



BEETHOVEN

SONATA IN C MAJOR, Op. 53,
"WALDSTEIN"

STRAVINSKY

PETROUCHKA

HYPERION KNIGHT

PIANIST



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Side One

BEETHOVEN

Sonata in C Major, Op. 53

Allegro con brio (9:36)

Adagio molto

Allegretto moderato (13:30)

Side Two

STRAVINSKY

Trois Mouvements de Petrouchka

Danse russe (2:30)

Chez petrouchka (4:14)

La semaine grass (5:26)

BEETHOVEN: Sonata in C Major, Op. 53

When Beethoven left Bonn in 1792, few could have envisioned the titanic creations which would follow his arrival in Vienna. The Count Ferdinand von Waldstein could hardly have foreseen the prophetic nature of his parting words to Beethoven: "Mozart's genius is still mourning the death of his ward. In the inexhaustible Haydn he found a refuge but no employment... Through unremitting industry you shall receive Mozart's spirit from the hands of Haydn." One can only imagine the exhilaration with which the Count must have greeted the sonata whose dedication immortalized his name.

The "Waldstein" Sonata was completed in 1804, the same year as the "Eroica" symphony. It shares with the "Eroica" an affinity of scope and breadth of expression. Beethoven had, in fact, conceived the sonata on such a broad scale that the movement originally intended as the slow movement was removed, and published separately as the "Andante favori" in F major. In its place Beethoven substituted the introspective "Introduzione", whose mere twenty eight measures eloquently foreshadow the exalted Rondo.

The opening movement, "Allegro con brio", exhibits many of the forward looking stylistic approaches of Beethoven's middle period. There is a third relationship between the first and second tonal areas (C major and E major) rather than the traditional tonic-dominant relationship (interestingly, in the recapitulation Beethoven initially moves the second tonal area down a fifth to A major rather than returning to the tonic of C). The movement possesses a development section of extended proportions, with a similarly enlarged coda to add symmetry to the form. Although the form may be expansive, there is little interruption in the motoric impulses of Beethoven's themes. The kinetic energy is seemingly limitless, and is exploited for the greatest drama.

The chromatically descending bassline and the resultant harmonic instability of the following "Introduzione" produce the greatest intensity of expression within a miniature framework. The hushed dynamics and ponderous "Adagio molto" tempo flow effortlessly into the theme of the Rondo.

The magnificent Rondo is full of the most glittering pianistic effects. The most striking use of the pedal is to be found in the main theme, where Beethoven indicates that the pedal is to be sustained through changes from tonic to dominant and even through changes from major to minor. The theme, as it turns out, is inseparably wed to its "pedal

point". It appears in many forms and styles throughout the movement, but always with extended pedalling, or with the "pedal tone" intact in the chord structure.

The theme, initially very gentle, swells to the most enormous proportions through Beethoven's juxtaposition of both a trill and the melody in the treble, supported by rapid scales in the bass. This and other effects, such as the octave glissandi and the coda, create the most stunning sonority throughout.

STRAVINSKY: Trois Mouvements de Petrouchka

The trilogy of ballets which Stravinsky wrote for the famed Ballet Russe during the years 1910-1914 are a milestone in the history of music. Each in its own way makes a unique contribution to the evolution of music in the twentieth century. "L'Oiseau de Feu" (1910) demonstrated to the world that Stravinsky was an orchestrator whose innovations would broaden the spectrum of the symphonic expression, even surpassing the achievements of his mentor, Rimsky-Korsakov. The early successes of the "Firebird", however, were only a prelude to the full realization of Stravinsky's artistic vision. Perhaps no moment in the history of music except the "Eroica" has had the revolutionary impact of "Le Sacre du Printemps" (1914).

"Petrouchka" (1911) in certain respects the finest ballet of the three. It represents a landmark in choreography and stage design as well as in its musical vernacular, which is widely heralded as the origin of polytonality in this century. Any musicological exploration of Petrouchka must approach the piece as a consummate work of Art, acknowledging the contributions of the remarkable creative personalities which vitalized the Ballet Russe under the direction of Serge Diaghilev.

The circumstances surrounding the creation of Petrouchka are well documented. After Stravinsky's resounding success with "L'Oiseau de Feu" Diaghilev was most enthusiastic about the next proposed project, "Le Sacre du Printemps". Stravinsky, evidently, felt the need for a momentary respite before tackling such a monumental project. In his own words:

"Before tackling the Sacre du Printemps...I wanted to refresh myself by composing an orchestral piece in which the piano would play the most important part—a sort of Konzertstück. In composing the music, I had in mind a distinct picture of a puppet, suddenly endowed with life, exasperating the patience of the orchestra with diabolical cascades of arpeggios. The outcome is a terrific noise which reaches its climax and ends in the sorrowful and querulous collapse of the poor puppet."

Stravinsky then surprised Diaghilev with this "Burlesque" rather than the sketches for "Sacre" which we expected. Struck by the novelty of the idea, Diaghilev requested that Stravinsky expand the work into a full ballet score. The stage design and costumes were assigned to Alexander Benois, and the choreography to Michel Fokine, who had choreographed "L'Oiseau de Feu".

Petrouchka, then, was originally conceived as a work for piano and orchestra. The "Konzertstück" to which Stravinsky referred was to become the second tableau, "Chez Petrouchka". This movement possesses the germinating motive for the entire work. The harmonic language which permeates a large part of the ballet stems from the bitonality of "Petrouchka's Cell".

The famed "Petrouchka chord", which makes its first appearance early in the second tableau, is the juxtaposition of a C major triad in the treble and an F# major triad in the bass, creating a dissonant yet

whimsical effect. The bitonality, however, is indicative of more than the pathos of the character Petrouchka. It is a clear indication of the panistic roots of the piece. The triads are those which require the exclusive use of white notes in the treble and black notes in the bass.

It is this white note versus black note approach to tonality which is structurally significant in the ballet as a whole. Much of the piano passagework in "Chez Petrouchka" is almost exclusively a product of this approach, with strict segregation of white and black note elements between the hands of the pianist. In the tableaux which make up the remainder of the ballet, this concept is expanded. The "white note" elements are transformed into passages of uninterrupted diatonicism.

These passages are then alternated with the "black note" elements, which are passages of great chromaticism and harmonic instability.

The contrast between the essentially pianistic chromaticism and the essentially orchestral diatonicism is in a larger sense representative of the dilemma of Petrouchka. The coldly wooden nature of the marionette is contrasted with the intimate, expressive nature of his true persona.

Some writers view this as an allegory to the plight of twentieth-century man. Such a notion might have been alien to Stravinsky's original intentions. Nonetheless, the ballet Petrouchka played a significant role in the artistic consciousness of the twentieth century. Perhaps never before in Art had the individual been portrayed as so ineffectual and so insignificant in society.

Hyperion Knight was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay area. He started piano lessons at the age of 4, and debuted professionally at 14 in San Rafael, California, playing Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto. While studying with Nathan Schwartz in San Francisco, Knight received his Bachelor of Music degree from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. He moved to Cleveland and continued his studies, this time with Eunice Podis. His Master of Arts degree was earned from the Cleveland Institute of Music. At the age of 22, Hyperion Knight received his Doctor of Musical Arts from the Cleveland Institute of Music. Appropriate to this recording, his dissertation was on the Beethoven's "Waldstein" Piano Sonata. In 1983 he was appointed principal pianist with the Erie Philharmonic Orchestra.

Technical / Listening Notes

The nine foot concert grand piano used for this recording is a unique instrument built by Sheldon Smith at his spacious workshop in Berkeley, California. The recording took place in this workshop. The piano's basic sound quality is characterized by a very powerful lower register, which provides a substantial left-hand foundation. The upper registers are somewhat less damped and more ringing than is typical of contemporary pianos.

The perspective chosen for this recording is close enough to create the illusion that the instrument is in the listener's room, yet not so close as to give the impression of being "inside the instrument". The relatively intimate microphone placement allows the musical lines to be followed with great detail, which proves to be particularly rewarding with the Petrouchka.

Schoeps omnidirectional condenser microphones, in a spaced pair, were used in conjunction with vacuum tube record amplifiers to capture an harmonically rich and accurate sound.

Recorded by David A. Wilson

Assistance by David A. Wilson, III and Sheryl Lee Wilson

Mastering by Bruce Leek

Matrix by Rick Goldman

Piano builder and tuner, Sheldon Smith



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PRODUCED BY: Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC

ORIGINAL RECORDING ENGINEER: David A. Wilson

PROJECT MANAGER: Daryl C. Wilson

ANALOG TO HIGH DEFINITION DIGITAL TRANSFER:
Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

TRANSFER EDITING: Bruce Brown, Puget Sound Studios

SONIC EVALUATION: David A. Wilson, Sheryl Lee Wilson, Daryl C. Wilson

DIRECTOR OF MORAL SUPPORT: Sasha Wilson

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Description of equipment and processes used for Master Tape transfers at
Puget Sound Studios:

PUGET SOUND STUDIOS RECEIVED THE TAPES FROM WILSON AUDIOPHILE RECORDINGS, LLC, IN A WOODEN CRATE. MASTER TAPES WERE THEN CATALOGUED IN AN EXCEL SPREADSHEET. EACH MASTER TAPE WAS THEN INSPECTED, CLEANED WITH AN ANTI-FUNGAL SOLUTION, AND THEN A LUBRICANT WAS APPLIED TO PREPARE THE MASTER TAPES FOR THE TRANSFER PROCESS. APPROXIMATELY 8 OF THE FIRST 13 REELS HAD TO BE BAKED TO REFORMULATE THE BINDING. THIS WAS DONE IN AN INCUBATOR AT 135 DEGREES FOR 24 HOURS AND THEN THEY WERE LEFT TO COOL BACK DOWN TO ROOM TEMPERATURE FOR THE NEXT 24 HOURS. ALL SPLICES WERE INSPECTED AND REPAIRED, IF NECESSARY.

EACH TRANSFER WAS EXECUTED ON A STUDER A-80 RC MK II, WHICH HAD EITHER A FLUX MAGNETICS EXTENDED RESPONSE REPRO HEAD OR A WOLKE DIN BUTTERFLY REPRO HEAD. CUSTOM MODIFICATIONS TO THE MACHINES HAVE BEEN PERFORMED BY JOHN FRENCH AND/OR KI CHOI.

EACH MASTER TAPE WAS STORED BY WILSON AUDIOPHILE "TAILS-OUT" IN WHICH PUGET SOUND STUDIOS DID A LIBRARY WIND TO THE TAKE-UP REEL. ALL LEVELS WERE SET ACCORDING TO INCLUDED EQ SHEETS AND EACH 1KHZ TONE WAS FURTHER SET AT PRECISELY 1KHZ, VIA A CUSTOM VARI-SPEED ADJUSTMENT. THIS PROVIDED THE EXACT SPEED THE MASTER TAPES WERE RECORDED AT. ALL CABLING USED IN THIS PROCESS WAS JPS LABS ALUMINATA AND ELECTRICAL POWER WAS PROVIDED BY AN EQUI=TECH BALANCED WALL CABINET USING OYAIDE RECEPTACLES.

A TOTAL OF FIVE DIFFERENT ANALOG-TO-DIGITAL CONVERTERS WERE USED TO PROVIDE SAMPLES FOR THE WILSONS TO EVALUATE. ULTIMATELY AN EMM LABS ADC-8 MK IV, CUSTOM MODIFIED BY ANDREAS KOCH, WAS CHOSEN BY DAVE AND DARYL WILSON FOR THE TRANSFERS INTO A SONOMA DSD WORKSTATION FOR CAPTURE AND EDITING. ALL SIGNALS WERE ROUTED THROUGH A RUPERT NEVE ANALOG MASTERING CONSOLE IF ANY GAIN, PANNING, OR EQ CHANGES NEEDED TO BE MADE.

ALL DSD FILES WERE TRANSFERRED INTO A MERGING TECHNOLOGIES PYRAMIX DSD/DXD MASSCORE WORKSTATION FOR SAMPLE RATE CONVERSION, FORMAT CONVERSION, AND META-DATA TAGGING. THE PYRAMIX APODIZING FILTER WAS USED FOR CONVERSION TO PCM. FILES WERE THEN UPLOADED TO A SECURE SERVER FOR THE WILSONS TO DOWNLOAD AND QA.

Description of the Equipment used in the Provo, Utah "Wilson Music Room" that Wilson Audiophile Recordings, LLC put to use for Sonic Evaluation:

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