



Adolf von

HENSELT

Complete Piano Études

12 Études caractéristiques

12 Études de Salon

Étude in A minor

La Gondola

Marcel Tadokoro, Piano

Adolf von
HENSELT
(1814–1889)

Complete Piano Études

12 Études caractéristiques, Op. 2 (pub. 1837/38)

32:35

1	No. 1 in D minor 'Orage, tu ne saurais m'abattre!'	2:28
2	No. 2 in D flat major 'Pensez un peu à moi, qui pense toujours à vous!'	3:53
3	No. 3 in B minor 'Exauce mes vœux!'	4:59
4	No. 4 in B flat major 'Duo. Repos d'amour'	2:07
5	No. 5 in C sharp minor 'Vie orageuse'	2:10
6	No. 6 in F sharp major 'Si oiseau j'étais, à toi je volerais!'	1:56
7	No. 7 in D major 'C'est la jeunesse, qui a des aîles dorées!'	2:43
8	No. 8a in E flat minor 'Tu m'attires, m'entraînes, m'engloutis!' (alternative version)	1:51
9	No. 9a in F major 'Jeunesse d'amour, plaisir céleste, ah tu t'enfuis! Mais la mémoire nous reste' (alternative version)	1:36
10	No. 10 in E minor 'Comme le ruisseau dans la mer se répand, ainsi, ma chère, mon cœur t'attend'	2:24
11	No. 11 in E flat major 'Dors tu, ma vie?'	3:42
12	No. 12 in B flat minor 'Plein de soupirs, de souvenirs, inquiet, hélas! Le cœur me bat'	2:47

12 Études de Salon, Op. 5 (pub. 1838)

35:38

13	No. 1 in C minor 'Eroica'	4:03
14	No. 2 in G major	1:49
15	No. 3 in A minor 'Hexentanz'	1:29
16	No. 4 in E major 'Ave Maria'	2:38
17	No. 5 in F sharp minor 'Verlorene Heimath'	3:19
18	No. 6a in A flat major 'Danklied nach Sturm' (alternative version)	4:57
19	No. 7 in C major 'Elfenreigen'	1:26
20	No. 8 in G minor 'Romanze mit Chor-Refrain'	2:19
21	No. 9 in A major	2:01
22	No. 10 in F minor 'Entschwundenes Glück'	5:53
23	No. 11 in B major 'Liebeslied'	3:20
24	No. 12 in G sharp minor 'Nächtlicher Geisterzug'	2:18

Étude in A minor (pub. 1876)

1:37

La Gondola. Étude, Op. 13, No. 2 (pub. 1841)

2:28

Adolf von Henselt (1814–1889)

Complete Piano Études

Adolf von Henselt belongs firmly in the realm of 19th-century virtuoso composer-pianists. Born in 1814 in Schwabach, Bavaria, he began learning the violin at the age of three before moving to the piano two years later. Among his teachers in Vienna were Johann Nepomuk Hummel and Simon Sechter (who was to be Bruckner's teacher), while his first love was the music of Carl Maria von Weber. Weber's opera *Der Freischütz* became the inspiration for a fantasy and variations, thought to be by another teacher of Henselt's, Josepha von Flad, which was played by the young pianist in his debut concert in Munich at the age of 14.

Following his initial teaching Henselt worked alone to develop a method of stretching and strengthening his hands to play widely spread chords without the need for a sustain pedal, a technique honed over two years of seclusion. It served him well, in spite of concerns aired by his contemporaries, assuaging the intense stage fright from which he suffered. Indeed, Liszt was to praise his 'cantabile' style.

Henselt travelled across Europe as his reputation grew, touring Vienna, St Petersburg and a number of German towns, when he met and married Rosalie Vogel in 1837. The pair initially settled in Breslau but moved to St Petersburg the following year, where Henselt became court pianist. The vast majority of his compositions date from relatively early in his career, tragically cut short on account of his stage fright. He is, however, regarded as the founder of the Russian piano school, teaching Nikolay Sergeyevich Zverev, who himself taught Rachmaninov and Scriabin, who would perform Henselt's *Piano Concerto* on graduation from the Moscow Conservatoire.

Aware that the piano study was flourishing beyond its function of mere technical exercise, Henselt completed two books of études, resolving to write one in each key. He decided against working through a cycle of fifths, as Chopin did in his *24 Preludes* of the same time. Instead the keys follow an unpredictable but clearly thought pattern, giving the overall cycle a satisfying emotional heft.

The *12 Études caractéristiques*, Op. 2 of 1837/38 were published in several editions, principally by Hofmeister – whose title carries a dedication to 'Sa Majesté, Roi de Bavière'. French titles were applied to each étude, enhancing their programmatic credentials. Henselt writes with great fluency, often complementing his faster keyboard writing with reflective statements, the technical demands on the pianist masked by a poetic intent.

The études begin with a red-blooded study in D minor, the key in which Chopin finished his *24 Preludes*. *Orage, tu ne saurais m'abattre* ('Storm, you will not fell me') spells out a melody in right-hand octaves above a flurry of left-hand notes. Moving to D flat major, *Pensez un peu à moi, qui pense toujours à vous!* ('Think a little about me, who thinks always of you!') is an intimate plea with a distinctive right-hand phrase. A dark encounter in B minor, a heartfelt wish to *Exauce mes vœux* ('Fulfil my desires'), finds a calmer response in B flat major as the melody passes to the inner parts for *Repos d'amour* ('The repose of love').

Vie orageuse ('Stormy life') recounts the turbulent first étude, before a richly colourful, watery 'song without words' marked *con leggerezza quasi zeffiroso* ('with almost zephyr-like lightness'). *C'est la jeunesse qui a des aîles dorées* ('It is the youth who has golden wings') adopts a distinctive, dotted rhythm in right-hand octaves above an accompaniment of increasing depth and power. Triplet figurations pervade the heady *Tu m'attires, m'entraînes, m'engloutis* ('You attract me, you carry away, you engulf'), which lives up to its marking of *Allegro agitato ed appassionato* with a thunderous blast of repeated-note octaves.

After such heady music *Jeunesse d'amour...* ('Love's Youth...') provides respite, as does the twinkling right-hand figuration of the tenth étude, *Comme le ruisseau dans la mer...* ('As the stream pours out into the sea...'), Henselt using an expressive pause to draw the ear back in. The penultimate of the set, *Dors tu, ma vie?* ('Do you sleep, my life?') has the most restful music of the collection, its demanding left-hand arpeggios masked by a gentle melody in the right. The tone darkens for the final étude, *Plein de soupirs, de souvenirs...* ('Full of sighs, of memories...').

Henselt's set of *12 Études de Salon* were also published in 1838, as his Op. 5. They are more explicit in their descriptive titles, with two (Nos. 2 and 9) left blank, allowing the listener more room for interpretation. Carrying the heading *Eroica*, the big-boned first étude strengthens its devotion to Beethoven through the key of C minor, its steely countenance supporting a melody of long and elegant phrasing. The sparkling G major étude is a technical tour de force suggesting the motion of a boat in choppy waters, while the *Hexentanz* ('Dance of the Witches') is a suitably diabolic aside in A minor. Music of chasteness follows, the beautiful chorale of *Ave Maria* touching in its simplicity.

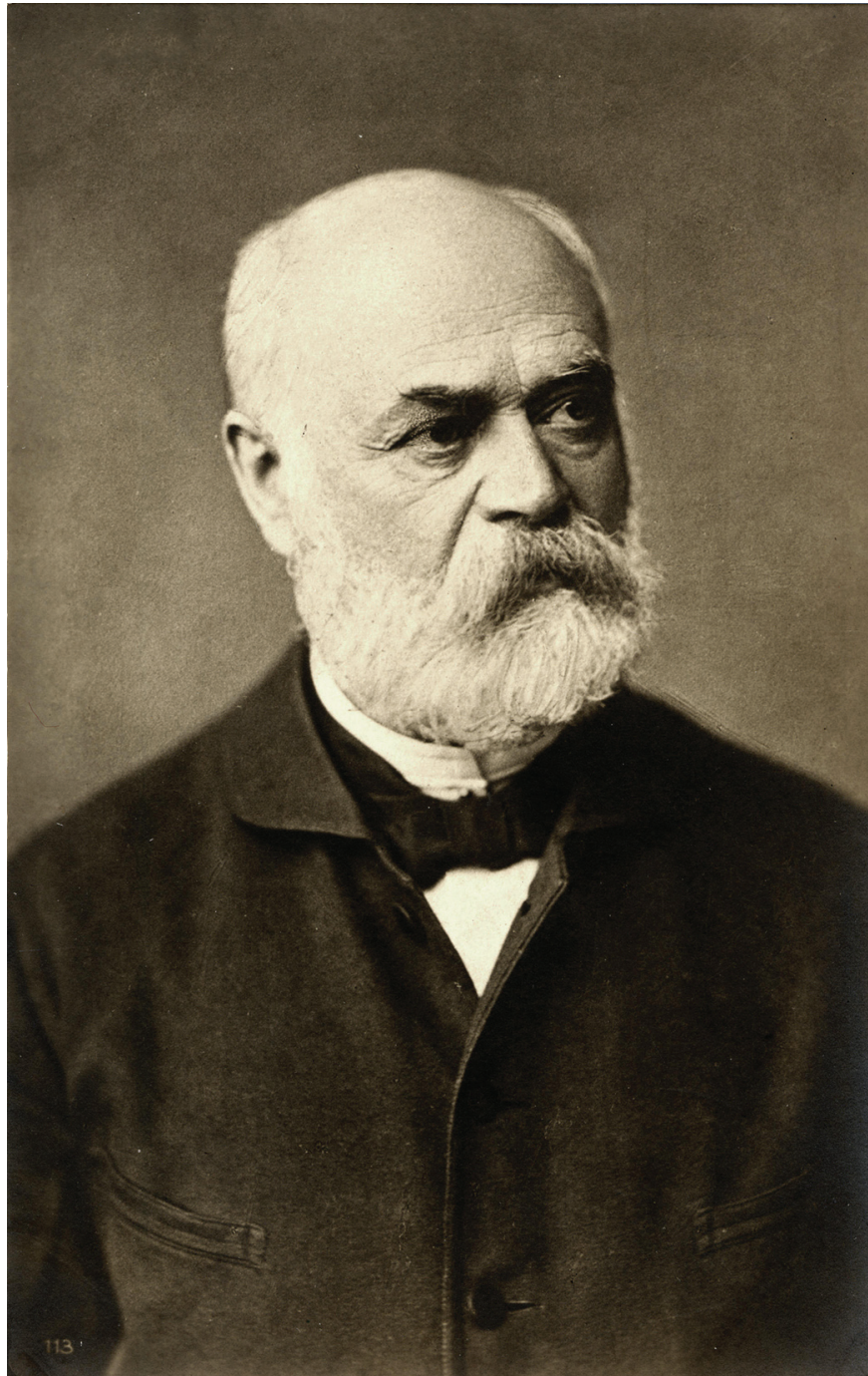
Henselt assigns a melody to right hand octaves in the F sharp minor étude, *Verlorene Heimath* ('Lost Home'), the inside parts pulling against it with counter melodies of their own. *Danklied nach Sturm* ('Thanksgiving after a Storm'), heard here in the alternative version published by Peters, is a poetic discourse, its freely wandering left hand providing the momentum over which a thoughtful melody unfolds. *Elfenreigen* ('Dance of the Elves') is a glittering perpetuum mobile for the right hand, while the *Romanze* in G minor follows a tender exposition with a passionate outpouring of octaves.

The freely flowing *Étude No. 9 in A major* often gives the impression of three hands at work, such is its momentum, before the longest étude of the 24, *Entschwundenes Glück* ('Lost Happiness') outlines its woe in long phrases surely anticipating Rachmaninov. The *Liebeslied* has a distinctive, Chopin-esque melody, while the cycle ends with *Nächtlicher Geisterzug* ('Nightly Ghost-Ride'), its spectres represented in the restless right hand.

The *Étude in A minor* is a late publication from 1876, dedicated 'à Madame Sophie Werkhowsky née Lachkévitch'. Its intricate cross rhythms between the hands are topped by a distinctive melody.

La Gondola was published in 1841 as part of the *Ten Pieces for Piano*, yet its roots lie in a commission from Ignaz Moscheles and François-Joseph Fétis, Henselt contributing along with twelve other composers to their *Méthode des méthodes*. This substantial volume included music by Chopin (*Trois Nouvelles études*), Liszt (*Morceau de salon, S142*) and Felix Mendelssohn (*Étude in F minor, WoO 1*). Henselt's contribution was short but meaningful, a descriptive water piece.

Ben Hogwood



Adolf von Henselt (www.alamy.com)

Marcel Tadokoro



Marcel Tadokoro was born in Fukuoka, Japan. He started to play the piano at the age of eight in Japan before studying in Paris at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse (CNSMDP) and the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional with Jean-François Heisser, Florent Boffard and Olivier Gardon. After completing his Master's course at the CNSMDP, he pursued further studies under Rena Shereshevskaya on a scholarship at the École Normale de Musique de Paris 'Alfred Cortot'. Tadokoro has won prestigious prizes at international competitions, such as the John Giordano Jury Chairman Discretionary Award at the 2022 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, and Third Prize at the 20th Paloma O'Shea International Piano Competition in the same year. He was also a finalist at the 2021 Concours musical international de Montréal. Tadokoro has performed concertos with the Ural Philharmonic Orchestra, State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Russia, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre Royal de Chambre de Wallonie, Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra, Nagoya Philharmonic Orchestra and Aichi Chamber Orchestra, among others. He has given recitals across Europe and Asia.

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Adolf von Henselt belongs firmly in the realm of 19th-century composer-pianists such as Chopin, Schumann and Liszt. He was influential in establishing a true Russian school of pianism and held in high esteem by Rachmaninov. Henselt's virtuoso technique was admired for its *cantabile* qualities but his performing career was cut short by extreme stage fright. Dating from early in his career, the études blend technical demands with clarity of vision and a lyrical poetic expressiveness often reflected in colourful descriptive titles.

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| 13–24 | 12 Études de Salon, Op. 5 (pub. 1838) | 35:38 |
| 25 | Étude in A minor (pub. 1876) | 1:37 |
| 26 | La Gondola. Étude, Op. 13, No. 2 (pub. 1841) | 2:28 |

Marcel Tadokoro, Piano

A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet
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