

JOHN DAMGAARD

PIANO



BEETHOVEN - CHOPIN - BRAHMS

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Piano Sonata No. 31 in A flat Major, Op. 110 19:10

[1] I. Moderato, cantabile molto espressivo 6:23

[2] II. Allegro molto 2:22

[3] III. Recitativo - Arioso dolente - Fugue - Arioso - Fugue 10:21

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849)

Piano Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58 28:12

[4] I. Allegro maestoso 10:03

[5] II. Scherzo: Molto vivace 2:35

[6] III. Largo 10:21

[7] IV. Finale: Presto, non tanto 5:09

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel, Op. 24 29:09

[8] Theme and Variations 1-8 7:10

[9] (Variation 9) and Variations 10-17 8:28

[10] (Variation 18) and Variations 19-25 and Fugue 13:32

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Many thanks to Solistforeningen af 1921 for kind support

MUSIC AND AGE

Why do many musicians continue playing far beyond when other people think they should quit?

Maybe they have always played for their own sake, not the audience's. If you are fortunate to have experienced the intoxication of playing an instrument while young, you are more likely to become an "addict" forever. A listener can sometimes achieve the same feeling, but the sensation while making music is stronger.

From the ecstatic childhood feeling of joy, you slowly develop a change in consciousness. The two most basic states of consciousness are awake and asleep – but music can take you to a higher level. Where the word stops, music begins. Just as a hypnotist can take a person into a trance with the click of a hand, a sensitive musician can take him or herself to a higher level by striking one or two chords.

A few children are born with this ability. Consider Mozart and Schubert. Most, however, need many years to develop it. Even natural born musicians develop themselves for a lifetime. Mozart's late work shows a big gain in insight compared to his early works. Beethoven's development is well known. The process actually never stops: You experience more and more as you age. Each detail becomes important and meaningful, which is why

tempo usually slows the older you get.

Developing each detail requires time. When you are young you are interested in speed, but what is speed without content? Anyone can speak the alphabet quickly, but the letters become interesting only when they are combined into words.

It's nonsense that you can't move as quickly when you grow old. Think of Rubinstein's last concert in London, when he was 93. There he played Schumann's Traumeswirren at a pace identical to when Horowitz was in his prime.

But when you realize that across your life you mainly play for your own sake, for the physical and psychological benefits music gives you, it's only natural to continue: for yourself alone, for listeners or for the microphone. Glenn Gould gave up concerts quite early for recordings. After all, a concert is gone the moment it's over. Recordings last.

At 80 myself I can assert: If everyone played an instrument, the world would need no psychologists. All our minds' struggles would evaporate into the sky!

John Damgaard



The Danish pianist John Damgaard (1941-) studied at Eastman School of Music (New York), The Royal Danish Conservatory of Music in Copenhagen with Georg Vasarhelyi and later with Ilona Kabos in London and Wilhelm Kempff in Italy.

From 1969-1984 John Damgaard was assistant professor at The Royal Danish Academy of Music and 1979-81 guest professor at Musashino Academia Musicae in Tokyo, Japan. From 1984-2005 he held the academic position of professor at The Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus.

John Damgaard has given concerts in USA, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, France, Belgium, Japan, Australia, primarily with classical, romantic programs, but almost always including Danish piano works. He has performed more than 31 different piano concerti.

For many years John Damgaard was a member of the piano trio Tre Musici. He has made more than 25 CD's - among other the complete piano works by Ravel on 2 CDs, the complete finished sonatas by Schubert on 5 CDs and Beethoven's 3 last sonatas...

Besides giving Master classes at Scandinavian Conservatories and in Japan he has been guest professor at ANAM (Australian National Academy of Music) in Melbourne.

John Damgaard has translated Alfred Cortot's book *Principes Rationnels de la Technique Pianistique* into Danish as well as Josef Lhevinnes book *Basic Principles in Pianoforte Playing*. (see: www.johnd.dk)

The piano works (Beethoven and Brahms) on this CD consists of recordings made following an extensive *bénéficial* tour for Danish Save the Children in 1979. Beethovens sonata Op. 110 is the most personal sonata of all his sonatas. There is no dedication. It almost like a diary of his life around Christmas 1821 when he was struggling with *Missa Solemnis* with indications in the score intended for the listeners more than the pianist.

The Chopin sonata was recorded in Danish Radio after a tour in Denmark. Brahms considered his variations on a theme by Haändel one of his best works.

But

Why 25 Variations?

....*John Damgaard writes:*

"I always wondered why Brahms wrote 25 variations and not 19 or maybe 28? If you start characterizing the different variations, you soon realize, that they come in groups.... that be tonality, style, mood etc. You quickly see that the whole piece is divided into 3 major groups – each group headed by 1) the theme, 2) an Interlude (Var. 9) and 3) the theme (Var. 18) You also quickly see, that each group of 8 Variations are divided in 2! Only the last group has only 7 Variations (4+3), but here the Fugue substitutes the missing Variation. All in all you have **8 Variations** 3 times and **6 groups** of variations. Eight and six! Is it a coincidence that there are also 8 letters in Johannes and 6 letters in Brahms? Many composers loved the secrets behind numbers. Brahms loved to hide his compositional techniques. Did he also hide the reason for 25 Variations?"

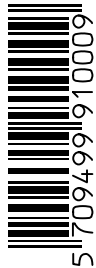
Theme	Var. 1-4	Var. 5-8	= 8 Variations
Interlude (Var. 9)	Var. 10-13	Var. 14-17	= 8 Variations
Theme (Var. 18)	Var. 19-22	Var. 23-25 + Fugue	= 8 Variations

In total 6 Groups
Johannes (8)
Brahms (6)

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Hannah JørgensenRecording, Production
& Mastering
Jørn BrammingChopin recorded 1979 in
the concert hall of
The Danish Radio,
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& Mastering
Claus ByrithBeethoven & Brahms
recorded 1979 in the
concert hall of The
Royal Academy of
Music, Aarhus, DenmarkTotal playing time:
76:59

DACOCD 910



As he turns 80 years old, Danish pianist John Damgaard is still going strong. This release features immaculate performances of pieces by three composers close to his heart: Late Beethoven and Chopin sonatas are paired with a truly strong-willed version of the Brahms Handel Variations. The release includes Damgaard's informative booklet notes that point out new and intriguing sides to the pianistic Handel variations.

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