

BEETHOVEN

DDD
8.553827

String Quintets Op. 1, No. 2, Op. 11 and Op. 17 Metamorphosis Quintet



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) String Quintets, transcribed by Carl Khyrn (c.1770-?)

Born in Bonn in 1770, Ludwig van Beethoven was already winning some distinction there, when, in 1787, he was first sent to Vienna, to study with Mozart. The illness of his mother forced an early return from this venture and her subsequent death left him with responsibility for his younger brothers, in view of the domestic and professional failures of his father, formerly a singer in the musical establishment of Beethoven's then patron, the Archbishop of Cologne. In 1792 Beethoven was sent once more to Vienna, now to study with Haydn, whom he had met in Bonn.

Beethoven's early career in Vienna was helped very considerably by the circumstances of his move there. The Archbishop was a son of the Empress Maria Theresa and there were introductions to leading members of society in the imperial capital. Here Beethoven was able to establish an early position for himself as a pianist of remarkable ability, coupled with a clear genius in the necessarily related arts of improvisation and composition. The onset of deafness at the turn of the century seemed an irony of Fate. It led Beethoven gradually away from a career as a virtuoso performer and into an area of composition where he was able to make remarkable changes and extensions of existing practice. Deafness tended to accentuate his eccentricities and paranoia, which became extreme as time went on. At the same time it allowed him to develop his gifts for counterpoint. He continued to revolutionise forms inherited from his predecessors, notably Haydn and Mozart, expanding these almost to bursting-point, and introducing innovation after innovation as he grew older. He died in 1827, his death the occasion of public mourning in Vienna.

The three works here included are arrangements of two trios by Beethoven and of his *Horn Sonata*. These were made by the Bohemian virtuoso oboist Carl

Khyrn, whose name sometimes appears as Chym. He was born about 1770 and was thus a more or less exact contemporary of Beethoven and seems to have been in the service of the Emperor. Little is known of his life, but he left a number of chamber music compositions and competent and effective arrangements of works by other composers, with the string quintet version of Beethoven's *Clarinet Trio, Op. 11*, appearing in Vienna and Pest in 1810/1811, and of the *Horn Sonata*, published in Bonn by Simrock in 1817. The arrangement of the *Piano Trio, Op. 1, No. 2*, seems to date from 1815. Nothing is known of Khyrn after 1819.

In 1795 Beethoven published a set of three *Piano Trios*, dedicated to Prince Carl Lichnowsky, in whose house they were first performed, in the presence of Haydn, who had reservations about the possible reception of the third, an implied criticism to which the composer took exception. The second of the group, the *Piano Trio in G major, Op. 1, No. 2*, makes a convincing string quintet. The first movement starts with a slow introduction, with the more decorative melodic elements now allotted to the violin, which opens the *Allegro vivace* with a lively first subject leading to a reasonable division of labour between the other instruments of the quintet. The first violin introduces the second subject in the sonata-form movement, with its repeated exposition, development and recapitulation. The characteristically sustained piano melody of the original work in the slow movement is aptly transferred to strings, its opening theme repeated an octave higher, after which the first violin leads on to a secondary theme, both themes soon to return, with a brief excursion into the tonic minor key before the closing section. The *Scherzo* is introduced by the cello, joined at once by the other instruments, and framing a B minor *Trio*. The final *Presto* opens with the

rapidly repeated notes of the violin, as in the original, with some modification of the original piano imitation of the theme, in a sonata-form movement, its exposition again repeated, before the central development and recapitulation.

Beethoven's 1798 *Trio in B flat major, Op. 11*, popularly known as the *Gassenhauer Trio* (Popular Song Trio), takes its nickname from the use Beethoven made, in the last movement, of a theme taken from Joseph Weigl's comic opera *L'amor marinaro* (Love among the Sailors), a terzetto for three basses, *Pria ch'io l'impegno*. Although often performed in a contemporary arrangement for violin, cello and piano, the original work was scored for a clarinet rather than a violin and owed its instrumentation to the composer's association with the clarinetist Josef Bähr, who suggested the theme for the last movement variations. Bähr collaborated with Beethoven in performances of his *Quintet, Op. 16*, and took part in the first performances of the *Septet, Op. 20* and the *Sextet, Op. 71*. He was employed in the musical establishment of Count Johann Joseph Liechtenstein. The first performance of the *Trio*, according to Ferdinand Ries, took place in the house of Count Fries in the presence of the rival virtuoso pianist Daniel Steibelt. Since the piano part gave relatively little scope for display, Steibelt managed to outshine Beethoven in performing his own quintet. A week later Steibelt provoked Beethoven by playing a brilliant set of variations on the Weigl melody of Beethoven's last movement, after which the latter took his revenge by a virtuoso improvisation on a motif from Steibelt's quintet, seizing a cello part, which he placed upside down on the music stand. The sonata-form first movement of the *Trio* has great charm and assured craftsmanship in its subtle shifts of key. The following *Adagio cantabile* bears a distinct melodic resemblance to the *Minuet* of the *Piano Sonata, Op. 49, No. 2*. According to Czerny,

Beethoven contemplated replacing the last movement and issuing the variations as a separate work. Although generally light-hearted, the nine variations include a melancholy excursion into the minor in the fourth variation and again in the dramatic seventh version of the theme, with contrapuntal elements in the ninth, before the syncopations of the final section.

The Bohemian horn player Jan Václav Stich, known professionally by the Italian form of his name, Giovanni Punto, boasted a considerable reputation as a virtuoso. In Paris in 1778 Mozart had written a solo part for him in his *Sinfonia Concertante* and he had appeared to acclaim in the major capitals of Europe. It was his visit to Vienna in 1800 that elicited from Beethoven his *Horn Sonata in F major, Op. 17*, committed to paper, it seems, the day before the first performance by Punto and the composer at a concert on 18th April, with Beethoven playing partly from memory and partly from the inspiration of the moment. The work was a success and was immediately played again in early May in Pest, where it seemed that Punto quarrelled with Beethoven, who refused to appear with him at a following provincial engagement. Both appeared again in Vienna on 30th January 1801, however, to play the work at a concert in aid of those wounded at the disastrous battle of Hohenlinden. Khy'm's transcription makes effective use of the material, redistributed largely according to the range of the original instruments, the horn part significantly allotted to the cello in the opening. The material is developed in a central section, before returning, with the necessary adjustments, in recapitulation. There is a brief slow introduction to the final F major *Rondo*. Here the cello answers the violin in the principal theme, which provides a framework for intervening episodes.

Metamorphosis Quintet

The Metamorphosis Quintet was formed in 1994 by leading musicians of the Budapest Festival Orchestra. Their repertoire mainly consists of the great classics, but works of contemporary composers are also performed by the Quintet.

**DDD**

8.553827

Playing Time
65:12www.naxos.com© 2003 & © 2003 HNH International Ltd.
Booklet notes in English
Made in Canada

NAXOS

BEETHOVEN: String Quintets Volume 1

8.553827

The virtuoso oboist Carl Khyrn, a contemporary of Beethoven, was himself a composer, but is better known as an arranger of other composers' chamber works. Amongst his best known arrangements, are these string quintet versions of Beethoven's *Clarinet Trio Op. 11*, *Horn Sonata Op. 17*, and *Piano Trio Op. 1, No. 2*, which distribute the thematic material within the most suitable range of each instrument, but retain all of the character of the original works.

Ludwig van
BEETHOVEN

(1770-1827)

String Quintets Volume 1
Transcriptions by Carl Khyrn (c.1770-?)

String Quintet in G major (Piano Trio in G major, Op. 1, No. 2) 32:38

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Adagio - Allegro vivace | 11:38 |
| 2 | Largo con espressione | 8:55 |
| 3 | Scherzo: Allegro | 3:38 |
| 4 | Finale: Presto | 8:27 |

String Quintet in B flat major (Clarinet Trio in B flat major, Op. 11) 19:25

- | | | |
|----------|--|-------------|
| 5 | Allegro con brio | 8:24 |
| 6 | Adagio | 4:14 |
| 7 | Allegretto con Variazioni su 'Pria ch'io l'impegno' | 6:47 |

String Quintet in F major (Sonata for Horn and Piano in F major, Op. 17) 13:09

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 8 | Allegro moderato | 7:15 |
| 9 | Poco adagio quasi andante | 1:22 |
| 10 | Rondo: Allegro moderato | 4:32 |

Metamorphosis Quintet

Violetta Eckhardt, Violin I (1-10) • Yoshiko Hagiwara, Violin II (1-10) • Barna Juhász, Viola (1-10)
Timea Iván, Viola (1-7) • Péter Szabó, Violoncello (1-10) • Iván Sztankov, Contrabass (8-10)

Recorded at the Phoenix Studio at the Unitarian Church, Budapest, Hungary, from 27th to 28th June and on 24th September, 1995 • Producer: Ibolya Tóth • Engineer: János Bohus • Booklet Notes: Keith Anderson
Cover Painting: *View of Brewery at Huteldorf near Vienna* engraving by T. Raulino (The Art Archive)

8.553827

BEETHOVEN: String Quintets Volume 1

NAXOS