

FRANZ LISZT

(1811-1886)

FANTASIE UND FUGE über den Choral "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam", S. 259 [28:45]

(transcribed by Ferruccio Busoni, BV B 59)

1. Fantasia [9:54]
2. Adagio [10:22]
3. Fuga [8:27]

SONATA IN B MINOR, S. 178 [32:28]

4. Lento, Allegro energico [8:41]
5. Fortissimo [4:02]
6. Andante sostenuto [8:29]
7. Allegro energico [11:14]

GARRICK OHLSSON, PIANO

On October 22, 2011, the musical world will celebrate the 200th birthday of Franz Liszt. During those two centuries, the Hungarian born composer/virtuoso has undergone countless transformations in the public eye: from wunderkind to legend as the greatest keyboard genius of his own time and arguably of all time; from composer of early romantic keyboard works in the Viennese vein, to revolutionary expander of the pianist's technical vocabulary; from harmonic innovator and proponent of the new and radical in music, to composer of highly individual symphonic tone poems; from recluse to the most public of musical figures and back to mysterious recluse. Though Liszt's compositions still create controversy in some quarters, his wide-ranging legacy of work is now a permanent fixture in the keyboard repertoire, and his huge influence on the quality and style of keyboard playing have cemented his position as a central figure in the development of western classical music.

The numerous upcoming celebrations of Liszt's bicentennial attest to our continued fascination with both the man and his art. Garrick Ohlsson, one of the great piano virtuosos of the current era, contributes to the celebration with the present recordings of two of Liszt's towering achievements: the infrequently recorded Busoni transcription of Liszt's organ piece, "Fantasie und Fuge über den choral *Ad nos, ad Salutarem Undam*", (To us, to the healing waters, come again) S. 259 and, the most played of all of Liszt's compositions, his *Sonata in B Minor*, S. 178.

The *Fantasy and Fugue* on the chorale *Ad nos, ad salutarem undam*, S.259, is a piece of organ music composed by Liszt in the winter of 1850. In February 1847, Liszt met

the Princess Carolyne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, who became a central figure for the remainder of his life. In 1848, Liszt settled in Weimar, having terminated his career as a performing virtuoso (at age 35). In Weimar, Liszt lived with the Princess, and devoted himself to composition with an intensity that was heretofore impossible.

During this period he also conducted, taught piano, and devoted himself to the championship of other music and musicians. The *Fantasy and Fugue* was dedicated to Giacomo Meyerbeer, who was the composer of the chorale "Ad nos, ad salutarem undam", which Meyerbeer used in the third scene of Act I of his opera *Le prophète*. The *Fantasy and Fugue* was given its premiere on October 29, 1852 in the Merseburg Cathedral by the young organist, Alexander Winterberger. The work was published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1852, and the fugue was additionally published as part of Liszt's operatic fantasy "Illustrations du Prophète" (S.414). Liszt also made a duo piano version (S.624), and the present version, a transcription for solo piano, was made by Ferruccio Busoni, (BV B 59) in 1897.

The work is divided into three sections: a Fantasy, an Adagio and a Fugue. In the fantasy the theme (changed by Liszt from Meyerbeer's triple to duple meter) is introduced and is immediately followed by a quiet episode; the theme returns and is developed into main body of the fantasy culminating in a grand martial climax which leads to florid ornamentation in arpeggios of the theme and a slow transition to the adagio.

The Adagio develops the theme, its texture thinning considerably from the more explosive Fantasy. Beginning quietly, the theme moves through a series of keys and is given gentle accompaniment culminating in a lovely canonic major key variant, constantly modulating until an almost angelic arpeggiando final episode leads to a

transition to the fugue consisting of a brief foreshadowing of the fugue's subject and a virtuoso flourish on the dominant.

The fugal finale begins with its subject in a swinging dotted rhythm. Liszt quickly builds the subject into a series of spectacular variants that recall the martial episode of the Fantasy and other elements of the earlier sections. Busoni's piano transcription adds arpeggiated figuration and chordal repetitions that give the solo piano version a thrilling hyper-virtuosic character quite apart from the more majestic organ version.

Liszt's *Sonata in B Minor*, was composed in 1852 and 1853. The work is dedicated to Robert Schumann, who had dedicated his own *Fantasie in C*, Op. 17 to Liszt. The sonata was published by Breitkopf & Härtel in 1854 and was first performed in 1857 in Berlin by Liszt's pupil and son-in-law, Hans von Bülow. As a radical departure from the 'traditional' sonata, the work was, for many years the subject of almost scurrilous derision. In the twentieth century, however, it has come to be the most performed and loved of Liszt's creations.

The Sonata has four movements although there is no gap between them. Charles Rosen states in his book *The Classical Style* that the entire piece fits the mold of a sonata form because of the reprise of material from the first movement that had been in D major, now heard in B minor. The sonata is notoriously built from motivic elements that are woven into an overarching musical architecture. These motives undergo transformation throughout the work. Liszt's sonata was no doubt influenced by Schubert's "Wanderer Fantasy", a work Liszt frequently played and also arranged for piano and orchestra. Liszt's Sonata, like the *Wanderer Fantasy*, is composed in a four movement (though continuous) structure, culminates in a final

fugue, and shares motivic material across the boundaries of each section.

Hearing Garrick Ohlsson's brilliant readings of these two compositions seems a fitting way to celebrate the Liszt bicentennial. Here, we find the legacy of Liszt's great voyage—transcendental technical accomplishment allied to deep and poetic musical values, the Dionysian and Apollonian bringing us to our own Parnassus.

—Robert Arctor



FRANZ LISZT



GARRICK OHLSSON

Since his triumph as winner of the 1970 Chopin International Piano Competition, pianist **GARRICK OHLSSON** has established himself worldwide as a musician of magisterial interpretive and technical prowess. Although he has long been regarded as one of the world's leading Chopin exponents, Mr. Ohlsson commands an enormous repertoire, which ranges over the entire piano literature. A student of the late Claudio Arrau, Mr. Ohlsson has come to be noted for his

masterly performances of the works of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, as well as the Romantic repertoire. His concerto repertoire alone is unusually wide and eclectic—ranging from Haydn and Mozart to works of the 21st century—and to date he has at his command some 80 concertos, which he regularly performs with the world's leading orchestras. A musician of commanding versatility, Mr. Ohlsson is also a consummate chamber pianist. He has collaborated with many of the leading chamber groups of our time, including the Cleveland, Emerson, Takács and Tokyo String Quartets, and with violinist Jorja Fleezanis and cellist Michael Grebanier, he is a founding member of the San Francisco-based FOG Trio.

A prolific recording artist, Mr. Ohlsson can be heard on the RCA Victor Red Seal, Angel, Bridge, BMG,

Delos, Hänssler, Nonesuch, Telarc, and Virgin Classics labels.

A native of White Plains, N.Y., Mr. Ohlsson began his piano studies at the age of 8. He attended the Westchester Conservatory of Music and at age 13 entered the Juilliard School. His musical development has been influenced by a succession of distinguished teachers, most notably Claudio Arrau, Olga Barabini, Tom Lishman, Sascha Gorodnitzki, Rosina Lhévinne, and Irma Wolpe. Although he won First Prizes at the 1966 Busoni Competition in Italy and the 1968 Montréal Piano Competition, it was his 1970 triumph in the Chopin Competition in Warsaw, where he won the Gold Medal, that brought him worldwide recognition. Mr. Ohlsson was awarded Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Prize in 1994 and received the 1998 Univer-

sity Musical Society Distinguished Artist Award in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Most recently, Mr. Ohlsson won a 2008 Grammy Award in the "Best Solo Performance" category for his "Beethoven Sonatas, Vol. 3" (BRIDGE 9207). Mr. Ohlsson's cycle of the 32 Beethoven sonatas was completed for Bridge in 2010.

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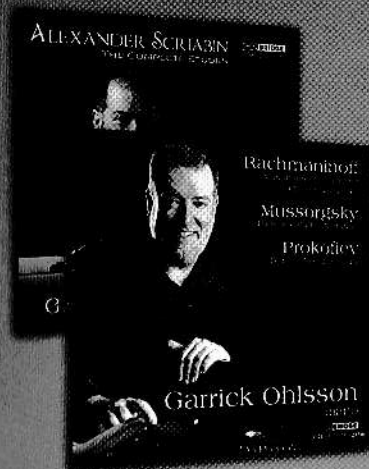
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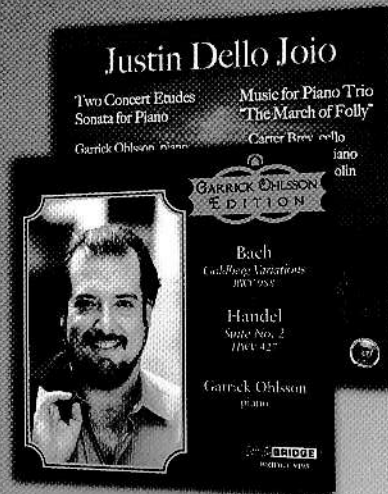


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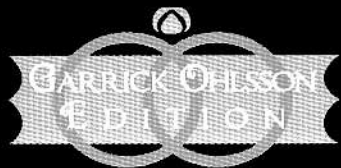
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