



A BEETHOVEN RECITAL
Ronald Farren-Price



RONALD FARRÉN-PRICE

1 TEN VARIATIONS ON “LA STESSA, LA STESSISSIMA” from the opera *FALSTAFF* by Salieri, IN B FLAT, W0073 (1799) 10’50”

2 RONDO IN G, Op. 51, No.2 (1802) 10’32”

3 RONDO IN C MAJOR, Op. 51, No.1 (1797) 5’56”

4 ALBUMBLATT IN A MINOR, “FURELISE”, W0059 (1810) 3’23”

5 POLONAISE IN C, Op. 89 (1814) 5’49”

6 SONATINE IN F (?1792) 5’03”

7 ALLEGRETTO IN C MINOR, W0053 (1796) 4’31”

TEN VARIATIONS ON SALIERI’S “LA STESSA, LA STESSISSIMA” in B FLAT

This was one of three sets of variations composed in 1798, when Beethoven was 29. Salieri, one of Beethoven’s tutors, and later a conductor of his works, composed the opera *Falstaff* from which Beethoven chose the theme of the aria *La Stessa, la Stessissimo* to be the theme of these variations several years later.

The variations were dedicated to Countess Keglevicz, one of Beethoven’s many piano pupils and lovers; he lived just across the road from the countess for convenience. He also dedicated to her his Piano Sonata Opus 7 (Amorous) and his C major Piano Concerto, composed in 1801. The genius in this group of variations is to be found in its form.

There is a definite pattern of variation; tempi and rhythmic fluctuations together form a pulsating, rising and falling, sequence; a solid foundation of movement is strongly noticeable throughout the work. The last variation concludes with several modulations, followed by a reminiscent fragment of the original theme.

RONDO IN C and RONDO IN G

Both *rondos* are founded on Mozartean themes and clearly display Beethoven in a florid and ornamental style. The *Rondo in C* was composed several years before the *Rondo in G*, and does not depart from the traditional rondo form (i.e., the chief

theme appears three times with intervening episodes), although it has an unusual transposition of the theme into A flat.

The *Rondo in G*, however, shows a form of construction within itself. The first episode assumes the form of a second subject with a contrasting key, a more elaborate recognition of the theme, and a concluding return to the tonic, as in sonata form. This *rondo* also has an unusual *Allegretto* section in a new key and altered rhythm. This work was dedicated to Countess Henrette von Lichnowsky, sister of Prince Karl Lichnowsky, who has been described as Beethoven's most devoted friend and companion.

ALBUMBLATT IN A MINOR, "FUR ELISE"

This work has caused much speculation as to the identity of "Elise". However, it is often assumed that the original title was *Fur Therese*, as at the time of its creation (27 April 1810) Beethoven was very much in love with Therese Malfatti, yet another of his pupils and a daughter of his physician, Dr. Johann von Montereccio Malfatti. The work, utterly charming, is a miniature *rondo* with two episodes.

POLONAISE IN C

Composed in 1814, this work was dedicated to the Empress of Russia after Beethoven had received 100 ducats from her husband, Alexander I, in payment for the three violin

sonatas, Opus 30, which Beethoven dedicated to him.

The *Polonaise* is generally ceremonial in nature, march-like, and full of pomp and grandeur. It begins with an ornamental cadenza passage, followed by a graceful polonaise. The middle section is in C minor and is full of modulations and dramatic passages which eventually lead to the playful first subject. A contrapuntal episode follows, and a final entry of the theme with coda completes the work.

SONATINE IN F

Very little is known of this work; it lacks both opus number and date of completion. However, it is extremely graceful, demonstrating the unique and very practical technique of the young Beethoven. Its melodic germ was later used in the *Trauerkantate* "Cantata on the Death of Joseph II", Wo087.

ALLEGRETTO IN C MAJOR

Completed in 1796, this work shows a remarkable use of double counterpoint,



Portrait by Joseph Karl Stieler, 1820

the result of Beethoven studying under Albrechtsberger. The *trio* begins in A minor but soon modulates to C major. The second half starts with bold octave jumps and after the *da capo* of the first part of the *Allegretto* a short coda begins, employing the last four measures of the *Allegretto* but with the voices reversed. This is a truly remarkable harmonic accomplishment.

BERLINGSKE TIDENDE COPENHAGEN ... 4 November 1986 ...

“A VERSATILE VIRTUOSO FROM A DISTANT LAND”

Mr Ronald Farren-Price, considered one of Australia's leading concert pianists, lives and works in Melbourne, where he is Head of the Department of Music at the University of Melbourne.

Each year Mr Farren-Price leaves the Southern hemisphere travelling to the farthest North - sometimes even more than once a year. Mr Farren-Price has given performances in both New York and Moscow as well as in London, Leningrad, Vienna and Rotterdam - just to mention a few places where the public has been given an opportunity to hear him play. Last Saturday he came to Copenhagen

and this was his first concert here.

The recital took place at the Glyptotek and for his first encounter with the Danish public this charming artist had arranged a large-scale program leaving no doubt about his virtuosity. He played four Sonatas by Scarlatti, Beethoven's variations of “La Stessa, La Stessissima” from the Salieri opera “Falstaff”. Included was Beethoven's sonata No 23 in F Minor, best known as “Appassionata”. With four Chopin Etudes and the Etude of Liszt's “Paysage”, along with Polo naise No 2 in E Minor by the same composer, the romantic era was not

neglected. A more modern tone was reflected in Prokofiev's Toccata Opus 11.

A most enjoyable evening was the result of this music historical program presenting Mr Farren-Price as a sensitive artist and a virtuoso of top rank. He appeared most convincing in the smaller works where he demonstrated a perfect balance between the sound and expression of the music. In the more important pieces he had a tendency to concentrate on the nuances of the tone and dynamics at the cost of dramatic excitement. However, definitely a pianist of great distinction.

Teresa Waskowska

RONALD FARREN-PRICE

This recording by Ronald Farren-Price was made in 1976 and presents an unusual variety of works by Beethoven. It comprises some works which have been rarely heard and some which are much loved by students.

The magnificent *Polonaise in C op. 89* was composed in 1814 at the time of the Congress of Vienna and dedicated to the Empress of Russia. It is a brilliant work with much that is exacting for the pianist. In fact, Beethoven has compounded many keyboard difficulties into this one work.

Another piece rarely heard is the *Allegretto in C minor*, perhaps considered by the composer for the 3rd movement of the op. 10 No. 1 Sonata. This is a work of immediate strength and purpose. The two beautiful *Rondos of op. 51* and the superbly olea cut and concise *Ten Variations on a theme by Salieri "La Stessa, La Stessissima"* are a welcome inclusion in the recital.

The fact that Ronald Farren-Price includes the early *Sonatine in F* and *Elise* is a tribute to the master's genius in "the simplest forms". Mr. Farren-Price plays these works with much affection.

Recorded May, July and August, 1976 in ABC Studios, Melbourne

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Recording Engineers: Fred Robilliard, Haime Gonsbor, George Hunt, Leo Fowler

Liner notes by David Barmby

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