

*THE CHAMBER MUSIC  
SOCIETY OF  
LINCOLN CENTER*

*DAVID  
SHIFRIN*

*Clarinet*

*ARTISTIC DIRECTOR*

*CHAMBER  
MUSIC  
of  
CARL MARIA  
von WEBER*



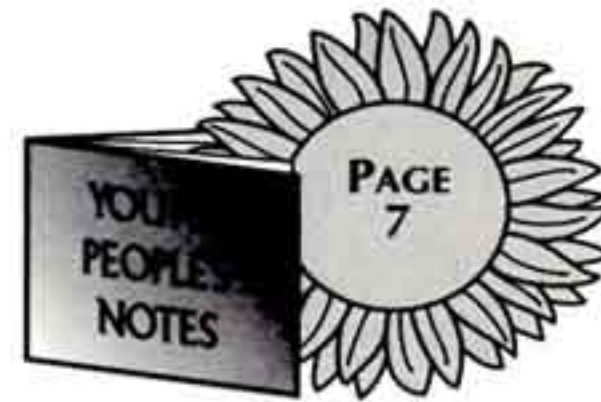
DE 3194



DE 3194

0 13491 31942 1

# CHAMBER MUSIC OF Carl Maria von Weber



## Quintet for Clarinet & Strings, Op. 34 [28:58]

- 1 Allegro (11:07)
- 2 Fantasia (Adagio ma non troppo) (5:32)
- 3 Menuetto (Capriccio presto) (5:55)
- 4 Rondo (Allegro giocoso) (6:24)

David Shifrin, *clarinet*

Ani Kavafian, Maria Bachmann, *violins* • Paul Neubauer, *viola* • Fred Sherry, *cello*

## Grand Duo Concertant, Op. 48 [22:20]

- 5 Allegro con fuoco (9:12)
- 6 Andante con moto (6:30)
- 7 Rondo (Allegro) (6:38)

David Shifrin, *clarinet*

David Golub, *piano*

## 8 Seven Variations, Op. 33 (9:32)

David Shifrin, *clarinet*

David Golub, *piano*

## 9 Introduction, Theme & Variations, Op. Posth. (8:49)

*(long attributed to Carl Maria von Weber, also believed to be by Joseph Küffner)*

David Shifrin, *clarinet*

Cho-Liang Lin, Toby Hoffman, *violins* • Paul Neubauer, *viola* • Gary Hoffman, *cello*

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 69:40

THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

DAVID SHIFRIN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

DE 3194



## CHAMBER MUSIC OF CARL MARIA VON WEBER

THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY  
OF LINCOLN CENTER

DAVID SHIFRIN

*ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, clarinet*

MARIA BACHMANN, TOBY HOFFMAN,  
ANI KAVAFIAN, CHO-LIANG LIN, *violins*

PAUL NEUBAUER, *viola*

GARY HOFFMAN, FRED SHERRY, *cellos*

DAVID GOLUB, *piano*

- 1 - 4 Quintet for Clarinet and Strings,  
Op. 34 (28:58)
- 5 - 7 Grand Duo Concertant, Op. 48 (22:20)
- 8 Seven Variations, Op. 33 (9:32)
- 9 Introduction, Theme and Variations,  
Op. Posth. (8:49)  
*(long attributed to Carl Maria Von Weber,  
also believed to be by Joseph Küffner)*

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 69:40



DDD COMPACT  
disc  
DIGITAL AUDIO

Manufactured in the U.S.A.

**H**ad he lived today, Carl Maria von Weber would have been a travel agent's delight. The son of an itinerant actor and theater-troupe manager, he seems to have been born in a state of perpetual motion. By the time he was 18 he had received musical training in Salzburg and Munich, made concert appearances as a pianist in Freiburg, visited North Germany with his father, spent some time in Hamburg, Coburg, Augsburg, Vienna, and finally come to rest — momentarily — in Breslau in 1804, where he accepted the post of director of the opera. The appointment was short-lived, and two years later, at age 20, he was to be found serving as house musician to a nobleman in Silesia; a year later he took up residence in Stuttgart as secretary to Duke Ludwig of Württemberg, where he proceeded to live a happily dissolute life, cocky and flirtatious, and was eventually relieved of his job and actually banished. (The misunderstanding was over money and Weber was proved innocent of any wrongdoing, but he had aroused disfavor at court and the financial incident was the final blow.)

On the road once more, Weber moved to Darmstadt ("dismal," in his opinion); he earned sufficient money to pay off

debts in Stuttgart but was left, as he put it, "with nothing but a little talent in the cupboard." His normally ebullient spirits were chastened: "God has sent me many vexations and disappointments, but He has also thrown me with many good, kind people, who have made life worth living. I can say honestly and in all quietness, that within the last ten months I have become a better man." But his diary at this period continues in a depressed vein: "My path in life was cast from my birth in different lines from that of any other human being; I have no happy childish days to look back upon, no free boyhood; though still a youth [he was 25], I am an old man in experience, learning everything through my own feelings and by myself, *nothing* by means of others." It was just this artistic self-reliance which enabled him to persist in his belief in a truly German operatic style, and which led him eventually to compose the landmark opera *Der Freischütz*.

But after this gloomy diary entry of January 12, 1811, happier times lay ahead, and they involved the clarinet. In March Weber took himself to Munich, where he met one of the most celebrated clarinetists of the day, Heinrich Baermann, two years his senior and already a performer of wide

experience. Baermann had been captured at the battle of Jena and been held as a prisoner of war; on his release he became principal clarinet of the Munich orchestra and earned great acclaim on tours of England, France, Italy and Russia. His style was described as combining the best qualities of both the German and French schools — the expressive, nuanced phrasing of the former with the technical brilliance and fluency of the latter. His velvety tone was greatly admired. Two years before he met Weber he had acquired a 10-key clarinet, one of the new and more proficient instruments that were being developed at this period.

Baermann and Weber took to each other from the start—Weber described him as “a truly great artist and admirable man” — forming a friendship that lasted until the composer’s death. Weber’s immediate response was to compose a Clarinet Concertino, which Baermann played with such success that, according to the composer, “the whole orchestra has been the very devil about demanding concertos from me.... I’m not doing at all badly, and very probably I’ll be spending the summer here, where I’m earning so much that I’ve something left over after paying my keep.” In short order he wrote

two additional clarinet concertos for Baermann—the second of which the artist played “in a heavenly manner”—and on December 1 of this propitious year the two men set out on a four-month concert tour in a comfortable new carriage that would take them to Prague, Dresden, Leipzig, Gotha, Weimar, back to Dresden, and finally to Berlin.

The first tangible result of this tour was the set of Variations, Op. 33, which Weber wrote soon after they started. Later works written for Baermann would come in the next few years: the Quintet in 1815, the famous Grand Duo Concertant in 1816. The Introduction, Theme and Variations for clarinet and string quartet has a somewhat mysterious history, and is said to have been discovered in 1941 by former solo clarinetist of the Berlin State Opera; its authenticity is doubtful, but it has long been adopted by soloists as a worthy and effective outlet for the clarinet’s athletic prowess.

**The Quintet for Clarinet and Strings, Op. 34**, occupied Weber for at least two years, off and on, here and there. He finally finished it in Prague on August 25, 1815, and Baermann gave the premiere the next day. It is, in essence, a miniature concerto: the

music's profile is almost entirely shaped by the clarinet, and the strings work solidly in accompaniment, or in occasional brief exchanges with the star.

The first movement, in the manner of Mozart's clarinet quintet, opens gently in the strings; the clarinet enters genially but cannot maintain its sobriety for long, and it soon takes off in the fast, rocketing figurations at which it excels. It dances along its own trajectory through the exposition (which is repeated), contrasting the lyric with the virtuosic; it encounters a few dramatic string flourishes in the development, and continues its adventures in the still-evolving recapitulation.

The adagio Fantasia, unexpectedly somber in its minor mode and dark coloration, allows the clarinet to grow more expansive as the movement progresses; several striking runs carry the soloist across a span of almost three octaves in one quick breath (this was the kind of gesture for which Baermann was famous). The Trio finds the clarinet at its most irrepressible (and encountering a mocking cello); the Minuet follows in a graceful and altogether calmer mood. The Rondo finale sets off at a Rossinian gallop that recurs between the movement's contrasting interludes. The "brilliant" marking in the

clarinet part seems almost understatement, especially in view of the series of gracefully plunging dives that brings the work to a close.

While the Quintet may allot only a modest role to the strings, there is nothing modest about the piano's part in the **Grand Duo Concertant**, which reflects Weber's own prodigious gifts at the keyboard (he "plays the piano like the very devil," in the words of a Prague theater director). He began the piece in July of 1815, last movement first, then wrote the middle movement and finally finished the opening *Allegro con fuoco* in November, 1816. It is one of his most popular chamber works, with the brilliance of the writing for both instruments exerting a fine virtuosic appeal.

The first movement follows a sonata-form plan, starting off with a flourish and relaxing into a second theme that begins with a gentle rocking figure; the clarinet shows off its striking contrast of color between top register and bottom, and the two instruments vie with each other in cascading scales and a lively exchange of phrases. The second movement, opening with a lovely, arching theme tailor-made for the clarinet, incorporates several

episodes including an extended section for the piano alone, and the delicate reunion of the two instruments when the clarinet enters again is one of the movement's most beautiful moments. The Rondo finale boasts a decidedly merry beginning, followed by unabashed displays of virtuosic exuberance and a breathless roller-coaster ride to the finish.

Weber wrote his set of **Seven Variations** two weeks after setting out with Baermann on their 1811 tour. It was finished in Prague on the morning of December 14 and performed that very evening in the house of a noble patron, Count Firmian. The theme is taken from *Silvana*, an opera composed by Weber the year before, and he must have been especially fond of the tune, for he had already used it in a set of piano pieces. It is beguiling in its simplicity and lends itself nicely to variation treatment. Both the clarinet and the piano are given ample opportunity, in the course of this deft and happy work, to exploit their skills in a spectacular manner.

It was this work, incidentally, that brought the composer and the great Goethe into not very cordial contact. When Weber and Baermann were playing

the Variations in Weimar at the residence of the Grand Duchess Maria Paulowna, Goethe entered, sat down, and began talking to the lady next to him. As the music finished he rose to leave, but paused long enough to allow the musicians to be presented to him. He seemed less than enthusiastic, and Weber summed up the encounter in his diary with one sentence: "I did not like him."

The **Introduction, Theme and Variations**, for clarinet and string quartet, is laid out in an unusual pattern. After the graceful Adagio introduction and the statement of a decidedly sprightly theme, each variation is divided in two, the first dominated by the clarinet, the second (and shorter) allotted to the string quartet alone. The six variations put the clarinet through a number of spectacular paces, culminating in a concluding section of fast and brilliant figurations.

*Shirley Fleming*

## *Young People's Notes*

**S**ometimes you just need a friend to get you started. That is what happened to the composer Carl Maria von Weber, who lived in Germany about 175 years ago, and played the piano "like the very devil," someone said.

Naturally, he was interested in writing music for the piano, which could help him

earn money when he performed at private concerts. He also wrote an opera or two when he was quite young — and some very famous ones toward the end of his life. But until he was 25 years old it had not occurred to him to write for the clarinet.

And then he met a clarinet player who was about his own age



and who also played *his* instrument “like the very devil.” Now, playing the clarinet was an adventure at this time, because the instrument was in the process of changing and the player had to keep up with the latest improvements. As it happened, Weber’s new friend Heinrich Baermann, who played in one of Germany’s most

important orchestras, had recently bought a new clarinet that could do breathtaking things.

**H**earing Baermann perform was all that Weber needed to inspire him. He immediately started to write music for this “truly great artist and admirable man.” These pieces were

designed to show off the way Baermann could play very fast and skittish music, or take a swan-dive down a steep waterfall of notes, or play a graceful slow tune, or jump from a bright high note right down to the low and mysterious note at the bottom of the clarinet's range. You will hear all these things in the music on this disc.

Soon after they met, Weber and Baermann bought themselves a comfortable carriage and set off on a concert tour. They had traveled for about two weeks when Weber wrote the Variations we hear. He finished them one morning and handed them over to Baermann to be played at a concert that very evening. We don't

know what Baermann said about the short notice, but we can be sure that he did a good job. There wasn't much that he was afraid to tackle.

Within a few years after their tour was over, Weber wrote further pieces for his friend, all of them tailor-made to fit the clarinet's acrobatic personality. Don't miss the

rocket-like take-off in the first movement of the Quintet, or the fast gallop at the end of the work. The Duo Concertant, the most famous piece of all, puts the clarinetist through some breathtaking paces, and sees to it that the pianist doesn't get off easily, either. The sparks fly.

*Notes by Shirley Fleming*

**The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center** has been the resident ensemble in Alice Tully Hall since the opening of the hall in 1969. The Society's purpose is to present the rich chamber music literature from the Renaissance to the present day in performances of the highest caliber. Artists of the Chamber Music Society, all virtuosi in their own right, are the basis of the ensemble. The frequent inclusion of distinguished guest artists enables the group to perform works which range from duets to much larger instrumentations within a single program. Since its founding, the Society has commissioned over 90 new works, many of which have already taken their places in the permanent repertoire. The Chamber Music Society takes pride in continuing to serve as the model on which other organizations across the country have established themselves. In addition to its Alice Tully Hall series at Lincoln Center, the Chamber Music Society tours regularly in the U.S. and abroad. It is featured frequently on public television's "Live from Lincoln Center," and is heard nationwide on public radio. The Chamber Music Society has received national and international acclaim for its numerous recordings.

"**David Shifrin** is one of the world's great clarinetists. If there is a bel canto school of clarinet playing, Shifrin is surely its finest exponent." (*Los Angeles Times*) As Artistic Director of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and Music Director of Chamber Music Northwest, Shifrin guides two of the finest chamber music series in America. He can be heard on Delos with both groups. Mr. Shifrin's celebrated record of the Mozart Clarinet Concerto (with Gerard Schwarz and the Mostly Mozart Orchestra) and Clarinet Quintet (with Chamber Music Northwest) was named Record of the Year by *Stereo Review*.

Executive Producer: *Amelia S. Haygood*  
Recording Producer: *Ramiro Belgardt*  
Recording Engineer: *John Eargle (Grand Duo, Variations, Introduction...)* *Stephen Basili (Quintet)*  
Editing: *Ramiro Belgardt, Peter S. Myles, Stephen Basili*  
Production Assistant: *Phyllis Bernard*  
Recorded: August 26 - 28, 1996 - First Congregational Church, L.A. (*Grand Duo, Variations, Introduction...*); May 29, 1995 - St. Peter's Episcopal Church, New York City (*Quintet*)  
Recording Monitor Loudspeakers: *JBL 6208*  
Post-production Monitor Loudspeakers: *Waveform Mach 13*  
20-bit Recording & Processing: *Prism AD-1*

Microphones: *Sanken CU-41, Sennheiser MKH-20, Neumann KM100 Series*  
Console: *Soundcraft 200B*  
Hamburg Steinway piano  
Piano Technician: *Ricard de La Rosa, PRO PIANO*  
Cover, Inlay and Disc Illustrations: *Ken Siefried*  
Creative Direction: *Harry Pack, Tri Arts and Associates*  
Graphics: *Bruce Dizon*  
Layout: *Mark Evans*  
Special thanks: *Jacqueline M. Taylor and the staff of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center*

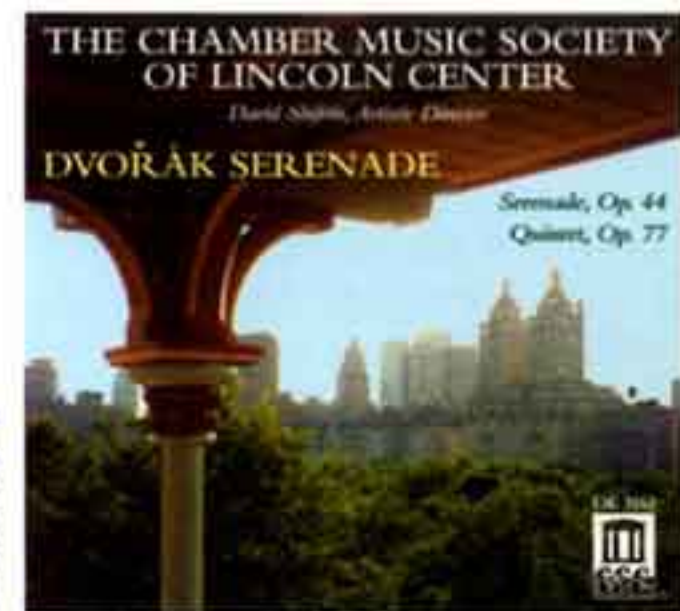


CITATION



**BACH – The Six  
Brandenburg Concertos**  
Virtual Reality Recording  
(VR<sup>2</sup>) • 2-disc slimline set  
[DECAPI SUBSTITUTION] • Young People's  
Notes • DE 3185 (DDD)

**DVOŘÁK – Serenade for  
Winds, Op. 44 • String  
Quintet, Op. 77 • Young  
People's Notes**  
DE 3152 (DDD)



## Other Recordings Available by **THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER**



**BEETHOVEN IN NEW  
YORK — Septet, Op. 20 •  
Serenade in D, Op. 25**  
Young People's Notes  
DE 3177 (DDD)

**KODÁLY: Serenade for  
Two Violins and Viola**  
**DOHNÁNYI: Serenade for  
String Trio • BARTÓK:  
Sonata for Two  
Pianos and Percussion**  
DE 3151 (DDD)





© 2014 Delos Productions, Inc.,  
P.O. Box 343, Sonoma, California 95476-9998  
(800) 364-0645 • (707) 996-3844  
*contactus@delosmusic.com • www.delosmusic.com*  
Made in U.S.A.