



CHANNEL CLASSICS

BEETHOVEN

VARIATIONS for violoncello and pianoforte

CCS 6494

Pieter
Wispelwey
violoncello

LOIS SHAPIRO pianoforte



Pieter Wispelwey is one of the first of a generation of generalist specialists, performing equally outstandingly on historical instruments as on modern instruments, based on and inspired by expert stylistical knowledge, highly original and deep musical understanding and superior technique. His repertory ranges from works by J. S. Bach to Elliott Carter, Kagel, Schnittke and young contemporary composers.

Pieter Wispelwey was awarded the Elisabeth Everts Prize, an award given biennially to the Netherlands' most promising musician in 1985 and in 1992 Pieter Wispelwey as first and only cellist received the highly prestigious Netherlands Music Prize. For many years he has given complete, widely acclaimed performances of the suites for cello solo by J. S. Bach and Britten and the sonatas by Beethoven and Brahms, on period as well as on modern instruments.

Pieter Wispelwey is a regularly returning guest in the Koninklijk Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, performing the baroque, classical, romantic and modern repertory. His debut performances in Rome, Milan, Paris, Boston, New York, Melbourne, Mexico, Vienna and München were highly successful. Debut performances in Berlin, London and Tokyo are scheduled for 1994.

He received his early training from Dicky Boeke and Anner Bijlsma in Amsterdam and continued his studies with Paul Katz (Rochester, USA) and with William Pleeth in England. The vast sonata repertoire for cello and piano he performs with several outstanding pianists, like Lois Shapiro and Paul Komen. As a soloist he performs regularly with orchestra and has recently played concertos by Dvorák, Elgar, Tchaikowsky, Shostakovitch, Dutilleux, Ibert, Schnittke, Haydn, Beethoven (triple), Brahms (double) performing a.o. in the Koninklijk Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and

with the Dutch and German Radio Chamber and Philharmonic Orchestras, the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra from Amsterdam, the Philharmonic Ungarica, the Netherlands Wind Ensemble, the Moscow Chamber Orchestra and with the Westdeutsche Sinfonia and the Stuttgarter Chamber Orchestra.

His CD's with all Bach Suites, Beethoven and Brahms Sonatas all received widely acclaim in the international press, several received international and national awards.

Warmly acknowledged for her imaginative and insightful performances, **Lois Shapiro** has performed as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the U.S.A. as well as the former USSR, Belgium, Switzerland, Hungary and Canada. She was the only North American classical musician invited for the past four seasons to participate in the International Arts Festival in Maracaibo, Venezuela - a participation involving recitals, concerto appearances, masterclasses and workshops on North American contemporary music. A previous winner of the prestigious Concert Artists Guild Award, she was also a finalist in the 1985 Affiliate Artists Competition.

Formerly an instructor of piano at Smith College and the New England Conservatory, Ms. Shapiro teaches currently on the faculties of Wellesley College and the Longy School of Music in Cambridge (Mass.). She has given numerous masterclasses and lectures on subjects such as the nature of musicianship, and Robert Schumann's music in relation to the early 19th century intellectual and aesthetic milieu. She received her musical training at the Peabody Institute, Yale University, the New England Conservatory and Indiana University. Her teachers include Leon Fleisher, Katja Andy and Gyorgy Sebok.

The cello sonatas of **Beethoven** must be familiar to any lover of the instrument. But many people see these works as the logical product of a creative artist: first comes the inspiration, and then hard work takes care of the rest. So why are there no cello sonatas by Haydn or Mozart, for example? There seems to be no obvious answer, but therein lies the clue. The classical sonata, incorporating a genuine dialogue of instruments, had not yet achieved its definitive form by 1800. For the most part, the general public is full of praise for Beethoven's symphonies, concerti, and quartets, but they forget that he was also virtually the first composer to produce a classical cello sonata.

By the end of the 18th century, the cello, thanks to several virtuoso performers, had rapidly evolved from a simple basso continuo instrument into a genuine solo voice. The most obvious examples can be seen in the many works of Boccherini in which liberal use is made of the instrument's highest register and the cello shows itself a full equal of more usual solo instruments like the violin. In Paris, Vienna, and Berlin as well, increasing numbers of virtuoso cellists such as the Duport brothers, Bernhard Romberg, and Anton Kraft had achieved sensational careers. All of these players devoted themselves primarily to concerti; the sonatas of the period were still written in the old style, a relic of the baroque period, with the keyboard accompaniment constituting little more than a figured bass.

With the advent of the classical style, the first hesitant attempts were made at violin and piano sonatas in which the piano dominated the stage. The violin participated occasionally in the melody but functioned primarily as an accompaniment. This style presented an additional problem for the cello; because of its lower pitch, it is not suited for doubling the melody. Melodic doubling at the lower octave is not an attractive sonority.

The cello's role, then, remained for some time what it had been since the baroque period: the solo line in concerto writing was often in a brilliantly high tessitura (e.g. Haydn's cello concerti); in the orchestral texture, the cello was primarily a bass instrument (usually associated with the double bass line). A small degree of progress could already be seen in the chamber music repertoire, where the cello was occasionally given a melodic role. Boccherini was again an innovator in this area, particularly in his string quintets with two celli, where the first cello frequently functions as a brilliant partner to the first violin.

Royalty also contributed to this development. Frederick Wilhelm II of Prussia commissioned many new works from composers including Mozart and Haydn; because he was an amateur cellist, the cello was also given a prominent role in these compositions. In addition, the royal musician also engaged the best cellists available for his court orchestra, including the above-mentioned brothers, Jean-Pierre and Jean-Louis Duport. Jean-Louis, in particular, was to establish the basis of modern cello technique with his published method.

When Beethoven came to the Berlin court in 1796, the technical accomplishments of the resident cellists, undoubtedly inspired the immediate composition of his first cello sonatas, opus 5, which he and Jean-Louis Duport then performed for the King. Beethoven and Duport must have frequently discussed the development of this new style, in which the cello engages in a fully developed dialogue with the piano, making use of its entire range and resulting in an unprecedented expressivity.

Close contact between composer and musician was virtually taken for granted during this period of immense technical and musical innovation. The virtuosic character

of the Kreutzer-Sonata was suggested to Beethoven primarily by the technical accomplishments of the violinist George Bridgetower (Beethoven at first even referred to this sonata as 'Sonata mulattica' because Bridgetower was a mulatto).

In the same way, the playing of the hornist Johann Wenzel Stich, (better known as Giovanni Punto-an Italian translation of his name) during his tour of Vienna in 1800, inspired Beethoven to compose his horn sonata Opus 17. In that same year, Punto and Beethoven gave the premiere performance of the work. Beethoven also published a somewhat more expansive version of the work in 1802 for cello and piano (alternative parts were often published to increase a work's saleability), but even though Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny considered this version as his teacher's third cello sonata, it disappeared relatively quickly from the scene. Pablo Casals was one of the first to revive it in recent memory.

Beethoven had very definite opinions about other composers. His favourites were Bach, Mozart, Handel, and Haydn, and in this he differed remarkably from his colleagues at the time. Mozart, in particular, was the composer most beloved of the youthful Beethoven, who had a special affection for 'Die Zauberflöte'.

Opera was one of the most popular musical genres in Vienna, and **variations** on a favourite aria were also a popular form of composition. Indeed, they could be seen as the 19th-century equivalent of the film soundtrack, with the important difference that Beethoven was able to create a whole wealth of sound within these miniatures for cello, sometimes introverted and sustained, sometimes brilliant and virtuosic; there is always a true dialogue between the cello and the piano, making optimal use of the cello's new technical developments.

Thanks to one of his patrons, Baron Gottfried van Swieten, Beethoven discovered Handel's vocal music. After a thorough study of the older composer's works, he concluded that they surpassed even those of Mozart: "Handel is the greatest composer who ever lived"... "I would bare my head and fall on my knees at his grave!" (From Thayer's Life of Beethoven, Berlin 1866/Hildesheim 1972). Although it may seem strange to us nowadays that Handel impressed Beethoven more than Mozart, it was the nobility of Handels music which particularly appealed to the younger man. There was nothing heroic about 'Figaro' and 'Don Giovanni', which Beethoven considered too lightweight. In contrast, the heroic composer of 'Fidelio', the 'Eroica', and the 'Ninth Symphony' was all the more attracted by the style of 'See the conqu'ring hero comes'.

Bastiaan van de Werf

Translation: David Shapero

Zwölf Variationen über das Thema 'See the
conqu'ring hero comes' aus Händels
Oratorium 'Judas Maccabaeus'

G Major - WoO 45 (1796)

1. Thema	0.45
2. Variation 1	0.38
3. Variation 2	0.42
4. Variation 3	0.39
5. Variation 4	0.50
6. Variation 5	0.48
7. Variation 6	0.38
8. Variation 7	0.33
9. Variation 8	0.45
10. Variation 9	0.36
11. Variation 10	0.43
12. Variation 11	3.19
13. Variation 12	0.57

Zwölf Variationen über das Thema 'Ein
Mädchen oder Weibchen' aus Mozarts Oper
'Die Zauberflöte'

F Major Opus 66 (1798)

14. Thema	0.32
15. Variation 1	0.36
16. Variation 2	0.33
17. Variation 3	0.33
18. Variation 4	0.39
19. Variation 5	0.29
20. Variation 6	0.30
21. Variation 7	0.41
22. Variation 8	0.33
23. Variation 9	0.38
24. Variation 10	1.18
25. Variation 11	1.07
26. Variation 12	1.53

Sieben Variationen über das Thema
'Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen' aus

Mozarts Oper 'Die Zauberflöte'

E flat Major - WoO 46 (1801)

27. Thema	0.51
28. Variation 1	0.39
29. Variation 2	0.39
30. Variation 3	0.57
31. Variation 4	1.18
32. Variation 5	0.37
33. Variation 6	2.16
34. Variation 7	1.50

Sonata für Violoncello und Klavier,

F Major Opus 17 (1802)

35. Allegro moderato	7.15
36. Poco Adagio, quasi Andante	1.16
37. Rondo	4.28

Total time 45.00