

Preface

Ferdinand Ries was baptised in Bonn on 28 November 1784. Today his name is rarely mentioned without a reference to Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), even if it is likely that it was only after his arrival in Vienna on 29 December 1802 until Ries had significant contact with Beethoven. Ries' father, Franz Anton Ries (1755–1846) was the archbishopic concertmaster and one of Beethoven's teachers, before he left for Vienna in 1792. After Ferdinand Ries arrived in Vienna, he became Beethoven's pupil, secretary and copyist. In 1805 he returned to Bonn for a year and, following Beethoven's advice, lived in Paris for a short period before resettling in Vienna in August 1808. From 1811 to 1813 he performed as a pianist all over Europe, starting in Russia and ending in London, where he was to live until 1824. After marrying into a wealthy family and with the help of Johann Peter Salomon (who was a friend of his father's), Ries became one of the directors of the London Philharmonic Society in 1815, a post he was to hold until his resignation in 1821. From 1824 to his death in 1838, he and his family lived in Germany, with Ries holding various posts as music director (e.g. in Aachen or at the Niederrheinisches Musikfest). While he seemed busy as a performer and also was highly active as a composer, not much of his music was performed. When he died in Frankfurt on 13 January 1838, he was virtually forgotten. His more than 200 compositions include nine piano concertos, chamber music of all genres, three operas and seven symphonies.

The cello sonata op. 20 was written in 1808, shortly before Ries left Paris, and is dedicated to Bernhard Romberg (1767–1841). Romberg had arrived in Bonn in 1790 to take composition lessons from Christian Gottlob Neefe (1748 to 1798), who also taught Beethoven. Romberg and Beethoven performed frequently together at that time, although later in his life, Romberg turned away from Beethoven: In 1812 in Moscow, he refused to play the cello part in the op. 59/1 string quartet, and allegedly he also turned down Beethoven's offer to write him a cello concerto.

Ries and Romberg performed the cello sonatas op. 20 and op. 21 (pm 0061) when they met in Russia in 1811 and in a subsequent concert tour, which Ries had to abandon in 1812 when Napoleon invaded Moscow. Both works bear the title "grande sonate" (note the reference to Beethoven's sonatas op. 5, titled "Deux Grandes Sonates"), clearly indicating that these pieces meant to excel compositions written for amateurs to play at home.

Note on the Edition

The aim of **paladino music** is to produce practical modern editions that also provide historical insight. The edition presents two cello parts, one marked according to the original, published by Simrock, Bonn, in 1810, and one that is marked for today's practical use.

The first edition only exists in parts and is characterised by a large number of inconsistencies regarding articulation and dynamics. While trying to stay as close to the original as possible, I have attempted to produce an edition that presents players with less problems than the original rather than opening up more questions. Additions or minor changes to clarify ambiguities have been made in accordance to common sense and performance practice.

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