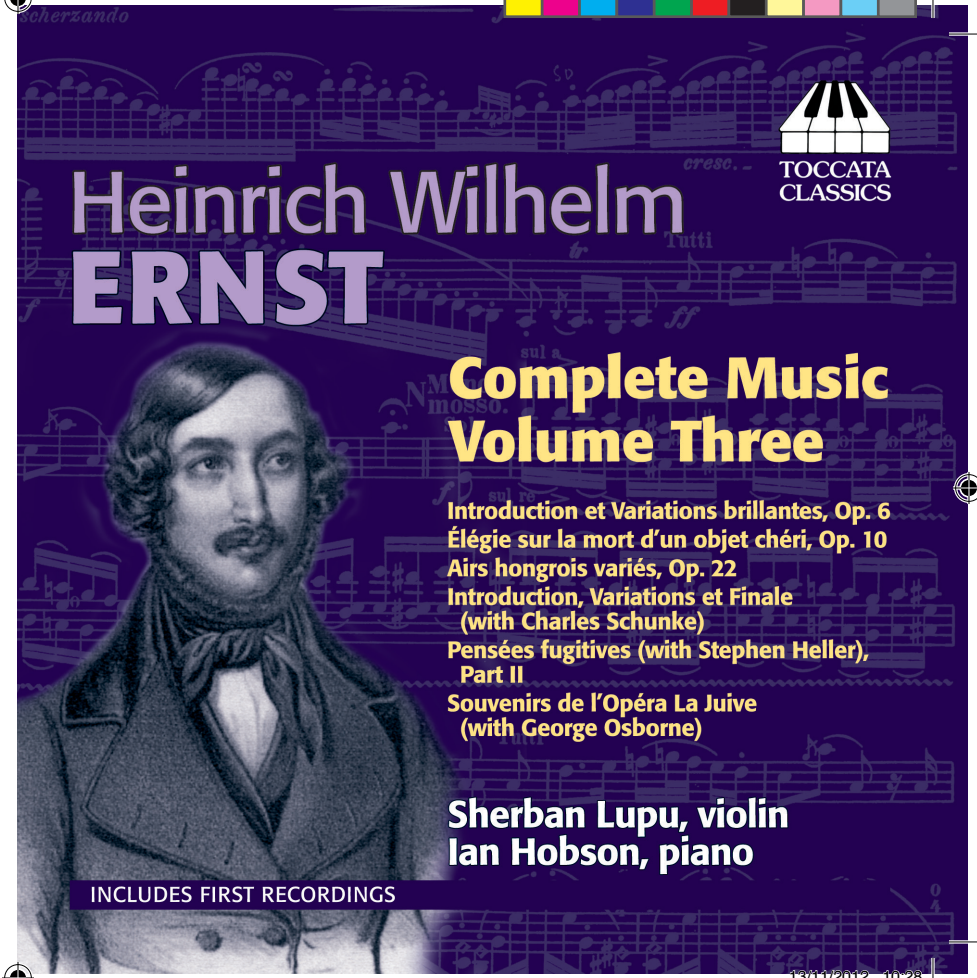
TOCCATA CLASSICS

Recorded in the Foellinger Great Hall of the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts, University of Illinois, on 10, 11 and 16 May 2011.
Engineer: Christopher Ericson
Producer: Samir Golescu

Music supplied by Jon Frohnen
Booklet text: Mark Rowe
Design and layout: Paul Brooks, Design and Print, Oxford

Executive Producer: Martin Anderson

TOCC 0163



ERNST Complete Music, Volume Three

	***Introduction et Variations Brillantes en form de Fantaisie pour le violon sur le Quatuor favori de Ludovic de F. Halévy*, Op. 6**	**13:45**
1	*Introduction: Moderato*	3:45
2	*Thema*: *Moderato*	1:09
3	Var. 1: *Risoluto*	1:29
4	Var. 2	1:23
5	Var. 3	1:10
6	Var. 4	1:41
7	*Molto Adagio*	1:28
8	*Allegretto moderato*	0:37
9	*Finale*: *Lostesso Tempo*	1:00
	***Élégie sur la mort d'un objet chéri*, Op. 10**	**9:19**
10	Introduction by Louis Spohr	2:11
11	*Élégie*	7:08
	***Introduction, Variations et Final, Dialogués & Concertans sur une Valse favorite pour Piano et Violon par Charles Schunke et H. W. Ernst*, [Schunke's] Op. 26**	**13:59**
12	*Introduzione: Moderato maestoso*	3:27
13	*Tema*	0:57
14	Var. 1: *Meno Vivo*	0:53
15	Var. 2	0:51
16	Var. 3: *Brillante ma moderato*	1:13
17	Var. 4: *Andantino pastorale*	2:05
18	*Finale*	4:33

recordings to date have been made with Sherban Lupu: the first two volumes in this Ernst series (TOCC 0118 and 0138) and the first volume in another series, *The Unknown Enescu* (TOCC 0047).

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.

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, the first two volumes in this Ernst series (TOCC 0118 and 0138) 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 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. His Toccata Classics

***Pensées Fugitives*, Part II**			**22:39**
19	No. 7	*Rêverie*: *Quasi Allegretto*	3:49
20	No. 8	*Un Caprice*: *Allegro assai*	2:06
21	No. 9	*Inquiétude*: *Adagio*	3:28
22	No. 10	*Prière pendant l'orage*: *Allegro non troppo*	2:59
23	No. 11	*Intermezzo*: *Allegro poco agitato*	3:06
24	No. 12	*Thème original de H. W. Ernst*: *Allegretto*	1:12
25		*Variation*: *Moderato*	1:25
26		*Presto capriccioso*: *Presto*	4:34

Souvenirs de l'Opéra La Juive de F. Halevy pour Piano et Violon Concertants Composés par Osborne et Ernst			**8:07**
27		*Adagio*	4:03
28		*Allegro*	4:04

***Airs hongrois variés*, Op. 22**			**13:07**
29		*Introduction*: *Molto moderato*	0:31
30		*Thema I*	1:24
31		*Variazione*: *Molto moderato*	1:45
32		*Più mosso*	0:44
33		*Thema II*: *Andante con molt' espressione*	1:41
34		*Molto più mosso, quasi del doppia*	0:33
35		Cadenza (Arthur Hartmann)	2:47
36		*Thema III*: *Allegretto moderato, con molto spirito*	3:41

TT 80:55

HEINRICH WILHELM ERNST: Complete Music, Volume 3

by Mark Rowe

Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst was one of the most important performers of the nineteenth century. In 1884, reviewing over thirty years of avid concert-going, the Rev. H. R. Haweis wrote: '[If], looking back and up to the present hour, I am asked to name off hand, the greatest players – the very greatest I ever heard – I say at once Ernst, Liszt, Rubinstein'.[1] His assessment was shared by the professionals. 'Ernst was the greatest violinist I ever heard,' said Joseph Joachim, 'he towered above the others [...]. He became my ideal of a performer, even surpassing in many respects the ideal I had imagined for myself'.[2] Similarly, Berlioz could not say enough about the genius of his friend: 'Let me reiterate, Ernst, who is a great musician as well as a great violinist (as well as being the most delightfully humorous man I know), is the complete rounded artist, profoundly and predominantly expressive in everything he does'.[3] As a performer, he was particularly admired 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.

These gifts, moreover, were lavished not only on the solo violin: he also made an outstanding contribution to public chamber music. Sir Julius Benedict, for example, reminiscing about the dismal premiere of one of Beethoven's late quartets, had no doubts about which violinist finally revealed these works as masterpieces: 'Not until Ernst had completely imbued himself in the spirit of these compositions could the world discover their long hidden beauties'.[4] When one also discovers that Ernst was Paganini's most significant rival, the first Jewish violin virtuoso of international renown, an important technical innovator and a highly successful and influential composer, it is natural to wonder who exactly he was.

Ernst was born on 8 June 1812 to a middle-class Jewish family from Brünn in the Austrian Empire (now Brno in the Czech Republic). At the age of nine, he began to take violin lessons with a local baker called Johann Sommer and – assisted by private study of Leopold Mozart's *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing* – started to make rapid progress. Within a year, he was taken on by the leading violin-teacher of the town, a Herr Leonhard, and won a place at the excellent music school of the Augustinian Monastery of St Thomas. With these advantages, his progress became even more remarkable: in March 1824, he made his first public appearance as a soloist; and in 1825 Leonhard suggested he should audition for the Vienna Conservatory.

[1] Rev. H. R. Haweis, *My Musical Life*, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1902, p. 34.
[2] Quoted in Andreas Moser, *Geschichte des Violinspiels*, Max Hesses Verlag, Berlin, 1923, pp. 519 and 533.
[3] Hector Berlioz, *Memoirs*, ed. and trans. David Cairns, Victor Gollancz, London, 1970, p. 538.
[4] Quoted in Alexander Thayer, *Life of Beethoven*, ed. Alan Pryce-Jones, 3 vols., Centaur Press, London, 1960, Vol. 3, pp. 139–40.

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 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 master-classes 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 Brașov', Romania. In 2007 he received another Arnold

different, such sections were designed to absorb thunderous applause before the next dazzling variation began.

The brilliant and nationalistic style of the *Airs hongrois variés* made the work one of Ernst's most popular pieces in the late nineteenth century (it was one of Wieniawski's favourite show-pieces), and later advocacy by Kreisler (who borrowed its central melody for his own arrangement of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dance*, Op. 46, No. 1) ensured it remained in print well into the twentieth century. Rather remarkably, it also played an important role in the musical development of Edward Elgar who, at the age of twenty, heard Wilhelmj play it in Gloucester Cathedral and was so excited by the opening leap that he resolved to go to London to become a concert violinist. In this ambition he proved unsuccessful, but that leap of a tenth from A to C sharp up the G string left an indelible imprint on him. He was still imitating it to friends forty years later and – in slightly amended form – it appears at climactic moments in both his important works for violin: in the slow movement of the Violin Concerto, Ernst's leap becomes a leap from A flat to C (bar 93); in the first movement of the Violin Sonata it is transposed to the minor and becomes a leap from A to C (bar 170).[20]

Mark W. Rowe is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of East Anglia. His biography, Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst: Virtuoso Violinist *was published by Ashgate, Aldershot, in 2008.*

Sherban Lupu, born in 1952, studied at the Bucharest Conservatory with George Manoliu. While a student

[20] I would like to thank Martin Anderson and Hugh Macdonald for help with these notes.

His father took him to the violin professor Joseph Böhm – a close associate of Beethoven and Schubert – who quickly realised that Ernst was nearly his equal in practical skill, although he still had things to learn about music and musicianship. Ernst moved to Vienna, and for the next three years studied with Böhm (and played at his informal quartet-evenings), took lessons in music-theory from the composer Ignaz Seyfried (who had conducted the premiere of Beethoven's *Fidelio*) and received advice and encouragement from the popular composer and virtuoso Joseph Mayseder. Within ten months of his arrival, Ernst had made several well-received public appearances and won the first prize of the Conservatoire.

His education ensured the Viennese classics entered his bloodstream, but it was Paganini's arrival in March 1828 that proved the overwhelming influence. A stunned Ernst attended as many of Paganini's concerts as he could, practised the Op. 1 *Caprices* furiously and was at last rewarded with an audition before the master. Amongst the pieces he played was the E major *Caprice*, *La Chasse*, and, having misunderstood the instruction 'flautato' ('flute-like') at the head of the score, played the whole piece in harmonics. The astounded Paganini, receiving a taste of his own medicine, cried 'He's a little devil!' and predicted a great future for the boy.

In August 1828 Ernst's elderly father fell seriously ill, and Ernst returned to Brünn to help his older half-brother nurse the invalid and run the family business. His prolonged absence caused problems with the Conservatoire, and Ernst, feeling that Vienna had little more to teach him, resolved not to return. He set off on a tour of southern Germany in April 1829 and, after another meeting with Paganini, decided to master every aspect of his art. Much to Paganini's irritation, he therefore followed him from town to town, renting rooms next to him, attending his concerts, listening to his practice, transcribing his compositions and copying his techniques.

Meanwhile, the young violinist sustained himself by giving concerts of his own, at one of which he played back Paganini's unpublished *Nel cor* variations to the twitchy composer. Naturally enough, the public's attention and its money were largely monopolised by Paganini, and on several occasions Ernst became severely depressed about his own comparative lack of success. But a number of his concerts received good reviews, and at least one was heard by a dissatisfied law-student named Robert Schumann, whom Ernst advised to take up music professionally.

Paganini intended to visit Paris in 1830, but the Revolution delayed his arrival until February 1831. Ernst followed two months later and quickly secured a concert with the great soprano Wilhelmine Schroeder-Devrient at the Théâtre des Italiens. But this debut proved unnerving. As a comparatively unknown violinist, the audience greeted him with a barrage of hissing, and Ernst only recovered his composure when the orchestra, appalled by the audience's reaction, stood up to applaud him. He then played well, but the evident asperity of Parisian audiences made him wary, and he vowed to devote himself to solitary study until his technique was beyond reproach.

Sharing lodgings with the Norwegian violinist Ole Bull, and sustaining himself by teaching and playing in private houses, Ernst allowed himself to perform in public concerts again only after June 1832, but his reappearance may still have been premature. Some newspaper reviews remained equivocal, and in mid-1833

he decided to retire for several more months to perfect his technique in the less pressurised atmosphere of Switzerland, where he played with the Irish pianist John Field.

Ernst had returned to Paris by November 1833, but it was two concerts at Stoepel's Salons at the end of 1834 which marked the beginning of his Parisian celebrity. Critics noted his expressive power, his 'extraordinary facility on the instrument',[5] and the fact that he was beginning to throw off the influence of Paganini. Further concerts with some of the great musicians of the age – Chopin, Liszt, Rubini, Lablache – followed in quick succession; and a number of his early compositions began to acquire a reputation.

In late 1836 his ambition was fired by news that Paganini – who had retired from concert-giving for a year to run the orchestra at Parma – was returning to the stage with concerts in Nice and Marseilles. Ernst rushed to the first of these cities, and took up his old habit of spying on Paganini's practice and rehearsals. This eavesdropping, amongst other things, ensured he was able to give a fine account of Paganini's unpublished *Moses* variations when the two violinists were competing in Marseilles early in the New Year. The balance of power had now shifted in Ernst's favour. Illness had reduced Paganini's confidence on the fingerboard and exacerbated his rapaciousness, and his audience became both disappointed and alienated. Ernst, on the other hand, was in excellent violinistic condition and demonstrating his ability to win-over all comers. Partly through illness and partly through evident unpopularity, Paganini gave only two concerts before retreating to his hotel room, and Ernst was able to report a major victory.

With this triumph, Ernst's *Glanzzeit* began. From 1837 to 1840 he toured through France, Holland, Germany and the Austrian Empire, playing with Mendelssohn and Clara Schumann and enjoying particular success in Brünn and Vienna. In the latter, he entirely eclipsed the success of de Bériot, and saved the young Joachim's career: the boy's father had been told his son's bowing was too stiff for a concert violinist, but Ernst assured him that Joachim was remarkably talented, and any problems could quickly be cured by taking lessons with Böhm. Ernst consolidated his triumphs in Paris (where he faced stiff competition from Vieuxtemps) in 1841, and then toured through Germany, Poland, the Low Countries – where he gave his first concert with Berlioz – and Scandinavia.

In 1843–44 he made highly successful tours of England, and gave several important early performances of Beethoven's late quartets; and in 1845–46 his performances in Germany, Hungary and Austria included several dazzling concerts with Liszt. He fulfilled a long-held ambition by playing in Moscow and St Petersburg in 1847, but while he was returning through Denmark, the 1848 Revolution broke out in Paris and rapidly spread throughout Europe. It brought musical life to a standstill. Ernst retreated to his brother's house in Brünn, where he remained for nearly a year. Although elated by ten years of almost unprecedented success, he was now exhausted by travel and concert-giving; and an illness which severely affected his playing – particularly his intonation – began to manifest itself in an acute and debilitating form. In spite of his family's love and support, the town did not prove an ideal place to recuperate: the Viennese counter-revolution was one of the bloodiest in Europe, and

[5] *Gazette musicale de Paris*, 28 December 1834, p. 427.

it would be a mistake to see the piece as a conscious precursor of the nationalist style that became an important part of European history – particularly Hungarian history – after the revolutions of 1848. In all likelihood, Ernst chose his themes because, like many other canny touring virtuosi, he knew that a brilliant new piece based on regional melodies would be sure to ingratiate him with local audiences: he had earlier composed *Variations on a Dutch Air* before a tour of Holland in 1838 (which was eventually published in 1842), and a *Fantasy on Irish Airs* before a tour of Ireland in 1844 (which remained unpublished).

One can either think of the piece as simply a sequence of three sets of variations or – more charitably – as having a concerto-like structure based round a central slow movement. After a short introduction 29, the first theme 30 is announced on the violin by a leap of a tenth up the G string, followed by a difficult and elaborate variation full of multiple-stopping, tenths, string-crossings and harmonics 31. An extended *ritornello* section 32 ushers in the second theme 33, and when the melody is repeated Ernst decorates it with written-in *rubato* and demisemiquaver elaborations. In spite of the brilliance which surrounds the section, it was this soulful episode which lingered in the audience's mind after Ernst himself performed the piece. The Reverend Haweis wrote:

> He played once at Her Majesty's Opera House, when the whole assembly seemed to dream through a performance of 'Hungarian Airs'. The lightest whisper of the violin controlled the house; the magician hardly stirred his wand at times, and no one could tell from the sound when he passed from up to down bow in those long cantabile notes which had such power to entrance me […].[17]

A quick episode in G-string harmonics follows 34, and then a cadenza 35 – not supplied by Ernst[18] – leads into the vigorous last melody 36. It is subjected to four brief and coruscating variations, the third and fourth of which exploit new technical devices. In the third, the melody is played in high octaves on the D and A strings, decorated with open Es on every other note and a trill on the bottom octave throughout. This finger-twister is so difficult to bring off that, on at least one early recording, the violinist substitutes another variation of his own composition.[19] In the fourth variation, which is also the finale, Ernst employs *ricochet-spiccato* bowing across all four strings, but picks out the melody in artificial harmonics on the first and eighth note of each demisemiquaver arpeggio group. The gaps between themes and variations are frequently marked by *ritornelli* in the accompaniment which are rather attractive, but it is doubtful if many early audiences heard them: in an age when concert manners were

[17] H. R. Haweis, *Music and Morals*, Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1898, p. 104.

[18] On this disc, the extended 'Hungarian Cadenza' by Arthur Hartmann (1881–1956) is recorded for the first time. A violinist of international renown, the American-born Hartmann was deeply attracted to the culture of central Europe. This inclination may explain why he wrote the cadenza, several pieces in Hungarian style, added a final 'n' to his surname and frequently adopted a foreign accent. For a fine account of Hartmann's life and work, *cf.* the notes which accompany *Arthur Hartmann: Miniatures for Violin and Piano* (Toccata Classics TOCC 0089).

[19] Ossy Renardy (violin) and Robert Walter (piano), *The Great Violinists*, Volume XVIII, Symposium 1311 (2003).

Ernst's fantasy on the opera is one of two written in collaboration with the urbane Irish pianist George Osborne (1806–93) and which turn out to be rather different from the three works he had already written with Schunke. The earlier compositions are long and elaborate virtuoso works with particularly demanding piano parts, and for this reason it is hard to imagine that they sold very widely. The two fantasies with Osborne, by contrast, are shorter, slighter, less demanding pieces clearly written with more than half an eye on the extensive amateur market. They are nonetheless pleasing and effective. The fantasy on *La Juive* opens 27 with the horn motif (imitated by double-stopping on the unaccompanied violin) announcing the heroine's aria, 'Il va venir'; her father's 'Quand du Seigneur' – one of the most moving arias in all opera – forms the middle section of the Introduction. The following *Allegro* 28 is based on 'D'un chrétien sacrilège et que l'enfer protège' in which the Jewish father curses the Christian lover, and the central section and exuberant coda make use of the joyful early chorus, 'Hâtons-nous car l'heure s'avance'. Uniquely amongst Ernst's operatic fantasies, the piece makes no use of variation technique.

There are no accounts of Ernst playing the work – perhaps because it was largely intended for amateurs – but the second half of 1835 is the most likely time of composition.

***Airs hongrois variés*, Op. 22**

Ernst's early concert-repertoire – often confined to the *Élégie*, *Otello* Fantasy[13] and 'Carnival of Venice'[14] – was beginning to seem both limited and dated by the mid-1840s, and he realised that, if he wanted to re-attract audiences in major European centres and fend off the challenge from a rising generation of virtuosi, he would have to write some exciting new material. Accordingly, he composed three important and forward-looking pieces in 1845–46: the *Rondo Papageno*, Op. 20,[15] *Airs hongrois variés*, Op. 22,and the Concerto, Op. 23 – and gave the premieres of the latter two on 19 April 1846 in the large hall of the Redoutensaal in Vienna.

Besides the style of its melodies, the *Airs hongrois variés* have many Hungarian connections. The work was probably written when Ernst was on an extended tour of the region around Pest; it is dedicated to the Hungarian Franz Liszt; and although Ernst composed the third melody, the first two are genuine Hungarian tunes. In addition, Liszt (who was pleased with the composition, describing it as an 'extremely piquant and brilliant caprice'[16] when he conducted Ernst playing it in 1849) reciprocated by dedicating his Ninth *Hungarian Rhapsody*, *Carnival in Pest*, to Ernst in 1853 – a highly appropriate gesture given the probable place of composition of the *Airs hongrois variés* and the fact that the *Carnival of Venice* was amongst Ernst's most famous compositions. But its shockwaves were felt all too clearly in nearby Brünn.

Even a year after revolution broke out, the only major European country with a normal musical life was England, and so in 1849, Ernst – along with Hallé, Chopin, Sivori and many other musicians – headed for its shores. He travelled by way of Weimar, performing the 'Kreutzer' Sonata with Liszt, and remained in Britain for most of the next two years. This move brought notable changes in the pattern of his musical life. He composed much less, and began to play what the nineteenth century called 'Classical' works at his popular concerts, giving his first performances of the Mendelssohn and Beethoven concertos in 1849 and 1851 respectively. Above all, chamber music started to play a significantly larger role in his repertoire, and his presence as leader ensured the success of several important new chamber-music societies – the Beethoven Quartet Society and Musical Union in London, and the Manchester Classical Chamber Concerts.

By the beginning of 1852 he was able to return to Paris, and it was while giving concerts there that he met his future wife, the Jewish actress and poet Amélie-Siona Lévy. She was a protégé of the poet and critic Théophile Gautier, and had made a considerable impression at the Odéon. But following a vision of the Virgin Mary her brother had entered a Catholic religious order, and she had renounced the stage, thinking of following in his footsteps. The meeting with Ernst curtailed this ambition, and she and the violinist (along with her mother as chaperone) were soon touring through Switzerland and the south of France. He performed his normal crowd-pleasers, she recited a judicious selection of prose and poetry, and the combination proved both unusual and popular.

But fashion was turning against Ernst. The public in major European cities was becoming bored with the kind of music he composed – virtuoso pieces largely based on French and Italian operas – and German critics began to disapprove of improvisation, rewriting music to suit one's own purposes, and playing anything but music by acknowledged masters. Ernst did not find this outlook natural and, after his marriage in 1854, he chose to spend most of his time in England, where a clique of powerful critics had managed to hold advanced ideas at bay. Consequently, the arrival of both Berlioz and Wagner to conduct in London in 1855 caused a furore, but Ernst – who was not doctrinaire in his outlook – performed successfully under the direction of both men.

Nature was also causing problems. Ernst's illness – probably a rare disease called acute intermittent porphyria, which contemporary medicine could neither diagnose nor cure – was growing worse, and making some of his performances desperately uneven. It had caused him problems for twenty years, but in July 1857 he was forced to retire, and by the early 1860s he was in a truly pitiable condition – crippled, yellow, depressed, skeletal and frequently in terrible pain.

Matters were made worse by lack of money: he had earned prodigious amounts but given most of it away to his family, friends and charitable causes; and Amélie could not work because she had to spend all her time nursing him. Fortunately, his melancholic, humorous and sympathetic character inspired generosity, and during his final years Brahms, Joachim, Wieniawski, Hallé and other eminent musicians raised considerable sums for him through benefit concerts, often by performing Ernst's own compositions.

[13] *Fantasie brillante sur la Marche et la Romance d'Otello de Rossini*, Op. 11, recorded on Vol. 2 of this series, TOCC 0138.

[14] *Carnaval de Venise* (*Variations burlesques sur la canzonetta 'Cara mamma mia'*), Op. 18, recorded on Vol. 1 of this series, TOCC 0118.

[15] Recorded on Vol. 1 of this series, TOCC 0118.

[16] Franz Liszt, *Letters of Franz Liszt*, ed. La Mara, trans. Constance Bache, 2 vols, Grevel and Co., London, 1894, Vol. I, pp. 65–66.

From 1858 onwards he lived largely in Nice, although he spent long periods in Vienna, Brünn and various spas, desperately seeking a cure. With the end of his playing career, and in spite of debility, he returned to serious composition and completed a Mendelssohnian string quartet by the middle of 1862. Towards the end of the same year, he and Amélie befriended the celebrated novelist Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, and he brought the couple to England so Ernst could benefit from the spa baths at Malvern. They largely stayed with Bulwer for the next fourteen months, during which time Ernst completed his *Polyphonic Studies*, and a second – and substantial parts of a third – string quartet. In spite of declining health, he was able to attend the enthusiastic premiere of the Second Quartet at a Monday Popular Concert in St James's Hall in June 1864.

On his way back to Nice a few months later, he enjoyed two private performances of the quartets in Paris – even playing the viola part at one of the concerts – but by this stage he was clearly dying. Enduring the most appalling suffering, he lingered for another year, and finally died at 2 o'clock in the afternoon on 8 October 1865. He was buried in the Castle Cemetery in Nice, indicating that, at some point in his final years, he had converted to Catholicism.

***Introduction et Variations Brillantes en form de Fantaisie pour le violon sur le Quatuor favori de Ludovic de F. Halévy,* Op. 6**

On 15 December 1832 Ferdinand Hérold's opera *Le Pré aux Clercs* was given its first performance at the Paris Opéra. Five weeks later, the 41-year-old composer was dead of tuberculosis, leaving a two-act comic opera called *Ludovic* uncompleted. Hérold had been *chef du chant* at the Opéra, and it was his friend and deputy Fromental Halévy (1799–1862) who undertook the task of completion. Even though the second act had only been sketched, Halévy completed the work within four months, and it was staged at the Opéra-Comique on 16 May 1833. For the first time in his life, the young Halévy found himself with a success on his hands: *Ludovic* had been performed seventy times by the end of the following year, and a quartet he had written for the first act ('Une fureur subite déjà') became a popular favourite and had to be repeated at each performance.

Unsurprisingly, Ernst was often attracted to works whose composers had Germanic or Jewish backgrounds, and this element, together with the huge popularity of the quartet, made the theme an obvious basis for variation. His fantasy was probably written in Switzerland in the second half of 1833 and, on his return to Paris, he gave its first performance at a private concert on 12 January 1834. At the end of the same year the piece also played a major role in the public concerts which established Ernst's Parisian reputation. After a performance of the fantasy on 23 December, for example, one critic wrote: 'He combines with an exceptional lightness and mastery of the instrument such noble personal execution, such tender and sweeping expression, and such sincere feeling that we do not hesitate to place him at the side of the greatest artists of our day'.[6]

[6] Anonymous review quoted in Amely Heller, *H. W. Ernst in the Opinion of his Contemporaries* (a shortened translation of *H. W. Ernst im Urteile seiner Zeitgenossen*), ed. Samuel Wolf, trans. Roberta Franke, Swand Publications, Linthicum Heights (Maryland), 1986, pp. 5–6.

No. 10, *Prière pendant l'orage*: *Allegro non troppo*, 6/8, A major (no dedication or epigraph)

A quiet bucolic song (of love, prayer, thanksgiving) set against a background of storm was a *scena* which appealed to many early Romantic composers, but, in spite of the intrinsic poetry of the idea, it doesn't seem to have brought out the best in Heller and Ernst. Their piece 22 is carefully structured and carefully written (the pianist, for example, is instructed to make his right-hand octaves less staccato than his left-hand octaves) but one feels that opportunities for contrast, variety and development are not fully explored, and consequently the piece does not justify its length.

No. 11, *Intermezzo*, *Allegro poco agitato*, 4/4, B minor, dedicated to Madlle Moscheles

Epigraph: *Elle parlait charmante et fière, et tendre encor* [*sic*] ('She was speaking charmingly and proudly, and gently nonetheless'), Victor Hugo, 'Pendant que la fenêtre était ouverte', *Les Voix intérieures*, 1835

This B minor piece 23, on the other hand, is one of the most appealing works in the entire set. The wispy but winsome first theme – which would not be out of place in a ballet score by Delibes or Tchaikovsky – is developed with real imagination: its phrases avoid obvious resolutions and other clichés, and winning counterpoints are introduced when the melody is repeated. Once the theme has been played twice, a transitional *pizzicato* section (*poco vivo*) introduces a relaxed D major melody which, combined with phrases from the opening theme, forms the basis for the felicitous B major coda.

No. 12, *Thème Original de H. W. Ernst*: *Allegretto*, 2/4; *Moderato*, 4/4; *Presto*, 6/8 (no dedication or epigraph)

This strange piece 24 begins like one of Ernst's early sets of variations: a catchy if four-square little theme (which could have been at the back of Sullivan's mind when he composed 'Onward, Christian Soldiers') is followed by an elegant variation employing extended arpeggios 25. But instead of the three further variations and finale one might have expected, Ernst and Heller provide one very long variation entitled *Presto Capriccioso* 26 which sounds, in many places, like the last movement of a sonata. Odd though the structure of the piece is, the tarantella rhythm of the final section, impetuous piano-writing and soaring melodies provide a dashing and effective conclusion to the set.

Souvenirs de l'Opéra La Juive de F. Halevy pour Piano et Violon Concertants Composés par Osborne et Ernst

The success of *Ludovic* made Dr Veron, the director of the Opéra, sit up and take notice, and he immediately commissioned Halévy to write a grand opera to a text by Eugène Scribe, the doyen of French librettists. Scribe's intuition that a tale about the conflict between mediaeval Jews and Christians would appeal to Halévy turned out to be more than prescient, and the resulting opera, *La Juive*, first performed on 23 February 1835, proved to be Halévy's masterpiece and a staple of the international repertoire until the Second World War.

Heller particularly disliked the personality and music of that virtuoso *par excellence*, Franz Liszt, and it is therefore something of a surprise to discover how Lisztian this piece [19] sounds – with its long-breathed melody, religiose atmosphere, and demanding extensions and octave displacements in the accompaniment. A dreamy first melody (evoking the sighing cypress tree) gives way to something altogether more imperative and stentorian (perhaps evoking the tombs and their ebony crosses). The initial theme returns twice more – each time over a more complex piano part – and in the final pages can perhaps be heard, in the dotted minims of the violin, the tolling of a bell as it spreads over a melancholy landscape.

No. 8, *Un Caprice*: *Allegro assai*, 6/8, F minor, dedicated to Madlle Smith

Epigraph: *Tu fuis, puis tu reviens, / puis tu t'en-vas encore* ('You flee, then you come back / Then you go again'), Victor Hugo, 'Le papillon et la fleur', *Les Chants du crepuscule*, 1835

Although still in 6/8 time, *Un Caprice* [20] presents a fine contrast to the preceding character sketch. The mood is changeable and unstable, and there is a constant to and fro between the piano and violin part – echoing and developing short phrases – as if the two instruments were engaged in an urgent and slightly obsessive conversation.

No. 9, *Inquiétude: Adagio*, *Allegro agitato*, *Tempo 1*, *Lento*, *Allegro*, 4/4, A major, dedicated to Madlle Raupp

Epigraph: *Qu'est-ce donc qui me trouble ? / Et qu'est-ce que j'attends ? / Oh ! Quel est donc l'objet de mes vagues désirs / Je l'ignore, et je cherche avec inquiétude*[12] ('So what is it that is troubling me? / And what am I waiting for? / Oh! What, then, is the object of my vague wishes / I do not know, and I seek worriedly'),Mme Desbordes-Valmore, 'L'Inquiétude', *Élégies*, 1830

This attractive piece [21] contrasts meditative *adagios* with quicker sections suggesting a restless search. Cleverly, the *adagios* always use the same key, as if returning to the same pre-occupying worry, whereas the *allegros* always restart their search in a new key – A minor, C sharp minor, F sharp minor. Unlike the epigraph, the piece appears to end in a joyous discovery, signalled by soaring high notes, a nimble cadenza, and a final virtuoso flourish.

[12] *Recte*:

Qu'est-ce donc qui me trouble? Et qu'est-ce que j'attends?
Je suis triste à la ville, et m'ennuie au village :
Les plaisirs de mon âge
Ne peuvent me sauver de la longueur du temps.

Autrefois, l'amitié, les charmes de l'étude,
Remplissaient sans effort mes paisibles loisirs.
Oh ! Quel est donc l'objet de mes vagues désirs?
Je l'ignore, et je cherche avec inquiétude.

The fantasy begins with a meditative, highly decorated introduction [1] in 12/8 time, before a short cadenza leads into the quartet theme [2]. It forms the basis for four variations: flying staccato to a military rhythm [3]; difficult two-part counterpoint – often in thirds, sixths and tenths [4]; rapid triplets [5]; and *ricochet* staccato arpeggios, octaves and alternating bowed and plucked notes [6]. This last variation is exceptionally demanding because, quite apart from anything else, it requires the arpeggios to be bounced at the *heel* of the bow – a technique which has not been much practised in the last 180 years. A *Molto adagio* [7] precedes an *Allegretto moderato* [8] where, after a restatement of the theme, the melody is taken up in the piano part accompanied by rapid arpeggios on the violin. The *moto perpetuo* finale [9] – largely in thirds, and bearing de Bériot's technical imprint[7] – brings the piece to a rousing close.

The *Introduction et Variations Brillantes* was the first of Ernst's compositions to remain in his concert repertoire for a number of years; he even played it at a London Philharmonic Society concert as late as 1850, probably because Halévy – in London to supervise rehearsals of his new opera *La Tempestà* – was in the audience.

Élégie sur la mort d'un objet chéri, Op. 10

Before leaving Vienna on his first tour, the seventeen-year-old Ernst is said to have fallen in love with the daughter of a wealthy family. Her father did not disapprove of the relationship, but wanted to see the young man firmly established in his career before giving his consent to a marriage, and it was agreed that after saying his good-bye, Ernst should not see or exchange letters with the daughter for seven years. The young violinist did indeed go on to attain outstanding success, particularly in Paris; and two days before the expiration of the agreed time, he set off post-haste for Vienna. But on entering the familiar house, he saw to his horror the girl's corpse laid out on a bier surrounded by flowers. Shock and grief made him unable to attend the funeral, and brought on a dangerous fever. When he recovered, two months later, it was a stunned and melancholy man who sat down to compose the *Élégie* in her memory.[8]

There are reasons for questioning some details of this story: the girl's death is more likely to have occurred in the early rather than late 1830s, and it is possible that the *Élégie* is an arrangement or simple re-titling of an *Adagio* which Ernst had been playing since 1829. But the basic outline of the tale is supported by the full title of the *Élégie* and the unusual lack of a personal dedication; and General von Moltke, a source of some probity, said that the girl was one of his relatives. The *Élégie* in its final form was given its first performance, by Heinrich Panofka, on 1 January 1838, and it seems to have been published later in the same year.

The piece went on to become Ernst's most widely performed composition: partly because of its emotional

[7] De Bériot often ends his brilliant pieces with an extended cadential figure in double-stopped semiquavers. His influence can also be found at the end of the finale of Mendelssohn's E minor Violin Concerto – in, for example, the figure beginning thirteen bars from the end of the last movement.

[8] For a full discussion of the origins of this story, and the reasons that its details should probably be modified, *cf.* M. W. Rowe, *Heinrich Wilhelm Ernst: Virtuoso Violinist*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2008, pp. 39–42 and 69–70.

charge, and partly because – unlike so much of Ernst's music – it is within the technical grasp of a good amateur. The British Library contains 24 editions published between 1844 and 1912, including transcriptions for concertina, flute, organ, viola, cello and voice. The work appealed to all kinds of musical taste. Several distinguished musicians produced additional arrangements: Czerny and Kullak, amongst others, transcribed the *Élégie* for piano, and Busoni arranged it for clarinet quintet. But it also penetrated deep into the popular consciousness: in Tolstoy's novella, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, it is the provincial Russian *audience* who call for Ernst's *Élégie* to be played as an encore; and one British amateur loved the piece so much she wrote manuscript arrangements for no less than six different instrumental ensembles. Predictably, it set a trend for violinists writing elegies, and Vieuxtemps, Bazzini and Panofka all followed suit.

The work consists of a deeply melancholy, long-spun C minor melody over a simple arpeggiated accompaniment, and Ernst uses every conceivable device to increase the violin's expressiveness. The theme begins [11] in third position, but he much increases its emotional impact by the use of high positions on the lower strings: the three Cs at the beginning of the second phrase of the melody, like a sudden gust of grief, are played in seventh position on the G string; and when the whole tune is repeated, it is reduced to a ghostly wail by going up to sixth position on the A string. The fingering of the first edition shows that Ernst enhanced this careful voicing by making extensive use of *portamenti* – particularly in the nagging A flat–G figure which recurs several times.

Joachim and Wihelmj began the practice of prefacing the *Élégie* with an introduction by Spohr (originally part of his sixth violin concerto) [10], and this version became standard in the late nineteenth century. The addition of this introduction made the structure of the piece fit orthodox notions of eschatology like a glove: a dramatic, questioning, restless *recitativo* representing the body's final hours; an intensely melancholy song of mourning on the soul's departure; ecstatic double-stopping symbolising resurrection and transfiguration; and the final attainment of peace and repose in quiet C major. In an age when early death and Christian belief were woven into the fabric of everyday experience, few could hear the piece without being deeply affected.

***Introduction, Variations et Final, Dialogués & Concertans sur une Valse favorite pour Piano et Violon par Charles Schunke et H. W. Ernst,* [Schunke's] Op. 26**

A letter recently discovered in the Janáček Institute in Brno shows that Ernst's three duos with Charles Schunke (1801–39) were a group commissioned by the Parisian publisher Maurice Schlesinger, and that they were written in 1834 just before the *Thème Allemande Varié*, Op. 9.[9] The waltz on which the third fantasy is based is *Das Leben ein Tanz oder Der Tanz ein Leben* (usually translated as *Life is a Dance*), Op. 49, by Johann Strauss Sr, published in late 1831. Alone of the group, this fantasy is not based on operatic material, and it is the only one where no record exists of Ernst's performing it. These features may be related. The Parisian public was notoriously insular and obsessed by opera, and Strauss would not reach the apogee of his Parisian vogue until he visited the capital

[9] Recorded on Vol. 1 of this series, TOCC 0118.

with his orchestra in 1837–38; thus, despite being on a 'favourite waltz', the fantasy may have been slightly less popular than the others.

On the cover of the sheet music, Schunke is proudly styled 'Pianiste de la Reine' and, as in the other two fantasies, the piano claims the lion's share of the virtuosity. An introduction, by turns grandiose and reflective (and containing some florid piano-writing) [12], leads to the lilting waltz with its slightly rustic accompaniment [13]. Three variations – one instrument handing on the baton of virtuosity to the other – follow [14]–[16], and then both collaborate in a rather charming minor-key *Andantino pastorale* [17], which continues the rustic mood. An *agitato* section leads into the extended and brilliant finale [18].

***Pensées fugitives, par Heller et Ernst,* Part II**

The *Pensées fugitives* ('Fleeting Thoughts') had their origin in Ernst's desire to make the compositions of the pianist Stephen Heller (1813–88) better known. Heller's father had exploited him as a *Wunderkind*, and the boy suffered a nervous breakdown as a result. It is therefore understandable that he came to detest virtuosos and virtuoso music, and that he made little headway in Paris which, in the 1830s and '40s, was fixated on virtuosity. But he grew to admire Ernst (the latter's virtuosity notwithstanding), and after about three years' intermittent labour they published the twelve pieces of the *Pensées fugitives* in 1842.[10] It was Heller, undistracted by concerts and touring, who supplied most of the ideas and did most of the compositional work. In consequence, and as the order of the composers in the title indicates, the final pieces contain more Heller than Ernst: many of the pieces have a poetic title and epigraph designed to induce a certain kind of mood (devices which Ernst does not use elsewhere),[11] and, in contrast to the rather plain and understated violin part, the piano-writing is demanding and sophisticated (unlike the more functional piano parts Ernst had written up to this point). Ernst frequently used two or three of the *Pensées fugitives* to end his concerts, and they also proved popular with other artists: Brahms, for example, programmed several in some of his concerts in the 1850s and '60s. They are important in Ernst's development as a composer because, being influenced by the music of Mendelssohn and Schumann rather than French and Italian opera-composers, they point towards the major works he would write later in his career – particularly the B flat String Quartet, Op. 26.

No. 7, *Rêverie*: *Quasi allegretto*, 6/8, B major, dedicated to Monsieur Moscheles

Epigraph: *Moi, je rêve! écoutant ce cypres soupirer / Autour des croix d'ébène / Et murmurer le fleuve et la cloche pleurer / Dans un coin de la plaine* ('I am dreaming, listening to the sighing of that cypress / Around the ebony crosses / And to the murmuring of the river and the weeping of the bell / In a corner of the plain'), Victor Hugo, 'À Olympio', *Les Voix intérieures*, 1835

[10] The first six are recorded on Vol. 1 of this series, TOCC 0118.

[11] The score generally gives only the epigraph and the author, not the detail of these notes.