

BEYOND BEETHOVEN

Anneke Scott *horn*, Steven Devine *fortepiano*

Ries, Steup, Starke, Thürner



Beyond Beethoven

Works for natural horn & fortepiano

Anneke Scott *natural horn*
Steven Devine *fortepiano*

Lucien Joseph Raoux cor solo, c.1810
Johann Peter Fritz Viennese fortepiano, 1815 (Richard Burnett collection)

About Anneke Scott & Steven Devine:

'[Anneke Scott] produces some wonderfully plangent tone colours [...] Her playing, and that of Steven Devine, has a natural musicality that is particularly noticeable in the way they both apply an easy flexibility to the flow of the music.'

Early Music Review

Ferdinand Ries (1784–1838)
Grande Sonate in F major, Op. 34
1. Larghetto – Allegro moderato [13:20]
2. Andante [2:57]
3. Rondo: Allegro [7:44]

Friedrich Eugen Thürner (1785–1827)
Grande Sonate in E major, Op. 29
4. Allegro [12:14]
5. Largo molto [3:20]
6. Rondo: Allegro moderato [7:03]

Friedrich Starke (1774–1835)
Adagio und Rondo, Op. 105
7. Poco Adagio [3:35]
8. Rondo poco Allegro [9:04]

Hendrik Coenraad Steup (1778–1827)
Sonate in E flat major, Op. 11
9. Allegro brillante [8:21]
10. "Les Adieux": Andante espressivo [5:17]
11. Rondo Allegro [4:48]

Total playing time [77:51]



Beyond Beethoven

If horn players learn one piece on the natural horn it is invariably Beethoven's Sonata in F major, Op. 17 for piano and horn. This work was premiered in 1800, at a time when the fame of the horn soloist, Giovanni Punto (1746–1803), far outshone that of the composer, with one reviewer of an early performance asking 'Who is this Herr Bethover [sic]?'. Not foreseeing the significance this short work was to have for future generations of horn players, Beethoven appears to have only just begun composing the day before its first performance. This was not wholly unusual for him, as Ferdinand Ries recounts:

Beethoven almost always postponed the composition of the majority of his works due by a certain date until the very last moment. He had, for instance, promised Ponto [sic], the famous horn player, that he would compose a sonata for piano and horn and would play it with him at a concert given by Ponto. The concert with the sonata was announced, but the sonata was not yet started. On the day before the performance Beethoven began the work and had it ready for the concert.

Beethoven, a highly regarded improviser, may have still been in the process of completing the composition during its first

performance. Despite this 'rushed job', or perhaps, given Beethoven's ability to extemporise, as a result of this element of spontaneity, the premiere was successful and the two musicians went on to perform this work a number of times.

Beethoven had rushed into the world the first complete sonata for piano and horn, but this was not going to be the sole specimen for long; many composers followed suit. Regrettably, this sizeable outpouring of new repertoire that grew during the first three decades of the nineteenth century has been somewhat neglected by more recent horn players. There are several reasons for the Beethoven Sonata to have enjoyed popularity: for horn players coming to the natural horn for the first time it has the advantage of being extremely well known, it is the key of F, the modern horn's home key – a tonality which is familiar and far less challenging than the remoter tonalities of other crooks – and, of course, despite the attitudes of Beethoven's audience in 1800 ('Who is this Herr Bethover?'), it is tempting to patronise audiences by assuming their tastes are dictated by their familiarity with the names of the composers in their programme.

The compositions performed on *Beyond Beethoven* represent a small selection of this

explosion in compositions for piano and horn duo. The four works have been chosen partly due to the connections between the composers and Beethoven and his Op. 17 Sonata and partly to demonstrate how Beethoven's peers exploited the variety and versatility of the natural horn, dispelling enduring modern myths about the instrument offering 'limited options', options that lead composers to be 'rather conservative and sometimes embarrassed' (David Smith, interview with Richard Watkins, 14 March 2019, www.prestomusic.com).

Pianist, cellist and composer Ferdinand Ries was born in Beethoven's home town of Bonn on the 28 November 1784. His father, Franz Anton Ries, was a violinist who had had a notable career in Vienna before settling in Bonn where he had been one of Beethoven's early teachers. Ferdinand Ries initially studied violin and piano with his father, taking cello lessons from Bernhard Romberg (1767–1841) from the age of five. The French seizure of Bonn in 1794, which dissolved the electoral court, meant that the normal pathways of employment for young musicians had been closed down. After a short period of composition study in 1801 with Peter Winter (1754–1825) in Munich, Ries departed Bonn for Vienna. Once in Vienna Ries studied composition

with Johann Georg Albrechtsberger (1736–1809) and piano with Beethoven, also serving as Beethoven's secretary and copyist. Beethoven secured a number of useful appointments for Ries including temporary roles as pianist to Count Johann Georg von Browne in 1802 and Prince Lichnowsky in 1805. Ries repaid Beethoven's generosity by becoming a significant interpreter and advocate of Beethoven's piano works.

The ramifications of Bonn being under French rule meant that in 1805 Ries was liable for conscription in the French army, and so he set off to join his regiment in Koblenz travelling via Prague, Dresden and Leipzig. Having lost an eye in a childhood injury he was rejected for service and at this juncture began a peripatetic career moving from Koblenz to Paris (1806–1808), Vienna (1808), and Bonn (1809–1811), followed by travels through Kassel, Hamburg, Copenhagen and Stockholm, arriving in St Petersburg just as Napoleon marched on Russia. In 1813 Ries settled in London where he became a mainstay of the city's musical life, performing to great acclaim and acquiring significant roles such as directorship of the influential London Philharmonic Society. It was not until 1824 that Ries, with his British wife and children, returned to his native land, firstly settling in Bad Godesberg then in Frankfurt am Main.

Given the uncertainty as to exactly when Ries arrived in Vienna it is hard to be sure that his famous account of Beethoven composing his Op. 17 sonata at the last minute was drawn from Ries's first-hand experience, but undoubtedly Ries would have been very much aware of this groundbreaking work. Ries's own **Grande Sonate in F major, Op. 34** was composed in 1811 whilst Ries was in Kassel, the newly formed seat of the King of Westphalia, Jérôme Bonaparte. A few years earlier Beethoven and Ries had had a minor falling out regarding the Kapellmeister job at this court; Beethoven had initially been offered the post and was minded to accept it, only deciding against it when his aristocratic patrons in Vienna offered him a pension to remain. Ries was later offered the post which led to Beethoven suspecting, erroneously, subterfuge on the part of his old student. Ries ultimately lost the opportunity and perhaps his visit to Kassel in 1811 was an attempt to achieve some form of employment at the court there.

Whilst in Kassel Ries composed two significant works for horn, the Grand Sonata Op. 34 and a Concerto for two horns which was premiered on the 23 February 1811 by the brothers Gottfried and Michael Schuncke (1777–1861 and 1778–1821 respectively).

It is to be presumed that Ries also conceived the sonata with one or other of the Schuncke brothers in mind.

Carl Czerny (1791–1857), a fellow student of Beethoven, was to applaud Ries as a 'distinguished' writer for the horn, going on to describe the instrument as 'especially adapted for calm sustained notes, for tender or melancholy ideas, or for an expression of energy and grandeur, in powerful, single blasts.' Czerny's description feels highly appropriate as a description of the Ries Sonata in general. In many ways the Ries could be seen as the sonata Beethoven may have written had he given the compositional process more time. This can be seen most clearly in the atmospheric 'Andante': could the rumbling bass notes in the piano be a reference to the rumbling double basses in the 'Marcia funebre' of Beethoven's 'Eroica' Symphony? Ries had a strong connection with this work and the horn players involved, having allowed himself to be ridiculed in his recollections of the first rehearsal of this symphony when he, mistakenly, berated the second horn player for his inability to count bars' rests:

During the first rehearsal of this symphony, which went appallingly, the horn player did come in correctly. I was standing next to Beethoven and believing the entry wrong said: "That damned horn player! Can't

he count? – It sounds terrible!” I believe I was very close indeed to having my ears boxed – Beethoven was a long time in forgiving me.

Oboist, pianist and composer Friedrich Eugen Thürner was born in Montbéliard on 9 December 1785. Thürner is likely to have been named after the local Duke, Frederick II Eugene of Württemberg, employer of his Viennese-born father, flautist Anton Thurner. Orphaned at the age of four, young Thurner was sent to Kassel to be raised by a family friend. Initially studying keyboard, the seven-year-old Thürner made his public debut performing Mozart piano concertos and was praised for his extraordinary skill and vivid expression. Wishing to follow in his father's footsteps he began to study the flute. He quickly mastered the instrument, however at the age of twelve turned to the oboe, claiming that the he would only gain happiness through achieving greatness on such a difficult instrument (something many horn players may very well recognise!). Thürner received support for his ongoing studies from the Duke of Württemberg's daughter, Empress Marie Fedorovna and in 1801 moved to Munich to study oboe with Friedrich Ramm (1744–1813) and composition with Franz Danzi (1763–1826). It was during this period that his first compositions were performed in public.

In 1804 Thürner travelled to Vienna, where he was deeply influenced by Beethoven and his compositional style. After this sojourn Thürner had been honour-bound to enter the services of Empress Marie Fedorovna, who had supported his studies. However, the Empress dismissed this obligation and Thürner entered first the services of a merchant called Bernard in Offenbach, then became principal oboe of the Braunschweigische Hofkapelle. The formation in 1807 of the Kingdom of Westphalia led to the dissolution of this ensemble and Thürner's return to his hometown of Kassel, a city that had been subsumed by the newly formed kingdom, where he joined the ensemble of the new King of Westphalia, Jérôme Bonaparte. This was a fruitful time for Thurner with opportunities to perform alongside violinist Louis Spohr (1784–1859) and clarinetist Johann Simon Hermstedt (1778–1846) and to work alongside notable musicians in the new court orchestra such as the Gottfried and Michael Schuncke, violinist Friedrich Ernst Fesca (1789–1826) and flautist Karl Keller (1784–1855).

After the Battle of Leipzig in 1813 the Kingdom of Westphalia was dissolved and the Electorate of Hesse reinstated, leading to the departure of many musicians including Thürner. In a similar way to Ries and many other musicians of this period, Thürner

became a travelling musician; first he headed to northern Germany (Bad Doberan and the island of Rügen), then travelled west through Eastern Friesland to Amsterdam where he spent several months. He then headed to Vienna via the Rhine to the Alsace region, Zurich and Stuttgart. Once in Vienna, despite his acknowledged talents, he faced a series of professional and personal disappointments which appear to have led to Thürner's first mental and physical breakdown. On his recovery he was advised to leave Vienna and the memories of his breakdown behind, so in 1817 Thürner travelled via Prague and Leipzig to Frankfurt where he joined the opera orchestra under the direction of Spohr. Thürner's mental health continued to be an issue during his employment in Frankfurt, and by 1820 it was again suggested that a change of scene, this time to Amsterdam, may be beneficial to his sanity. Given his happy memories of his earlier stay in Amsterdam, Thürner willingly agreed to this, but shortly after his arrival in the city he was committed on a permanent basis to an asylum, passing away there on 2 March 1827.

Thürner composed his **Grande Sonate, Op. 29** during the Westphalian period he spent in Kassel. Given Ries's presence in Kassel the previous year, could Ries's Op. 34 have inspired Thürner to compose

his Op.29? The composition was premiered in a concert given on 18 October 1812 by Friedrich Ernst Fesca. The Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung reviewed both this performance as well as the Sonata's eventual publication by Peters in 1818. Notably the work was dedicated to one Charles Fesca 'from Vienna', presumably a relative of Friedrich Ernst Fesca from Kassel. In live performance the sonata was described as 'elaborated with a lot of art and diligence; but more for the connoisseur than for the general public'. The later review of the publication was more open-minded as to the appeal of this work, stating that Thürner 'gives the artist and dilettante on both instruments the opportunity [...] to arouse pleasure through pleasant, cheerful melodies, and also to shine through imposing passages.' The AMZ goes on to praise the 'fast, interesting Allegro in E major which forms the first movement', the subsequent 'Largo molto in E minor, which serves at the same time as an introduction to the Rondo' noting the 'excellent effect' of the 'swelling tones of the horn and the tremolo accompaniment in the piano'. The Rondo in E major is deemed to have 'a friendly theme' which 'remains the motif of the very successful work'. As with the Ries Sonata it is hard to be certain which of the Kassel horn playing Schuncke brothers this Sonata was written for, as the performer is only

identified by his surname. The AMZ describes the horn part as virtuosic, pointing to the particularly large horn range as well as the sonata 'requiring a skilled pianist', going on to recommend that any effort pianists put in to learning this work 'will be amply repaid by making a very brilliant impression in the ensemble'.

Punto was not the only horn player with whom Beethoven played his Op. 17 Sonata. Horn player, pianist and composer Friedrich Starke was born in Elsterwerda on 29 March 1774. After military service and musical roles in various parts of Saxony he settled in Vienna in around 1814 where he studied with Albrechtstberger. Starke was on familiar terms with Beethoven to the extent that the two were regular dining partners. Ludwig Nohl recollection of one such meal were recounted by Alexander Wheelock Thayer:

Starke was often invited to a meal and after it often had the soul-satisfying experience of hearing Beethoven improvise. The most remarkable and pleasant time was an invitation to a breakfast which for Starke was a real spiritual breakfast... After breakfast which consisted of very good coffee (and which Beethoven made himself in a glass machine), Starke requested a breakfast for his heart and mind, and Beethoven improvised in three different

styles, first restrained, second fugal, where a heavenly theme in sixteenth notes was developed in the most wonderful way, and third in chamber style in which Beethoven knew how to combine the greatest intricacies in projecting his special mood.

Starke brought along with his horn and offered to play Beethoven's horn sonata in F with him, which Beethoven accepted with pleasure. When it was discovered that the piano was a half-step too low, Starke offered to play the horn down a half-step; but Beethoven said that the effect would be spoiled and that he would rather play it up a half step.

It was begun and Beethoven played it in a wondrously beautiful way; the passages rolled along so clear and fine that one couldn't believe at all that he was transposing. Beethoven also had praise for Starke because he had never heard the sonata performed with shading; he found the pp especially fine. The whole thing was a heavenly breakfast.

In 1812, thanks to Beethoven's endorsement, Starke joined the orchestra of the Kärntnerort Theatre and in this capacity was fourth horn for the premiere of Beethoven's revised *Fidelio* in 1814. For a short period around 1815 he was also tasked with teaching the piano to Beethoven's troubled nephew Karl.

He wrote a considerable number of compositions including at least two works for horn – a currently lost Grand Sonata in F and the **Adagio und Rondo, Op. 105** (published c.1821).

The dramatic, brooding 'Adagio' introduction, exploiting tremolos in the piano and chromatic passages in both horn and piano, quickly gives way to an expansive cantabile melody. Starke incorporates a typical *cor basse* trope of arpeggio passages, calls and echoes that hint at effects to come later in this work. The *poco allegro* 'Rondo' theme perhaps bears a passing resemblance to one of the themes in the Overture to Rossini's *L'Italiana in Algeri* (1813).

Throughout this work Starke calls for special timbral effects from both the horn and the piano. Horn calls, grounded in the instrument's hunting origins, which evoke 'the great outdoors' are a familiar trope. The early-nineteenth century saw a fashion for a different horn call effect, that of the *Ranz des vaches* or *Kuhreihen*, the Swiss alphorn calls. These calls are more pastoral, less blood sport. Unlike the hunting horn calls, which serve to spur the listener on to action, these calls evoke space, tranquility, awe and the sublime. Think, for example, of the final movement of Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony (1808). In order to

arouse these reactions composers play with the sense of space and distance, as in Berlioz's use of an on-stage *cor anglais* and the replying (or silent) off-stage oboe in the 'Scène aux champs' in his *Symphonie fantastique* (1833). During the 1820s a number of solo works for horn, including Starke's Adagio und Rondo, incorporate muted passages to create these distant echoes. It is notable that these muted passages often occur after tumultuous stormy passages, thus further evoking a sense of peace and calm. As early-nineteenth-century horn mutes were often made out of papier-mâché, few, if any survive, so one was made specially for this recording. Its design was based on descriptions found in nineteenth-century texts such as those by Bernsdorf (1856), Fröhlich (1811), and Wirth (1877), describing such mutes as consisting of a six-inch diameter ball with an open tube neck which fits into the bell of the horn.

Starke published his *Wiener Pianoforte Schule, Op. 108* at about the same time as the Adagio und Rondo. In this work he explores the timbral effects possible on Viennese pianos of the time. Starke's piano had five pedals and throughout the Adagio und Rondo he includes directions to alternate between the second pedal, the *Fortezug* or forte pedal and the fifth pedal, the *Pianissimozug*, at times leading to a blurring affect. In the tempestuous passage prior to the muted

echo passage Starke apparently contradicts his own advice from the *Pianoforte Schule* in which he recommends that the *Fortezug* is used only in slow passages with relatively static harmony and especially recommends it for 'pastoral, tender and melancholic arias, romances, religious compositions and all the soulful passages where the song flows slowly and seldom falls out of modulation.' Whilst this description does not seem immediately appropriate for this turbulent passage, such a description is perfect for the alphorn-like passage which follows, as does Starke's description of the *Pianissimozug* as recommended for 'distant play, or echo.' The Fritz fortepiano used in this recording has four pedals (1. una corda, 2. moderator, 3. sustain and 4. the Janissary or Turkish percussion of drum and bells) plus a knee lever (bassoon or Fagott mechanism).

Pianist, composer, publisher and salesman Heinrich Conrad Steup was born on 3 February 1778, in Dillenburg, part of the Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel. Little is known of his early life before his arrival in Amsterdam in 1801 where he participated in many aspects of music making, undertaking what many modern musicians would recognise as a 'portfolio career' encompassing performing, composition and a great deal of entrepreneurship;

being a prolific publisher of music and, in addition to this, running a thriving business selling musical instruments. In an 1814 article exploring the status of music making in Holland the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* refer to Steup as both a composer (whose piano concertos 'have not yet become well known') and as a performer ('Steup also has a great deal of skill and a pleasant manner of performance').

Much of Steup's compositional output comprised solo works for piano, sonatinas for violin and piano and small-scale chamber music for piano with winds and strings. Steup's **Sonata Op. 11** was published under his own imprint in 1820. The frontispiece includes a *nota bene* informing us that 'the six first bars recall the theme of a Sonata by Beethoven', the sonata in question being none other than the Op. 17 horn sonata, but now in E-flat, a darker key than original F major. The opening fanfare nods to Beethoven's brazen introduction, then follows the recognisable first subject from the Op. 17. Steup swiftly moves on, developing the theme in his own unique fashion. Throughout the first movement flashes of Beethovenian references appear. The tender 'Andantino espressivo' slow movement is subtitled 'Les Adieux', though it has no connection with Beethoven's piano sonata bearing the

same title. It is followed by a cheerful 'Rondo Allegro'.

The background to this piece is unknown, as is the horn player whom Steup had in mind for the work. Since the heyday of Willem Spandau (1741–1806) the Dutch musical scene boasted a number of excellent horn players. One candidate is Nicolaas Josef Potdevin (1798–1866), principal horn of the Felix Meritis and the Stadsschouwburg in Amsterdam. His *Caecilia* obituary asserted that '[t]he tone that Potdevin managed to elicit from his instrument was rightly called enchanting. A cleaner, fuller, richer song, more silky sound was difficult to wish for; it was not really blowing; it was singing!'

Another inspiration behind the composition might be deduced from the dedication of this work to one 'Ch. Aders'. Carl Aders (1780–1846) was a German merchant and art collector who settled in London in 1811 where he counted artistic luminaries such as William Blake, William Wordsworth, Charles and Mary Lamb and Samuel Taylor Coleridge as part of his circle. Ferdinand Ries also corresponded with and dedicated works to Aders; and his brother, Joseph Ries, worked for Aders in London. It is reported that Aders had a castle at Bad Godesberg, the town close to Bonn to which Ries

briefly retired in 1824. In 1810 Aders was witness to the baptism of Steup's daughter, Frederique Caroline Steup, suggesting the dedication to be more than mere networking. Could the Beethoven quotes in Steup's Op. 11 be a reference to Aders's links to the world of Ries, Bonn and, therefore, Beethoven?

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Anneke Scott (natural horn)

Anneke Scott is a leading exponent of historical horn playing. Her work takes her around the globe and throughout centuries of music with a repertoire incorporating music and instruments from the late-seventeenth century through to the present day. Anneke is principal horn of a number of internationally renowned period instrument ensembles including Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique and The English Baroque Soloists, ensemble Pygmalion, The Orchestra of the Sixteen, the Irish Baroque Orchestra, and the Dunedin Consort. She is similarly in great demand as a guest principal horn, regularly appearing with orchestras and ensembles worldwide.

Anneke enjoys an international solo career and discography embracing three centuries of virtuosic horn works. Her expertise in baroque horn repertoire ensures that she is frequently to be heard performing the famous obligato arias of composers such as Bach and Handel as well as solo concertos from this period. Her critically acclaimed solo recordings also include three discs focussing on the music of the leading Parisian horn player of the nineteenth century, Jaques-François Gallay.

Anneke enjoys collaborating with a wide group of musicians and is a key member of a number of chamber music ensembles including nineteenth century period brass ensemble The Prince Regent's Band, the Harmoniemusik ensemble Boxwood & Brass, historic wind ensemble Syrnix and ensembleF2. She regularly works with leading period keyboardists including Steven Devine, Neal Peres da Costa, Geoffrey Govier and Kathryn Cok as well as period harpist Frances Kelly.

Anneke's research deeply influences her teaching and she has recently published a natural horn method based upon the sources that she draws upon in her playing. She is the historical horn tutor at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and at the Centre for Early Music Performance Research at the University of Birmingham.

In 2018 Anneke was appointed a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music (FRAM) and in 2019 was received the International Horn Society's Punto Award.

www.annekescott.com

Photography: John Croft



Steven Devine (fortepiano)

Steven Devine enjoys a busy career as a music director and keyboard player working with some of the finest musicians.

He made his London conducting debut in 2002 at the Royal Albert Hall and is now a regular performer there – including making his Proms directing debut in August 2007 with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. He has conducted the Mozart Festival Orchestra in every major concert hall in the UK and also across Switzerland. He has been Conductor and Master of Ceremonies for Raymond Gubbay's 'Carols by Candlelight' in London and across the UK for many years. Steven is Music Director for New Chamber Opera in Oxford and with them has performed repertoire from Cavalli to Rossini. For the Dartington Festival Opera he has conducted Handel's *Orlando* and Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. He is currently conductor and Artistic Advisor for the English Haydn Festival in Bridgnorth. Steven works regularly with the Norwegian Wind Ensemble, Trondheim Barokk, the Victoria Baroque Players (BC, Canada) and Arion Baroque Ensemble (Montreal).

As a much sought-after keyboard player he has regular positions with the Orchestra

of the Age of Enlightenment, Classical Opera/ The Mozartists, and The Gonzaga Band among others. He has recorded over forty discs with many artists and ensembles and his solo recordings are widely acclaimed. His recording of Bach's Goldberg Variations (Chandos Records) was described by *Gramophone* magazine as 'among the best' and his recording of Bach's 'Italian Concerto' was voted Classic FM's Connoisseur's choice. Steven recently completed his survey of the harpsichord works of Jean-Philippe Rameau (Resonus), with *The Observer* recommending 'You won't find a better exponent than Devine'. Further releases for Resonus include the Well-Tempered Clavier by J.S. Bach.

He teaches harpsichord and fortepiano at Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London and is Early Keyboard Consultant to the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

www.stevendevine.com



Instruments:

Lucien Joseph Raoux cor solo, c.1810.

Papier-mâché mute, hand made by Anneke Scott.

Johann Peter Fritz Viennese fortepiano, 1815 (Richard Burnett collection)

Pitch: A=430

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Sources:

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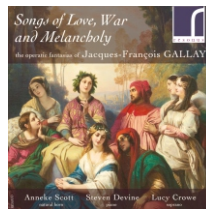
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Cover image: Detail from Johann Peter Fritz Viennese fortepiano, 1815 (Richard Burnett Collection)

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