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CLASSICS

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SIGCD704

BEETHOVEN

VIOLIN
CONCERTO
ROMANCES

Charlie Siem *violin*
Philharmonia Orchestra
Oleg Caetani *conductor*





BEETHOVEN

VIOLIN CONCERTO ROMANCES FOR VIOLIN & ORCHESTRA

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 61

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | I. Allegro ma non troppo | 21.54 |
| 2 | II. Larghetto | 8.06 |
| 3 | III. Rondo. Allegro | 10.35 |
| 4 | Romance for Violin and Orchestra No. 1
in G Major, Op. 40 | 5.57 |
| 5 | Romance for Violin and Orchestra No. 2
in F Major, Op. 50 | 7.34 |

Total timings	54.08
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Charlie Siem *violin*
Philharmonia Orchestra
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LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

1770-1827

VIOLIN CONCERTO ROMANCES

Vienna, Franz II's city. 'There one might see elegant men dressed in silk, with their thin stockings and buckled shoes, army officers fresh from the Balkan, Italian, or Belgian campaigns, commoners in sober, black clothes, and Capuchins in brown cowls. One was jostled by carriers of sedan chairs in which sat distinguished ladies; one was importuned by toy-sellers whose wares had been carved in low huts on the

Slovakian mountains. There were Italian merchants, Hungarians in the tight trousers and feather-rufted hats of their national costume, smiling girls selling violets in baskets ... a youth of twenty-two with a dark pock-marked face, black eyes, and black hair streaming in the wind ... high domelike forehead, flat nose, and teeth that pushed his lips outward.'

- Max Graf

Beethoven's **Violin Concerto**, midway between the Mozart canon and Mendelssohn, was the 19th century's first great example of the form. Completed in two months (few sketches survive), it was introduced by Franz Clement at the Theater an der Wien, 23 December 1806, apparently at sight and without rehearsal. Legend has it that the first movement was separated from the (linked) second and third with trickery and sundry diversions. The original handbill reads differently, the new opus featuring in the concert's opening half between a Méhul overture and Mozart aria. 'A born genius', Clement (1780-1842) was director and concertmaster of the Theater - opened in 1801 and still in use today, the 'Wien' of its name referring

to the river from the Vienna Woods that once flowed by. 'His [style],' the Leipzig *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* admired, 'is not the marked, bold, strong playing, the moving, forceful *adagio*, the powerful bow and tone [familiar from the Franco-Latin] Rode-Viotti School; rather, his playing is indescribably delicate, neat and elegant; it has an extremely delightful tenderness and cleanness that undoubtedly secures him a place among the most perfect violinists.' In April 1805, under Beethoven's direction, he led the premiere of the *Eroica*, in a programme including additionally the (better received) first performance of one of his own concertos.

'Degas one day said to Mallarmé: "I cannot manage the end of my sonnet, and it is not that I am wanting in ideas." Mallarmé, softly: "It is not with ideas that one makes sonnets, but with words." So it is with Beethoven. It is in the quality of his musical material and not in the nature of his ideas that his true greatness lies.'

- Igor Stravinsky

Beethoven revised the solo part extensively, his final thoughts dating from April/May 1807 while working/collaborating on an arrangement for piano and orchestra (the only innovation of which was a developmental first movement cadenza incorporating

militaristic timpani). To what extent Clement may have had a hand in Beethoven's changes is unclear. Detailing correspondences between his own 1805 concerto (published 1806/07) and Beethoven's, both in the same key, Clive Brown (2008) is of the opinion that 'Beethoven had Clement's style of violin playing clearly in mind ... the resemblances between Beethoven's and Clement's concertos go far deeper than the general character of the violin writing, suggesting perhaps a hidden dialogue between the two composers. Both works are externally similar. They both employ the same instrumentation [the usual classical complement but with only a single flute and omitting trumpets and drums in the

slow movements] ... In addition, they exhibit a similar approach in their treatment of the solo instrument, and there are even many individual figurations in Beethoven's Violin Concerto that appear to allude directly to passages in Clement's concerto'.

'[In Beethoven] the dreamer will recognise his dreams, the sailor his storms, the wolf his forests.'

- Victor Hugo

In 1807 Clement repeated the Concerto twice (23, 26 December). Aside from an uncredited 1816 listing in the Grosser Redoutensaal, it was not heard again in Vienna during Beethoven's lifetime. The *Zeitung für Theater, Musik und Poesie* (8 January 1807) filed a disparaging report:

'The verdict of the cognoscenti is unanimous: they conceded [the music] has some beauty, but maintain that the continuity is often completely fragmented, and that the endless repetition of some commonplace passages might easily prove wearisome. They assert that Beethoven [sic] could put his undoubtedly great talents to better use.' Modern opinion – since the occasion in early-Victorian London when, under the baton of Mendelssohn, it was revived by the twelve-year-old Joachim for his Philharmonic Society debut, 27 May 1844 (to 'prolonged and rapturous applause') – begs to differ.

'Beethoven's Concerto is Janus-faced, looking both ways: Classical in its architecture and language

and yet innovative in its proportions and breadth of vision. It is not yet Romantic, albeit romantic, but opens up a path for later composers to explore.'

- Andrew Manze

Combining facets echoing the groundplans of Mozart's keyboard and fiddle concertos, the first movement – launched audaciously by a bar of soft drum taps, nothing else – is an expansive sonata design, the accent not so much on individual subjects as a pair of open-ended thematic groups tonally and rhythmically energised. Unfurled out of the cadenza (Kreisler's in this recording, *nobilmente*), the tranced closing section remains for ever miraculous, a lingering farewell where violin and

orchestra entwine in an ethereal dialogue of sublime stillness. The song of this *Allegro* is matched by that of the G major *Larghetto* – a tonally motionless dream-like sequence of 91 bars unviolated by the Napoleonic battlefields of its time or locale. Ostensibly it is a set of variations, but such impression is contradicted half way through when the soloist (unmuted against *sordino* orchestral violins) enters suddenly with an entirely new idea, *cantabile* on the G and D strings. Galanteries and fantastical images, tumbling among waterfalls of brightly rainbowed sound, course through the concluding 6/8 sonata-rondo, music of bacchanalian pastures and gruff humour. Dance-like in its refrain (possibly borrowed

from Clement) and the *à la chasse* style of its hunting-horns, reflective in the violin and bassoon conversation of its G minor central episode, teasingly denying (for example the extraordinary, if preceded, resolution of the final cadenza in A flat, remotest of keys relatively), the vibrancy of its life cannot be stilled.

'In playing Beethoven the violinist should be a medium. There is little that is personal or that can be reduced to ingratiating sounds, pleasing slides and so on. Everything is dictated by the significance, the weight, structure and direction of the notes and passages themselves'

- Yehudi Menuhin

Apart from the incomplete *Allegro* of a Violin Concerto in C (Bonn, 1790-92), an abandoned *Concertante* in D (1802), the *Triple Concerto of Eroica* fraternity (1803-04), and the *Benedictus* of the *Missa Solemnis*, the only other works Beethoven left for violin are the two **Romances** with small orchestra Opp 40 and 50 from 1800-01 and 1798 (or 1795), printed in 1803 and 1805 respectively. Early ventures, these are precisely what their name implies – *romances* not *adagios*, portraits without specifics, verdant yet smoky. Within the opening *a cappella* phrase of the First murmurs the impulse from which the *Kreutzer* Sonata and Fourth Piano Concerto sprang. Lurking among the pages, 195 bars

in all, legacies of old baroque *affekt* might be fancied. G major, symbolic of 'things rural, idyllic and pastoral; all calm and peaceful passions; the deepest gratitude for sincere friendships and true love' (Schubart). The Second is in F major, 'the most high and noble feelings are here so easy as to be compared with a beautiful person who succeeds in everything he tries' (Mattheson). Beethoven, arch lyricist, his particularisation of title (rare but not unknown – most obviously the slow movement of Mozart's D minor Concerto, a work he admired, played and composed cadenzas for) harking back to an unfinished boyhood Romance cantabile (piano, flute, bassoon) written in Bonn in 1786 – an emotionally

awakening fragment. Less Haydn's swarthy 'Grand Mogul' than a man of yielding countenance enamoured with a young countess arrived from Trieste. Julie Guicciardi, *la bella Guicciardi*, turning seventeen, hair dressed à *la Titus*. 'I'm out and about again, among people ... [my change of life] brought about by a dear charming girl who loves me and whom I love. After two years, I am again enjoying some blissful moments, and it is the first time that – that I feel marriage might bring me happiness. But unfortunately she is not of my station – and now – now I certainly could not marry.' (16 November 1801).

'Beethoven broke all the rules, and turned out pieces of breath-taking rightness. Rightness – that's the word! When you get the feeling that whatever note succeeds the last is the only possible note that can rightly happen at that instant, in that context ... Our boy has the real goods, the stuff from Heaven, the power to make you feel at the finish: Something is right in the world ... something we can trust, that will never let us down.'

- Leonard Bernstein

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CHARLIE SIEM

Charlie Siem is one of today's foremost violinists, with such a wide-ranging diversity of cross-cultural appeal as to have played a large part in defining what it means to be a true artist of the 21st century.

Born in London, to a Norwegian father and British mother, Siem began to play the violin at the age of three after hearing a broadcast of Yehudi Menuhin playing Beethoven's Violin Concerto. He received a broad and thorough education from Eton College, before completing the intellectually demanding undergraduate degree programme in Music at the University of Cambridge. From 1998 to 2004, he studied the violin with Itzhak Rashkovsky in London at the Royal College of Music, and since 2004 has been mentored by Shlomo Mintz.

Siem has appeared with many of the world's finest orchestras and chamber ensembles, including: the Bergen Philharmonic, the Camerata Salzburg, the Czech National Symphony, the Israel Philharmonic, the London

Symphony, the Moscow Philharmonic, the Oslo Philharmonic, the Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, MDR Leipzig, Camerata Salzburg. He has worked with top conductors including: Charles Dutoit, Dannis Russel Davies, Edward Gardner, Zubin Mehta, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Sir Roger Norrington, Libor Pešek and Yuri Simonov. International festival appearances to date include: Spoleto, St. Moritz, Gstaad, Bergen, Tine@Munch, Festival Internacional de Santa Lucía, and the Windsor Festival. Siem's regular sonata partner is renowned pianist Itamar Golan.

Charlie Siem has a varied discography and has made a number recordings, including with the London Symphony Orchestra (Warner Classics, 2011) and Münchner Rundfunkorchester

(Sony Classical, 2014). He has also recorded *"Between the Clouds"* (Signum Records, 2020) including works by Kreisler, Sarasate, Paganini, Elgar and Wieniawski, showcasing Siem's versatility and virtuosity in an intimate Parisian-style 'salon' programme.

A great believer in giving to worthwhile causes, Siem is an ambassador of The Prince's Trust. He is also a Visiting Professor at Leeds College of Music in the UK, and Nanjing University of the Arts in China. He gives masterclasses around the world at top institutions such as the Royal College of Music in London, and the Accademia di Musica in Florence.

Passionate about bringing classical music to new audiences around the world, in addition to his classical performance

career Siem has revived the age-old violinistic tradition of composing virtuosic variations of popular themes, which he has done alongside artists including: Bryan Adams, Jamie Cullum and The Who. In 2014, he wrote his first composition – *Canopy*, for solo violin and string orchestra – which was commissioned by the USA television station *CBS Watch!* and recorded with the English Chamber Orchestra. Siem has also had numerous collaborations with fashion brands including: Armani, Chanel, Dior, Dunhill, Hugo Boss and Loro Piana.

Charlie Siem plays the 1735 Guarneri del Gesù violin, known as the *D'Egville*.



OLEG CAETANI

Oleg Caetani, one of the greatest conductors of his generation, moves freely between symphonic and opera repertoire. Caetani has conducted all over the world including: the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, the Royal

Opera House in London, the Opera House in San Francisco, the Musikverein in Vienna, Lincoln Center in New York, the Suntory Hall in Japan, the Sydney Opera House, the Accademia of Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Staatskapelle Dresden, the Munich Philharmonic, the Mozarteum Orchester in Salzburg, the Svetlanov Symphony Orchestra of Russia, La Scala in Milan, the Yomiuri Orchestra in Tokyo, the Sydney Symphony and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. He has worked with the greatest soloists in our day including: Marta Argerich, Sviatoslav Richter, Danil Trifonov, Vadim Repin, Misha Maisky, Gautier Capuçon, Viktoria Mullova and Emmanuele Pahud.

Caetani considers Nadia Boulanger to be the driving

inspiration of his career. She discovered his talent, initiated him into music, and gave him the philosophical approach to life linked to Montaigne, that he still has today.

Oleg was chief designate at the ENO in 2005, chief designate 2002-2005 for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Music Conductor and Artistic Director for the same orchestra from 2005 to 2009. Before that, Caetani was the Principal Conductor for the Staatskapelle Weimar, First Kapellmeister of the Frankfurt Opera and GMD in Wiesbaden and in Chemnitz.

Shostakovich's music plays a central role in his repertoire. Caetani translated the libretto of *The Nose* from Russian into German for his production in Frankfurt in 1991; he conducted

the Italian premiere of the operetta *Moscow Cheriomushki* in 2007, and has conducted the first performances in many different countries of Shostakovich's operas, concertos, ballets and suites, as well as having recorded the first Italian complete cycle of Shostakovich symphonies with the LaVerdi Orchestra in Milan. Their albums

have won several prizes: 10/10 from Classical Today in the USA, ffff Télérama in France and Record Geijutsu in Japan. His recordings of Tansman's Symphonies, released by Chandos, won three Diapason d'Or in 2006 and 2008; his Gounod's Symphonies for CPO (including the 3rd Symphony, discovered by Caetani) also won a Diapason D'or in January 2015.

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

The Philharmonia Orchestra creates thrilling performances for a global audience.

The Philharmonia is team of 80 outstanding musicians from 16 countries. Santtu-Matias Rouvali is our Principal Conductor, the sixth

person to hold that title in the Orchestra's history.

The Philharmonia was founded in 1945. Herbert von Karajan, Otto Klemperer, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Arturo Toscanini, Riccardo Muti and Esa-Pekka Salonen are just

a few of the great artists to be associated with the Philharmonia, and the Orchestra has premiered works by Richard Strauss, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Errollyn Wallen, Kaija Saariaho and many others.

Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall has been the Philharmonia's home since 1995. The Orchestra also has residencies at venues and festivals across England, each embracing a Learning & Engagement programme that empowers people to engage with orchestral music.

The Philharmonia is a registered charity, proud to be supported by Arts Council England, many generous individuals, corporate supporters and Trusts and Foundations.

The Orchestra makes recordings, plays for movie and video soundtracks, and creates

groundbreaking VR experiences. The Philharmonia's Learning & Engagement projects, their films and their pioneering use of technology enable more people to experience world-class music-making, and they are committed to nurturing the next generation of orchestral musicians and composers.

Throughout its history, the Philharmonia has toured across Europe, Asia and America. In the 2021/22 season the Orchestra has performed in Romania, Spain, Finland, Greece and Germany.

The Philharmonia's Emerging Artists Programme aims to increase diversity within the classical music industry, and develop the next generation of instrumentalists, composers and conductors.

philharmonia.co.uk

1st Violin

Rebecca Chan
Eugene Lee
Eunsley Park
Karin Tilch
Soong Choo
Victoria Irish
Eleanor Wilkinson *
Adrián Varela *

2nd Violin

Miranda Dale
Samantha Reagan
Susan Hedger
Julian Milone
David López Ibáñez
Paula Clifton-Everest *
Gideon Robinson *
Helena Buckie *

Viola

Nicholas Bootiman
Sylvain Séailles
Stephanie
Edmundson

Carol Hultmark
Louise Hawker *
Mariya Sotirova *

Cello

Karen Stephenson
Yaroslava Trofymchuk
Deirdre Cooper
Anne Baker *
Miwa Rosso *
Raphael Lang *

Bass

Simon Oliver
Gareth Sheppard
Michael Fuller *
Owen Nicolaou *

Flute

Fiona Kelly

Oboe

Tom Blomfield
Imogen Davies

Clarinet

Mark van de Wiel *
James Gilbert *

Bassoon

David Hubbard
Shelly Organ

Horn

Timothy Jones
Carsten Williams

Trumpet

Christian Barraclough *
Robin Totterdell *

Timpani

Antoine Siguré *

*** *Violin Concerto only***