and thus is somewhat akin to a suite.

Baldassarre Galuppi was born near Venice, and his long career saw him holding the same positions as Monteverdi had at St Mark's Basilica, and a similar role to Vivaldi at one of the Venetian orphanages. He became well known for operas and church music, and spent a few years at the court of Catherine the Great in St Petersburg. His keyboard works have something of the theatrical flair associated with vocal styles, and this *Sonata in A major* is particularly interesting for its harmonic invention.

Domenico Scarlatti and his student Antonio Soler are the chief keyboard composers associated with the court of Spain in the 18th century. Both share a dynamic approach to keyboard technique, such that it has been suggested that the emerging fortepiano as well as the harpsichord could well have been the intended ‘authentic’ instrument. While the harpsichord may have been able to present the guitar-like percussive textures so characteristic of Spanish music, the fortepiano provided opportunities to explore different technical opportunities. In fact, playing these composers on the early piano provides great insight into where some of the idiomatic ‘tricks’ were first invented that separate it from the world of the harpsichord. The two pairs of sonatas presented here display the whole gamut from melodic lyricism to flamboyant extroversion using the full range of the keyboard with large leaps and octave patterns.

Juan Cristósono Arriaga died tragically young, but his output of works including chamber music, a symphony, two operas and various vocal works, are sufficient to have earned him the nickname of ‘the Spanish Mozart’. However there is little that is characteristically Mediterranean about his music – his style is part of the general milieu of the late 18th century, with a particularly warm lyricism. His *Estudios de character* therefore fit well into the emerging genre of the character piece, rather than the sonata model.

Luigi Rodolfo Boccherini was another of the Italians working at the court of Spain during the 18th century. A cellist himself, there are many works for quartet and quintet combinations, including some which are enigmatically appropriate for either keyboard or guitar. His *Quintet in C major* is in three movements, the most interesting of which is the central one, a set of variations *The Nightwatch in Madrid*. Images of a military procession are conjured up through the slow approach to the central climax and the ‘retreat’ back to the softest dynamic levels possible.

No.8 – The 50 variations (not by Beethoven) on a Waltz by Diabelli, 6 March 2008

Anton Diabelli (1781-1858) was an important figure in Viennese music for more than 50 years. As a co-proprietor of the firm *Cappi & Diabelli* in the early 1820s he was responsible for the first publications by songs by Schubert, the final piano works by Beethoven, as well as various compositions by Czerny and Johann Strauss (senior). He is however best known today for having initiated a special project during the years following the Congress of Vienna (1814-15) through an attempt to 'collectivise' Austrian musical talent and celebrate same via a collaborative publication. After issuing his Waltz in C major to virtually all the active 'composers and virtuosos in Vienna and the Royal and Imperial Austrian states' in 1819, with the invitation to compose a single variation, his plan had a rather unintended outcome. Part One of his 'Patriotic Composers' Union' appeared in 1823 in the form of the monumental set of *33 Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Diabelli* Opus 120 by Beethoven, which was to be his last work for solo piano. The elder statesman of music had famously dismissed the theme as being a 'cobbler's patch' but even so saw within it great potential as a basis for a strikingly original set of variations, although as Austria's most famous living composer, he was not satisfied to be merely 'first among equals'.

The following year saw the appearance of Part Two, now under the auspices of *Diabelli & Co.* with exactly fifty interpretations of the rather simplistic waltz theme. The list of contributors is an unparalleled and rather astonishing variety of musical personalities and age groups, ranging from the 11 year-old 'youth from Hungary' Franz Liszt (in his very first publication – No.24), to the 76 year old Maximilian Stadler (No.41). Whereas Stadler would live more than another 10 years, his exact contemporary Emanuel Aloys Förster had passed away in 1823, just prior to the publication of what was to be his final composition. When considering that that oldest of these was born in 1748 and the youngest died in 1886, it is rather extraordinary that a single publication can form a network of connections that span across approximately 120 years of musical history.

It appears that Diabelli's intention was to avoid any hierarchical ordering of contributions, since the composers' variations are published purely in alphabetical order, irrespective of their relative length, key, genre and tempo. While it might be argued that such an egalitarian approach prevents any broader conceptualisation of the work as a satisfying and coherent entity, a number of both planned and unplanned structural landmarks make for a reasonably effective structure. The most clearly deliberate attempt to tie the work together was the commissioning by Diabelli a culminating Coda by Carl Czerny, who appears earlier in Variation 4. Relatively early in the work, the predictable pattern of the theme's symmetrical binary structure is broken by two through-composed settings, a 'Quasi Overture' by Drechsler (No.7) and a Capriccio (No.8) by the aforementioned Förster. The juxtaposition of two variations in A flat by the Moravian Horzalka (No.14) and Hüglmann (No.15) provides a similar circuit-breaker in terms of key, as do those which similarly avoid C major – Kerkowsky's in F (No.20), Liszt's in C minor (No.24), Panny's in A minor (No.29), Riotte's in F minor / major (No.34), Roser's in A flat (No.35) and Schubert's in C minor (No.38). A number of 'genre' variations are evident, such as the Austrian Ländler by Mayseder (No.25), the Capriccio by Schenk (No.36), 3 part canonic invention by Sechter (No.39), Fuga by Archduke Rudolf (No.40), and Polonaise by Tomaschek (No.43).

The collective of artists comprises a majority of pianist-composers, including some of the most famous virtuoso performers of the day, such as Hummel (No.16), Kalkbrenner – who was then visiting Vienna briefly (No.18), Moscheles (No.26), Pixis (No.31), and Friedrich Weber (No.45). Various other virtuoso pianists whose fame did not extend beyond their region or lifetime include Czapek (No.3), Hoffmann (No.13), Plachy (No.32), Schoberlechner (No.37) and Szalay (No.42). Interestingly, also included are a number of string playing composers, namely the violinist Bocklet (No.2) and the violist Weiss (No.48), both of whom performed with the famous Schuppanzigh. Vienna's fame as a theatrical and operatic centre is indicated by the various Kapellmeister / conductors represented – Gänsbacher (No.10), Kreutzer (No.21), Mosel (No.27), Payer (No.30), and Umlauf (No.44), as well as a few who were active within the Imperial Chapel such as Assmayr (No.1) and Dietrichstein (No.6) who founded the music collection within the court library. Also represented are various publisher colleagues including Josef Czerny (No.5) and Leidesdorf (No.23), as well as a number whose major contribution was a teacher of counterpoint or composition – Rieger (No.33), as well as Förster and Sechter.

Some of the composers are best known through their connection with a more famous figure, such as Freystädtler (No.9) who was immortalised in one of W.A.Mozart's comical canons, and that same composer's younger son also called Wolfgang Amadeus (No.28) who forged a reasonably successful career in various parts of Europe. Similarly Gelinek (No.11) and Halm (No.12) are linked at various points in their careers with that of Beethoven, while Kanne (No.19) published insightful critiques of his latest works, while Hüttenbrenner (No.17) had significant contact with Schubert. Of those not already listed, worth mentioning is Lannoy (No.22) for his role in establishing the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, one of Vienna's most esteemed musical societies, and Wittassek who held the esteemed position of Prague cathedral organist.

About the instrument

The Dörr instrument being featured in this concert was built circa 1825 by Daniel Dörr (1789-1837), thus within the lifetimes of both Beethoven and Schubert, for whose later works it is well suited. Dörr's Viennese family business existed for about one hundred years from the time he gained his license in 1817, and two of his instruments are held in the Kunsthistorisches Museum there. The 6-octave fortepiano features a wooden frame, is triple strung throughout, and a walnut cabinet refinished in French polish. Other technical features are the Viennese action and three foot-operated pedals, one of which activates a moderator that creates a 'mute' effect by bringing a line of felt into play between the hammers and strings. The restoration of this fortepiano, initially procured from an antique shop in Florence Italy, was completed in February 2008 by Dr Edward Swenson whose workshop is located near Ithaca in upstate New York USA. This piano was acquired by Peter Roennfeldt through the bequest of his late aunt Frieda Reuther, who graduated from the Queensland Conservatorium in 1970 and who subsequently taught music for many years at St Peters Lutheran College Indooroopilly. Together with another 19thC antique instrument built by Streicher, also acquired recently in 2008, this fortepiano is now on permanent loan to the institution.