



FRIEDRICH KUHLAU

*Violin Sonatas Vol. 1*

Duo Åstrand/Salo

**FRIEDRICH KUHLAU** *Violin Sonatas Vol. 1*

**Duo Åstrand/Salo**

**Christina Åstrand**, *violin*; **Per Salo**, *piano*

**Sonata for Violin and Piano in E-flat Major, op. 64** (1825/1855) . . . . . 25:10

1	I Allegro con energia . . . . .	9:04
2	II Ancien air danois: Andante . . . . .	6:50
3	III Finale: Allegro vivace . . . . .	9:16

**Sonata for Violin and Piano in F major, op. 79 no. 1** (c. 1827) . . . . . 13:30

4	I Allegro gustoso . . . . .	6:13
5	II Andante . . . . .	2:38
6	III Rondo: Allegro scherzando . . . . .	4:39

**Sonata for Violin and Piano in A minor, op. 79 no. 2** (c. 1827) . . . . . 15:08

7	I Allegro . . . . .	6:08
8	II Andantino . . . . .	2:58
9	III Rondo: Alla polacca . . . . .	6:02

**Sonata for Violin and Piano in C major, op. 79 no. 3** (c. 1827) . . . . . 15:46

10	I Allegro molto . . . . .	6:14
11	II Andantino . . . . .	4:48
12	III Rondo: Allegro . . . . .	4:44

Total: 69:34

## A COSMOPOLITAN IN DENMARK *by Jens Cornelius*

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**Kuhlau** was Danish music's most cosmopolitan personality at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He had a wide network abroad, and as a great admirer of Beethoven he fought for new tones in Danish musical life.

In human terms, too, Kuhlau stood out from the crowd; and not only because he was a German who never learned to speak Danish, and only had one eye. He was a restless soul who did not fit naturally into the small, homogeneous Copenhagen elite to which his audiences and patrons belonged. Instead he preferred to live outside the capital.

If one reads through the ambiguous circumlocutions of the age the picture emerges of a warm, vital, but not very conformist man with a liking for jovial company, tobacco and wine – indeed something of an alcoholic. Like his model Beethoven Kuhlau never married, or as cryptically remarked in a commemorative speech after his death: "He lacked many of the relationships and motives that are most congenial and encouraging to mankind. Music was his truest, almost his only female companion through the reefs of life".

Kuhlau was born in 1786 in the northern German town of Uelzen. As a boy he lost his right eye in an accident, but this did not prevent him from aspiring to a future as a musician. As early as his teenage years he was active as a pianist and had his first compositions published.

In 1806 Kuhlau went to Hamburg, where he studied with the strict cantor Schwencke, but that same year the city was occupied by Napoleon's troops. In 1810, when the young men of the city began to be conscripted into the French army, Kuhlau left the danger zone and travelled to Copenhagen. The next year he made his debut as a pianist in a concert at the Royal Danish Theatre and was well received as an intriguing messenger from the Continent.

For generations Danish musical life had been dependent on immigrants and guests from the south. In 1813 Kuhlau too was granted Danish citizenship and the honorary title of Royal Court Musician with the duty of writing official cantatas and an opera every second year. These included epoch-making works in Danish music – the operas *Røverborgen* (The Robbers' Castle), *Lulu* and especially the music for the national play *Elverhøj* (The Elf-Hill) which has over the years been performed over 1000 times at the Royal Theatre. The *Elverhøj* music is based on

Danish and Swedish ballads and became the clearest indication of a new national-romantic ideal in Danish culture.

In short, Kuhlau was one of the leading figures in what posterity has dubbed the Danish Golden Age: the first half of the nineteenth century when the arts and sciences saw intense development, in stark contrast with the stagnating absolutism and general impoverishment of the country.

Abroad, on the other hand, Kuhlau has passed into history as a flute composer. "The Beethoven of the flute" is the rather derogatory label that has stuck to him. Because he was never given a permanent salaried position that matched his format, he had to exploit the fact that he could effortlessly write large quantities of high-quality music for the flute, the fashionable instrument of the time. Kuhlau himself was not a flautist – a rumour that was already current in his own lifetime, but as he said, "I play this instrument very little, but I know it thoroughly".

The flute music and the iconic national-romantic works have both overshadowed Kuhlau's other production. He was a highly prolific composer who besides his theatrical works also wrote piano music, three piano quartets and a masterly string quartet which according to plan was to be one of six. And then there is the violin music: a sonata op. 33, the first Danish one in the Romantic style, and the three short sonatas that make up the collection op. 79.

To these we can add the **Sonata op. 64**, published in 1825 and dedicated to Frederik Clauson-Kaas, Lord Chamberlain to the Crown Prince.

The sonata is an ambitious work, whose first movement strikes up a *concertante* style right from the introductory chords of the piano. *Allegro con energia* is a fine description of the inspiring interaction of the two parts in this broad, energetic movement. It balances excellently between proud dotted rhythms and lyrical sweetness.

The second movement with the designation "*Ancien air danois*" consists of variations on the shipwreck ballad known as "De engellandske Frøkener" (The English Maidens). The piano introduction paints the dark, rolling sea – something Kuhlau had done before in his first concert in Denmark, where he played a large piano work entitled *The Storm at Sea*. After this, the theme is presented by the violin, and then come eight very different variations packed with ideas and changing stylistic features. The ballad returns in the coda, when the last rolling waves of the storm break against the cold shore.

The melody had been collected a few years earlier in Jutland, and Kuhlau got to know it even before it was published. Later he also used it in *Elverhøj* (to the text "Der vanker en ridder" – A knight comes riding) – and in a rondo for piano, but in op. 64 it was the first time he used a Danish folk tune in a work of chamber music. Kuhlau belonged to the front line of National-Romantics, who hunted out the soul of the nation in folk poetry – an interesting contrast to his otherwise highly international horizon.

The long third movement shows in a different way how Kuhlau absorbed ideas and incorporated them in his own music. The main subject of the movement is largely identical to the subject of the final movement of Beethoven's Quintet op. 16 – even the key of E-flat major is the same. Kuhlau uses his 'mutation' of this hunting theme for a highly energetic sonata rondo. Again the music has a combination of charming themes and surprising modulations that point in the direction of Schubert, although Kuhlau probably did not know a single one of Schubert's works.

Kuhlau originally wrote the sonata for flute and piano. In 1855 it was published in London as a violin sonata in the version recorded here. That an outside hand has been involved has not had the slightest importance for the musical quality of the sonata. At all events it is a masterpiece.

The re-instrumentation is the work of the German-Jewish violinist and composer Eduard Eliason (1808-1886). He was a pupil of the French violin master Pierre Baillot and as a young man went to England. In 1832 he gave the first British performance of Beethoven's Violin Concerto, conducted by Ignaz Moscheles. Eliason was employed as the conductor at the Drury Lane Theatre, but in 1842 returned to Germany to become the musical director of the Frankfurt Stadttheater. Eduard Eliason was in other words a man who knew all about the violin, and for the same publishing house that issued the Sonata op. 64 he planned a whole series of violin versions of Kuhlau's works for flute and piano. Unfortunately he did not manage to realize any more before the publisher closed down.

Kuhlau's three **Violin Sonatas op. 79** are truly charming music; short but very well-proportioned works that easily bear comparison with Schubert's sonatas op. 137 (which posterity has erroneously called sonatinas).

The three sonatas form a highly satisfactory totality. The first sonata, in F major, begins the cycle in pastoral style. It sets the standard with a compact, but perfectly worked-out first movement; harmonious and amiable music that lives up to the designation *Allegro gustoso*,

“tastefully, agreeably fast”. The second movement is very short, almost a romance, while the final movement is a playful rondo.

The second sonata is in A minor and offers a more contrast-filled first movement and a splendid finale in the form of a catchy polonaise, more elaborated than the rondo in the F major sonata. The third sonata, in C major, is the confident conclusion of the series, where the format has been developed further. There is no doubt that this is a sonata, not a sonatina. The first movement involves many modulations – among other things the second subject comes in the unexpected key of E major. The second movement has an opera-like grace, while the last movement is a truly festive finale with the humour of a drinking song and an outgoing piano texture that is to be played “*brillante*”.

In direct contrast to the sonata op. 64 the three sonatas op. 79 appeared later in arrangements for flute, made by the flute virtuoso Louis Drouet (1792-1873), whom Kuhlau had met in Copenhagen in 1822.

In the three sonatas op. 79 one senses how Kuhlau is a born “serial composer” who inspires himself through the work with his own music. In general the 1820s were a highly productive phase of Kuhlau’s life when he created some of his best works, including the fairytale opera **Lulu** and the overture to the play **William Shakespeare**. He achieved a personal high-water mark in 1825 when he went on his second journey to Vienna, forged many contacts abroad and not least met his great idol, Beethoven. They spent a couple of days together and emptied innumerable bottles while they exchanged canons and artful exercises in counterpoint. Beethoven jokingly called Kuhlau “*der grosse Kanonier*”.

But Kuhlau’s restless life was also something of a jinx for him. The fine honorary titles were not followed up by much money, and his income also had to extend to supporting his old parents, an adopted son and a sister who lived with him. In 1830 both parents died, and the next winter Kuhlau’s thatched house in Lyngby burned down with all its furnishings, including a wardrobe full of manuscripts. No one knows how many works were lost in the accident. The broken-down composer moved to Copenhagen, but died the next year, 46 years old, of tuberculosis.

Jens Cornelius, 2014

## THE PERFORMERS

**Duo Åstrand/Salo** consists of Christina Åstrand (violin) and Per Salo (piano), who in many years of playing together have built up an extensive repertoire from Bach to brand new music. Danish music enjoys a privileged place in the duo's repertoire. One of the shared goals of the two musicians is to spread knowledge of Danish music both within and outside Denmark, and their concert programmes almost always include Danish works, as evidenced also by their CD production. In 2007 the duo's CD of Carl Nielsen's violin sonatas won two prizes at the Danish Music Awards, and in 2009 they released a critically acclaimed CD with the three violin sonatas of the Danish Romantic composer Niels W. Gade. In 2012 the duo released violin sonatas by Ravel, Bloch and Janacek on both CD and DVD for Orchid Classics, recorded in the beautiful DR concert hall in Copenhagen.

Christina Åstrand and Per Salo are both members of the Danish National Symphony Orchestra, respectively as concertmaster and pianist/organist. Åstrand is one of the most notable violinists in Scandinavia today. As a soloist she regularly appears with the leading symphony orchestras in Scandinavia. Many Danish composers have written works for her or dedicated them to her, and she is one of the few violinists in the world who has Györgi Ligeti's violin concerto in her repertoire. In 2014 Christina Åstrand makes her American debut in N.W. Gade's violin concerto with the Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra. Christina Åstrand plays on a Stradivarius from 1705.

Per Salo studied piano and organ in Denmark, Italy and the USA. He is an active soloist and chamber musician and has toured with a large repertoire in among other regions Scandinavia, Europe, Korea and the USA. Many Danish composers have written music for him, including Per Nørgård, who wrote and dedicated his piano concerto *Concerto in due Tempi* to him.

As soloists Åstrand and Salo have each recorded violin and piano concertos by Per Nørgård on CD for Chandos as well as Emil Hartmann's violin and piano concertos for Dacapo. Åstrand is even the soloist on a Dacapo CD in three Danish Romantic violin concertos by Niels W. Gade, P.E. Lange-Müller and Rued Langgaard, while Salo appears as the piano soloist on the Danish National Symphony Orchestra's CD recording of Rued Langgaard's Third Symphony conducted by Thomas Dausgaard.

[www.astrandsalo.com](http://www.astrandsalo.com)



**Kuhlau** var dansk musiks mest kosmopolitiske personlighed i begyndelsen af 1800-tallet. Han havde et stort udenlandsk netværk, og som stærk Beethoven-beundrer kæmpede han for nye toner i det danske musikliv.

Også menneskeligt stak Kuhlau ud i mængden. Ikke kun fordi han var en tysker, der aldrig lærte at tale dansk og kun havde ét øje. Han var en urolig sjæl, der ikke passede naturligt ind i den lille, homogene københavnske elite, som hans publikum og velyndere tilhørte. I stedet foretrak han at bo uden for hovedstaden.

Læser man gennem datidens florumvundne omskrivninger tegner der sig billedet af en varm og levende, men også utilpasset mand med hang til jovialt selskab, tobak og vin – nok faktisk et regulært alkoholmisbrug. Ligesom forbilledet Beethoven blev Kuhlau aldrig gift, eller som det forblommet blev sagt i en mindetale efter hans død: "Han savnede mange af de Forhold og Motiver som ere Mennesket de kæreste og meest opmuntrende. Musikken var hans troeste, fast hans eneste Ledsagerinde gennem Livets Skiær".

Kuhlau blev født 1786 i den nordtyske by Uelzen. Som dreng mistede han højre øje ved en ulykke, men det forhindrede ham ikke i at stræbe efter en fremtid som musiker. Allerede i teen-ageårene var han aktiv som pianist og fik trykt sine første kompositioner.

I 1806 kom Kuhlau til Hamborg, hvor han studerede hos den strenge kantor Schwencke, men samme år blev byen besat af Napoleons tropper. Da byens unge mænd i 1810 begyndte at blive tvangsudskrevet til den franske hær, forlod Kuhlau farezonen og rejste til København. Året efter debuterede han som pianist ved en koncert på Det Kgl. Teater og blev taget vel imod som en spændende budbringer fra kontinentet.

Dansk musikliv havde i generationer været afhængigt af indvandrere og gæster sydfra. I 1813 fik også Kuhlau dansk indfødsret og hæderstitel af kongelig kammermusikus med pligt til at skrive officielle kantater og hvert andet år en opera. Blandt dem var skelsættende værker i dansk musik, operaerne Røverborgen, Lulu og især musikken til nationalskuespillet Elverhøj, som gennem årene er blevet opført over 1.000 gange på Det Kongelige Teater. Elverhøj-musikken bygger på danske og svenske folkeviser og blev den tydeligste markering af et nyt nationalromantisk ideal i dansk kultur.

Kuhlau var kort sagt en af hovedpersonerne i det, eftertiden har døbt den danske guldalder, nemlig første halvdel af 1800-tallet, hvor kunsten og videnskaben udviklede sig voldsomt, stik modsat det stagnerende enevælde og landets generelle forarmelse.

I udlandet er Kuhlau derimod gået over i historien som fløjtekomponist. "Fløjtes Beethoven" er den ret nedladende etiket, han er blevet påhæftet. Fordi han aldrig fik en fast lønnet stilling der svarede til hans format, måtte han udnytte, at han ubesværet kunne skrive store mængder kvalitetsmusik for fløjte, tidens modeinstrument. Selv var Kuhlau ikke fløjtenist – det rygte gik allerede i hans egen levetid, men som han sagde: "Ich spiele nur wenig dies Instrument, aber ich kenne es genau".

Både fløjtemusikken og de nationalromantiske ikonværker har skygget for Kuhlaus øvrige produktion. Han var en meget produktiv komponist, der udover sine sceniske værker også skrev klavermusik, tre klaverkvartetter og en mesterlig strygekvartet, der efter planen skulle have været den første af seks. Og så er der violinmusikken: En sonate op. 33, den første danske i romantisk stil, samt de tre korte sonater, der udgør samlingen op. 79.

Dertil kommer **sonaten op. 64**, udgivet i 1825 og tilegnet kammerherre Frederik Clauson-Kaas, hofmarskal for kronprinsen.

Sonaten er et ambitiøst værk, hvis 1. sats slår en koncerterende stil fast allerede i klaverets indledende akkorder. "Allegro con energia" beskriver godt det inspirerede samspil mellem de to parter i denne brede og veloplagte sats. Den balancerer fornemt mellem stolte, punkterede rytmer og lyrisk sødme.

Andensatsen med betegnelsen "Ancien air danois" består af variationer over folkevisen "Der strander et skib mellem fjord mellem mind" (også kendt som "De engellandske Frøkener"). Klaverindledningen fremtaler det rullende, dystre hav – noget Kuhlau allerede havde gjort ved sin første koncert i Danmark, hvor han spillede et stort klaverværk med titlen "Uvejret paa Havet". Derefter præsenteres temaet af violinen og så følger otte meget forskelligartede variationer, pakket med idéer og skiftende stiltræk. Folkevisen vender tilbage i codaen, hvor stormens sidste rullende bølger slår ind mod den kolde kyst.

Melodien var få år inden blevet optegnet i Jylland, og Kuhlau lærte den at kende endnu før den blev udgivet på tryk. Senere brugte han den også i Elverhøj (til teksten "Der vanker en ridder") og i en rondo for klaver, men i op. 64 er det første gang, han bruger en dansk folkemelodi i et stykke

kammermusik. Kuhlau tilhørte forreste linje af nationalromantikere, der gik på jagt efter nationens sjæl i folkepoesien – en interessant modsætning til hans i øvrigt meget internationale udsyn.

Den lange tredjesats viser på anden måde, hvordan Kuhlau sugede idéer til sig og optog dem i sin egen musik. Satsens hovedtema er nemlig stort set identisk med finaletemaet fra Beethovens Kvintet op. 16, selv tonearten Es-dur er den samme. Kuhlau bruger sin "mutation" af dette jagttema til en meget veloplagt sonaterondo. Igen har musikken en kombination af charmerende temaer og overraskende modulationer, der peger i retning af Schubert, selv om Kuhlau nok ikke har kendt til et eneste af hans værker.

Sonaten er fra Kuhlaus hånd skrevet for fløjte og klaver. I 1855 blev den udgivet i London som violinsonate i den version, der er indspillet her. At en fremmed hånd har været indover, har ikke betydet det ringeste for sonatens musikalske kvalitet. Den er under alle omstændigheder et mesterværk.

Bearbejdelsen skyldes den tysk-jødiske violinist og komponist Eduard Eliason (1808-1886). Han var elev af den franske violinmester Pierre Baillot og kom som ung mand til England. Her gav han i 1832 den britiske førsteopførelse af Beethovens violinkoncert, dirigeret af Ignaz Moscheles. Eliason fik stilling som kapelmester ved Drury Lane Theatre, men vendte i 1842 tilbage til Tyskland for at blive musikdirektør ved Frankfurt Stadttheater. Eduard Eliason var med andre ord en mand, der vidste alt om violinen, og for samme forlag, der udgav sonaten op. 64, planlagde han en hel række violinversioner af Kuhlaus værker for fløjte og klaver. Desværre nåede han ikke at realisere flere, inden forlaget lukkede.

Kuhlaus tre **violinsonater op. 79** er virkelig charmerende musik. Korte, men meget velproportionerede værker, der sagtens kan tåle sammenligning med Schuberts sonater op. 137 (som eftertiden har kaldt sonatiner, hvad de ikke er).

De tre sonater danner en meget tilfredsstillende helhed. Første sonate i F-dur indleder cyklusen i pastoral stil. Den sætter målestokken med en kompakt, men perfekt gennemarbejdet førstesats. Harmonisk og venlig musik, der lever op til karakterbetegnelsen Allegro gustoso, "hurtig på en smagfuld og elskværdig måde". Andensatsen er ganske kort, nærmest en romance, mens finalen er en legende rondo.

Den anden sonate er i a-mol og byder på en mere kontrastfuld førstesats og en herlig finale i form af en catchy polonaise, som er mere udbygget end rondoen i F-dur sonaten. Den tredje

sonate i C-dur er seriens veloplagte afslutning, hvor formatet er udviklet yderligere. Ingen tvivl om, at det er en sonate og ikke en sonatine. Førstesatsen rummer mange modulationer, bl.a. bringes sidetemaet i den uventede toneart E-dur. Andensatsen har en operaagtig yndefuldhed, mens sidste sats er en virkelig festlig finale med humør som en drikkevisе og en udadvendt klaversats, der skal spilles "brillante".

Lige omvendt sonaten op. 64 udkom de tre sonater op. 79 senere i arrangementer for fløjte, lavet af fløjtevirtuosen Louis Drouet (1792-1873), som Kuhlau havde mødt i København 1822.

I de tre sonater op. 79 mærker man, at Kuhlau var den fødte "seriekomponist", der inspirerer sig selv gennem arbejdet med sin egen musik. 1820'erne var i det hele taget en meget produktiv fase af Kuhlaus liv, hvor han skabte nogle af sine bedste værker, bl.a. trylleoperaen Lulu og ouverturen til skuespillet William Shakespeare. Han nåede et personligt højdepunkt, da han i 1825 tog på sin anden rejse til Wien, knyttede mange udenlandske kontakter og ikke mindst fik mødt sit store idol, Beethoven. De tilbragte et par dage sammen og tømte utallige flasker, mens de udvekslede kanoner og fiffige opgaver i kontrapunkt. Beethoven kaldte spøgende Kuhlau for "der grosse Kanonier".

Men Kuhlaus urolige liv gjorde ham også til noget af en ulykkesfugl. De smukke hæderstitler fulgtes ikke af mange penge, og hans indtægter skulle endda også række til at forsørge hans gamle forældre, en plejesøn og en søster, der boede hos ham. I 1830 døde begge forældrene, og den følgende vinter nedbrændte Kuhlaus stråttækte hus i Lyngby med alt indbo, bl.a. et klædeskab fuldt af manuskripter. Ingen ved, hvor mange værker, der gik tabt ved ulykken. Den nedbrudte komponist flyttede til København, men døde året efter, 46 år gammel, af tuberkulose.

**Jens Cornelius, 2014**

## DE MEDVIRKENDE

**Duo Åstrand/Salo** består af Christina Åstrand (violin) og Per Salo (klaver), som gennem mange års samspil har opbygget et omfattende repertoire fra Bach til den helt nye musik. Dansk musik har en stor plads i duoens repertoire. Et af de to musikeres fælles mål er at udbrede kendskabet til dansk musik både i og uden for Danmark, hvilket deres CD produktion også bærer præg af. Og deres koncertprogrammer indeholder næsten altid danske værker. I 2007 modtog duoens CD med Carl Nielsens violinsonater to priser ved Danish Music Award, og i 2009 udgav de en anmelderrost CD med de tre violinsonater af den danske romantiker Niels W. Gade. I 2012 udgav duoen violinsonater af Ravel, Bloch og Janacek på både CD og DVD for Orchid Classics, optaget i DR Koncerthuset's smukke koncertsal i København.

Christina Åstrand og Per Salo er begge ansat i DR Symfoniorkestret som henholdsvis koncertmester og pianist/organist. Åstrand er en af de mest bemærkelsesværdige violinister i Skandinavien i dag. Hun gæster jævnligt de førende symfoniorkestre i Skandinavien som solist. Mange danske komponister har skrevet og tilegnet hende værker og hun er én af de få violinister i verden som har Györgi Ligeti's violinkoncert på repertoire. 2014 har Christina Åstrand sin amerikanske debut med N. W. Gades violinkoncert hos Chicago Philharmonic Orchestra. Christina Åstrand spiller på en Stradivarius fra 1705.

Per Salo studerede klaver og orgel i Danmark, Italien og USA. Han er en aktiv solist og kammermusiker og har turneret med et omfattende repertoire i bl.a. Skandinavien, Europa, Korea og USA. Mange danske komponister har skrevet musik til ham, bl.a. Per Nørgård som skrev og dedikerede sin klaverkoncert *Concerto in due Tempi* til ham.

Som solister har Åstrand og Salo hver indspillet violin- og klaverkoncerterne af Per Nørgård på CD for Chandos samt Emil Hartmann's violin- og klaverkonserter for Dacapo. Åstrand er ligeledes solist på en Dacapo-cd i tre danske romantiske violinkoncerter af Niels W. Gade, P.E. Lange-Müller og Rued Langgaard, ligesom Salo medvirkede som klaversolist på DR Symfoni-Orkestrets CD-indspilning af Rued Langgaards 3. symfoni med Thomas Dausgaard.

[www.astrandsalo.com](http://www.astrandsalo.com)



DUO ÅSTRAND/SALO

## DDD

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