

NAXOS

**Johann Nepomuk
HUMMEL**

DDD

8.557682

**Piano Sonatas Volume 3
Nos. 1, 7, 8 & 9**

Hae-won Chang, Piano



Johann Nepomuk HUMMEL (1778 - 1837)

Sonata No. 1 in C major Op. 2, No. 3

Sonata No. 7 in G major

Sonata No. 8 in A flat major

Sonata No. 9 in C major

Largely neglected by posterity, Johann Nepomuk Hummel in his own time enjoyed the highest reputation both as a composer and as a virtuoso performer. The increasing availability of his music, whether in print or in recordings, is evidence of the unjustified nature of the posthumous neglect of his work, although neither the bicentenary of his birth nor the 150th anniversary of his death in 1987 aroused the interest that his compositions clearly deserve.

Hummel was born in 1778 in Pressburg, the modern Slovak capital Bratislava, the son of a musician. At the age of four he could read music, at five play the violin and at six the piano. Two years later he became a pupil of Mozart in Vienna, lodging, as was the custom, in his master's house. On Mozart's suggestion the boy and his father embarked in 1788 on an extended concert tour. For four years they travelled through Germany and Denmark and by the spring of 1790 they were in Edinburgh, where they spent three months. There followed visits to Durham and to Cambridge before they arrived, in the autumn, in London. Plans in 1792 to tour France and Spain seemed inopportune at a time of revolution, so that father and son made their way back through Holland to Vienna.

The next ten years of Hummel's career found him occupied in study, in composition and in teaching in Vienna. When Beethoven had settled in Vienna in 1792, the year after Mozart's death, he had sought lessons from Haydn, from Albrechtsberger and from the Court Composer Antonio Salieri. Hummel was to study with the same teachers, the most distinguished Vienna had to offer. Albrechtsberger provided a sound technical basis for his composition, while Salieri gave instruction in writing for the voice and in the philosophy of aesthetics. Haydn, after his second visit to London, gave him some organ lessons, but warned him of the possible effect on his touch as a pianist. It was through Haydn that Hummel in 1804 became Konzertmeister to the second Prince Nikolaus Esterházy, effectively doing the work of Kapellmeister, a title that Haydn held nominally until his death in 1809. He had Haydn to thank, too, for his retention of his position with the Esterházy family when in 1808 neglect of his duties had brought dismissal. His connection with the family came to an end in 1811 but his period of service had given him experience as a composer of church and theatre music, while his father, as director of music at the Theater auf der Wieden and later of the famous Apollo Saal, provided other opportunities.

Hummel had impressed audiences as a child by his virtuosity as a pianist. He returned to the concert platform in 1814, at the time of the Congress of Vienna, a year after his marriage, but it was

the Grand Duchy of Weimar, home of Goethe, that was able to provide him, in 1818, with a basis for his career. By the terms of his employment he was allowed leave of absence for three months each spring, a period spent in concert tours. In Protestant Weimar he was relieved of responsibilities for church music but presided at the opera and was, with Goethe, one of the tourist attractions of the place, although in speech his homely Viennese accent sorted ill with the purer speech of the resident literati.

In 1828 Hummel published his study of pianoforte performance technique, a work that enjoyed immediate success and has proved a valuable source for our knowledge of contemporary performance practice. Towards the end of his life his brilliance as a player diminished. This was the age of Liszt and a new school of virtuosity, while Hummel represented a continuation of the classical style of playing of his teacher, Mozart, now carried into the age of Chopin, Liszt, Kalkbrenner and Thalberg.

Hummel's *Piano Sonata in C major, Op.2, No.3*, is an early work, published in 1792 as the third of a set of three pieces, a *Trio* for flute or violin, cello and piano, a sonata for violin or flute and piano and the present sonata, in the first movement of which scholars have detected the influence of an earlier sonata by Dussek. Spirited use is made of octaves in the opening, the first subject duly followed by a G major second subject, before the closing section of the exposition. The central development makes its way from G major to an A minor version of the second subject, marked *Languido*, before the return of the first subject in recapitulation. The second movement is an F major *Adagio*, followed by a final *Rondo* with an insouciant principal theme and contrasting episodes in G major and C minor, the first the equivalent of the second subject and the second marking the equivalent of the development of sonata-rondo form. The main theme duly returns to frame the second subject, before the final climax, a brief pause and a very short codetta.

The final three works included here are short sonatas that have been reliably attributed to Hummel, although not among the sonatas that he published himself. The first of these, the *Sonata No.7 in G major*, makes considerable use of triplet rhythms in its sonata-form first movement. Its contrasted second movement leads to a final rondo with the expected contrasts of key and episodic material. It ends with a minor-key passage making full use of the descending scale, followed by a major-key version of the derivative material.

Sonata No.8 in A flat major starts with a slow introduction, followed by an *Allegro vivo*, its melody accompanied by left-hand figuration that calls for large stretches, leading to arpeggiation where the extent of the suggested chord is too great. The first subject material ends, as is usual, with the chords of the dominant of the new key of the second subject, E flat major. A minor-key version of the first subject opens the central development section and the subject is omitted from the final recapitulation based on the second subject. The E flat major second movement is a *Tempo di Menuetto*, with an A flat trio section. The final *Allegretto* offers variations on a simple theme, the first part presented in chords. Five versions of this lead to an *Allegro* variation and a final more extended derivative of the theme.

Sonata No.9 in C major starts with a bold declaration in octaves, reflected in the development, after which the gentler second subject that had preceded it returns in recapitulation. The C minor slow movement finds scope for ornamentation, before the jaunty finale, urged on by its triplet rhythms and broadly in sonatina form, omitting the true first subject in the final recapitulation.

Keith Anderson

Hae-Won Chang

Hae-Won Chang was born in the Korean city of Seoul and started to play the piano at the age of six, completing her studies there at Ewha University in 1963. From 1964 until 1968 she studied at the Frankfurt Musikhochschule on a German government scholarship and was awarded her diploma as a concert pianist. On her return to Korea she was appointed professor of piano at her old university. In Korea Hae-Won Chang won various prizes, including first prize in the 1960 Korean National Piano Competition. Her career as a soloist had begun in 1957, when she appeared with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. Since then she has enjoyed a busy career as a performer in Korea, in other Asian countries, in America and in Europe, with annual concert tours and engagements at home and abroad. She has appeared as a soloist with major orchestra and in recitals in collaboration with musicians of the greatest distinction. Festival appearances include participation in the Paris Château de Breteuil Festival, the National Music Festival in Korea and the festival for the opening of the Sejong Cultural Centre and of the Goethe-Institut in Seoul. She has served on the jury of the Lisbon Vianna da Motta Competition in Lisbon and in 1985 was acclaimed by the Music Critics' Circle of Korea as Musician of the Year. Her recordings for Naxos and Marco Polo include works by Pierne and Ibert, Scarlatti's sonatas, concertos by Hummel and Haydn and the complete J.S.Bach solo keyboard concertos. She is Dean of the College of Music at Ewha University.

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A precocious musician as a child, Johann Nepomuk Hummel was a pupil of Mozart in Vienna, before embarking on his earliest concert tours as a virtuoso pianist. He was later able to combine his career as a performer with his appointment as director of music to the Grand Duchy of Weimar, a position he held for much of his professional career. His piano sonatas reflect rather the tradition of Mozart and Haydn than the ostentatious virtuosity of Liszt.

**Johann Nepomuk
HUMMEL
(1778-1837)**

Sonata No. 1 in C major Op.2

1	Allegro spiritoso	7:49
2	Adagio	5:51
3	Rondo	5:08

Sonata No. 7 in G major

4	Allergo con spirito	5:19
5	Finale: Allegro	4:03

Sonata No. 8 in A flat major

6	Largo	6:52
7	Tempo di Menuetto	8:19
8	Allegretto	4:36

Sonata No. 9 in C major

9	Allergo con spirito	6:44
10	Largo	7:05
11	Finale: Allegro assai	5:40

Hae-won Chang, Piano

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