

# BEETHOVEN

## Variations on Folk Songs

Patrick Gallois, Flute  
Maria Prinz, Piano



**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)**  
**Variations on Folk Songs, Opp. 105 and 107**  
**(Performing version by Patrick Gallois)**

It was in 1803 that Beethoven had his first contact with George Thomson, an employee of the Board of Trustees for the Encouragement of Art and Manufactures in Scotland and a keen amateur musician. Thomson had made it his task to collect and publish settings of folk songs. To this end he commissioned composers, chiefly in Vienna, to provide the arrangements he thought suitable for his ambitions. Haydn's pupil and London rival Pleyel worked for Thomson in 1793, followed in 1797 by Koželuch, until 1809, and eventually even Haydn himself. Following the pattern of his early collaboration with Pleyel and Koželuch, Thomson, in a letter of 5th July 1803, suggested that Beethoven should supply him with some sonatas making use of Scottish airs. Beethoven's reply, suggesting a fee of three hundred ducats, brought the matter to a close for the moment; Thomson would only pay half that sum for six sonatas. The following year Beethoven suggested another arrangement to Thomson, allowing publication of whatever works were composed in other major cities; he enclosed a price-list, ranging from thirty ducats for a symphony to eight ducats for variations with or without accompaniment.

The next surviving communication between Beethoven and Thomson came in November 1806, when Beethoven replied to a proposal of July 1806 by Thomson. Writing in French, Beethoven is unwilling to compose for the flute, which he describes as too limited and imperfect, but suggests a number of works, string trios, quartets and other compositions. The same letter includes in a postscript the matter of harmonising some little Scottish airs, a task for which, Beethoven says, Haydn was paid a pound for each air. The correspondence is resumed in 1809, when once again Beethoven lays down his terms, now for the arrangement of 43 Scottish airs, to which it seems Thomson is adding words, bowdlerised versions of existing verses or new words, a subject that arises again in further correspondence in the following years, during which Beethoven

supplied Thomson with arrangements of Scottish and other airs. Thomson continues to insist on settings that will be playable by amateurs in Scotland, who, it seems, could hardly be expected to cope with cross-rhythms at the keyboard. In his letters to Thomson Beethoven repeatedly protests at Thomson's requirement of ease of performance, while Thomson always has in mind the popular amateur market for which he intends his publications. The correspondence continues, delayed at times by the disturbed state of Europe. Beethoven sets Irish airs, and is asked for works on folk songs from other countries; he needs to drive as hard a bargain as he can with Thomson, who protests that he is losing money and constantly stresses the poor standards of performance in Great Britain.

It is only in February 1818 that Beethoven suggests to Thomson that he supply him with twelve themes and variations, for which he asks a hundred ducats. Thomson agrees, but by January 1819 complains that "Our Scotch ladies can't surely be as strong as yours", as one of the best players has had to give up the Tirolese themes in despair. By March 1819 Beethoven's patience is exhausted. Thomson had asked for some simplification of the themes and variations. Beethoven's reply was direct: "Vous écrivez toujours facile, très facile – je m'accomode tout mon possible, mais – mais –mais" ("You always write easy, very easy – I try to accommodate you as much as I can, but – but – but"). The correspondence comes to an end in the following year, when Thomson complains that the variations, for which he has paid £94, have not sold well and he would be willing to part with them for sale in Vienna. In the event the variations were sold in 1830 for £50 to Paine and Hopkins in London. In 1819 Thomson in Edinburgh and Preston in London had published *Twelve National Airs with Variations for the Piano and an Accompaniment for the Flute*. In the event only three of a projected four volumes were published, the six variations of

*Op. 105* and *Nos. 2, 6 and 7 of Op. 107*. In 1819 Artaria in Vienna published *Op. 105* as *Six Thèmes Variés bien faciles à exécuter pour Piano-Forte seul ou avec accompagnement d'une Flûte ou d'un violon (ad libitum)* (Six Varied Themes easy to play for the Pianoforte alone or with accompaniment of flute or violin, ad lib). In 1820 Simrock published *Op. 107* as *Dix Thèmes Russes, Ecosais et Tyroliens Variés pour le Piano-Forte avec accompagnement d'une Flûte ou d'un Violon ad libitum* (Ten Themes, Russian, Scottish and Tyrolean, Varied for Pianoforte, with optional accompaniment for flute or violin, *Op. 107*). It will be noticed that Simrock and Artaria had added a possible optional violin, with Artaria at first adapting the accompanying part to suit the resources of that instrument.

The first collection of themes and variations starts with *The cottage maid*, described as a Welsh song and, in Beethoven's setting of Welsh airs, given words by Thomson's collaborator William Smyth, Professor of History at Cambridge. The theme, marked *Andantino quasi Allegretto*, is followed by a variation for piano alone and a second variation with a left-hand triplet semiquaver accompaniment. The third variation is straightforward, leading to a tonic minor contrapuntal version of the theme and a brief conclusion. The second piece, *Von edlem Geschlecht war Shinkin* (Of noble stock was Shinkin), described as a Scottish air, its theme marked *Allegretto scherzoso*, is in C minor, with answering phrases, continued in the first variation and the second. The third is a major key *Allegretto*, capped by a final return to the minor key, an *Allegro*, the theme in canon between the lower keyboard part and the flute, with a continuing right-hand trill on the keyboard. The Austrian *A Schüsserl und a Reindl* (A dish and a pot is all my kitchenware), in C major, with the direction *Andantino quasi Allegretto*, allows additional ornamentation for the flute in the repeated sections of the melody and its six variations the fifth of which is a minor key *Adagio*, followed by a sixth, *Andante con moto*. *The last rose of summer*, a traditional Irish melody for which Thomas Moore supplied the now familiar words, is in E flat.

Its first variation, originally for piano alone, is here aptly augmented by the flute, which, in the second variation, bears the melody over a semiquaver keyboard accompaniment, with the third variation accompanied by rapid piano figuration, before an unusual twist in the closing bars. The fifth theme, the traditional Irish jig *Chiling O'Guiry*, marked *Allegro spiritoso*, allows some freedom of interpretation in its first variation, followed by a variation with rapid keyboard figuration and crossing of hands, with a final variation in duple metre. Still in Ireland, *Paddy whack* has the tempo direction *Allegretto piuttosto vivace* and is in D major, its second variation allowing the flautist to add figuration echoing that of the piano. The third variation switches to B flat major, the original key triumphantly restored in the fourth version of the theme.

Opus 107 starts with the characteristic Austrian *I bin a Tiroler Bua* (I am a Tyrolean lad), the first variation of its E flat melody in the higher register of the keyboard. A second variation with a running semiquaver accompaniment is followed by an excursion into E minor and a fourth variation with a triplet quaver keyboard accompaniment. Marked *Allegretto quasi vivace* and in F major, the Scottish *Bonny laddie, highland laddie* ends each version of the theme with a sudden silence, broken only in the second variation by the flute. The fourth variation is *Andante mosso alla siciliana*, followed by a return to the spirit of the original theme. *Volkslied aus Kleinrußland* (Folksong from Little Russia), *Vivace* and in G major, offers scope for additional ornamentation from the flute in its repeated sections and an addition to the second variation. The fifth variation offers dynamic contrasts, leading to an *Adagio sostenuto*, followed by an initially contrapuntal treatment of the theme, replaced by the rapid keyboard triplet figuration of the closing section. The *Allegretto scherzando* F major Irish *St Patrick's Day* entrusts the first variation to the piano, leading to rapid keyboard figuration in the second and a minor key *Poco adagio*, before the fourth, a *Vivace*, with cadenzas for each instrument and a fifth, *Moderato*, before a short return to the original theme and tempo in conclusion. In the same key the Austrian *A Madel, ja a*

*Madel* (A maiden, yes a maiden) seems to have defeated the Edinburgh ladies, with an even more demanding keyboard part. The second variation contrasts heavy octaves with gentler material and the third leads to a *Maestoso* interlude, before the final demanding *Allegro*. *Peggy's daughter*, for which Anne Hunter, wife of the London surgeon and friend of Haydn, provided words in Beethoven's 26 *Welsh Songs*, has a gentle *Andante comodo* lilt, the mood changing in the fourth and final *Vivace* variation. The Ukrainian *Schöne Minka* (Fair Minka, I must leave you) has six variations, with a final brief excursion into A major, before a return to the prevailing key of A minor. *O Mary, at the (recte thy) window be*, a Scottish melody for which Thomson's friend, Burns, provided words, has four variations, a piano cadenza leading from the fourth

to the cheerful final version of the theme. *Oh, thou art the lad of my heart*, a Scottish tune for which Smyth provided a text, has a characteristic melody. The fourth of its five variations is in the tonic minor of E flat, leading to a final major *Vivace*. The set remains in Scotland for the final *The highland watch*, its text in the song publication written by James Hogg on the return of the 42nd Highland Regiment from the battle of Waterloo. The theme is in G minor and marked *Spiritoso e marciale*, the quicker third variation in the major, followed by a fourth, marked *Andante espressivo*, leading to a final *Allegro*, to end a series in which Beethoven displayed the power of his imagination at a time when life presented him with many difficulties.

**Keith Anderson**

Photo: Theresia Linke



## A Note on the Performance by Patrick Gallois

The present performance offers a version of Beethoven's folk-song arrangements for piano and flute based on the performance practice of the early eighteenth century. The flute, a second voice in these pieces, adds an improvisatory element, suggested, in part, by the treatment of the second voice in the version of these works for piano and violin. There remains, however, a certain difficulty in recording performances that contain freer interpretations that would inevitably vary in live performance.

The period between 1750 and 1850 brought the flute into particular prominence, with a demand for flute tutors and methods and a supply of transcriptions and

compositions for the instrument. The flute version of Mozart's *Clarinet Concerto*, for example, was issued in 1801, before the clarinet version. The flute methods of the time give explanations of technique, sound, phrasing, tonguing, as well as of ornamentation and choice of vibrato. They reflect the popularity of the flute at a time when cultivated women might play the harpsichord or the harp, while men played the flute.

Performance of Beethoven's folk song variations calls for a measure of improvisatory freedom in interpretation. What becomes fixed in a recording, changes in performance.

## Patrick Gallois

Patrick Gallois belongs to the generation of French musicians leading highly successful international careers as both soloist and conductor. From the age of seventeen he studied the flute with Jean-Pierre Rampal at the Paris Conservatoire and at the age of 21 was appointed principal flute in the Orchestre National de France, under Lorin Maazel, playing under many famous conductors, including Leonard Bernstein, Seiji Ozawa, Pierre Boulez, Karl Böhm, Eugen Jochum, and Sergiu Celibidache. He held this post until 1984, when he decided to focus on his solo career, which has subsequently taken him throughout the world. He regularly performs and records with leading conductors and collaborates in chamber music with musicians such as Yuri Bashmet, Natalia Gutman, Peter Schreier, Jorg Demus, the Lindsay Quartet and formerly with Jean-Pierre Rampal and Lily Laskine. He has been invited to appear as a soloist with major orchestras in Europe and in Asia, and in leading international festivals, with tours to Germany, Japan and Israel, and annual master-classes at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. For twelve years after establishing his own orchestra in Paris, the Académie de Paris, Patrick Gallois developed a conducting career which has taken him to Japan, Scandinavia, Italy, Portugal, the United States and Bulgaria, in addition to appearances as a conductor in France. In 2003 he was appointed Musical Director of the Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä and toured regularly with the orchestra. Both as a conductor and as a flautist he has a wide repertoire, with a predilection for contemporary music, and many new works have been dedicated to him. His recordings include an award-winning series for DG. For Naxos he has recorded the complete *Flute Concertos* of C.P.E. Bach (8.557515-16), Haydn's *Symphonies Nos. 1-5* (8.557571) and *9-12* (8.557771), and Gounod's *Symphonies* (8.557463), among other works. His recording for Naxos of Kraus's *Aeneas i Cartago* (8.570585) was awarded a Choc by *Musica* in April 2010. His recording of the *Violin Concertos* of Saint-Saëns with Fanny Clamagirand (Naxos 8.572037) was awarded a Choc (*Musica*) in February 2011 and a Diapason d'Or in March 2011. A further Choc (*Musica*) was awarded for his recording of the Mendelssohn *Violin Concertos* with Tianwa Yang and Sinfonia Finlandia Jyväskylä (8.572662).

Patrick Gallois plays Chris Abell wooden flutes. The instrument played in this recording is made from African blackwood and the Böhm system keys are gold. Modern pitch = 442

## **A Note on the Recording by Maria Prinz**

The idea for this recording was born during my first meeting with Klaus Heymann in October 2011 in Hong Kong. We spoke about repertoire for flute and piano. I told Mr. Heymann about the “Viennese classics” programme for flute and piano, played by the Vienna Philharmonic flautist Dieter Flury and myself in the Weill Hall/Carnegie Hall, including *Variation, Op. 7, No. 7 “The beautiful Minka”* by Beethoven.

This idea had to wait three years before realisation, as my first flute-piano project for Naxos was the recording of Patrick Gallois’ arrangement for flute and piano of Mozart’s *Violin Sonatas Nos. 24–26* (Naxos 8.573033). This new recording will always be connected with the memory of the last weeks of my husband, the great clarinetist Alfred Prinz, who died on September 20th 2014. Those were for me weeks of hope and sorrow, of hours spent in hospital with my husband, who was seriously ill. I am very grateful to Klaus Heymann and Patrick Gallois for agreeing to dedicate this recording to the memory of Alfred Prinz.

Beethoven’s *Variations, Opp. 105 and 107* are a dream

and a challenge (as all late Beethoven works are) for every pianist, but not so much for the flautist. Beethoven’s and the editor’s indication is “Variations for piano solo or with accompaniment of a flute ad libitum”. In a letter dated December 1817, the Scottish folk-song collector and publisher George Thomson (who commissioned the variations) wrote to the composer: “You must write the variations in a familiar, easy and slightly brilliant style, so that the greatest number of our ladies can play and enjoy them.” This requirement may have been an advantage in Beethoven days, but it may also explain why the variations are not played often nowadays, being insufficiently attractive for the professional flutist. Patrick Gallois found a solution to this problem by upgrading the flute part, based on the practice of improvisation and ornamentation in the tradition of the Viennese classics and creating a much richer and more virtuoso version of the flute part. We both enjoyed very much working on those ingenious variations, trying to find a specific sonority and atmosphere for each one.

### ***Dedicated to the memory of Alfred Prinz***

## **Maria Prinz**

Maria Prinz was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, into a musical family, the daughter of the famous Bulgarian conductor and composer Konstantin Iliev. She studied at the Hanns Eisler Music University in Berlin with Rudolf Dunckel, in Vienna with Jörg Demus and in Paris with Yvonne Lefébure. In addition to her performing career, she has taught at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna since 1987. Maria Prinz has performed with leading orchestras and conductors throughout Europe. As a recitalist she has appeared in the United States, throughout Europe and in Japan. Her chamber music collaborations have brought numerous performances with distinguished colleagues, including extensive concert and recording projects with Patrick Gallois, as well as concerts in Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, in New York, the Purcell Room and Barbican Centre in London and at the Accademia Chigiana in Siena. The 2014/2015 season brought a new collaboration with the distinguished baritone Matthias Goerne in Schubert’s *Winterreise* in Sofia and solo recitals in Bratislava and New York.

Beethoven's letters show an extensive and prolonged correspondence with George Thomson, a keen amateur musician who had made it his task to collect and publish settings of folk songs, commissioning the likes of Pleyel, Koželuch and Haydn. The *Opp. 105* and *107* collections, written for piano with optional parts for flute or violin, are filled with delightfully decorative but virtuoso writing. This recording offers versions with improvisation and ornamentation by Patrick Gallois based on the performance practice of the early eighteenth century.

**Ludwig van  
BEETHOVEN**  
(1770–1827)

**Variations on Folk Songs, Opp. 105 and 107**  
(Performing version by Patrick Gallois)

<b>Six Variations on Folk Songs, Op. 105</b>	<b>21:54</b>	<b>Ten Variations on Folk Songs, Op. 107</b>	<b>50:01</b>
1 No. 1 The cottage maid (Welsh)	3:10	7 No. 1 I bin a Tiroler Bua (Austrian)	4:38
2 No. 2 Of noble stock was Shinkin (Scottish)	2:28	8 No. 2 Bonny laddie, highland laddie (Scottish)	3:05
3 No. 3 A Schlüsserl und a Reindl (Austrian)	6:17	9 No. 3 Volkslied aus Kleinrußland (Russian)	6:13
4 No. 4 The last rose of summer (Irish)	4:05	10 No. 4 St Patrick's Day (Irish)	4:45
5 No. 5 Chiling O'Guiry (Irish)	2:06	11 No. 5 A Madel, ja a Madel (Austrian)	7:12
6 No. 6 Paddy whack (Irish)	3:36	12 No. 6 Peggy's daughter (Welsh)	5:27
		13 No. 7 Schöne Minka (Russian)	5:47
		14 No. 8 O Mary, at the window be (Scottish)	2:40
		15 No. 9 Oh, thou art the lad of my heart (Scottish)	5:17
		16 No. 10 The highland watch (Scottish)	4:35



**Patrick Gallois, Flute**  
**Maria Prinz, Piano**

Recorded at the Mozart-Saal, Irnberger Foundation, Salzburg, Austria, 19–21 June 2014  
 Producer, Engineer & Editor: Jens Jamin • Performing version by Patrick Gallois (unpublished)  
 Booklet notes: Keith Anderson • Cover photo: Irish cottage (Patrik Kosmider / Dreamstime.com)



8.573337

DDD

Playing Time  
72:02



© & © 2015  
 Naxos Rights US, Inc.  
 Booklet notes in English  
 Made in Germany  
[www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com)