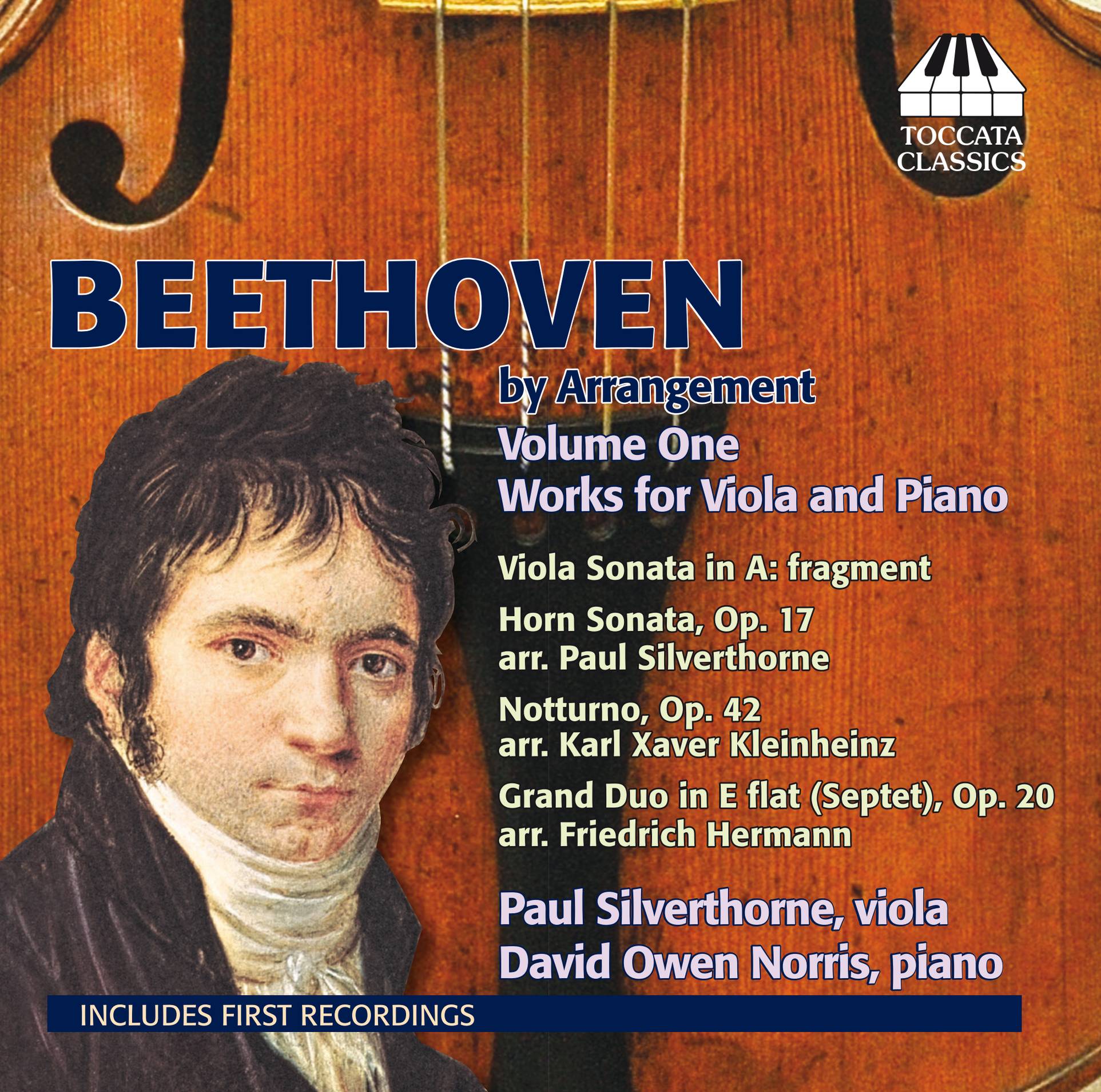
TOCCATA
CLASSICS
BEETHOVEN
by Arrangement
Volume One
Works for Viola and Piano
Viola Sonata in A: fragment
Horn Sonata, Op. 17
arr. Paul Silverthorne
Notturno, Op. 42
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Paul Silverthorne, viola
David Owen Norris, piano
INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

BEETHOVEN AND THE VIOLA
by Paul Silverthorne

Like many composers – Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Brahms (it is rumoured), Hindemith, Britten – Beethoven was a viola-player. Although famous throughout Europe as a pianist and composer, by the age of nineteen he had already spent several years as a professional violist in the orchestra of the Elector of Bonn. It is clear from the duo which he wrote for himself and Nikolaus Zmeskall (a lifelong friend and amateur cellist) in 1796 that he felt able to tackle a fairly demanding viola part. But it is equally clear that he didn't have the same confidence in other performers on the instrument since he rarely demanded that a viola-player stray from the lower positions. Even in the late Quartets, which have cruelly demanding violin and cello parts, the viola stays mainly in the first position.

But Beethoven had his reasons: he knew where the tonal strengths of the instrument lay and in no way are his viola parts less interesting than the others. He gave the viola melodies in the warmest and most characteristic middle register (not least in variation movements in the *Serenades*, Opp. 8 and 25, and the Septet, Op. 20) and in the later Quartets he frequently used the viola as an effective bass to a high-lying cello.

Yet what might he have written had there been a virtuoso viola-player in Vienna to commission works for his instrument? To help answer this question, I have taken three works from his early years in Vienna to show how his music can sound on the viola, an instrument he understood well but had little opportunity to exploit in a solo capacity. In addition, for the very first time, we perform an eight-bar sketch for a viola sonata in A major that Beethoven started and abandoned. We do not know when it was written, or for whom, but the open and energetic style suggests it might also be from his fecund early years.

The Music

Sonata Fragment in A major

The intriguing eight-bar fragment would have been lost to posterity had it not been for Karl Holz, the second violinist of the Schuppanzigh Quartet, who for a year towards the end of the composer's life also acted as Beethoven's secretary. In 1847 he copied the two lines of music from one of Beethoven's sketchbooks. The sketchbook was subsequently lost but the copy is now held in the library of the University of Frankfurt. The music is in a lively and forthright style, setting up expectations of a brilliant and virtuosic piece. Sadly, it stops abruptly after a cadence in the dominant in the eighth bar.

Horn Sonata in F major, Op. 17

In 1800 the Bohemian horn-virtuoso Johann Stich (who had Italianised his name to Giovanni Punto) arrived in Vienna and Beethoven wrote this sonata for them to perform together. The story is told that Beethoven had written out only the horn part by the time of the performance and had to improvise at the concert from a sketched outline of the piano part. Whether or not he was able to repeat this feat exactly when an encore was demanded is not recorded.[1] One wonders if Beethoven ever played the Sonata as written, as on a subsequent occasion, in 1812, he had to transpose the piece into F sharp to compensate for an out-of-tune piano. The very rich and imaginative piano part that he finally wrote down cleverly distracts from the shortage of available notes on the natural horn. His arrangement for cello, not so restricted, adds characteristic figuration for the instrument. In most cases these passages can be adapted successfully to the viola. In others, I have preferred to return to the original horn part.

The Sonata is in three movements, the *Allegro moderato* first movement launching with a bold fanfare-like figure for the horn/viola answered by a more yielding and

[1] Elliot Forbes (ed.), *Thayer's Life of Beethoven*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, rev. edn. 1967, p. 256.

expressive phrase from the piano. The two protagonists exchange these alternately energetic and lyrical elements throughout the movement but occasionally take the listener by surprise with a daring modulation and an unexpected moment of stasis.

The short central section, marked *Poco adagio, quasi Andante*, is almost too short to be called a movement on its own. But again Beethoven modulates far from the main key so that the arrival in the home key for the finale seems to have been acheived after a considerable journey.

In the *Allegro molto* rondo both the the piano and the horn/viola enjoy the wide leaps and the dancing figures of the main melody. A darker D minor episode still does not diminish the energy but in the final bars Beethoven allows the music to drift almost to a standstill before dashing to the end in a flurry of arpeggios for both instruments.

Notturno in D major, Op. 42,

This work is the only arrangement on this disc that Beethoven knew in this form. It is an arrangement of the *Serenade* for string trio, Op. 8 (1796–97), and was published in 1803 as Op. 42 together with Op. 41 (an arrangement for flute and piano of the *Serenade*, Op. 25). The composer Franz Xaver Kleinheinz (1765–1832), who made both these arrangements, had moved to Vienna to study with Albrechtsberger (with whom Beethoven himself had studied for a year in his teens) and had already made arrangements of piano sonatas by Beethoven for string quartet. Beethoven was asked to correct and approve the arrangement – which he did with little enthusiasm, as a letter to the publishers Hoffmeister & Kühnel shows:

> The arrangements were not made by me, but I have gone through them and made drastic corrections in some passages. So do not dare to state in writing that I have arranged them. If you, do you will be telling a lie, seeing that, moreover, I could never have found the time, or even had the patience, to do work of that kind [...].[2]

[2] Dated c. 18 September 1803; *cf.* Emily Anderson (trans. and ed.), *Letters of Beethoven*, Macmillan, London, 1961, Letter 82, p. 97.

The work is in a form popular in Vienna at the time, often given the title *divertimento* or *serenade*: a series of six short characteristic pieces. But the arrangement does not attempt to make a display piece for the viola; indeed, most of the time the original viola part of the trio has been retained and the violin and cello parts are taken by the piano. It was probably intended for amateur use, to make available for domestic enjoyment an attractive work in another form. The modest scope of this arrangement has tempted players in the last century to adapt it or make new transcriptions which bring the viola more to the fore. The first edition of 1804, by Hoffmeister & Kühnel of Leipzig, contained many inaccuracies and was very short on phrasing marks. A new edition published by Peters in 1858 was much better and with a few minor corrections was the basis for this recording.

The work opens strikingly with a short, spritely *Marcia,* making much of the contrast between dotted and triplet rhythms.

The *Adagio* which follows opens with the viola imitating a distant horn call while around it the piano executes elegant arabesques. The melodic interest is mainly in the hands of the pianist, with the viola weaving in and out in a serene and elegant discourse.

Abrupt chords and brusque short phrases characterise the *Menuetto* third movement, Beethoven relenting in the lilting melody of the *Trio* section.

The fourth movement, with its alternating *Adagio* and *Presto* sections, looks forward not only to the similar movement in the String Quartet in G major, Op. 18, No. 2, but also the extraordinary structures which he developed in the late Quartets – for example, the slow movement of Op. 132 in A minor. Here the austere D minor *Adagio* is played three times separated by two versions of a D major episode in which lively running quavers in the piano are interrupted by *forte* chords in the viola.

One of Beethoven's most ebullient movements, the *Allegretto alla Polacca,* is a rondo in form. The syncopated main theme is given to the piano with rhythmic

accompaniment from the viola and is played three times alternating with two episodes, one lyrical for the viola and another darker D minor episode where the two instruments exchange flashing arpeggio figures.

The longest movement in the *Notturno* is the Theme and Variations, marked *Andante quasi Allegretto*. The theme is very similar in its simple folk-like style to that of the variation movements in the later Septet, Op. 20, and in Mozart's *Divertimento*, K563. After the theme is presented, the piano takes the first variation alone with florid runs decorating the melody. The viola's answer is hardly less virtuosic and elegant. Again Beethoven shifts to D minor to exploit the dark dramatic potential of that key. A gigue-like variation follows, sounding like a finale, but no, Beethoven diverts the music back to the original tempo, for another view of the theme – now in a distant key, B flat. This diversion leads to the final surprise, a reprise of the opening *Marcia* to round off this remarkable work.

Grand Duo (arrangement of Septet in E flat major, Op. 20, by Friedrich Hermann)

Beethoven's Septet, written between 1798 and 1799, rapidly became one of his most popular works, as the record number of arrangements – over one hundred – made in his lifetime testifies. The form of the work, a more sophisticated kind of *divertimento* than the *Notturno*, was possibly modelled on Mozart's great *Divertimento* for String Trio, K563, and the *Serenade* for thirteen wind instruments, K361, where the conventional sequence of a sonata or symphony has added to it a minuet (or in Beethoven's case a scherzo) and a theme and variations. Even the key sequence of the movements is the same as K563 and the theme of the variations has the same folk-like character.

Friedrich Hermann (1828–1907) studied the violin with Ferdinand David and composition with Mendelssohn at the newly founded Leipzig Conservatoire,

graduating at the age of eighteen. He was immediately appointed principal viola of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, a post he held for 32 years. He was also a member of the Gewandhaus Quartet and was a frequent chamber-music companion of Clara Schumann and Ferdinand David. Although he enjoyed some success as a composer, he is now better remembered as a copious arranger and editor. The *GRAND DUO,* which was published by Peters in Leipzig in 1853, is a completely different kind of arrangement from the *Notturno*. Clearly not designed for amateur use, it is the work of one of the first career viola-players who began to emerge in the nineteenth century and is intended to display the viola as a serious solo instrument. The result is a major virtuoso recital work from a period that has little to offer the solo violist.

Hermann's arrangement is done with much originality and imagination but I was still able to make certain improvements and refinements. I made minor corrections of dynamics and articulations with reference to the original Septet. But the most important revisions came from a study of Beethoven's Trio, Op. 38, his own arrangement of the Septet, for clarinet, cello and piano, published in 1806, although the arrangement was made a few years earlier. Beethoven's chord-spacing on the piano is particularly individual and in many places throughout the work I was able to adopt Beethoven's version. More striking was Beethoven's re-invention of certain string passages for the piano which are far more effective than Hermann's more literal interpretations. In addition, I have myself found, I feel, some more elegant solutions for a few passages.

Beethoven opens this, the longest work so far in his output, with a sonorous and portentous *Adagio* introduction before the muscular *Allegro* theme launches the first movement confidently on its way. The many contrasting melodic figures are bound together in a very tightly organised form with tirelessly forward moving pulse.

The *Adagio* which follows is one of Beethoven's finest from this early period, a serene outpouring of melody in one of his most expressive keys, A flat major. The

Tempo di Menuetto which ensues is a reworking of the *Minuet* movement of the Piano Sonata, Op. 49, No. 2, which – notwithstanding the opus number – was written in 1795–96. The trio section written to show off arpeggios on the horn neatly becomes an exercise in elegant bowing in this viola version.

The *Tema con Variazioni* is full of invention. The naïve theme spawns witty, elegant, virtuosic and dark variations by turn, ending with a Haydnesque surprise.

Now Beethoven introduces his own speciality, the Scherzo, fast and furious and with a sentimental trio melody that arches effortlessly over a fast waltz-like accompaniment.

To balance the opening of the work Beethoven prefaces the Finale with another slow introduction. Almost a funeral march, in E flat minor, he creates maximum contrast with the lively dancing theme of the *Presto.* And his invention still does not flag: this sonata-rondo is packed with material, lively counterpoint and brilliant instrumental writing, including a cadenza. In the Septet it is for the violin; Hermann provides versions for both the viola and the piano, and here it is played on the viola.

The Instruments

The Brothers Amati viola of 1620 from the collection at the Royal Academy of Music in London has been my principal instrument for the last thirty years. It is an extraordinary example of a large 'tenor' viola and is in remarkable condition. Like the majority of instruments of the period it would have been altered, probably around the beginning of the nineteenth century. Necks were lengthened and set at an angle that increased the tension and thus the power of the instrument; larger bass bars were fitted to support this higher tension. But large violas of this type soon became much less popular as they became much harder to play and many were reduced in size.

For this recording I used all gut strings; plain gut A and D, and silver covered G and C. This set-up puts the viola in very much the condition it would have been at the time of Hermann's arrangement in 1853. The bow, made by John Dodd in 1790, was lent to me by the Royal Academy for this recording. This combination, together with the lower pitch (A 430), meant that the instrument was in a very relaxed and responsive condition.

The piano is a rare and beautiful example of the work of the Viennese maker Blümel dating from the 1860s. It is an example of the final flowering of the Viennese-type piano, a larger, more highly developed instrument than those of Beethoven's time. It is more robustly constructed and with larger and heavier hammers, but with a mechanism and quality of tone that would have been familiar to Beethoven. The result is a very characterful instrument with a cleaner, clearer sound than the modern grand piano, slightly 'woody' in the bass and bell-like in the treble. This piano belongs to the singer David Wilson-Johnson and is in the music room of his house in Ferrandou in the Dordogne valley, where we made the recording.

The experience of recording with these instruments in this intimate space was very

different from working, as we usually do, in large halls with a modern grand piano. The balance problems were reversed: it was quite possible for the viola to drown the piano, and I found myself letting the viola speak in its own way enjoying the timbre of the gut strings and not having to compete with the piano. In particular, the *Notturno* felt convincing for the first time. With a modern piano the writing can sound clumsy and unblended, whereas with the Blümel the lighter sounds sit comfortably with each other.

Paul Silverthorne has been Principal Viola of the London Symphony Orchestra since 1991 and of the London Sinfonietta since 1988, while continuing to pursue a busy solo career. As a soloist, he has performed with the LSO, the London Sinfonietta and with other major orchestras in the UK, USA and Europe, under such conductors as Sir Colin Davis, André Previn, Sir Simon Rattle, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Oliver Knussen and John Adams.

His solo performances in recent years have covered an extraordinarily wide range, including Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* in New York with the LSO and Sir Colin Davis, the Walton Concerto in London, the USA and on tour in Europe, the premiere of a new electronic work at the South Bank and performances of George Benjamin's *Viola, Viola* in Sydney, the Barbican and at festivals around Europe. He recently premiered a new viola concerto written for him by the American composer Kenneth Fuchs which he will record with the LSO in 2011.

He has recorded a wide range of repertoire for EMI, Koch International, ASV, Chandos, Meridian and many other labels. His acclaimed CD *Invocations*, with John Constable, on the Black Box label consists entirely of works written for him over the previous twenty years. Another recent release, Vaughan Williams' *Flos Campi* on the Naxos label, received rave reviews and was *Gramophone* magazine's 'Record of the Month'. Future recording plans include discs of works by Beethoven and Röntgen for Toccata Classics.

He is much in demand around the world for masterclasses and is a Professor at the Royal Academy of Music, to whom he is indebted for the loan, from their collection, of the viola by the brothers Amati from 1620 on which he plays.

His website can be found at www.paulsilverthorne.com.

David Owen Norris is Professor of Musical Performance at the University of Southampton and Visiting Professor of Fortepiano at the Royal College of Music, an Honorary Fellow of Keble College, Oxford, Educational Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music and of the Royal College of Organists. He is the Director of Music at Poole Parish Church. He was Organ Scholar at Keble, and left Oxford with a First and a Composition Scholarship to study in London and Paris. He was repetiteur at the Royal Opera House, harpist at the Royal Shakespeare Company, Artistic Director of the Cardiff International Festival and the Petworth Festival, Chairman of the Steans Institute for Singers at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago, and the Gresham Professor of Music in the City of London. His many radio series have included *The Works*, *But I know what I like* and *All the Rage*, and he presented the drive-time show *In Tune* for several years. First and foremost he is a pianist, beginning as an accompanist to such artists as Dame Janet Baker, Jean-Pierre Rampal and Larry Adler. In 1991, after a worldwide search, the Gilmore International Keyboard Festival appointed him the first Gilmore Artist, a quadrennial award. His subsequent international solo career has included concertos with the Chicago and Detroit Symphony Orchestras and the Handel & Haydn Society in Boston (amongst many other North American orchestras), the Philharmonia, the Academy of Ancient Music, and several of the BBC's orchestras, including four appearances at the Proms, and solo recitals all over North America and Australia, and in every European country from Hungary westwards.

TOCCATA CLASSICS

Recorded in Ferrandou, France, on 23–26 June 2009
Producer-engineer: Michael Ponder
Piano technician: Ben Marks

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BEETHOVEN Arrangements for viola and piano

Although a violist himself, Beethoven left nothing for the viola – except for the fragment of a sonata recorded here for the first time. So his contemporaries and successors have 'helped' him fill the gaps: it was Karl Xaver Kleinheinz (1765–1832) who arranged the String Trio, Op. 8, gaining Beethoven's reluctant approval; and a later musician, Friedrich Hermann (1828–1907), transformed the Septet, Op. 20, into an ambitious viola sonata. And now Paul Silverthorne, Principal Viola of the London Symphony Orchestra, expands the repertoire with his own transcription of the Horn Sonata, Op. 17.

TOCCATA CLASSICS

BEETHOVEN Arrangements for viola and piano

1	**Viola Sonata in A major: fragment***		0:25
	Horn Sonata, Op. 17*		**11:23**
	arr. Paul Silverthorne		
2	I.	*Allegro moderato*	5:36
3	II.	*Poco adagio, quasi Andante*	1:06
4	III.	*Rondo: Allegro molto*	4:41
	***Notturno*, Op. 42**		**28:47**
	arr. Karl Xaver Kleinheinz		
5	I.	*Marcia. Allegro*	2:16
6	II.	*Adagio*	5:09
7	III.	*Menuetto. Allegretto*	2:14
8	IV.	*Adagio – Scherzo: Molto Allegro – Adagio – Scherzo – Adagio*	4:27
9	V.	*Allegretto alla Polacca*	3:28
10	VI.	*Tema con Variazioni. Andante quasi Allegretto*	8:53
11	VII.	*Marcia. Allegro*	2:20
	Grand Duo* in E flat (Septet), Op. 20		**39:23**
	arr. Friedrich Hermann, rev. Paul Silverthorne		
12	I.	*Adagio – Allegro con brio*	8:16
13	II.	*Adagio cantabile*	7:47
14	III.	*Tempo di Menuetto*	3:17
15	IV.	*Tema con Variazioni. Andante*	7:57
16	V.	*Scherzo. Allegro molto e vivace*	3:27
17	VI.	*Andante con moto alla Marcia – Presto*	7:07
			TT 78:33

*FIRST RECORDINGS

Paul Silverthorne, viola
(Geronimo and Antonio Amati, 1620)
David Owen Norris, piano
(Blümel, Vienna, c.1865)

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