

Johann Nepomuk Hummel | Music for guitar and piano duo
cd#1 Pot-pourri

Introduction

This album is dedicated to music for guitar and piano duo written by the renowned Austrian pianist-composer Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837). This singular formation of the guitar and piano was widespread at the beginning of the nineteenth century, particularly in Vienna, Paris and London. With the transition from aristocratic to middle-class patronage, amateur musicians increased in number, and guitar and piano were among the most popular instruments in middle-class salons. Playing an instrument had an essential role in social advancement, both for women and men: it was considered a fashionable activity, the best way to be introduced in good society and possibly find a partner or (exclusively for men) a more lucrative working position.[1] Consequently, it was common for family members to engage with different musical instruments and play together within the home, encouraging experimentation with new chamber ensembles, such as guitar and piano.
In a city like Vienna, where music had such an important role in society, the guitar and piano virtuosos capitalised on the instruments' artistic and economic potential. They played an essential role in the spread and popularity of both instruments, while composing a substantial number of solo and duo works. The success of this duo was also an opportunity for them to perform publicly,

demonstrating, on one hand, their abilities as players, and on the other, promoting their own works and publications.

Hummel's collaboration with Giuliani

When approaching Hummel's repertoire for piano and guitar, it is also essential to address the figure of guitarist virtuoso Mauro Giuliani (1781-1829). Both lived in Vienna, in the period between 1811 and 1816, and were among the most famous musicians of their time.[2] Some of the compositions for the duo from Hummel and Giuliani explicitly mention the other as co-author of the respective instrumental part. This was a typical approach for the composer-virtuoso of the early nineteenth century; collaborating with successful exponents of different instruments was not only a way to reach a wider public but also an economical and practical advantage for publications and performances.

During the Viennese years, Hummel and Giuliani collaborated both as performers and composers on several occasions. Their first duo appearance took place in 1811, for an event organised by the French ambassador Louis-Guillaume Otto. This concert was meant to feature Giuliani with the violinist Seidler, who, due to an illness, was replaced by Hummel. On this occasion, the reviewer wrote that they performed a duet for guitar and violin rearranged for their instruments.[3] There is no mention of original duo compositions, but the relevance of this event is that it signalled the beginning of their flourishing collaborative activity.

In 1815, with violinist Joseph Mayseder, they organised a series of six concerts known as the 'Dukatenkonzerte' in the house of the paper merchant Joseph Rohrer, which took their name from the cost of a single ticket.[4] The events, which were enthusiastically received by the Viennese public, consisted of performances by the three musicians playing solo pieces and trios. One of the bravura pieces performed by the three for the finale was 'La Sentinella', a set of variations for ensemble based on a well-known song of the time arranged by Hummel with the contribution of Giuliani and Mayseder in the writing of the instrumental variations.

After this successful cycle of concerts, the same year, they were invited by Count Franz Palffy, an influential member of the Viennese nobility (and a student of Giuliani), to perform evening serenades at the botanical gardens of the Schönbrunn Palace.[5] These evenings involved several performers: Giuliani, Hummel and Mayseder, were joined by singers and virtuosos such as pianist Ignaz Moscheles and cellist Joseph Merck. The significance of these events was underlined by the attendance of

royalty, including Empress Maria Luigia, who, moreover, started playing the guitar that same year and was most probably tutored by Giuliani.[6]

There is a fascinating document related to these evening serenades, consisting of the frontispiece of the Grande Sérénades en Pot-pourri op.63 by Hummel. This work, together with the op.66, was specifically composed for Count Palffy's evenings (as specified on the frontispiece) by Hummel, in collaboration with Giuliani and Mayseder in the writing of the guitar and violin variations. It also shows a lithograph depicting five instrumentalists performing outdoors, namely a guitarist, a fortepianist, a violinist, a cellist and a clarinettist (or flautist), representing the instrumental formation of the music published. This image is of great interest from a performer's perspective, suggesting a possible performance setting of this ensemble, with the musicians positioned around the fortepiano (*Figure 1*).

The music

The opening composition of this album is the **Pot-pourri op.53**, published between 1812 and 1814 in Répertoire,[8] a series dedicated to Hummel's works by the Viennese publisher Artaria.[9] This Pot-pourri presents several themes, which Hummel explicitly indicated on the piano scores: the Andante n.12 from *Raul der Blaubart* (bar 1), a French opera by André Ernest-Modeste Grétrys, rearranged and presented in Vienna by Anton Fischer;[10] *Jean de Paris* (bar 30), an opéra comique in two acts by French composer François Adrien Boieldieu, written in 1812 and performed in Vienna the same year; *La Vestale* (bar 120), a three-act tragedie-lyrique by Gaspare



[Frontispiece of the Grande Sérénade en Pot-pourri n.1 op.63. The musicians represented in this lithograph are presumably Giuliani at the guitar, Hummel at the piano, Mayseder at the violin, Merck at the cello, while the fifth player, who could be either a flautist or a clarinettist, is unknown.[7]]

Spontini (1807) and dedicated to empress Giuseppina, Napoleon's first wife; 'Aria Russa' (bar 160), a Russian theme from '*Sobraniye Narodnïkh Russikikh Pesen s Ikh Golosami*' ('Collection of Russian Folk Songs with Their Tunes') by Johann Gottfried Pratsch published in 1790,[11] more precisely the melody 'Schöne Minka';[12] the aria 'Notte e giorno faticar' from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (bar 205); aria from *Re Teodoro* (bar 284) by Giovanni Paisiello; Tempo di Valser (bar 300) probably by Hummel itself. A curious fact about this last movement Tempo di Valser is the similarity with the finale of the *Avventure d'Amore* op.116 by Giuliani, with Hummel presenting bars 355-363 with the same material as Giuliani's first 8 bars of finale in minor mode.

The second work presented is the **Grand Pot-pourri National**. This work is a four-hand composition by Hummel and Giuliani. Both composers published this work in their catalogues, the first as op.79 with Mollo around 1818[13] and the second with Haslinger as op.93 around the same year, each mentioning their collaboration in their respective editions. The Grand Pot-pourri National is a collection of six national songs and dances and can be seen as a tribute to the Congress of Vienna of 1815 and the new European spirit. The composers present three nations through characteristic dances, namely Poland with a Polacca (bar 206), Spain with a Bolero (bar 556) and Italy with a Tarantella (bar 692). They represent the other three nations through popular songs and anthems: 'Rule Britannia!' (bar 246), a patriotic song of Britain; 'Le Retour des Princes français à Paris' (bar 383), the French national anthem during the restoration and based on the popular melody 'Vive Henri IV'; 'Kaiserhymne' (bar 637), the German national anthem, composed by Joseph Haydn in 1797 and Austrian national anthem until 1918. Hummel and Giuliani connected these melodies in a fascinating way, adding exciting variations and linking the music material with refined and elaborated passages.

The **Concertante Duet (en pot-pourri)** is an arrangement for guitar and piano of themes and variations from the Grande Sérénades opp.63 and 66 by Hummel, originally for quintet (piano, terz-guitar, violin, clarinet and bassoon). This duet was published in London by Paine & Hopkins, presumably between 1821 and 1836. However, the composition is not included in Hummel's catalogue of works, making it difficult to attribute this arrangement directly to him.[14] In England, around the 1820s, unauthorised arrangements were a commonplace, which may explain how this work is not included in the official catalogue. It is also true

that from 1825, in response to the widespread piracy around his compositions, Hummel published all his works in England, France and Germany, thus making possible the hypothesis of an arrangement of his two Serenades for piano and guitar by himself.

The composition presents several themes and arias that were presumably quite popular at that time. Some of the themes indicated by Hummel on the scores are known, while others are still of uncertain provenience. The melody of 'Mazur' (bar 31) was originally written by Paul Wranitzky and can be found together with the two variations in the same form also in the *Grandes Variations concertantes pour deux guitares op.35* by Mauro Giuliani.[15] The theme of Allegretto with variations (bar 245) is part of the ballet *Die Abencerragen und Zegris, Oder: Die feindlichen Volksstämme* by Michael Umlauf, performed in Vienna around 1806. This theme was also used by Mauro Giuliani for his Variations for solo guitar op.7. For the other themes, I can make some assumptions: the opening Larghetto 'Hadrian' (bar 1) could be part of the three-act opera *Kaiser Hadrian* by Joseph Weigl, performed in 1807 in the Theater am Kärntnertor in Vienna; 'Zephir' (bar 177) may well refer to the ballet *Zephir und Flora* by Paul Wranitzky, from whom another theme of this Concertante Duet was borrowed, composed and performed in 1795 in Vienna. Regarding Allegretto vivo 'Gehn ma ham, bleim ma do?' (bar 130), the provenience is still unknown.

The guitar part is precisely the same as the guitar part of the Grande Sérénades, and it keeps the same tonality, which is a minor third higher than the other instruments (as originally played with a terz-guitar). The piano part, on the other hand, has been transposed a minor third higher to match the guitar's tonality. Although the "authenticity" of this piece is unknown, we decided to include it in this album as part of the guitar and piano repertoire related to Hummel, as a testimony of the popularity of this formation and the contribution (direct or indirect) of the figure of Hummel to the guitar and piano duo.

The instruments

The instruments from the first half of the nineteenth century present different characteristics from today's guitar and piano: pianos (or fortepianos) generally had a softer tone, especially the Viennese instruments, and were characterised by great distinction between the different registers of the keyboard and the presence of several pedals, allowing a great variety of sound. Guitars, on the other hand, were slightly smaller than today's

instruments, and the sound was designed to enhance the highest (and more 'singing' style) strings. These features allowed an excellent balance between the two instruments and a unique sound combination, encouraging several composers to write for them.

It is worth considering what type of instruments Giuliani and Hummel played. When he arrived in Vienna in 1806, Giuliani connected and collaborated with local guitar makers, contributing to the diffusion and success of this instrument. The most significant collaboration was that with Johann Georg Stauffer (1778-1853), one of the most brilliant and influential luthiers of that time, responsible for several innovations to the guitar making and affirming a characteristic Viennese-style of building, such as the introduction of the floating fretboard, the removable neck and the iconic headstock's shape (Figure 2). Around 1814, Stauffer and others started experimenting with a new type of guitar, the terz-guitar, a smaller instrument tuned a third higher than a standard guitar, in the attempt to reinvigorate and strengthen the collective enthusiasm for the guitar. Giuliani started using the terz-guitar for the first time in his works that same year, composing opp.66, 67 and 69 for two guitars and the third Guitar Concerto op.70.[16]

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, two leading piano-building schools competed in Europe, the English and the Viennese. The first pianos were extremely resonant and with a heavy touch, while the Viennese were characterised by a light and bright sound. Hummel approached both types of instruments, as he lived in Vienna and London for several years. The most important piano makers of the Viennese school were Johann Andreas Stein (1728–1792) and, subsequently, Anton Walter (1752-1826), who improved Stein's project by introducing the back check.
Of the Stein school belonged also builders such Johann Schantz (the instrument used in this recording) and Nannette Streicher, Stein's daughter, representing the sound of the Hummel-school.[17]

The instruments used for this recording are all original from the first half of the nineteenth century. The fortepiano is an 1813 instrument by the Viennese builder Johann Schantz (1762-1828). This instrument was one of the fortepianos owned by the Duchess of Parma, Maria-Louise, and is now housed in the Ducal Palace of Colorno (Parma). It is a beautiful and well-preserved instrument, with five working pedals which allow a great variety of sounds: *una-corda*; *resonance*; *moderator*, a pedal that inserts a

[Headstock of Stauffer's family guitars. In this figure, there are two of Anton Stauffer's instruments, one on the front (1840) and one in the middle (1832), while in the background, there is a Fender Stratocaster (1962) with a similar headstock shape.]



cloth between the hammer and the string, resulting in a softer and muffled sound; *bassoon*, a pedal that positions a piece of parchment on the strings exclusively to a determined register of the piano; *turcherie*, a pedal that activates a drum and a bell.

The two guitars I play on this recording are instruments made by the Viennese guitar-maker Anton Stauffer (1805-1871): a six-string guitar from 1840 and a terz-guitar from c.1830. They are characterised by a percussive sound, softened by the resonances they create and with a sweet and clear high register. The use that composers usually make of a terz-guitar is that of a leading instrument, while standard guitars were also often used as accompanying instruments. The register of a terz-guitar allows the instrument to emerge in contexts with competitive instruments in terms of sound, also helped by the resonances created by the guitar's standard tuning.

In the case of the compositions of this album, the terz-guitar was used exclusively for the Grand Pot-pourri National. The Concertante Duet requires a standard guitar, but it is important to note that initially, in the original versions for quintet (the Grande Sérénades opp.63 and 66), the guitar part was assigned to a terz-guitar. The difference between using these guitars during our practice was

a matter of balance, whereas, with the standard guitar, I felt that the guitar's register, in most of the melodic passages, was too low to sing and lead.

Studying and recording with such precious historical instruments allowed us to discover unexpected sound combinations and begin an exciting journey into the sound world of early nineteenth-century Vienna.

Notes

[1] Alice M. Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienn*a, Cambridge University Press, 1985, p.118
[2] In 1808, the *Vaterländische Blätter* journal printed the article 'Uebersicht des gegenwärtigen Zustandes der Tonkunst in Wien' (translated by Thomas Heck as 'Survey of the Present State of Music in Vienna'), listing all the performers in Vienna and dividing them between professional and amateurs: they placed Hummel at the second place of the professional pianists, immediately after Beethoven, and Giuliani as the only mentioned professional guitarist (that, for the perception of guitar at that time as an instrument for amateurs, it is remarkable to have his name included in the professional musicians).
3 E. Castiglione, M. Marcone, 'Gran Pot-pourri National op.93 per chitarra e pianoforte', Società Editrice Musicologica, 2016, p.VIII.
[4] Gerhard Penn, 'Mauro Giuliani: Nuovi documenti', *il Fronimo*, April 2015, n.170, p.43
[5] Thomas Heck, Mauro Giuliani: Virtuoso guitarist and composer, *Edition Orphee*, 1995.
[6] Erik Pierre Hofmann, *A Royal Gift – Marie-Louise and the Guitar*, Les Editions des Robins, 2017.
[7] Thomas Heck suggests in his book 'Mauro Giuliani: Virtuoso guitarist and composer' (T. Heck, Ed. Orphee, 1995) that the fifth player could be the flautist Johann Sedlatscheck, a famous virtuoso contemporary who toured with Giuliani around 1823.
[8] Joel Sachs, 'A Checklist of the Works of Johann Nepomuk Hummel', *Notes*, Vol.30 n.4, 1974, p.739.
[9] The complete title of the publication Repertoire was: 'Repertoire de musique pour les dames, Ouvrage periodique et progressif composee par J. N. Hummel'.
[10] Martin Skamletz, 'Cherubini in Wien: Concerto Stella Mattutina', liner notes (translation Roderick Shaw), Fra Bernardo Label, 2018, p.11.
[11] https://vmirror.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/e/eb/IMSLP619901-PMLP995813-Pra-,_Ivan,_sobranie_russkich_1.pdf, , p. 75 n.8, accessed 15-01-2024
[12] The theme 'Schone Minka' was also used by other composers such as L. v. Beethoven (op. 107 n. 7) and C. M. von Weber (op.40). Hummel used this

theme for his Trio for flute, cello and piano in A Major op.78 (1818) and also Giuliani composed a set of variations known as op.60 for solo guitar (1814).

[13] Joel Sachs, 'A Checklist of the Works of Johann Nepomuk Hummel', *Notes*, Vol.30 n.4, 1974, p.740

[14] Joel Sachs, 'A Checklist of the Works of Johann Nepomuk Hummel', *Notes*, Vol.30, No.4, (June 1974), pp.732-754.

[15] Gerhard Penn, 'Mauro Giuliani a Vienna: Nuovi documenti', *il Fronimo*, n.170, 2015, p.45.

[16] Gerhard Penn, 'Mauro Giuliani a Vienna: Nuovi Documenti', *il Fronimo*, n.170, 2015, p. 41.

[17] Petra Somlai, 'Two Viennese piano schools: Beethoven and Hummel', 2019, https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/555906/559358 accessed19-02-2024.

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Enrica and Laura each started their musical training at a young age and pursued their musical studies in chamber music and as solo performers. Enrica is a classical guitar graduate with high honors from the Conservatorio di Musica Arrigo Boito, Parma, studying under Maestro Walter Pezzali in conjunction with a double major in clarinet with Maestro Roberto Saltini. She graduated in nineteenth-century guitar at Civica Scuola di Musica in Milan in 2013, and in 2021 she obtained her Master of Arts in music performance in the Early Music department of the Koninklijk Conservatorium, Brussels. She is currently undertaking DMus research in Ireland at TU Dublin Conservatoire and works as a freelance performer and a guitar tutor at Maynooth University. Laura graduated in piano from the Conservatorio di Musica 'Arrigo Boito', Parma. She continued her studies at the 'G. Puccini' of Gallarate (VA) under the guidance of Maestro Alberto Miodini. In 2016, she obtained a Master's degree in fortepiano performance at the Musikhochschule in Stuttgart with Maestro Stefania Neonato. She is currently teaching at Conservatorio 'O. Vecchi' in Modena. They regularly participate in conferences and international music festivals, invited as performers and to teach masterclasses and workshops.

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