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BEETHOVEN Music for Wind Ensemble
THE ALBION ENSEMBLE

MICHAEL COX, ROBERT MANASSE flutes

GEORGE CAIRD, KATIE CLEMMOW oboes

ANGELA MALSBURY, DAVID FUEST clarinets

PETER FRANCOMB [1,7-10], PIP EASTOP [2-6], PETER RICHARDS horns

GARETH NEWMAN, HELEN SIMONS, ROBIN KENNARD [2-5] bassoons

SIMON ESTELL contrabassoon

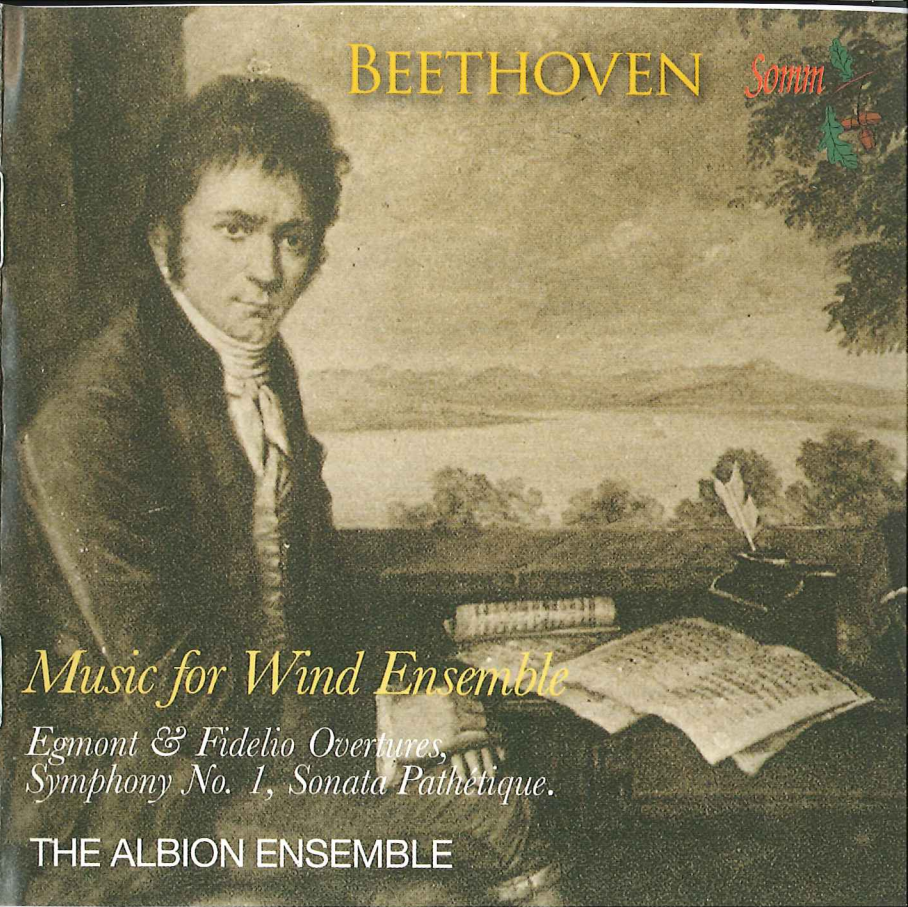
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| <p>[1] Egmont Overture, Op. 84
arr. Friedrich Starke (1812) 7:50</p> <p>Symphony No. 1 in C major, Op. 21
arr. Georg Schmitt (1817)</p> <p>[2] (i) Adagio molto - Allegro con brio 8:43</p> <p>[3] (ii) Andante cantabile con moto 7:52</p> <p>[4] (iii) Menuetto e Trio: Allegro molto vivace 3:35</p> <p>[5] (iv) Finale: Allegro molto vivace 5:48</p> <p>[6] Fidelio Overture, Op. 72
arr. Wenzel Sedlak (1815) 6:13</p> | <p>[7] Fidelio March, Op. 72
arr. Wenzel Sedlak (1815) 2:16</p> <p>[8] Andante cantabile from Piano and Wind Quintet, Op. 16
arr. Joseph Triebensee (c. 1809) 6:38</p> <p>Sonata Pathétique, Op. 13
arr. anon (1810)</p> <p>[9] (i) Grave - Allegro molto e con brio 9:54</p> <p>[10] (ii) Adagio cantabile 4:18</p> <p>[11] (iii) Rondo: Allegro 5:00</p> |
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Recording supported by funds from UCE Birmingham Conservatoire & the Royal Northern College of Music

Total duration 68:14

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BEETHOVEN



Music for Wind Ensemble

*Egmont & Fidelio Overtures,
Symphony No. 1, Sonata Pathétique.*

THE ALBION ENSEMBLE

It would not be an exaggeration to describe the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century interest in music for the small wind band known as the *Harmonie* as a phenomenon, one largely overlooked in music histories and little understood by modern listeners. The vast extant repertory for the ensemble from across Europe, original music and arrangements, testifies to the fascination for this medium. The versatility of the winds in performing both indoors and outdoors, instrumentalists sometimes doubling as court musicians and members of military guards, was appealing to members of the nobility who, due to the ravages and expenses of the wars that dogged Europe from the 1790s, had often to pare back their hitherto lavish musical establishments. For all the original repertory – Beethoven himself wrote music for Harmonie, probably for that of the Elector of Cologne, Maximilian Franz in the early 1790s – arrangements of music far outnumbered original works and transcriptions of opera, the pre-eminent genre, numbered more than any other type. Arrangements for winds, which lent themselves so well to the mimicry of the human voice, offered listeners, in a time before gramophone recordings, the opportunity to rehear popular tunes from the stage. The sheer quantity of arranged music led to work of mixed quality. One of the finest arrangers, Joseph Triebensee, advertised his new *Harmonie Collection* in 1804 noting that: ‘For some time now many masterpieces of the most famous have been appearing in arrangements for Harmonie in which the entire spirit of the authors has often been mutilated, often they were even unrecognisable – without regard for instruments, their compasses, their abilities.’ This recording includes arrangements from the second decade of the nineteenth century of Beethoven’s work by some of the most able and imaginative of the transcribers, Triebensee included, who were themselves highly accomplished performers, composers and holders of significant positions in Austro-German court musical establishments. Beethoven’s limited contributions of music for the Viennese stage, and the composer’s publicly professed dislike of the vogue for transcription – he wrote in 1802 that this was something that ‘an author can only struggle against in vain’ – may have contributed to there being relatively few arrangements of Beethoven for winds. Some of the most notable examples are presented here, several of which were by musicians who had direct association with the composer.

Friedrich Starke (1774-1835) was a remarkable and colourful musical personality of the Classical period, and probably the most prolific German composer and transcriber of music for the Classical wind ensemble. After early musical studies in his native Saxony, Starke toured this region for five years as a travelling musician, a horn player, then taking up the position of Kapellmeister in the famous Kolter circus troupe. After two years Starke joined the theatre and church orchestras in the Salzburg Hofkapelle. Then Starke worked as piano teacher within the house of the Countess Pilati in Wels, twenty miles south-west of Linz. Accustomed to the life of an itinerant musician, Starke next took a variety of positions as Kapellmeister to Austrian military regiments. This took him across the German lands

on military campaigns against the French; to Switzerland, Swabia and the Rhineland. By 1810 Starke was resident in Vienna, holding further posts within military establishments, a position as organist of an inner city Vienna church, and working as a horn player in the court theatre orchestra. After a long and varied career he retired to the Viennese suburb of Döbling from where he seems to have concentrated on composition and arranging.

By 1812 Starke was a close acquaintance of Beethoven. In this year, in a performance of his Horn Sonata Op.17, Beethoven famously transposed the piano part up a semitone, due to the flatness of the keyboard instrument. Starke’s playing excited Beethoven to comment that he had never heard the sonata performed with such shading and delicacy. It seems that it was Beethoven who vouched for the quality of Starke’s horn playing and instigated his appointment to the court ensemble. Around 1815 Beethoven entrusted his beloved nephew Karl to Starke for musical instruction. Starke’s name is often mentioned in the composer’s conversation books between 1819 and 1826. Beethoven contributed a variety of works to Starke’s *Pianoforte-Schule* published between 1819 and 1821. Between 1814 and 1826 Starke published his *Journal Militärischer Musik*, appearing in 141 monthly instalments. This vast undertaking contains arrangements of popular operatic and ballet works by Boieldieu, Dalayrac, Gallenberg, Gyrowetz, Hummel, Isouard, Kinsky, Méhul, Seyfried, Spontini, Umlauf and Weigl.

The *Egmont Overture, Op.84* arranged by Starke, was published by Steiner in Vienna in 1812. Beethoven’s music for the *Trauerspiel* by Goethe had been composed between 1809 and 1810 and comprises an overture and nine numbers. The work was premiered in Vienna in May 1810. Only the overture was published in Beethoven’s lifetime. The subject matter of Goethe’s drama, and the theme of national liberation that so captured Beethoven’s attention, would surely have struck a chord with a military musician such as Starke. The celebratory music at the end of the overture, which reappears in Beethoven’s closing number of the work, the ‘Siegessymphonie’, must have had a particular appeal. As an experienced director of wind players, as an accomplished horn player and as a prolific composer and arranger for the winds, Starke would have seen the potential for the successful transference of this music to the Harmonie ensemble that is so ably demonstrated in his skilful arrangement.

A review of the premiere of Beethoven’s *Symphony No.1 in C major, Op.21* in Vienna on 2 April 1800 recorded that ‘the wind instruments were used far too much so that there was more music for Harmonie than for full orchestra’. Clearly Beethoven’s more democratic treatment of winds, borne of his experimentation with these instruments in a variety of chamber configurations such as the wind Octet, Op.103 (1792-3), the Sextet, Op.71 for pairs of clarinets, bassoons and horns (c.1796), would

have seemed extraordinary to a listener accustomed to the winds' subordination to the strings. It was perhaps the prominence of the wind instruments in the original that drew Georg Schmitt, director of Prince Hohenlohe-Öhringen's Harmonie in Southern Germany to arrange the work. Little is known of this musician. He joined the Hohenlohe-Öhringen establishment in 1816 from Amorbach and may have died in the late 1830s. Schmitt left more than a hundred arrangements for the wind ensemble, notably those of operas by Auber, Boieldieu, Cherubini, Dalayrac, Fioravanti, Gyrowetz, Isouard, R. Kreutzer, Lindpainter, Marschner, Méhul, Meyerbeer, Mozart, Müller, Pacini, Paer, Righini, Rossini, Spohr, Spontini, Weber, Weigl and Winter. Many of these arrangements are for a twelve-part ensemble; some are for a larger military band. Two of the earliest extant transcriptions by Schmitt are of Beethoven's Septet Op.20 and the Symphony No.1. The work was not published, and was thus presumably for the domestic usage of the Prince August von Hohenlohe-Öhringen's court. The scoring is for eleven-part Harmonie, being the traditional octet of pairs of oboes, clarinets, bassoons and horns, here with the addition of two flutes and a *Basso* instrument. The first page of the autograph score dates the arrangement at October 1817.

The final manifestation of Beethoven's opera *Leonore*, as *Fidelio*, **Op.72**, was performed for the first time in Vienna in May 1814. Beethoven swiftly passed the score of the work to the Vienna publisher Artaria in July 1814, advertising in the press that 'under his direction' arrangements for piano, quartets and Harmonie would shortly appear. The first arrangement, of the complete work with piano and text was probably by Ignaz Moscheles; the second, of the Overture arranged for piano, by Johann Nepomuk Hummel; the third a piano version without text by Moscheles; the fourth an arrangement for harmonie by Wenzel Sedlak (1776-1851). Sedlak was a Bohemian clarinetist, who by 1805 was a musician of the Prince Auersperg, later becoming his Kapellmeister. From 1807 Sedlak worked under Triebensee at the Prince Lichtenstein's court whom he succeeded, in 1812, as Kapellmeister and director of the Prince's Harmonie. Doubtless the two performed much Harmonie music together and from Triebensee Sedlak may well have learnt many of the techniques of the Harmonie transcriber. Sedlak's arrangement of *Fidelio* was advertised in the *Wiener Zeitung* in January 1815. It contains eleven of the seventeen movements of the opera. The **Overture**, transposed from the original key so as to accommodate better the wind instruments, also includes a judicious cut where excursions to more extreme tonalities would have proven problematic for the contemporary instruments. Here Sedlak demonstrates an intuitive understanding of the strengths and limitations of the winds. The entrance **March** of Pizarro the prison governor, from the first act of the opera, with prominent winds in the opera's original score lends itself more easily to transcription.

The first recorded performance of Beethoven's **Piano and Wind Quintet, Op.16** was that given on 6 April 1797 at a concert by the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh held at Jahn's restaurant in Vienna. Beethoven himself played the piano, with the oboist in the ensemble being Joseph Triebensee (1772-1846). The two players were involved in a performance of the work the following year at a Vienna concert on 2 April 1798 to an audience which included the Emperor. It is a measure of Beethoven's regard for the work that he should have selected this work for this auspicious occasion. Triebensee was a fine oboist, son of George Triebensee, himself an oboist and a founder member in 1782 of the Emperor's own Harmonie ensemble. Joseph worked as a player in the Viennese theatre orchestras from a young age, was already employed by Lichtenstein in 1792 and from 1794 assumed leadership of the Prince's Harmonie as 'chamber and theatre Kapellmeister'. He held this position until 1809, when, due to financial cutbacks, the Prince released the Harmonie players with the assurance that they may return in more peaceful and prosperous times.

It is little surprise perhaps that he should wish to arrange the beautiful slow movement of Op.16 for winds, here with pairs of oboes, clarinets and bassoons and a single horn. The movement appeared within Triebensee's collection of Harmonie music, the *Miscellanées de Musique*, a precursor of Starke's *Journal*, which was sold from 1809 in monthly instalments until 1812. This was amongst the ten second-month offerings, which included arranged single movements of symphonies by Mozart and Haydn, operatic numbers and a piano March by Cramer. It is perhaps telling that, of all of the hundreds of arrangements by Triebensee, this single movement transcription was the only one fashioned from a Beethoven work.

Beethoven's **Sonate Pathétique Op.13** was composed between 1797 and 1798 and dedicated to the Prince Charles Lichnowsky, one of Beethoven's most important patrons, who promoted the composer and supported him when he first arrived in Vienna in 1792. Beethoven probably resided in Lichnowsky's house between 1793 and 1795. The Chemische Druckerei publishing firm, who had acquired the plates of this piano sonata in 1806, were a firm who had made a systematic attempt to publish Harmonie music in the form of their *Journal für sechsstimmige und neunstimmige Harmonie*. From the end of May 1810 there was the intention to publish every two months popular operas, ballets and other works arranged for Harmonie. The special feature of the series would be its price – a third of the cost of similar manuscript arrangements – and that the arrangements would be checked for accuracy by the original composers themselves. In actuality only eight publications in the *Journal* were produced, between 1810 and 1814. The arrangers of this important collection remained anonymous, save for that of the eighth volume in the series, Sedlak, who arranged Hummel's *Die Eselshaut*.

Advertised in September 1810, along with the second volume of the *Journal*, was a nine-part Harmonie arrangement of Beethoven's *Sonate Pathétique*. The title page makes no mention of the transcriber though various authors have associated Georg Druschetzky (1745-1819) with the arrangement. Druschetzky is known to have arranged Beethoven's *Septet*, Op.20 which was also published by Chemische Druckerei in 1812. But other arrangers produced works for the firm, Sedlak and Starke included. What is evident is that, here too, in exemplary fashion we see the art and craft of the Harmonie transcriber. In spite of the work being entirely familiar in its original form, the listener can be seduced into thinking that this music originated for the wind ensemble. Such an accolade is the finest that can be afforded to any expert arranger of music for Harmonie in the Classical period.



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This recording uses modern critical editions by Martin Harlow from Ut Orpheus Edizioni, Bologna in the series *Accademia musica strumentale e vocale dei secoli XVIII e XIX*; Egmont Overture, Op.84 (2006, ACC62), Symphony No.1, Op.21 (2007, ACC72), *Sonate Pathétique*, Op.13 (2006, ACC63). An unpublished critical edition of Beethoven Op.16, *Andante*, was prepared from manuscript materials in the Austrian National Library.

Since its formation in 1976, the Albion Ensemble has established itself as one of the leading chamber ensembles in Britain. The Ensemble presents a wide range of repertoire for wind quintet, octet and larger formations. It has toured extensively throughout the world, appearing at festivals and on radio and television. Major tours have been undertaken for the British Council including masterclasses, recitals and teaching in China, the Far East and India. The Ensemble has also performed in many European countries and in Richard Baker's Music Festival at Sea on the P&O ship, *Victoria*. In 2007 the Ensemble were resident in Barcelona with the Catalonian Youth Orchestra.

The Ensemble records frequently for BBC radio and has taken part in many music programmes for TVS, Yorkshire Television and the BBC as well as appearing in documentary films on Elizabeth Maconchy and Sir Robert Mayer. The Ensemble has also been featured in a series of five programmes on the wind quintet for the BBC Radio 3 *Music Machine*.



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