

COMPLETE PIANO SONATAS  
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# Lussek

SONATAS OP.44 & OP.77

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*fortepiano*



## Johann Ladislaus Dussek 1760-1812

### Sonata in E flat major Op.44, Craw 178 "The Farewell" (1800)

- |   |      |                          |       |
|---|------|--------------------------|-------|
| 1 | I.   | Introduzione. Grave –    |       |
|   |      | Allegro moderato         | 11'00 |
| 2 | II.  | Molto adagio e sostenuto | 7'37  |
| 3 | III. | Tempo di menuetto        |       |
|   |      | piuttosto Allegro        | 3'42  |
| 4 | IV.  | Rondo: Allegro moderato  |       |
|   |      | ed espressivo            | 7'30  |

### Sonata in F minor Op.77, Craw 259 "L'Invocation" (1812)

- |   |      |                         |       |
|---|------|-------------------------|-------|
| 5 | I.   | Allegro moderato,       |       |
|   |      | ma energico             | 12'30 |
| 6 | II.  | Tempo di menuetto:      |       |
|   |      | Con moto                | 4'37  |
| 7 | III. | Adagio non troppo,      |       |
|   |      | ma solenne              | 6'01  |
| 8 | IV.  | Rondo: Allegro moderato | 9'25  |

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(from Haydn's letter to Dussek's father)

*I...therefore consider myself fortunate in being able to assure you, that you have one of the most upright, moral, and, in music most eminent of men, for a son. I love him just as you do, for he fully deserves it. Give him, then, daily, a father's blessing, and thus will he be ever fortunate, which I heartily wish him to be, for his remarkable talents. I am, with all respect,*

*Your most sincere friend,  
Joseph Haydn*

London, February 16, 1792.

If Dussek had spent the creative years of his life in Vienna, instead of traveling through all of Europe, from Paris to Lithuania and Russia, then to London, then to Paris again, he most likely could have become a real rival to Mozart and Beethoven. His enormous talent certainly could have allowed that and in his works we can hear a bridge leading from Mozart's classical style to the Romanticism of Schubert. But his muse was bound to stay on the crossroads of all possible styles, national influences and local trends, and this is what makes Dussek a unique figure – a follower of a traditional routine and a pioneer led by his intuition at the same time.

His roots are anchored in the late German Baroque, he had futurist insight into the harmony and expression of Schubert, Chopin, Brahms and Dvorak. In form he followed clichés, and turned them into schemes, a compositional limitation that Schubert and Bruckner later used as a strong individual procedure.

This unstable equilibrium is what first allowed Dussek to become a great favorite of the 1st half of the 19th century and then pulled him into oblivion until a late rediscovery in the 1960's. Even now, although his music sounds thanks to the efforts



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Recording, editing, mastering - Slava Poprugun (Steppenwolf studio, Asch)  
Fortepiano Longman Clementi (London, 1798-1799), Collection Chris Maene, restored 2002.  
Cover: Jean-Baptiste Raguenet, A View of Paris from the Pont Neuf, 1763  
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of such important Early Music figures as Malcolm Bilson, Andreas Staier, Bart van Oort and others, it receives much less attention than it deserves.

The combination of banalities, ingenious revelations and absolute novelties in Dussek's music is a real challenge for the performer. Only fine intuition, knowledge of musical context and a right choice of instrument allow us to discover the true value of this composer.

The two sonatas Op.44 and Op.77 that I have chosen for this recording belong to the mature and most original of Dussek's works. Already in the sonata Op.44 (Farewell, or Les Adieux, 1799), he transcends into the world of Romantic feelings. This is obvious not only in the 2nd movement but also in the Trio of the Menuet and in episodes of the Rondo finale. I have always admired how faithful Dussek, a cosmopolitan of the musical world, remains to his Czech origins. Whether by intuition or consciously, he creates melodies and rhythms that are deeply rooted in Czech folk songs and dances (i.e. the 2nd theme of the 1st movement and all the syncopated rhythms of the finale.)

The Sonata Op.44 is not only a dedication to and a farewell with Dussek's friend and musical contemporary Muzio Clementi. It is also a journey through all the musical styles and époques to which Dussek bore witness. The polyphony and the canonic imitations in the development of the 1st movement represent the heritage of the Baroque era. The clear lines of the rhetorical formulae in the 1st movement belong to the classical style of Haydn and Mozart. The exquisite coquetry of the dance in the Trio of the Menuet relate to the salon of the pre-Chopin times. And the last bars of the Sonata are blown away in an extraordinary gesture of farewell.

The Sonata Op.77 (L'Invocation) deserves its reputation as one of the most outstanding of Dussek's works. It is not free of the weaker traits of the earlier pieces: the clichés in form, the trivial appoggiaturas and sighs, the use of diminished 7th chords to express passion and tragedy, and the tonal monotony (especially in the 1st movement and the Menuet). Nevertheless, the emotional candor, the romantic

impulse, the depressive melancholy in the presentiment of his coming death make up for the lack of invention in manipulating the musical material. Both in the 1st and the final movements, the music achieves dramatic heights only to break down and fall deep into resignation and despair. Dussek surpasses Beethoven and Schubert in the expression of subjective feeling. In this Sonata, he reaches out to the Romanticism of Chopin (3rd mvt), Schumann (episodes of the Finale) and Brahms (Trio). Again and again, the listener is impressed by the fusion of baroque archaism, classical sonata forms, the novelty and expression of the melodic contour, the richness of the piano writing and the boldness in the use of all possible resources of the instrument.

Muzio Clementi (1752-1832) came to England as a child prodigee and made a career as a composer and pianist. He went into a business relationship with Longman & Broderip. When the partners went into bankruptcy in 1798, Clementi supported them financially and became a partner of the firm under the name of Longman Clementi & Co and from 1800 as Clementi & Co. Their pianos were innovative in the case, soundboard, range of the keyboard (FF-c4), action and strings as well as pedals (due corde and una corda), increasing both the dynamical and expressive range.

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*Translation by Liza Miller*

#### ALEXEI LUBIMOV

One of the most original contemporary musicians. After completing his studies with Heinrich Neuhaus, he was the first to awaken interest at the Moscow Conservatory in Baroque music (particularly performed on period instruments) and contemporary music. He is also an outstanding interpreter of Classical and Romantic works. During the 80s, when political restrictions in Russia were gradually loosening, he began performing in Western Europe, Japan and the US, becoming one of the world's leading pianists. He has performed with such orchestras as the philharmonic orchestras of Israel, Los Angeles, Munich and St Petersburg, the Royal Philharmonic in London, Russian National Orchestra, Orchestre National de France and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, working with such conductors as Vladimir Ashkenazy, Neeme Järvi, Kirill Kondrashin, Christopher Hogwood, Roger Norrington, Mikhail Pletnev, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Vladimir Jurowski and Iván Fischer. In historical performance, he has performed with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Wiener Akademie and Concerto Köln. He also performs as a chamber musician with leading soloists and ensembles, taking part in festivals around the world. Recent highlights in his artistic work include the stage project *This is (not) a Dream* with music by Erik Satie and John Cage, directed and performed by the French actress Louise Moaty (presented in Europe and Mexico), performances in duet with Alexey Zuev, concerts in repertoire including contemporary Russian music, and also recitals and chamber concerts on period instruments, including in Bruges, Potsdam, Paris, Amsterdam, Berlin, Moscow and Yale. In 2015, he received the Cage-Cunningham Fellowship. He has worked with many renowned record labels, including Melodia, Erato, BIS and Sony, his recordings including the complete Mozart piano sonatas, as well as piano works by Schubert, Chopin, Beethoven, Brahms and twentieth-century composers. Since 2003, he has recorded regularly for ECM, and recent albums have included Debussy's *Preludes* and John Cage's *As It Is* (with Natalia Pschenitschnikova). His discography also includes recordings made on period instruments (Schubert's *Impromptus*, Beethoven's *Last sonatas*, Mozart's *Complete works for two pianos*, with Yuri Martynov, and a piano version of Haydn's *Seven Last Words of Christ on the Cross*) released on ZZT/Outhere France.

