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CLASSICS

Haydn Piano Sonatas

John Lill



HAYDN: PIANO SONATAS

Sonata No.49 in C sharp minor Hob.XVI: 36

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Moderato | [8.27] |
| 2. Scherzando: Allegro con brio | [3.01] |
| 3. Menuetto & Trio | [5.01] |

Piano Sonata No.32 in G minor Hob.XVI: 44

- | | |
|---------------|--------|
| 4. Moderato | [7.59] |
| 5. Allegretto | [4.39] |

Piano Sonata No.59 in E flat major Hob.XVI: 49

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| 6. Allegro | [12.14] |
| 7. Adagio e cantabile | [8.37] |
| 8. Finale: Tempo di Menuet | [4.34] |

Piano Sonata No.62 in E flat major Hob.XVI: 52

- | | |
|--------------------|--------|
| 9. Allegro | [8.39] |
| 10. Adagio | [7.47] |
| 11. Finale: Presto | [5.09] |

Total	[76.09]
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JOHN LILL - PIANO

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HAYDN PIANO SONATAS

Haydn was not famed in his day for sublime skill as an improviser at the keyboard and, unlike his three peers in the musical stratosphere, Bach, Mozart and Beethoven, there are no landmark concertos written expressly to show off his own technique, whether at court, in the salon or at subscription concerts. His generally modest character may also have contributed to the lack of such ostentatious displays of prowess at the keyboard yet despite this, his corpus of piano sonatas reveals him to be up there with the very best. In recent decades it has been promoted that Haydn had no great skill at the keyboard, and while his manifold duties at the Esterházy court mitigated against life as a virtuoso keyboardist, there is enough evidence to suggest that he was a very fine player. As well as playing the violin to concerto standard, he was apparently a fine singer and thought of himself 'no mean keyboard player'.

Thankfully, he was far from retiring when it came to writing great keyboard works for the many talented amateurs that came his way for instruction. His earliest sonatas, dating from the early 1760s (Haydn knew them as *partitas* or

divertimentos), were most likely used as didactic material for his pupils. Over three decades, it seems that both his interest in the genre and the virtuosity of his pupils grew exponentially. That at least three of the four sonatas here are written for, or dedicated to women should come as little surprise. It was simply part of the accepted educational lot for young ladies in the late Eighteenth Century to be proficient at the keyboard. Without the brilliance of these wives and daughters of the great, the good and the highly educated, Haydn's talents may well have been less focused on the genre.

Sonata No.49 in C sharp minor Hob.XVI: 36

- 1. Moderato**
- 2. Scherzando: Allegro con brio**
- 3. Menuetto & Trio**

The Sonata No.49 in C sharp minor Hob.XVI: 36 was written for Katherina & Marianne von Auenbrugger as No.5 of a set of 6 Sonatas Op.30 (comprising sonatas Hob.XVI: 48 - 52 & 33, respectively), his first publication for Artaria & Co. in Vienna. Although written expressly for the

sisters, as can be seen from Haydn's many effusive letters to Artaria, the sonatas were not dedicated to them as in the 18th century publishers often reserved the right to make such dedications themselves. The Auenbrugger sisters were the daughters of an eminent Austrian physician and known in circles which included Salieri, Haydn and Mozart. Haydn was obviously much taken with the girls' talent, writing to his publisher, 'The approval of the Mrs von Auenbrugger is of the utmost importance to me since their manner of playing and their genuine understanding of the art of music equals that of the greatest masters'.

Prior to 1780, relatively few letters and other documents survive for us to date Haydn's keyboard works with any great accuracy, therefore, possible composition dates for the present sonata range from 1767 to 1775. By the time the group was published in 1780, one of their number included dynamic markings, signifying Haydn's preference for the fortepiano over the comparatively limited harpsichord - and consequently these were the last to be sanctioned for use on both harpsichord and fortepiano.

The sonata opens with a brief figure which has all the drama of a bold operatic overture - but not for

long. The movement veers between these short swashbuckling bravado moments, Baroque-style sequencies and delicate, highly ornamented passages which retreat into veiled, inward-looking contemplation. The A major *Scherzando* comes as something of a shock after the intensity of the first movement. It is a charming creation that has something of the simple character of a musical clock - a favourite plaything of the day, and for which Mozart, Beethoven and Haydn himself transcribed or composed pieces. The wistful closing Minuet & Trio retains some of the stark qualities of the opening movement but is uplifted by an unusual Trio section in C sharp major.

Piano Sonata No.32 in G minor Hob.XVI: 44

- 1. Moderato**
- 2. Allegretto**

It is quite a surprise, given Haydn's gargantuan output, that no more than a handful of his works of any note were written in the key of G minor. A couple of symphonies and string quartets, a *Salve Regina* and the Piano Sonata No.32 in G minor Hob.XVI: 44 are all that have come down to us. The composer seems to have associated the key with a certain melancholy and takes a rather serious tone when writing in it. The *Salve Regina*, composed in

1771, was by most accounts composed in thanks to the Virgin Mary for his recovery from a dangerous illness suffered the previous year.

The two-movement Sonata is among the very first to be actually named as a 'Sonate' in Haydn's output, but there is no bold histrionic opening statement here. Instead, a quiet, serious, delicate and expressive *Moderato* ebbs and flows, built upon no more musical material than a few fragile wisps peppered with exquisite silences, a demeanour profound and serious, largely dispensing with the relief of humour and tending more toward tender thoughts. Altogether remarkable, this is one of Haydn's most hypnotic movements. It is followed by a Minuet that further develops the mesmeric hold on the listener. No Haydn-esque spikey, tricky finishes this time. Problems with dating still plague the work, and while a rough guide might be 1770 - 1775, the enigma befits the mystery of the piece.

Piano Sonata No.59 in E flat major Hob.XVI: 49

- 1. Allegro**
- 2. Adagio e cantabile**
- 3. Finale: Tempo di Menuet**

Haydn's last handful of sonatas see him step out

from the drawing room resolutely into the concert hall, at least in terms of approach and technical mastery. These sonatas are unabashed works that speak easily to a large audience while providing the seasoned concert pianist with much food for thought. It was composed for Maria Anna von Genzinger, the wife of a society physician whose important clients included members of the Esterházy family, Haydn's own noble employers. From their surviving letters, it's clear that Haydn and Mme Genzinger maintained an intense, if platonic, relationship that ranged from intimate expression to quotidian practicalities. It was to her that he wrote from London on hearing of Mozart's death and, regarding the present sonata, 'I know that I should have written this sonata for your type of clavier, but it was just not possible, because I am not at all used to it any more' - another reference to his preference for the fortepiano.

The sonata opens with a stentorian statement which is treated to an expansive, almost symphonic work-out, occasionally harking both back in time through the use of Baroque-style sequences and leaping forward into the world of Beethoven's mature piano sonatas - indeed there are a multitude of Beethoven-esque references. The *Adagio cantabile* is a heartfelt



song without words - an exquisite aria, increasingly ornamented with extraordinary sensitivity. 'It means a great deal, which I will analyse for you when I have the chance' wrote Haydn to Mme Genzinger. Alas, no further letters have come to light to fill-in the tantalising details. Beethoven can be heard in the central section - foreshadows of the famous 'Moonlight' sonata's first movement leap out. A straight-ahead, playful, bright minuet infused with Haydn's beloved variation techniques ends the sonata in considerable subtlety and with his inimitable panache.

Piano Sonata No.62 in E flat major Hob.XVI: 52

- 1. Allegro**
- 2. Adagio**
- 3. Finale: Presto**

Haydn's final sonata for piano takes its place amongst the finest of the Classical or any other era. Composed in 1794, a critic of the day wrote, 'Whoever can completely master this extremely fine sonata...and can execute it precisely without missing the least thing, he can really let it be said of him that he plays'. The *she* for whom it and the marvellous C major Sonata Hob.XVI: 50 were written for, and dedicated to was Therese Jansen. Born in Aachen, Germany, her father came to work

in England, becoming a much sought-after dancing master and soon had Therese and her brother studying with the great Clementi. Although she appears not to have performed in public, she was regarded as one of Clementi's triumvirate of star pupils. It says a great deal for her abilities that the other two are still regarded as very fine composers, and among the greatest pianists of their day - Johann Cramer and John Field. Indeed, both Cramer and Clementi dedicated sets of piano sonatas to her and Haydn also threw in three of his finest late piano trios, 'Composed expressly for and dedicated to Mrs [Jansen] Bartolozzi'. It is evident that both of Haydn's 'Jansen' sonatas were composed in London from the greater range, evenness of touch and pedal effects that were more readily available on the latest English Broadwood pianos than on continental instruments.

The opening movement is a true symphonic creation, its initial statement of intent flowering into a multitude of ideas and variants, always balanced, thoughtful and seemingly inevitable. The slow movement surprises with its E major key and the profundity of its lyricism, the middle section providing a passionate countert-argument. The finale opens with a single note and a hint of hesitation, but humorous, uttered with the

confidence of a master of the joke. The humour now become wit is allied with virtuosity and confidence bringing a movement full of joy and brilliance. It remains one of the most satisfying endings in the history of the piano sonata. It is no accident that just two years after Haydn composed his final work in this genre, the young Beethoven

dedicated his debut set of Op.2 piano sonatas to the man he clearly thought of as a master in every respect - Joseph Haydn.

M. Ross



BIOGRAPHIES

JOHN LILL



"He is one of greatest pianists alive today. Across the board, I do not know another pianist who could hold a candle to this magisterial keyboard player. Unsurpassed playing. An intellectual giant and mastercraftsman. Beyond words."

Michael Tumelty, The Glasgow Herald, October 2004

"Lill allows the music to emerge gloriously free of extra-musical association with intellectual clarity to have one listening to these glorious works afresh. A recording truly worthy of celebration."

Simon Hodges, International Piano, July/August 2004

John Lill's concert career spans over fifty years. His rare talent emerged at an early age - he gave his first piano recital at the age of nine. At eighteen he performed Rachmaninov's 3rd Piano Concerto under Sir Adrian Boult, followed by his much-acclaimed London debut playing Beethoven's

'Emperor' Piano Concerto at the Royal Festival Hall. His success was reflected in many prestigious international prizes and awards, and in 1970 he won the most coveted of these, the Moscow International Tchaikovsky Competition, further consolidating his already busy international concert schedule.

Unanimously described as the leading British pianist of his generation, John Lill's career has taken him to over fifty countries, both as a recitalist and as a soloist with the world's greatest orchestras. He regularly performs in all the European capitals (including Amsterdam, Berlin, Paris, Prague, Rome, Stockholm and Vienna), Russia, the Far East, Australasia, (including several ABC tours) and he is a frequent visitor to the United States, where he has worked with the Cleveland, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia, Dallas Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Boston Symphony, Washington and San Diego Symphony Orchestras.

John Lill's extensive repertoire includes more than seventy concertos, and he is acclaimed in particular as a leading interpreter of Beethoven, whose complete sonata cycle he has performed on several occasions in the UK, USA and Japan. In Britain he has given over 30 BBC Promenade

concerts and regularly appears with all the major Symphony Orchestras. He has toured overseas with the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, City of Birmingham, Hallé, Royal Scottish National and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestras.

Recently John Lill performed with, among others, the Tasmania Symphony, Czech Philharmonic, Gothenburg Symphony, Trondheim Symphony, Malaysian, NHK, Stockholm, Rotterdam, Sudwestdeutsche, London and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, NDR Orchestra, Baltimore and Vancouver Symphony, Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestre National de Lyon, and gave recitals throughout the UK, USA, Canada, France, Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Czech Republic, South America and Australia.

John Lill has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon, EMI (Complete Beethoven Piano Concertos with RSN and Gibson), ASV (both Brahms Concertos with the Hallé and Loughran) plus the complete Beethoven Sonatas and Pickwick Records (Tchaikovsky I with the LSO and Judd). More recently he has recorded the complete Prokofiev sonatas with ASV and his recent recording of the complete Beethoven *Bagatelles* and Piano Concertos with the CBSO and Weller is available

on Chandos. He recorded Malcolm Arnold's *Fantasy on a Theme of John Field* (dedicated to John Lill) with RPO and Handley for Conifer and the complete Rachmaninov Concertos and major solo piano works for Nimbus Records. His most recent recording projects have been the 60th birthday release of piano works by Schumann on

the Classics for Pleasure label and a new release for Signum Records of Schumann and Brahms.

John Lill lives in London and was awarded the CBE for his services to music in the 2005 New Year's Honours List.

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