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Wonkak Kim

Praised by *The Washington Post* for "excellent breath control and fine command of his instrument," Korean-born clarinetist Wonkak Kim has captivated audiences around the globe with "lyrical musicality and supple tone" (*The Clarinet Magazine*) and "impressive range" (*The New York Concert Review*). Since his solo début in 2007 with the Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, playing Carl Nielsen's *Clarinet Concerto*, Kim has enjoyed a performance career spanning hundreds of venues on four continents, including Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, Constitution Hall, Le Louvre in Paris, Izumi Hall in Osaka, Japan, and the Seoul Arts Center, as well as in London, Geneva, Philadelphia, Boston, Minneapolis, Ghent, Costa Rica, and Brazil. A laureate of the Presser Music Award, Kim received over a dozen international prizes and is frequently featured with orchestras and ensembles worldwide. His extensive recordings have been broadcast on National Public Radio and Korean Broadcasting System. Professor Kim joined the music faculty at Tennessee Tech University in 2011, where he performs as the principal clarinetist of the Bryan Symphony Orchestra and the Cumber-land Quintet.

www.wonkak.com

Eun-Hye Grace Choi

Korean pianist Eun-Hye Grace Choi began playing the piano at the age of six, and has worked with such renowned artists as Graham Johnson, Richard Stoltzman, and Eugene Rousseau. Choi has won several competitions in her native country and performed extensively as a collaborative pianist throughout the United States, France, Belgium, UK, and South Korea. Her playing has been widely praised as "technically flawless and exquisite performance" (*Alexandria Gazette*). Her performance at the Hot Springs Music Festival was broadcast on NPR's Performance Today. Choi also served as a staff collaborative pianist at the Interlochen Center for the Arts Summer Camp. She holds a degree in Composition from Yonsei University in Korea. Choi received her Master's degree in Collaborative Piano at Florida State University and is currently completing her DMA at the University of Minnesota.

Photos: Estro Studio

François DEVIENNE
Clarinet Sonatas

Wonkak Kim, Clarinet
Eun-Hye Grace Choi, Piano

François Devienne (1759–1803)
Clarinet Sonatas

François Devienne, born in 1759 in Joinville, France, the fourteenth and last child of a saddle dealer, was a child prodigy. Writing a Mass at the age of ten, Devienne showed not only unusual musical facility as a child, but an extraordinary degree of diligence as well. Emile Humbolt's account of the young pupil is particularly illuminating: "Quite unlike other children, who have to be promised money if you want to get them to do anything, Devienne would leave off work only when his brother had given him a few écus, on condition that he would go and enjoy himself." Quickly becoming highly proficient on the flute and bassoon, Devienne joined the Concerts de la Loge Olympique in 1784 and the musicians of the Swiss Guard in 1788. He also became the principal bassoonist of the Théâtre de Monsieur (later the Théâtre Feydeau), retaining this position until 1801. While active as a woodwind virtuoso, Devienne wrote extensively in many genres, including a number of successful operas. Among these is the opéra comique *Les visitandines* (1792), which brought him much fame.

From 1791 Devienne held the rank of sergeant in the Garde Nationale and taught in its Institut National de Musique. In 1795 he became a charter faculty member of the Paris Conservatoire and was appointed its first flute professor and administrator. During his tenure as a Conservatoire professor, he wrote his celebrated *Méthode de Flûte Théorique et Pratique* (1793). His school of flute playing brought a significant advance not only to the instrument, but also to the quality of eighteenth-century French wind music. Until his death at a sanatorium in Charenton near Paris in 1803, he was highly prolific, producing 25 quartets, 46 trios, and 147 duos in all styles, including 67 sonatas.

Although Devienne's principal instruments were the flute and the bassoon, he became familiar with the clarinet early in his career. When he performed his first *Symphonie concertante* (1787) for flute, clarinet, and bassoon with Hugot and Lefebvre, the clarinet, then a relatively novel instrument, had already undergone considerable technical development and had the facility for considerable agility. Fascinated by the romanticism of his time, Devienne saw ample opportunities for expression through the clarinet's impressive spectrum of range and dynamics. His sonatas for the clarinet, originally entitled *Sonates pour clarinette et accompagnement de basse*, are adapted from his own flute sonatas, *Opp. 58* and *68*. The first edition of these sonatas only consists of a two-staff score for a virtuosic solo part for clarinet in C over a highly compressed and simplified bass line. As many have argued, however, Devienne's classical style, following the spirit of Mozart and Haydn, does not suggest a baroque realisation of these unfigured continuo lines. Instead, the editions used in this recording constantly feature ornate melodic lines given to the keyboard, according to the style of the period. With the exception of *Sonata No. 1 in C major*, the sonatas are transposed in order to retain the fingering for Devienne's clarinet in C when playing a modern clarinet in B flat.

The clarinet sonatas display Devienne's great ease of writing as well as his uniquely creative melodic lines. They encompass all forms and styles available in his time, ranging from the Baroque sonata to classical theme and variations. Along with works by his contemporaries Franz Anton Hoffmeister and Johann Baptist Vanhal, these selections represent the unrivaled charm and elegance of classical sonatas for the clarinet.

Wonkak Kim

Editions used

Sonata No. 1 in C major (tracks 1–3): Realization by Jean-Pierre Dautel and edited by Jacques Lancelot. Paris: Editions Musicales Transatlantiques, 1962 • *Sonata No. 2 in E flat major* (tracks 4–6): Realization by Laurence Boulay and edited by Jacques Lancelot. Paris: Editions Musicales Transatlantiques, 1972 • *Sonata in B flat major* (tracks 7–9:) Realization by Noël Lancien and edited by Frank Amet. Paris: Editions Henry Lemoine, 2002 • *Sonata in E flat major* (tracks 10–12): Realization by Jocelyn Sgard and edited by Frank Amet. Paris: Editions Henry Lemoine, 2002

François Devienne (1759–1803)
Sonates pour clarinette

Né en 1759 à Joinville en France, quatorzième et dernier enfant d'un marchand de selles, François Devienne était un enfant prodige. Depuis la composition d'une messe à l'âge de dix ans, Devienne a montré non seulement des talents musicaux extraordinaires, mais aussi des efforts énormes incroyables pour un enfant. Voilà l'observation d'Emile Humbolt à propos du jeune élève : "À la grande différence d'autres enfants, à qui on doit promettre de l'argent pour en tirer quoi que ce soit, Devienne ne quittait son travail que lorsque son frère lui donnait quelques écus pour aller s'amuser." Devenu rapidement très brillant à la flûte et au basson, Devienne rejoint les Concerts de la Loge Olympique (1784) et les musiciens de la Garde Suisse (1788). Il deviendra également bassoniste principal du Théâtre de Monsieur (Théâtre Feydeau), où il y restera jusqu'à sa mort. Tout en se produisant comme virtuose des instruments à vent, Devienne a composé énormément dans presque tous les genres, et nombre de ses opéras ont connu un grand succès. Parmi ceux-ci, l'opéra-comique *Les Visitandines* (1792) lui valut une grande notoriété.

A partir de 1791, Devienne a occupé le poste de sergent dans la Garde Nationale et enseigna dans son Institut National de Musique. En 1795, il devint l'un des membres fondateurs du Conservatoire de Paris, dont il fut le premier professeur de flûte et administrateur. C'est à son poste de professeur au Conservatoire que Devienne a composé sa célèbre *Méthode de Flûte Théorique et Pratique* (1793). Son école de flûte a contribué de manière significative non seulement au développement de l'instrument, mais également à la qualité de la musique pour instruments à vent françaises du XVIIIe siècle. Jusqu'à sa mort dans un sanatorium à Charenton près de Paris en 1803, Devienne a beaucoup produit, composant 25 quatuors, 46 trios et 147 duos dans tous les styles, dont 67 étaient sonates.

Bien que les principaux instruments de Devienne aient été la flûte et le basson, il s'était familiarisé avec la clarinette au tout début de sa carrière. Lorsqu'il a joué sa première *Symphonie concertante* (1787) pour flûte, clarinette et basson en compagnie de Hugot et Lefebvre, la clarinette, encore instrument relativement nouvelle, était déjà devenue un instrument riche en possibilités et permettant une certaine agilité. Fasciné par le romantisme de son époque, Devienne a entrevu les grandes possibilités d'expression qu'offraient la tessiture impressionnant et le spectre dynamique de la clarinette. Ses sonates pour clarinette, initialement intitulées *Sonates pour clarinette et accompagnement de basse*, sont des transcriptions de ses propres sonates pour flûte *opus 58* et *68*. La première édition de ces sonates consiste simplement en une partition à deux portées, où une ligne de basse extrêmement concentrée et simplifiée accompagne une partie solo virtuose pour clarinette en Do. Comme certains l'ont cependant soutenu, le style classique de Devienne, suivant l'esprit de Mozart et de Haydn, ne suggère pas une réalisation baroque de ces lignes de continuo non chiffrées. Au contraire, dans les éditions utilisées pour cet enregistrement, les lignes mélodiques au clavier sont constamment ornées, conformément au style de l'époque. À l'exception de la *Sonate n° 1 en Do majeur*, les sonates sont transposées de manière à conserver le doigté de la clarinette en Do de Devienne en jouant en Si bémol sur une clarinette moderne.

Les sonates pour clarinette témoignent de la grande facilité de Devienne dans l'art de composition et de la créativité unique de ses lignes mélodiques. Elles englobent toutes les formes et tous les styles disponibles à son époque, allant de la sonate baroque au thème et variations. Aux côtés des œuvres de ses contemporains Franz Anton Hoffmeister et Johann Baptist Vanhal, ces sélections représentent le charme et l'élégance inégalés des sonates classiques pour clarinette.

Wonkak Kim