



# Heinrich Wilhelm ERNST

## COMPLETE WORKS, VOLUME FIVE

VARIATIONS ON THE DUTCH NATIONAL ANTHEM, OP. 18

POLONAISE DE CONCERT, OP. 17

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PACINI VARIATIONS

FEUILLET D'ALBUM

LA ROMANESCA

Sherban Lupu, violin  
Ian Hobson, piano

INCLUDES FIRST RECORDINGS

# HEINRICH WILHELM ERNST: COMPLETE MUSIC, VOLUME 5

by Mark Rowe

Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst was one of the most important performers of the nineteenth century. Joachim said he was 'the greatest violinist I ever heard; he towered above the others',<sup>1</sup> and Berlioz described him as 'a great musician as well as a great violinist [...] the complete rounded artist, profoundly and predominantly expressive in all he does'.<sup>2</sup>

As a violinist, Ernst was notable primarily for his stupendous technique, his intense and melancholic expressivity, his capricious sense of humour, and a tone which came remarkably close to the human voice. As a musician, he was celebrated chiefly for his contributions to chamber music – giving many public performances of Beethoven's late quartets at a time when they were widely considered the final ramblings of a madman. As a composer, his importance is threefold: he wrote two of the most popular works of the nineteenth century (the *Elegy*, Op. 10, and his variations on the *Carnival of Venice*, Op. 18); he pushed violin technique beyond the boundaries established by Paganini, particularly in the area of left-hand pizzicato and polyphonic playing; and he wrote two violin pieces of real significance – the *Concerto Pathétique* in F sharp minor, Op. 23 (the form of which had a profound influence on Liszt's B minor Piano Sonata), and the *Polyphonic Studies* (which lead directly into Ysaÿe's *Sonates pour violon seul*).

Ernst was born in Brünn (now Brno) in 1812, and when his talent proved too much for local teachers, he transferred to Vienna in 1825. Here he studied under Jakob Böhm and Joseph Mayseder for violin, and Ignaz Seyfried for composition, but the decisive moment in his life was Paganini's arrival in 1828. Ernst attended all his concerts, practised his pieces, and was finally granted an audience with Paganini, where he dumbfounded the older man by playing his E major caprice, *La Chasse*, entirely in harmonics. After returning to Brno to look after his elderly father, he arranged a concert tour through Germany in 1829–30 which followed closely in Paganini's footsteps. Much to the latter's irritation, Ernst took every opportunity to eavesdrop on his practice, uncover his technical secrets and transcribe his compositions.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Andreas Moser, *Geschichte des Violinspiels*, Max Hesses Verlag, Berlin, 1923, pp. 519 and 533.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, ed. and trans. David Cairns, Victor Gollancz, London, 1970, p. 538.

Ernst followed Paganini to Paris in 1831, but the young violinist's debut was not a complete success, and he withdrew from public performance to work on his technique. He allowed himself to perform three or four times in 1832 and early 1833, but some reviews were still equivocal, and so between May and October 1833 he retreated to Switzerland for further study. His true celebrity in Paris dates from two highly successful concerts (the second with Liszt and Chopin) at the end of 1834. These led to further appearances with some of the greatest musicians of the age in 1835–36, and Ernst finally made his name throughout France by triumphing over a now ailing Paganini in Marseilles in early 1837.

For the next eleven years, Ernst's life was a series of spectacularly successful tours: the Low Countries, Germany and the Austrian Empire in 1838–40; Poland and Germany in 1841–42; the Low Countries, Germany and Scandinavia in 1841–42; England and Germany in 1843–44; Germany and the Austrian Empire in 1845–46; and Russia and Scandinavia in 1847–48. The 1848 Revolution and ill health forced him to spend an idle year in Brno, and from 1849 until 1857 he spent much of his time in England – one of the few European countries unaffected by revolutionary disruption. An exception was 1852–53 when he met his wife – an actress called Amélie-Siona Lévy – and toured with her through Switzerland, the south of France, and Germany. His change of geographical focus affected his musical life and outlook: he composed less, played much more chamber music, and incorporated a number of 'Classical' works (including the Beethoven and Mendelssohn concertos) into his repertoire.

In 1857, the ill health which had been affecting him and his playing for twenty years became acute, and he was forced to retire. He centred his life on Nice, although he spent much of 1863–64 under the care of the novelist Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton in England. During these last years, he concentrated on composition, finishing the *Polyphonic Studies*, two string quartets and two movements of a third by 1864.<sup>3</sup> He died in Nice in 1865, leaving a young wife to mourn his loss for more than forty years.<sup>4</sup>

### *Polonaise de Concert, Op. 17*

The 'de Concert' in the title of this piece 1 is important. Most early-nineteenth-century music – particularly in short dance-forms – was intended for domestic or salon use; the qualification in Ernst's title indicates that this work was intended for performance by professionals in large public halls. Accordingly, it is grandly conceived, emphatic, full of bold melodies, and overflows with joyous and exuberant virtuosity. It is also the longest single movement based on original material that Ernst had thus far composed, and

<sup>3</sup> Only the first quartet, in B flat major, Op. 26, survives. It is recorded on Toccata Classics TOCC 0189. The second quartet, in A major, and the two movements of a third in C major, have been lost.

<sup>4</sup> In my biography, *Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst: Virtuoso Violinist* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008) I reported that Amélie Ernst – who was born in 1831 – was still alive in 1904 (p. 272). I now know she was still alive – and living in Nice – in 1908–10.

this expanded time-frame offered him plenty of scope for ambitious formal experiment. The chart below shows that the work is very far from exemplifying one of the simple forms (ABA, rondo, set of variations and so on) found in most display pieces:

- 1) tutti:<sup>5</sup> introduction
- 2) [0:15] first subject
- 3) [1:23] tutti
- 4) [1:35] episode (chromatic scales in violin part)
- 5) [2:26] tutti
- 6) [2:46] second subject in A
- 7) [4:04] virtuoso passagework in thirds
- 8) [5:06] tutti (chromatic scales in piano part)
- 9) [5:49] first subject
- 10) [6:43] tutti
- 11) [7:00] episode in B flat
- 12) [8:24] virtuoso passagework – slurred sextuplets – in B flat
- 13) [9:07] tutti in D
- 14) [9:26] second subject in D at higher pitch
- 15) [10:23] virtuoso passage work and climax based on 7
- 16) [11:16] Coda: cadential theme A, [11:31] cadential theme B, [11:43] tutti.

Glancing at this chart, one can see how carefully the work is thought through: it abounds in contrasts, echoes, surprises, interweavings – all the ‘unity amidst variety’ which Francis Hutcheson thought the essence of beauty.<sup>6</sup> The two main subjects – 2 and 6 – are admirably contrasted (the first nervous and energetic, the other lyrical and noble); only 9 involves straightforward repetition (of 2); 8 and 11 sound more like development sections than episodes; 11 and 12 are in a different (and unexpected) key from the main composition; the two main sections of virtuoso passagework – 7 and 12 – use widely contrasting techniques; both sections of passagework give relief from the hammering ‘rat-tatta-tat’ of the standard polonaise accompaniment; 8 echoes 4; cadential theme A is based on the second subject whereas cadential theme B is derived from the first; the accompaniment, as the presence of seven tutti passages suggests, does not just offer support, but is a rich and integral part of the composition. There is no hint as yet of the

<sup>5</sup> I use ‘tutti’ rather than ‘piano’ because the piano part is obviously a reduction of the orchestral score.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Peter Kivy, *The Seventh Sense: Francis Hutcheson and Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetics*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 59.

thematic transformation found in Ernst's *Concerto Pathétique* of 1846.<sup>7</sup> But the Polonaise already suggests his dissatisfaction with conventional forms, and his interest in the problem of holding an audience's attention throughout a single large-scale movement.

Why did Ernst decide to write a polonaise? Several polonaises by Mayseder – one of his teachers – were in Ernst's early repertoire; Chopin, of course, had already made the form popular; Ernst was on friendly terms with many Poles (including Chopin and his own secretary, Karol Frankowski); and Ernst's Op. 17 represents the apotheosis of the 'rat-tatta-tat' rhythm with runs through the second half of the *Romance*, Op. 15, No. 2, and the *Boléro*, Op. 16.<sup>8</sup> But the most likely explanation is that Ernst's *Polonaise* was conceived either for or during his tour of Poland in the early months of 1842. But if the work was intended for this Polish sojourn, it was not finished in time, and Ernst premiered it in Berlin – his first stop after Poland – in April 1842.

Fittingly, this serious and well-wrought piece is dedicated to Karl Müller, who made his name not as a touring virtuoso but as leader of both the Brunswick orchestra and the first Müller Brothers' Quartet<sup>9</sup> – at the time widely regarded as the greatest interpreters of the Classical quartet repertoire. Rather remarkably, there are no accounts of Ernst playing the *Polonaise* after its first performance. Perhaps its very length, grandeur and experimental form made it too severe for popular audiences.

### *Feuille d'Album pour le violon avec accompagnement de piano*

This *Feuille d'Album* [2] is Ernst's arrangement for violin and piano of a piano study by his friend Stephen Heller: No. 14 of the 24 études of *L'Art de Phraser*, Op. 16.<sup>10</sup> Some of these studies are slightly dull, but in this little piece Heller produced something exceptional; Ernst must have immediately wanted to play it and seen how well it would suit his own instrument and style of performance. He made a number of judicious and effective changes to the original, transposing it from D flat to D (a much more grateful and resonant key on the violin), occasionally reinforcing the original left-hand part of the piano with extra notes (to counterbalance the more pronounced sustaining power of the violin), and prefacing the melody with two bars of introductory triplets (to add an element of anticipation). His main innovation was to

<sup>7</sup> Recorded on Ernst, Complete Music, Volume 4, Toccata Classics TOCC 0189.

<sup>8</sup> Both recorded on Ernst, Complete Works, Volume 2, TOCC 0138.

<sup>9</sup> The members of the first Müller Brothers' Quartet (1830–55) – Karl, Franz, Theodor and August – were all sons of a Brunswick musician named Aegidius Müller; they disbanded on the death of Franz. The members of the second Müller Brothers' Quartet (1856–73) – Karl the younger, Hugo, Bernhard and Wilhelm – were all sons of Karl.

<sup>10</sup> The original is also called *Feuille d'Album*. Heller later expanded *L'Art de Phraser* to first 25, then 26 études, and so the numbering can vary from one edition to another.

increase the cumulative emotional power of the piece by doubling its length, turning Heller's AB form into ABAB, and much increasing the intensity of the second B section by adding octaves, appoggiaturas and other decorations to the violin part.

Ernst premiered his arrangement in early August 1842 at a salon held by Liszt's former mistress Marie d'Agoult, and immediately opened negotiations with publishers. Ernst had originally collaborated with Heller on the twelve pieces of their *Pensées fugitives*<sup>11</sup> in order to spread Heller's name and raise his standard of living. In this end he succeeded admirably, and at first Heller immensely enjoyed the experience of being courted by publishers. But when Ernst arranged the *Feuillet d'Album* a few months later, the pianist could not quite suppress a feeling of rueful envy at his friend's negotiating power, even though he himself stood to benefit from it. As he wrote to the artist Eugène de Frobeville:

As you will have seen in the news columns of the *Gaz[ette] Musicale*, Ernst has transcribed my *Feuillet d'Album* from my 24 *Etudes*, and he plays it admirably. He played it the day before yesterday at Madame d'Agoult's with great success. But what amused me is that he sold this arrangement for 100 francs to [Maurice] Schlesinger here, and for 200 francs to his brother [Heinrich] in Berlin, who was staying for some weeks in Paris. That was exactly the price that [Maurice] Schlesinger gave me for all 24 *etudes* and for the copyright in both countries. Admire, my dear friend, the effect of a great reputation! M. Maurice also wants to acquire the French copyright of our dozen pieces. But Ernst finds the offer of 500 francs too mean. Then he asks for 3 duos on operatic themes for 600 francs for all three; Ernst rejected this too for the same reason. His brother in Berlin offered us 1000 francs for 2 duos on Richard-Cœur de Dandy and on the *Huguenots*,<sup>12</sup> which we'll put together shortly.<sup>13</sup>

The final version of the *Feuillet d'Album* transcends finance or envy. It is utterly lovely – tender, yearning, nostalgic – all that an album leaf should be, and a fitting monument (if that's not too monumental a word) to their friendship.

<sup>11</sup> Recorded on Ernst, Complete Works, Volumes 2 and 3, TOCC 0138 and 0163.

<sup>12</sup> Despite the financial incentives, none of these opera-based projects was realised. 'Richard-Cœur de Dandy' is Heller's ironic way of referring to Gréty's comic opera *Richard Cœur de Lion* of 1784. It had always been popular in France, but a version mounted at the Opéra-Comique in 1841, with new orchestrations by Adolphe Adam, made it suddenly very fashionable again.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Jean-Jacques Eigeldinger (ed.), *Stephen Heller: Lettres d'un musicien romantique à Paris*, Flammarion, Paris, 1981, p. 110.

*Trois Rondinos Brillants sur des motifs favoris de Robert le Diable de Meyerbeer, Nathalie de Carafa et la Tentation de Halévy pour le Violon Seul; avec accompagnement d'un second Violon (ad-lib.) ou de piano (ad-lib.), Op. 5*<sup>14</sup>

The three pieces of Op. 5 are tuneful, light-textured, sparkling, finely crafted, and altogether charming, but some harsh economic realities lie behind their creation.

Ernst's early years in Paris were difficult. After the equivocal success of his debut, he withdrew from public performance in order to practice and study, and supported himself by giving lessons and private concerts. But if he was going to make his name, he had to engage in some serious composition: virtuosi, at the time, almost always played their own works, and he had so far only published one piece;<sup>15</sup> and selling sheet music was a good way of becoming known and supplementing one's income. Thus the most likely explanation for Ernst's stay in Switzerland between June and October 1833 was to give himself time to compose (as well as practise) by reducing costs and distractions to a minimum. The plan was successful and resulted in the *Rondinos*, Op. 5, and the *Ludovic* Fantasy, Op. 6,<sup>16</sup> both of which were published by Schlesinger in early 1834.

Based on a fashionable opera, the Fantasy was an ideal vehicle for Ernst's own use, and it would undoubtedly further his reputation as both violinist and composer; but as it was expensive to engrave, and its technical difficulty put it beyond the reach of most violinists, it could not be expected to sell well. It thus seems likely that Schlesinger suggested to Ernst that he write some popular music which would offset the cost of the Fantasy, and disseminate his name more widely as a composer.

Everything about the Three *Rondinos* suggests commercial calculation. First, there is no evidence of Ernst playing them himself, and although they require an advanced technique, they avoid the kind of outrageous difficulties found in many of his other pieces – extended passages in thirds, octaves, tenths, artificial harmonics and the like. These facts suggest Ernst intended the *Rondinos* for two overlapping amateur markets: players interested in tuneful and brilliant pieces for domestic recitals, and those seeking interesting technical challenges for study or teaching purposes. By targeting amateurs in this way, he was gaining access to the largest potential pool of customers.

Second, as their title-page shows, the pieces could be bought in three different forms at three different prices, allowing the customer to decide which best suited his purse and purpose. The solo version would be most suitable for individual study; the piano version for salon performance; and many teachers –

<sup>14</sup> Although Ernst numbered his Three *Rondinos*, there is no reason to suppose he wanted them played together or in that order. On this recording, to ensure a more satisfying recital, they are recorded in the order they appear on the title-page.

<sup>15</sup> The Rossini Variations, Op. 4 (Opp. 1, 2 and 3 never existed) are recorded on Ernst, Complete Music, Volume 2, rocc 0138.

<sup>16</sup> Recorded on Ernst, Complete Music, Volume 3, rocc 0163.

including Ernst's old master Joseph Böhm, and possibly Ernst himself – found it easier to observe and correct their pupils' playing while accompanying on violin rather than piano.

Third, the most popular instrumental compositions were based on fashionable stage works, and the Three Rondinos are all based on works recently and successfully premiered at the Paris Opéra: No. 3 on Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, given on 21 November 1831 [3]; No. 1 on Carafa's *Nathalie*, premiered on 7 November 1831 [4]<sup>17</sup> and No. 2 on Halevy's *La Tentation*<sup>18</sup> first heard on 20 June 1832 [5]. (Halévy's completion of Hérold's *Ludovic* was first staged at the Opéra-Comique on 16 May 1833).

Fourth, Ernst's pieces target both the opera and ballet audiences: *Robert le Diable* contains a famous erotic ballet scene for ghostly nuns; *La Tentation* is an opera-ballet; and *Nathalie* is a ballet pure and simple.

Lastly, a well-placed dedication could always pay a debt of gratitude, indicate a target audience, or raise the composer's social standing, and Ernst achieved all these goals by giving his pieces two: the German edition is dedicated to Joseph Böhm, and the French edition is dedicated to M. Le Comte de Montendre, the Inspector General of the Royal Stud.

All three Rondinos follow the same basic pattern: a dramatic introduction; the rondino theme; a skilful weaving together of further favourite airs from the opera linked by sparkling passagework; and a *moto perpetuo* finale.

*Brilliant Variations for the Pianoforte and Violin on the Favourite Air I tuoi frequenti palpiti (from Pacini's opera Niobe) Composed by Osborne and Ernst*<sup>19</sup>

The works of Giovanni Pacini (1796–1867) have virtually disappeared from the stage, but many of his 74 operas were very popular in their day, and musicologists now regard them as important transitional works between the formulaic structures of Rossini and the more dramatic, expressive and fluid forms of Bellini and Verdi. *Niobe* was his 31st opera, and, as one might expect from the title, it is not an amiable or heart-warming work. Niobe, a mother of twelve children, prepares to marry her daughter Asteria to

<sup>17</sup> The ballet called *Nathalie* given at the Paris Opéra was a revision by Michele Carafa (1787–1872) of a score by Adalbert Gyrowetz (1763–1850), *Das Schweitzer Milchmädchen*, first performed at the Theater am Kärntnertor in Vienna on 8 October 1821. Born into a noble family, Carafa studied with Cherubini and Kalkbrenner before embarking on a distinguished military career in 1806. After the fall of Napoleon, he became a professional composer and enjoyed considerable success in both Naples and Paris: besides composing nearly forty works for the stage, he was professor of counterpoint at the Paris Conservatoire between 1840 and 1858.

<sup>18</sup> Halévy wrote the operatic portions of *La Tentation*, but he collaborated with Casimir Gide (1804–68) on the ballet sections.

<sup>19</sup> The piece was simultaneously published in France and England in 1836. I use the title of the English edition because, unlike the French, it says which opera the theme is from and who composed it.

Prince Licida, and declares herself superior to the goddess Latma; when Niobe refuses to repent, Latma strikes her twelve children dead and turns their mother to stone. Nonetheless, when the opera opened at Naples on 1 November 1826 – assisted by a stellar cast and royal patronage – it went down surprisingly well, although not well enough ever to be mounted by a major opera-house again.

One aria stood out: Licida's 'I tuoi frequenti palpiti', sung as he waits with eager anticipation to meet his beloved.<sup>20</sup> It turned the tenor for whom it was written, Giovanni Rubini, into an international superstar, and enjoyed the ultimate accolade of becoming an 'insertion aria': a piece so popular it had to be worked into other operas by other composers.<sup>21</sup> Rubini managed to find an excuse for it in at least five operas by four other composers, and an early French edition of Ernst and Osborne's work reveals that it was his performance of the aria in Act II of Bellini's *La Staniera*, in Paris in the summer of 1832, which prompted them to compose their set of variations.

As the letter by Heller quoted earlier makes clear, fantasies on popular themes jointly 'put together' for the amateur market by violinists and pianists – each part taking turns in the virtuoso limelight – could be very lucrative. The Pacini Variations is the second of two pieces which Ernst composed with George Alexander Osborne, probably in late 1835 and early 1836 (the first being the fantasy on *La Juive*<sup>22</sup>). Osborne (1806–93) was an Irish musician resident in Paris, and although he was a celebrated pianist (he played at Chopin's Paris debut in 1832) and composer (his waltz, *La pluie de perles* enjoyed forty years of European celebrity),<sup>23</sup> he and Ernst were not an obvious partnership. The Irishman – smooth, urbane and just a little stuffy – was a natural *saloniste*, whereas Ernst was an impassioned super-virtuoso who, like Liszt, loved to conquer the pulsating multitude. It is thus no surprise to learn that after Ernst and Osborne premiered their Variations at the Salle Chanteraine in April 1836, they did not collaborate again on another composition, although Osborne would complete thirty such duets with the violinist Charles de Bériot – a player whose polished, *diamanté* style suited him much better.

<sup>20</sup> The aria consists of two parts: a *cantabile* ('Il soave, e bel contento') and a cavatina ('Il tuoi frequenti palpiti'). The tune of the cavatina is therefore sometimes referred to by both titles, as it is in various editions of Ernst and Osborne's variations. The opening two lines of the cavatina mean, 'O loving heart, / Restrain your frequent beating!'

<sup>21</sup> I take my information from Hilary Poriss' excellent, *Changing the Score: Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authenticity of Performance*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009, pp. 82–91.

<sup>22</sup> Recorded on Ernst, Complete Works, Volume 2, TOCC 0138.

<sup>23</sup> The G major Piano Trio, Op. 52, is probably Osborne's masterpiece. Its transparent textures may derive from Schubert and Mendelssohn, but they are rendered individual by a distinctive Irish lilt, and Ernst – who regularly performed it with the composer – must have relished the invigorating syncopations of its gipsy-like finale. The work has been recorded by the Triantán Trio on *Shower of Pearls: The Music of George Alexander Osborne*, RTÉ Lyric FM CD 103.

The opening of the Variations [6] – four unaccompanied pizzicato notes<sup>24</sup> – is highly original (and would no doubt have been greeted by smiles of recognition), but the rest of the piece, although completely winning, is unruffled by genius. Because it was primarily intended for amateur performance, Ernst does not unleash his usual arsenal of virtuoso effects, and, in order not to distract attention from the piano's livelier moments, there are many places where the violin does not play, or simply supports its partner with a light accompaniment of pizzicato or quiet extended chords. After the piano introduces the main theme [7], there are five variations. The first [8], in sextuplet semiquavers, highlights the pianist; the second [9], in elegantly decorated semiquavers, allows the violinist to shine. The *tranquillamente* variation which follows [10] pays equal attention to both instruments as they share interlocking semiquaver groups, and it is followed by an expressive *adagio* [11] and a jaunty and satisfying finale [12].

### *Romanesca fameux: Air de Danse du 16ème Siècle*

This antique melody, probably of Spanish origin, was widely known and enjoyed in 1830s and '40s Paris.<sup>25</sup> Liszt wrote two arrangements of it for solo piano,<sup>26</sup> Henri Herz wrote a fantasy on it for piano and orchestra (which the impoverished young Wagner had to arrange for piano four-hands), Alexandre Batta transcribed it for cello, Fernando Sor for guitar, and there are at least a dozen other versions. Ernst probably transcribed the theme in 1839,<sup>27</sup> and played it occasionally at public concerts from then on.

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of his arrangement [13] is its plainness. Liszt's versions are studies in extended trills and filigree cadenzas, but Ernst presents no technical obstacles and, to make his effect, relies on the simple beauty of the harmony and the speaking power of his melodic line. He also gave a good deal of thought to sonority. Besides his grave and well-judged accompaniment for piano, he provided two alternatives: one for string quartet and guitar, and another for string quintet with a pair of violas – two ensembles which are unique in his output. The result, in any version, is touching, chaste and moving – all the more so when placed between virtuoso fireworks.

### *Variations de bravoure sur l'air national hollandais, Op. 18*

In 1815 the Dutch decided they needed a new national anthem. The song *Het Wilhelmus* ('The William'), which had functioned as a semi-official anthem since the late seventeenth century, was too closely

<sup>24</sup> The Fantasy on *La Juive* also opens with the solo violin, but this time it uses double-stopped bowed notes to imitate the French horn.

<sup>25</sup> This melody is now widely loved once again, this time in South Korea. Known as Jil-Hoo's theme, or *Boys over Flowers*, it featured in a popular TV drama.

<sup>26</sup> Liszt's first version was published in 1833, his later revision in 1852.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Christine Hoppe, *Der Schatten Paganini: Virtuosität in den Kompositionen Heinrich Wilhelm Ernsts*, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim, Zürich, New York, 2014, p. 480.

associated with Calvinism and the House of Orange to please large sections of the Dutch population: in particular, the anti-Orangist Patriot Party and the Catholic population of the Southern Netherlands that had united with the Dutch in 1815. Accordingly, a competition for a new song was held in that year. It was won by Hendrik Tollens, whose rousing poem begins:

Wien Neerlandsch bloed in de aders vloeit  
Van vreemde smiten vrij

*Whoever has Dutch blood flowing in their veins  
Free from foreign taint*

After several false starts, the words were set to a serviceable tune by the expatriate German composer Johann Wilhelm Wilms, and – apart from a slight adjustment to the politically incorrect second line in 1898 – the resulting work remained the national anthem until 1932. But by this stage it too had become associated with a faction (in this case, Dutch conservative nationalism) and so had to be replaced by the now politically more neutral *Het Wilhelmus*.

In 1838, after living for seven years in Paris, Ernst determined to set out on his first major foreign tour – through Holland and the Low Countries – and decided to write a piece that would delight his target audience. What could be better than a work based on the new anthem, designed as it was to be universally popular amongst members of a recently enlarged and confident country? He tried out his set of variations at a concert in Amsterdam in July 1838,<sup>28</sup> and then played it throughout his tour which began in November. This concert-series turned out to be an unprecedented triumph, and several of the letters he dashed off to Schlesinger at this time give the impression of a man barely able to keep his head as a storm of adulation rages about him:

My success here in this country continues to be fabulous. I can barely get out of the carriage or the concert halls. The smallest towns of 3,000 to 4,000 inhabitants compete amongst themselves to see which one will enjoy me first, and some Parisian concerts are not perhaps so profitable as some of these small-town offers. On Thursday 21st I am going to a big concert in the wonderful Odeon Hall, after that I've already played 5 times to a full house in the French Theatre, in which Vrugt, Madame Marinoni, Madame Fink-Lohr and Mlle. Buys (a *gorgeous* girl with a big voice and lots of feeling and talent) will all sing. The last one I will perhaps recommend to you, because she intends to go to Paris. On top of this, the majority of the orchestra from The Hague are coming to this concert. Forty men, led by the court orchestra leader Lübeck. The King himself has given permission for this. I'm going to play for the first time in this concert [-group] my caprice on the Dutch folksong. I believe that the concert will be a great success. The tickets are going for an unusual price here – 4 guilders, which is over 8 francs –

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 471.

and yesterday over 400 tickets had already been bought. Orders are coming in from 10–14 miles away. I hope to be in Paris in the spring and am already looking forward to telling you rogues [...] orally the details of my artistic excursions.<sup>29</sup>

He eventually gave 67 concerts before returning to Paris, delirious but exhausted, in May 1839.

The Variations begin [14] with a long and grandiose introduction containing prefigurations of the melody to come, which, when it arrives, is presented simply and gracefully on the violin [15]. But the first variation [16] soon makes clear why the piece is entitled ‘Variations de Bravoure’: here there are no concessions to amateurs as Ernst bedizens his theme with octaves, chromatic sixths and thirds, harmonics and ricochet-spiccato bowing. The second variation [17] offers no let-up as the violin accompanies the tune, in the piano, with triple and quadruple stopping. But even amidst this storm of virtuosity it is striking how carefully Ernst calculates his effects. He writes out two different versions of the variation according to whether it is accompanied by orchestra or string-quartet/piano, the latter (recorded here) being slightly fuller and more elaborate. Incorporating the ‘tremolo’ effect (two-notes-to-a-bow rapid spiccato) made fashionable by de Bériot, the third variation [18] produces a shimmering impression, first by rapidly alternating between octaves on the G and D strings, and then by outlining the tune in artificial harmonics. When this variation finishes, one would expect an *adagio*, allowing Ernst to show off his immensely expressive *parlando* tone, but in this piece he dives straight into the finale [19]. The rapid simultaneous octaves of the opening soon give way to further shimmering octave displacements, before a final sequence of piccolo-like harmonics ushers in a rousing conclusion.

Outside Holland, the tune of ‘Wien Neerlandsch bloed’ was little known and had no emotional resonance. In consequence, Ernst did not play the piece regularly, although it was useful – particularly in the mid-1840s – whenever a long series of concerts in one place put his repertoire under pressure.

Mark W. Rowe is Honorary Researcher in Philosophy at the University of East Anglia. His biography Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst: Virtuoso Violinist appeared from Ashgate, Aldershot, in 2008.

<sup>29</sup> Letter of 19 February 1839, quoted in Rowe, *op. cit.* p. 73. I particularly like the way everyone in this letter seems to be moving or thinking of moving – as though destabilised by the artistic phenomenon amongst them.

**Sherban Lupu**, born in 1952, studied at the Bucharest Conservatory with George Manoliu. While a student he concertised throughout eastern Europe and performed on Romanian radio and television. He left Romania to study at the Guildhall School of Music in London with Yfrah Neaman and took lessons and masterclasses with Yehudi Menuhin, Henryk Szering and Nathan Milstein, as well as with Norbert Brainin of the Amadeus String Quartet and with Sandor Vegh. He won prizes in numerous competitions, such as the Vienna International, the Jacques Thibaud in Paris and the Carl Flesch in London. Subsequently he moved to the United States to study with Dorothy De Lay and, at Indiana University, with Josef Gingold and receive chamber-music coaching from Menahem Pressler. Until recently Sherban Lupu was professor of violin at the University of Illinois.

Appearing frequently as soloist in Europe and the United States, Lupu has performed the complete cycle of Beethoven sonatas with Menahem Pressler, but he specialises in the music of his native Romania and eastern Europe as well as the virtuoso Romantic repertoire. He has made solo appearances at the world's major concert halls, among them The Kennedy Center, Royal Festival Hall, the Gstaad and Aldeburgh Festivals and Carnegie Hall. His recordings include works by Ysaÿe, Bartók, Enescu, Wieniawski, Ernst, Stravinsky, Bloch and Ginastera for the ASV, Arabesque, Capstone, Continuum, Electrecord and Zephyr labels, and his recording of the Bach solo Sonatas and Partitas appeared on Electrecord. He has also recorded for the BBC. In collaboration with the composer Cornel Țăranu, Lupu finished and reconstructed the *Caprice roumain* for violin and orchestra by Enescu. That work, which he performed in a special concert at the World Exhibition 2000 in Hannover, has been released on an Electrecord CD.

Much in demand as a pedagogue, Sherban Lupu is a frequent member of international juries, has given numerous masterclasses and taught in the Czech Republic, England, Germany, Holland, Italy, Poland – where in July 2004 he received from the Ministry of Culture the Award for Outstanding Teaching – and Romania.

In 2000 Sherban Lupu received a life-time achievement award from the Romanian Cultural Foundation for his efforts to promote Romanian culture and music internationally, and in May 2002 he was given the prestigious Arnold Beckman Award from the Research Board of the University of Illinois towards the recording of the complete works for violin and piano by Béla Bartók. In November that year he was awarded the title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the Academy of Music G. Dima in Cluj (Romania) and in January 2004 the President of Romania conferred upon him the title of Commander of the National Order of Merit and Service for his worldwide musical and cultural activities. Since 2002 he has been Artistic Director of the International Festival 'The Musical Citadel of Braşov', Romania. In 2007 he received another Arnold Beckman Award from the Research Board of the University of Illinois and was awarded a doctorate *honoris causa* by the Al. I. Cuza University of Iaşi, Romania.

In September 2005, together with the Romanian Cultural Institute, Sherban Lupu published six volumes of previously unknown works for violin by George Enescu – all of them discovered, edited and arranged by Lupu himself – and since December of the same year he has been the Artistic Director of the George Enescu Society of the United States. For the academic year 2009–10 he was a Fulbright Senior Lecturer and also a recipient of the College of Fine and Applied Arts Creative Research Award at the University of Illinois.

For Toccata Classics he has recorded, with Ian Hobson, four volumes in this Ernst series (TOCC 0118, 0138, 0163 and 0189) and the first volume in another series, *The Unknown Enescu* (TOCC 0047).

**Ian Hobson**, pianist and conductor, enjoys an international reputation both for his performances of the Romantic repertoire and of neglected piano music old and new, and for his assured conducting from both the piano and the podium, renewing interest in the music of such lesser known masters as Ignaz Moscheles and Johann Hummel as well as being an effective advocate of works written expressly for him by contemporary composers, among them John Gardner, Benjamin Lees, David Liptak, Alan Ridout and Roberto Sierra.

Born in Wolverhampton in 1952 and one of the youngest-ever graduates of the Royal Academy of Music, Ian Hobson began his international career in 1981 when he won First Prize at the Leeds International Piano Competition. He studied also at Cambridge and Yale Universities. Among his piano teachers were Sidney Harrison, Ward Davenny, Claude Frank and Menahem Pressler; as a conductor he studied with Otto Werner Mueller, Denis Russell Davies, Daniel Lewis and Gustav Meier, and he worked with Lorin Maazel in Cleveland and Leonard Bernstein at Tanglewood. A professor in the Center for Advanced Study at the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), Ian Hobson received the endowed chair of Swanlund Professor of Music in 2000.

He is a recording artist of prodigious energy, having to date amassed a discography of some sixty releases, including the complete piano sonatas of Beethoven and Schumann and a complete edition of Brahms' variations for piano. In 2007, with the Sinfonia Varsovia, he recorded Rachmaninov's four piano concertos and *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* for the Zephyr label in the dual role of pianist and conductor – an achievement no other performer has matched. In addition, he has recorded more than twenty albums for the Arabesque label featuring the music of Clementi, Dussek and Weber, the complete solo-piano sonatas of Hummel, the complete solo piano transcriptions of Rachmaninov, and *Hobson's Choice*, a collection of his favourite pieces exploring the multiple facets of virtuosity across the span of three centuries. Several of his Toccata Classics recordings to date have been made as a pianist with Sherban Lupu: three volumes in this Ernst series (rocc 0118, 0138 and 0163), the first volume in another series, *The Unknown Enescu* (rocc 0047) and a disc of violin works by Theodor Grigoriu (rocc 0131). His recordings for Toccata Classics as solo pianist have featured the music of Harold Truscott (rocc 0252) and Edward Loder (rocc 0322), and as a conductor he has embarked on a Toccata Classics series giving Martinů's early orchestral works their first-ever recordings, the first of them appearing on rocc 0249.

He has also been engaged in recording a sixteen-volume collection of the complete works of Chopin, also for the Zephyr label, having marked the composer's 200th birthday with a series of ten solo concerts in New York. In addition to the large body of work for solo piano, this recording series features his performances as pianist and conductor, with the Sinfonia Varsovia, in all of the works for piano and orchestra, as well as his collaboration as pianist with other artists in Chopin's chamber music and songs. In this edition there is around three-quarters of an hour of music by Chopin that has never been recorded before, making Ian Hobson the first-ever artist to record the composer's entire *œuvre*.

In addition, Ian Hobson is a much sought-after jury-member for national and international competitions, among them the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition (at the specific request of Van Cliburn himself), the Arthur Rubinstein Competition in Poland, the Chopin Competition in Florida, the Leeds Piano Competition and the Schumann International Competition.



Recorded on 24 and 25 May 2013 in the Foellinger Great Hall of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, University of Illinois  
Engineer: Christopher Ericson  
Producer: Samir Golescu

Music supplied by Jon Frohnen

Booklet text: Mark Rowe

Cover design: David M. Baker ([david@notneverknow.com](mailto:david@notneverknow.com))

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Executive producer: Martin Anderson

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# ERNST Complete Works, Volume Five

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[1] *Polonaise de Concert*, Op. 17 (1842) 12:00

[2] **HELLER** *Feuille d'Album*,  
*L'Art de Phraser*, Op. 16, No. 14,  
arr. Ernst (1842) 3:02

*Trois Rondinos Brillants sur des motifs  
favoris de Robert le Diable de Meyerbeer,  
Nathalie de Carafa et la Tentation de Halévy  
pour le Violon Seul; avec accompagnement  
d'un second Violon (ad-lib.) ou de piano  
(ad-lib.), Op. 5 (1833)\* 28:42*

[3] Rondino No. 3 in D major  
on Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* 9:34

[4] Rondino No. 1 in F major  
on Carafa's *Natalie* 8:56

[5] Rondino No. 2 in A major  
on Halévy's *La Tentation* 10:12

*Brilliant Variations for the Pianoforte  
and Violin on the Favourite Air I tuoi  
frequenti palpiti (from Pacini's opera Niobe)  
Composed by [G. A.] Osborne  
and [H. W.] Ernst (1836)\* 11:12*

[6] Introduction: *Moderato* 0:51

[7] Theme: *Moderato* 1:06

[8] Var. 1: *Brillante* 1:04

[9] Var. 2 1:07

[10] Var. 3: *Tranquillamente* 1:07

[11] Var. 4: *Adagio* 2:36

[12] Finale: *Allegro* 3:20

[13] *Romanesca fameux:*  
*Air de Danse du 16ème Siècle* (1839) 3:53

*Variations de bravoure sur l'air national  
hollandais*, Op. 18 (1838)\* 10:55

[14] Introduction: *Maestoso* 2:11

[15] Theme: *Quasi andante* 1:37

[16] Var. 1 2:05

[17] Var. 2: *Au talon en tirant* 1:51

[18] Var. 3: *Più mosso* 1:13

[19] Finale: *Più mosso* 1:58

TT 69:47

**Sherban Lupu**, violin  
**Ian Hobson**, piano

\*FIRST RECORDINGS