

The NAXOS logo features a stylized classical building facade with columns and a pediment, rendered in white on a blue rectangular background.

ROMANTIC  
PIANO

FRIEDRICH  
KIEL

Piano Works

Piano Suite • 6 Fugues • 10 Pianoforte-Stücke

Elizabeth Haughan



Friedrich  
**KIEL**  
(1821–1885)  
**Piano Works**

	<b>Piano Suite, Op. 28</b> (pub. 1864)	<b>21:33</b>
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2	II. Impromptu: Presto appassionato	5:52
3	III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace	3:42
4	IV. Notturmo: Andante grazioso	1:49
	<b>6 Fugues, Op. 2</b> (1850)	<b>23:30</b>
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6	No. 2 in A major: Moderato	1:53
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## Romantic Piano • 4

### Friedrich Kiel (1821–1885)

Friedrich Kiel was born in Bad Laasphe Puderbach on 8 October 1821 and died in Berlin on 13 September 1885. He was the second of six children born to schoolteacher Johann Jost Kiel, and Johanne Marie Kiel née Jung. He was partly self-taught and did not learn music notation and elementary music theory formally until 1832 using his father's music books and advice. Subsequently, through the agency of Prince Albrecht Sayn-Wittgenstein-Berleburg, Kiel received violin lessons from Schulz, the local court orchestra concertmaster and theory lessons from eminent flautist Kaspar Kummer.

Progress was rapid and Kiel was chamber musician (violinist) and soloist for violin and piano concertos at the Fürstlichen Hof Berleburg from 1836 to 1838 and concertmaster from 1840 to 1842, teaching the Prince's children as well. Coming to the notice of Louis Spohr, a stipend from King Frederick William IV of Prussia was made available for Kiel to move to Berlin for composition lessons with Siegfried Dehn.

Kiel's studies with Dehn lasted officially until 1845 after which Kiel established a routine of composing in the morning and teaching composition and piano in the afternoon. As early as 1850 Kiel began having some of his compositions published which drew attention amongst Berlin's art-loving circles and he also appeared occasionally as a pianist in performances of his own chamber music and piano works. Indeed, as early as 1852 he was even described as a protégé of Liszt in a letter from Dehn, and in 1858, upon Dehn's death, Kiel took over most of his composition students.

A decisive moment for Kiel occurred in 1862 when his *Requiem in F minor, Op. 20* had its premiere on 8 February. This premiere enjoyed great success with the public as well as the Berlin critics and moved Kiel's name to the forefront of contemporary composers. A rapidly growing number of composition students allowed him to devote himself entirely to composition lessons. For example, in November 1862 the famous pianist Clara Schumann asked Kiel in a letter about theoretical lessons for her daughter Elise Schumann.

In 1866 Kiel was teaching composition at the Stern Conservatory; later elevated to a professorship. In December 1869 he became a professor of composition at the newly founded Hochschule für Musik (Academy of Music) at Charlottenburg, Berlin. Moving amongst luminaries such as Philipp Spitta and Josef Joachim, Kiel was subsequently head of the department of composition and a council member of the Berlin Academy of the Arts. A plethora of appointments, honours and awards began to descend on Kiel's unassuming shoulders and unsurprisingly several of Kiel's students went on to make considerable musical reputations for themselves including Charles Villiers Stanford, Arthur Somervell, Frederic Hymen Cowen, Emil Sjögren and Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Stanford commented later: 'I learnt more from him in three months, than from all the others in three years.' He was undoubtedly a popular teacher, and this may well have been partly due to the fact he was not an ideologue or dogmatist. Rather, he had an open-minded artistic attitude towards all contemporary musical genres and taught a wide range of different composition styles to his large and international circle of students.

Furthermore, Berlin was turning itself into an Imperial capital, and an industrial and cultural metropolis following the proclamation of the German Empire in 1871 after victories in the German–Danish War of 1864, the Austro–Prussian War of 1866 and the Franco–Prussian War of 1870–71. Reflecting these events Kiel's *Te Deum, Op. 46* appeared in 1866 and *Three Military Marches, Op. 39* for orchestra in 1867. Reconciliation was a theme in his 1870 oratorio *Christus, Op. 60*.

Undoubtedly, Kiel had a penchant for the piano and he included a piano part in 27 of his scores. The three *Piano Quartets* were composed in 1866–67 and published by Simrock of Berlin. Although Kiel admired Schumann and was a close contemporary of Brahms, these chamber scores are heavily influenced by middle-period Beethoven. For example, the *Adagio* movement of the *First Quartet* has been described as one of noble and serious character, but conservative in its language with Alberti bass figuration and classical piano writing. Kiel was also committed to the heritage of Schubert concerning romantic melody, yet often allowed for a little advanced harmony, reminiscent of Liszt. His *Violin Sonata in G minor, Op. 67* composed in 1871, dedicated to his friend, the court music director in Dresden, Julius Rietz, is a case in point, while in the 1864 *Piano Concerto in B flat, Op. 64* the influence of Chopin, Mendelssohn and Schumann can be detected.

Reflecting a resilient physique, Kiel's hobby was mountaineering and in 1881 aged 60, he had climbed Europe's second highest peak, the Monte Rosa. However, in September 1883, he was hit by a horse-drawn carriage. Subsequent hospitalisation and a period of recuperation in Switzerland failed to restore him to good health and he died, aged 63, on 13 September 1885, following a stroke. On 17 September he was buried in the Old Twelve Apostles Cemetery in Berlin-Schöneberg.

As little as five years later his composition pupil Otto Lessmann complained that 'all of Kiel's music deserved much more attention than is unfortunately the case'. Various reasons have been suggested for the relatively rapid disappearance of Kiel's music from concert platforms including the lack of symphonies, operas and a substantial quantity of songs in his *oeuvre*. However, if that were the case Chopin would also not be remembered. More likely, given his open-minded eclectic tastes, a lack of readily identifiable signature stylistic traits in his music played a part.

### **Piano Suite, Op. 28**

Dating from 1864, this was perhaps intended for instructional purposes as well as performance repertoire. It is dedicated to Theodore Kullak, a noted pedagogue and a pupil of Siegfried Dehn.

*I. Sonate: Allegretto vivace, A major*

The style is conservatively Beethovenian. Strict sonata form is observed and there is much fugal counterpoint and imitation. The material is straightforward and directly tuneful.

*II. Impromptu: Presto appassionato, A minor*

A Tarantella feel is established and there is a sonata exposition with two subject groups in a fast dramatic 6/8 time. Instead of a development, a slower calm episode in A major is interposed before a sonata recapitulation returns. The unrelenting triplet writing would assist in developing finger facility.

*III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace, A major*

This brisk 3/4 movement has occasional Chopinesque inflexions in the outer two *Scherzo* sections. The middle *Trio* section is in D major and the rapid two-note groupings in the main theme are the principal technical challenge.

*IV. Notturmo: Andante grazioso, A major.*

This single verse movement cleverly builds additional decorations and countermelodies to the original simple theme. A singing cantabile keyboard touch is required to project the theme convincingly.

### **6 Fugues, Op. 2**

These date from 1850. Interest in older musical styles and forms had been increasing since Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in 1829, and Kiel's knowledge was profound. While the writing is contrapuntal Kiel employs some pianistic figuration at times. However, this is not encountered as routinely as in Beethoven's fugues. Kiel limits himself to three voice-parts throughout which reduces the likelihood of an over-dense piano texture. Kiel's melodic constructions fairly frequently adopt a more lyrically romantic song-like approach than was customary for Baroque composers.

*No. 1 in C sharp minor*

This large-scale fugue moves through many keys but returns to C sharp minor three times before a cadenza-like finish.

*No. 2 in A major*

Light staccato semiquavers are embedded in the subject itself leading to a transparent texture.

*No. 3 in A minor*

This exuberant canvass belies its minor key with energy and vitality. Some of the melodic writing assumes a more romantic ambience than is found in Baroque works and the final bars have a pianistic quality and resonance quite removed from the 18th century.

*No. 4 in B major*

This is the longest fugue. Following extensive development there is a left-hand F sharp sustained bass for six bars leading to a quiet restatement of the theme. There follows cumulative material with heavy chords and sonic richness of a more romantic nature before the close.

*No. 5 in F minor*

There is a lyrical quality to the main musical interest, brought into relief by the almost constant quaver movement with very little rhythmic variation.

*No. 6 in C minor*

This is perhaps the most pianistic of the fugues with the final pages containing some pianistic writing in a Beethovenian manner. There are two main themes in this fugue, the second announced following the exposition of the first theme.

## 10 Piano Pieces, Op. 18

These date from 1860 and were published in three volumes, *Book I: Nos. 1–4*, *Book II: Nos. 5–7* and *Book III: Nos. 8–10*.

### *No. 1. Praeludium in C minor*

ABA musical form encases this tiny piece, with a second theme in E flat major forming the B section.

### *No. 2. Scherzo in F minor*

This brisk *Scherzo* and *Trio* form movement moves to D flat major for the middle *Trio* section which uses drone bass notes to anchor the music.

### *No. 3. Duett in A flat major*

Echoes of Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* permeate this gentle duet where the two melodies copy each other one bar apart in the manner of a canon.

### *No. 4. Andante in C sharp minor*

Chopin's *Mazurkas* are a model here, although the mood is muted. ABA form is used, and the middle section employs considerably more decoration and display.

### *No. 5. Hongroise in F sharp minor*

This is a miniature Liszt *Hungarian Dance*. Short, contrasted episodes are interspersed throughout the canvass emphasising the three appearances of the main theme.

### *No. 6. Scherzo in D major*

Marked fast and light, this childlike impish character piece contrasts the effervescent opening and closing sections with a more somnambulant middle section in G which is reminiscent of Chopin's famous *Berceuse*.

### *No. 7. Melodie in F major*

This might be heard as a miniature *Barcarolle* with its gently swaying 6/8 time and its brief timeframe.

### *No. 8. Ballade in A minor*

The majestic melody in the middle C major section is cleverly written to sound between the hands as a middle line. The contrasted outer sections give a feeling of introduction and closure to the *Ballade* narrative.

### *No. 9. Lied in D major*

The Steinway sostenuto middle pedal had not been introduced when this *Lied* was written and Kiel seeks to hold the lowest notes through sensitive use of the right sustaining pedal with some concomitant blurring adding to the legato atmosphere.

### *No. 10. Hymne in G major*

There are echoes of Schumann in this attractively grandiose yet sensitive canvass. Following a slight pause before the final appearance of the main theme Kiel uses one of his favourite devices, a rising and falling sequence.

**Rodney Smith**

## Elizabeth Haughan



Scottish-born pianist Elizabeth Haughan has worked as both a soloist and collaborator in venues such as the Southbank Centre, Wigmore Hall and the V&A Museum. Particularly interested in collaborative and curation work, she has been involved in a variety of projects, from playing piano trio works outside of the canon to investigating the link between song and sign language. This work has seen her be a Young Artist at Leeds Song Festival and SongEasel, as well as play concerts for various City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra festivals. Haughan held a Weingarten Scholarship at the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music in Budapest. She also studied at the Royal College of Music and the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, learning with John Thwaites, Gordon Fergus-Thompson, Margaret Fingerhut and Pascal Nemirovski. While completing her Advanced Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire she received the Leamington Music Prize and the Sylvia Cleaver Chamber Music Prize, as well as the accompanist prizes for all major song competitions.

[www.bethhaughan.com](http://www.bethhaughan.com)

Friedrich Kiel enjoyed great prestige as a professor of composition in Berlin where his many students included Stanford and Paderewski. As a teacher he remained broad-minded and undogmatic. These elegantly poised works show a rather conservative craftsman but one who absorbed the influences of the best of his contemporaries – Chopin, Mendelssohn, Schumann and Liszt. The *Suite* is Beethovenian in style, while his approach in the *Six Fugues* is largely lyrical. A digital EP of the *Six Impromptus* is available to stream and download (9.70385).

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|--------------|--|--------------|
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**Elizabeth Haughan, Piano**

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet

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