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COMPLETE PIANO SONATAS  
VOLUME 5

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CLASSICS

# Lussek

SONATAS OP.18 No.2 & OP.45

Wolfgang Brunner  
*fortepiano*



## Johann Ladislaus Dussek 1760-1812

### Sonata in A minor Op.18 No.2

1. I. Agitato Assai 6'41
2. II. Rondo:  
Allegretto moderato 5'11

### Sonata in B flat Op.45 No.1

3. I. Allegro cantabile 9'32
4. II. Adagio patetico 5'13
5. III. Rondo scherzo:  
Allegro da Ballo 5'29

### Sonata in G Op.45 No.2

6. I. Larghetto sostenuto –  
Allegro di molto 9'07
7. II. Rondo:  
Andantino con moto 5'56

### Sonata in D Op.45 No.3

8. I. Allegro moderato 9'05
9. II. Larghetto con moto 3'24
10. III. Rondo:  
Allegro moderato assai 5'06

Wolfgang Brunner *fortepiano*

*Fortepianos*

*Robert Brown: Copy after Michael Rosenberger (Vienna c. 1810),  
Oberndorf near Salzburg 2009 (tr. 1-2, 6-7)*

*John Broadwood and Son, London 1804, Rococo Summer Pavilion Stift Schlägl/  
Austria (tr. 3-5, 8-11)*

Recording: March 2018, Rococo Summer Pavilion Stift Schlägl, Austria

Producer: Dario Zingales, Leonore von Strauss

Editing: Dario Zingales

Mixing & mastering: Michele Gaggia

Cover: Capriccio with St. Paul's and Old London Bridge, Antonio Joli, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of Alice Bradford Woolsey, 1970

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*“Most worthy friend, I 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.”*

A letter from Joseph Haydn to Johann Ladislaus Dussek's father, 1792

Johann Ladislaus Dussek (1760-1812) was regarded by his contemporaries as one of the foremost keyboard performers and composers of his age. Over a span of three decades, Dussek completed nearly 300 compositions, most of which involve a keyboard instrument. The sonata as a genre holds a special position in his overall oeuvre: keyboard sonatas were among his first published pieces in the early 1780s, and the sonata Op.77 in f minor was to be his last work before his death in 1812.

From his origins as a choir boy in rural Bohemia to his last employment with the prince of Talleyrand, Dussek led a restless life that unfolded in some of the most important cultural centres of his time, among them Paris, Riga, St Petersburg and London. He left Bohemia at the age of eighteen, having received musical training by his organist father and at several Jesuit institutions. On his ensuing travels through Eastern Europe, Germany and the Netherlands, he achieved considerable fame as an outstanding virtuoso, performing on the harpsichord, fortepiano and even the keyed glass harmonica.

After three years in Paris, Dussek headed to London in early 1789. With its high-class professional concert series and manifold business opportunities, the British capital was a most attractive destination for continental musicians. Dussek lived in the city through the 1790s and quickly established himself as a sought-after performer and fashionable piano teacher. His cooperation with piano builder John Broadwood resulted in an important development of the instrument: upon Dussek's request, the Broadwood company started to build fortepianos with an extended keyboard range, first of five and a half octaves from FF to c4, later of six octaves with a bass extension to CC.

Dussek seems to have taken a liking to English instruments from an early stage in his career. Already in 1782, a concert announcement mentions his performance on “an English fortepiano of entirely new invention” in Hamburg. The English fortepiano lent itself naturally to the harmonic fullness of Dussek's preferred textures, and in reverse, the instrument's characteristic sound and touch inspired and shaped the development of Dussek's compositional style.

This disc is the fifth part of an extensive recording project using the combined resources of eight excellent fortepianists. As a result, we will soon have the first comprehensive recording of Dussek's piano sonatas on period instruments. Listeners are invited to take a journey through the brilliant, harmonically beautiful and expressive music of one of the most fascinating composers at the threshold of early Romanticism.

© *Olga Witthauer*

The fortepianos which have been used for this recording, were chosen based on Dussek's living conditions and private lifestyle: the environment in which he grew up, was marked by the Viennese Classical style with its clearly articulated pianos and abundant overtones. Hence, for two of the sonatas recorded here (A Minor and G Major), I have used a replica after Michael Rosenberger by Robert Brown with a 6 octave range (FF – f4) and 3 knee levers (from left to right: shift, moderator „simple“, damper lifting).

During his London years, from 1789 till 1794, however, Dussek used his cordial and business relations with the relatives of piano builder John Broadwood to convince them to extend the range from 5 to eventually 6 octaves, and also insisted on a larger, more robust sound with a stronger emphasis on keynotes. I considered this sound very appropriate for the B-Dur and D-Dur sonatas. Interestingly enough, from the start of the 19th century Broadwood ordered his sound board, made from very suitable spruce wood, from a firm in the Sumava mountains (Bohemian forest) in Dussek's homeland (and not far from our recording place Stift Schlägl).

These are the most important differences between Viennese and English fortepianos from around 1800:

**VIENNESE INSTRUMENTS****ENGLISH INSTRUMENTS****Hammer action:**

Predominantly prell.  
Light hammers, mounted on the key.  
Hammers engage at the end of the string.

**Hammer action:**

Predominantly stoss-action.  
Heavy hammers, mounted on a separate bar.  
Hammers engage closer to the middle of the string.

**Sound:**

Lighter, flexible, colourful (rich in overtones).

**Sound:**

Full, round, loud, emphatic keynotes.

**Dampening:**

Precise, clear ending of tone.  
Knee-lever until around 1800, occasionally later.

**Dampening:**

Intentionally weak, inaccurate, permanently lighter resonance, causing overtones to develop afterwards.  
Pedals in the centre, occasionally split.

**Range:**

5 Octaves FF to f3 or g3, occasionally until after the year 1800.

**Range:**

Often more than 5 octaves (extensions either on the bass or treble side)

**Soundboard** thin, flexible, 3-5mm

**Soundboard** thicker, 6-8mm

**Casing:**

Frame with massive rib construction with softer outer lining (small casing)

**Casing:**

Frame lighter; massive and wider casing; stronger and integral part of rib construction.

**Well-known builders:**

Johann Andreas Stein  
Anton Walter / Donat Schöffstoß  
Joseph Dohnal  
Johann Schantz  
Joseph Brodmann  
Michael Rosenberger

**Well-known builders:**

Jacob and Abraham Kirckman  
Muzio Clementi  
John Broadwood  
Johannes Zumpfe

The slight internal resonance of the instrument, which is caused by the soft dampening of the strings, initially sounds rather peculiar to contemporary ears, moreover because it makes interference far more noticeable and occasionally makes the instrument sound almost out of tune.

A Minor Sonata: In both movements many surprising sforzati on normally unaccentuated meters.

First movement of the B flat Major Sonata: The inflatory wealth of thirds becomes the constituent element of the musical movement. Is this English? Earliest establishment of the third in the musical history of England...

Since the recording was made on the outskirts of the Bohemian Forest, I would like to mention the following detail. There are records which prove that ultimately in 1827 Bohemian resonance wood was supplied to Broadwood. It is possible, however, that similar deliveries to England were made before this year. In any case they were too late for the instrument used for this recording\*.

“The presence of spruce, which is eminently suitable for soundboards, is of great importance for the export of wood products, which as early as 1807 already represented a value of 48,000 fl. The firm of D. Bienert & Sohn zu Maderhäuser in the Bohemian Forest, established by Franz Bienert from Ober Kreibitz in Bohemia, has had to overcome major obstacles in the early stages of its existence. The first shipment of resonance wood for the piano building company of Broadwood in London took place in 1827 and initiated a sustained export to England and later even America. The value of the annually produced components for musical instruments is 40 to 50,000 fl. Recently this firm was taken over by Fürst Schwarzenberg.”

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\* Wilhelm Franz Exner: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Gewerbe und Erfindungen Oesterreichs von der Mitte des XVIII. Jahrhunderts bis zur Gegenwart... Vienna 1873, page 398



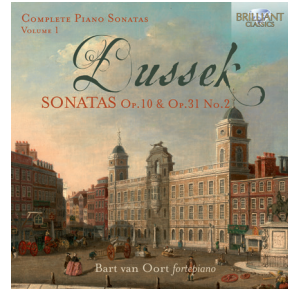
*John Broadwood and Son, London 1804,  
Rococo Summer Pavilion Stift Schlägl / Austria*



**Wolfgang Brunner** enjoys almost all keyboard instruments, and his love for historical tone colours has led him to play on many concert stages and in many recording studios (and to make some 60 CD recordings). Another passion of his is the keyboard improvisation, which he practices almost daily, from general bass till the accompaniment of silent movies, as crisis management at concerts, survival training and as a playful challenge. His musical drive expresses itself through unconventional programming, through the organization of concert series and through the “Salzburger Hofmusik”, which he has founded in 1992 and which up to now has successfully stood up to the economic and spiritual depletion of middle-class concert culture. Brunner satisfies his penchant for education at up to 3 musical academies (Universität Mozarteum, Bruckneruniversität Linz and Musikhochschule Trossingen), where he teaches subjects like period performance practice, old and new keyboards, improvisation and projects in collaboration with students. From time to time he cannot suppress the urge to contribute scientific articles to specialist journals or lexicons (MGG-Artikel), although his increasing wisdom that comes with age, tells him he’d better devote more of his attention to his charming family with 3 children.

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*I am indebted to the Premonstratensian monastery of Schlägl with its Rococo summer pavilion, where the recording with the Broadwood could be made, and to the monastic organist Mr Ingemar Melchersson, who has put the instrument at our disposal. Martin Pühringer took care of the technical aspects of the Broadwood.*



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