

# Pinto

SONATAS FOR PIANO AND VIOLIN

Marek Toporowski *fortepiano* · Robert Bachara *violin*



## George Frederick Pinto 1786–1806

### Three Sonatas for the Piano Forte with an Accompaniment for a Violin

Composed and Respectfully Dedicated to Miss Mary Gordon (Cluny)

by G. F. Pinto (London, 1806)

#### Sonata No.1 in G minor

1. I. Allegro moderato con  
espressione 8'51
2. II. Adagio. Sostenuto e legato 5'02
3. III. Rondo: Allegretto grazioso 5'44

#### Sonata No.2 in A

4. I. Allegro moderato con  
espressione 9'19
5. II. Andante 4'40
6. III. Rondo: Allegro con brio 6'34

#### Sonata No.3 in B-flat

7. I. Allegro moderato con  
espressione con spirito 10'00
8. II. Adagio affettuoso e con  
sentimento 3'40
9. III. Rondo: Allegro moderato.  
Pastorale e legato 4'57

Marek Toporowski *fortepiano*  
Paul McNulty, after Anton Walter, compass F1–c4

Robert Bachara *violin*  
Anonymous Italian, 18th c.

George Frederick Pinto was born George Sanders in 1786. After his father's death, he took his mother's surname. Little is known about his life. Pinto owes his Italian surname to his grandfather, Thomas Pinto. He began to play the violin as a child and, at age eight, became a pupil of Johann Peter Salomon. He was a child prodigy. As an 11-year-old boy, he made his first public appearance playing a violin concerto. His health began to deteriorate in 1805, and he died early in 1806. Salomon wrote after his death, 'If he had lived and been able to resist the allurements of the society, England would have had the honour of producing a second Mozart.'

The aforementioned genius – George Frederic Pinto – died at the age of 21. His music soon fell into oblivion; although some attempts to bring it back to life were made (the publication of two minor pieces in *Harmonicon* 1827, Alexander Billet's performance of two sonatas in 1850), it was not truly rediscovered until the 21st century. We can only imagine how the intense poetic and emotional power of Pinto's music would have developed, had he lived any longer. Would he have become a musical genius on a par with Schubert? In fact, these two great figures of early Romanticism had much in common: the singing quality of their music (let us not forget that Pinto also composed some beautiful songs), their ability to write deeply touching melodies and their gentle personality (according to contemporary witnesses, Pinto loved nature, birds and flowers, and had a reputation as a good and compassionate person). In listening to Pinto's three sonatas for piano and violin, it is difficult to resist the impression that – in terms of class, level and dimensions – they represent a foretaste of Schubert's cycle of three sonatas op. 137. The latter, however, was written over 10 years later (1816)!

Pinto's piano music was not fully understood during his lifetime. It is striking that the 1850 performance was received enthusiastically, whereas *Monthly Magazine* stated in 1803:

*We certainly find in these sonatas some bold and original ideas... but to these recommendations are opposed such chromatic incongruities, abrupt modulations,*

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Fortepiano tuning: Witold Gertner

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Cover: George Frederick Pinto 1806, by Albin Roberts Burt (1783-1842) after Andrew Robertson (1777-1845). Bibliothèque nationale de France

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*and constrained evolutions of harmony to form great drawbacks upon the composer's pretensions to our praise. The instruction of Mr. Salomon, his tutor... [has] not been... sufficiently attended to by Mr. Pinto in this department of his professional studies... the great knowledge and experience of such a master would otherwise have guarded a real genius against the dangers of chaotic affectation and indigested theory...*

Nowadays, we would appreciate the boldness of Pinto's harmonic ideas, which were indeed far ahead of his time. It is difficult not to agree with the opinion of Alexander L. Ringer, who described Pinto as 'a prophet of keyboard things to come'.

The three sonatas for piano and violin, published by the composer's mother after his death, indubitably number among the greatest masterpieces of the literature for these two instruments from the turn of the 19th century.

Though the title indicates the sonatas as having been written for piano 'with violin accompaniment', they nonetheless differ greatly from most works of this genre. The parts are of equal importance here; at any rate, it would be impossible to omit the violin part. This is probably connected to the fact that Pinto was a virtuoso of both of the instruments under discussion. In executing the violin part, Robert Bachara has decided to use extensive ornamentation, indeed in certain places to through-compose and supplement his part, which without doubt highlights the equal stature of the violin part. In the case of the piano part, it is noteworthy that in comparison to the solo piano works, which require a keyboard compass of  $F_1$ – $g^3$  (with the highest note  $g^3$  being used only occasionally; the works are also easily performable on a 5-octave instrument), a range of  $F_1$  –  $a^3$  is required here (and the note  $a^3$  is used consciously in places difficult to adapt to an instrument of smaller range). Perhaps this is by chance; perhaps in the case of the solo piano works, Pinto limited the range in order to facilitate the performance of this repertoire outside of England (English instrument-building was more progressive in this respect). All three sonatas are of similar structure; they are written as three-movement works: the first movement is a sonata allegro; the second, an aria requiring highly imaginative ornamentation; and the third,

a rondo. What is interesting is the question of these works' stylistic situation. They appear to belong to mainstream German chamber music: on the one hand, looking back to Haydn and Mozart; and on the other, heralding Brahms, or even Reger (the chromatic harmonization of the theme in the Rondo from *Sonata No.1*). This is probably evidence that Salomon introduced Pinto to the world of German aesthetics very effectively, and the *Monthly Magazine* statement cited at the beginning is grossly unfair to Pinto. On the other hand, Alexander L. Ringer's opinion 'a prophet of keyboard things to come' would probably be worth expanding to 'a prophet of German music to come'!

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Revised by Karol Thornton-Remiszewski



**Marek Toporowski**, a harpsichordist, organist, chamber musician and conductor, is indubitably one of the Polish historical performance movement's most recognizable performers. He also concertizes on the clavichord and on historical pianos.

In 1991, Toporowski formed the Concerto Polacco ensemble, which specializes in historical performance. Their regular concert series in Warsaw, featuring historically informed interpretations of oratorio music, has presented Polish period-instrument premières of such masterpieces as J. S. Bach's *Mass in B minor*, as well as première performances and recordings of Polish early music works under his baton.

The artist concertizes in Poland and abroad, and has made several dozen album recordings in Poland, Germany and France, among them the first phonographic recording of harpsichord music by Charles Noblet, as well as numerous recordings of historical organs in Germany, some of which are featured in the Organs of Lower Lusatia series. The 1st Prize winner at the 1st Wanda Landowska National Harpsichord Competition in Kraków (1985), he has also received numerous Fryderyk awards for his recordings.

After graduating with a dual degree from the Academy of Music in Warsaw, where he studied with Józef Serafin (organ) and Leszek Kędracki (harpsichord), Toporowski honed his skills in France (Strasbourg), Germany (Saarbrücken) and Holland (Amsterdam), training with Daniel Roth (organ), Aline Zylberajch and Bob van Asperen (harpsichord). During this time, he received 1st Prizes from Strasbourg Conservatory in organ and harpsichord performance, as well as a Concert Diploma from the Musikhochschule des Saarlandes (organ).

Since 1991, the artist has been teaching at the Academy of Music in Katowice, where he formed Upper Silesia's first harpsichord studio and Baroque orchestra. From 2008 to 2012, he served as pro-rector; and from 2012 to 2015, as chairman of the Department of Harpsichord and Historical Performance Practice. Since 2016, he has also been associated with the Academy of Music in Kraków. He gives frequent master classes; for 20 years, he also co-organized the summer Organ Academy in Koszalin.

Marek Toporowski collects historical keyboard instruments; his collection is on exhibition at the Fortepianarium in Zabrze. In recent years, he has devoted much attention to performance of music from the turn of the 19th century.

**Robert Bachara** is a violinist born in 1985. At age 7, he sang in a boys' choir where his musical talent was noticed. A year later, he began studying violin performance with distinguished pedagogue Michał Kuzniecowa. Bachara debuted in 1998 with the accompaniment of the Wrocław Philharmonic Orchestra. He studied at the Academy of Music in Wrocław, and has honed his skills at master classes with Ida Haendel, Grigori Zhislin and Jadwiga Kaliszewska. In the area of historically informed performance practice, he trained in Kraków with Sirkka-Liisa Kaakinen-Pilch.



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*The present recording is a supplement to the recording of the complete piano works of George Frederick Pinto (Piano Classics, PCL10177).*