



CHANNEL CLASSICS

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Paolo Giacometti

FORTEPIANO

FRANZ
SCHUBERT

Sonata in a minor opus 42
4 Impromptus opus 142



Paolo Giacometti

FORTEPIANO

Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

INSTRUMENT	<i>Sonata in a minor (opus 42 - D 845)</i>	
<i>Pianoforte</i>	1 Moderato	12.27
<i>Salvatore Lagrassa 1815,</i>	2 Andante, poco mosso	11.36
<i>Viennese School,</i>	3 Scherzo <i>Allegro vivace</i>	7.22
<i>restored by Edwin Beunk</i>	4 Rondo <i>Allegro vivace</i>	5.34
<i>& Johan Wennink.</i>		
	<i>Impromptus (opus 142)</i>	
<i>Recorded March 1997</i>	5 f minor <i>Allegro moderato</i>	10.30
<i>Renswoude Holland</i>	6 A Flat Major <i>Allegretto</i>	7.33
	7 B Flat Major <i>Andante</i>	11.26
	8 f minor <i>Allegro scherzando</i>	8.00

Total Time: 75.11



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*"All Channel Classics recordings are realised with extensive use
of custom made Rens Heijnis Audio equipment & microphones"*

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

MICROPHONES	Rens Heijnis/Bruel & Kjaer 4003
DIGITAL CONVERTER	DCS 900C
SPEAKERSYSTEMS	Monitor Audio 6 & AKG K1000 Headphones
RECORDING LOCATION	Renswoude, Holland
RECORDING DATES	March 1997

DISCOGRAHY PAOLO GIACOMETTI & PIETER WISPELWEY, CELLO	
DVORÁK, TCHAIKOVSKY, ARENSKY, DAVÍDOV	CCS 8695
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SCHUBERT (ARPEGGIONE)	CCS 9696

Paolo Giacometti

F O R T E P I A N O

Paolo Giacometti was born in Milan in 1970 and came with his parents to the Netherlands the next year. When he was nine years old he started piano lessons at the Music School in Hilversum with Joke Dekker-Vroons. He continued his studies with Jan Wijn at the Amsterdam Sweelinck Conservatory, where he was admitted directly to the 'Performance Musician Program'. He graduated with honors in 1995.

Paolo Giacometti has followed a number of Masterclasses with such eminent pianists and teachers as György Sebök, Karl-Heinz Kämmerling, Marie Françoise Bucquet, Lazar Berman, John Perry and Detlef Kraus.

He has successfully participated in various National and International Piano Competitions.

In 1987 he was awarded First Prize at the Steinway Competition in The Netherlands qualifying thereby to take part in the international Steinway Festival the following year as the representative of the Netherlands. This in turn led to an invitation to participate in the German Parke-Davis Förderpreis in Germany in 1990, which he won. In 1992 he participated in the prestigious International Brahms Competition in Hamburg where he was awarded the Second Prize. In 1995 Paolo Giacometti was again awarded First Prize at the Postbank Sweelinck Competition and was invited to perform Brahms' 2nd piano concerto together with the Amsterdam Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Kenneth Montgomery at various famous Dutch concert halls, including the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

In recent years he has performed several times in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam as part of the Holland Music Sessions and in the series 'Young Dutch Musicians'. This last performance was greeted with great enthusiasm both by the public and the reviewers.

The Telegraaf, a leading Dutch daily wrote: '*Giacometti, talent and musician!....a name to remember*'.

Apart from many concerts in The Netherlands, Paolo Giacometti has given recitals in Italy, Germany and France. The last years he has also performed abroad together with the dutch cellist Pieter Wispelwey.

4 **Franz Schubert** (Vienna, 1797-1828) was the son of a schoolteacher who was also an amateur cellist. He received musical instruction starting an early age from the local parish organist, who recognized and encouraged his unusual musical talent; this did not please Schubert's father, who would have preferred his son to follow in his own footsteps as a teacher. Ultimately, Schubert chose to be a composer. His contemporaries did not take him seriously, and he was only able to survive thanks to the support of a small group of friends and admirers.

Both the Sonata in a minor op. 42 and the four Impromptus op. 142 were written towards the end of Schubert's life, in 1825 and 1826 respectively. Unlike many of his compositions which are now famous, the Sonata was actually published during Schubert's lifetime, in 1826. The Impromptus, however, were declared "too difficult" by his publisher; they were not to be published until 1839, ten years after his death, by Diabelli. From that moment on, the Impromptus attained their stature as important compositions.

They fitted in with the 19th-century preference for smaller forms and character sketches: Robert Schumann, for example, already referred to them with great enthusiasm in his influential "Zeitschrift für neue Musik". It would take nearly another century before the Sonata, thanks to the championship of pianists like Anton Rubinstein and, in particular, Arthur Schnabel, would receive the appreciation that it deserved.

For a long time, associations with Biedermeier culture, as well as the tendency to position Schubert somewhere in Beethoven's shadow in respect to his handling of sonata form, has put his music at a disadvantage. I can think of no better example than this a minor Sonata as a way of dispelling these prejudices.

The massive proportions of the first movement are cast in a form of great strength which contributes to the inexorable and deeply dramatic character of the piece. The question posed at the beginning of the movement serves as a doom-laden thread which unites all the later expressive climaxes. It is an unanswerable question, which stagnates in restlessness during the development section and concludes in total despair at the end of the piece.

The second movement, with its moving and tender theme, sounds all the more unreal in contrast; the variations explore every distant corner of the human soul, ending in resignation. The same resignation can be heard in the trio of the next movement, an exuberant Scherzo full of sudden alternations between major and minor. The effect is underlined by surprising rhythmic changes which constantly unsettle the listener. The light, ironic tone of the Scherzo seems like an attempt to put the Sonata's sombre character in perspective.

The last movement is also characterized by these occasional reminiscences of happiness, which, however, give way increasingly to the melancholy Rondo theme, which hurtles like an runaway perpetuum mobile towards the same gloomy closing chords which brought the first movement to an end.

Robert Schumann, in his enthusiastic article on the four Impromptus op. 142, proposed the theory that they might be movements of an incomplete Sonata. The sonata form of the first and the andante character of the second support this theory to a certain extent. However, it is now virtually certain that Schubert intended them as free-standing pieces in a single series together with the four Impromptus op. 90. For me, then, they speak of four different worlds. The first speaks in long phrases about the difference between light and darkness, whereas the second, in all its simplicity, seems to aspire to be no more than a forgotten song. The third, opening with the familiar theme from "Rosamunde", exhibits interesting features in common with the Andante of the Sonata. Here too, the first variation is a classic decoration of the theme, the second is dancelike, the third dramatic, and the fourth virtuosic in character. At the end, the theme returns, as in a distant memory.

In the fourth impromptu, Schubert's affinity with Slavic culture can be clearly heard. The opening and closing sections portray a stirring dance, full of lively accents and rhythmic jokes. The dreamy world of the middle section is in great contrast, strongly improvisatory in character and filled with scales which fade into excursions all over the keyboard, a journey through a country of intangible modulations, permeated with colors and mysterious changes of direction.

It seems as though Schubert, in this music, took great pleasure in all of the new and unfamiliar possibilities offered by the Viennese fortepiano. In the same way, it was a very special experience for me to make this journey on the Lagrassa, in spite of all the problems which go with an instrument of the period. The Lagrassa is an instrument which is mechanically primitive, goes out of tune with the smallest change of humidity and temperature, and provides a generous proportion of non-musical noises. An instrument which demands a lot of attention, a lot of study, the search for and trying out of all its possibilities, until it finally frees me from the illusion of perfection and admits me to its warm and human world. A world full of intense dynamic shadings, surprising changes of register, and a clear and honest tonal character which seems so very close to Schubert's music.

An addition enrichment of this world is provided by the "moderator". This is a thin layer of felt which is brought into position between the hammers and the strings by means of a pedal. Thus, in the Trio of the Scherzo, it is possible to create a silvery shading, veiled and mysterious.

It was also highly significant for me to discover that the final run of the fourth impromptu covers the entire keyboard of the fortepiano from high to low. I could imagine, then, how Schubert must have played this run with great elan, closed the instrument, and taken his leave of his friends, who were already looking forward to the next Schubertiade.

THE INSTRUMENT

Pianoforte Salvatore Lagrassa 1815, Viennese School.

Restored by Edwin Beunk & Johan Wennink.

