



Carol Rosenberger, piano

# *Theme & Variations*

## Beethoven

Sonata Op. 109

## Schubert

Impromptu Op. 142#3

## Mozart

Sonata K. 331



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# *Theme & Variations*

*"Rosenberger, Beethoven Go Together"*

(headline) The Boston Globe

BEETHOVEN: Sonata in E, Op. 109  
Vivace, ma non troppo ▪ Prestissimo  
Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo

SCAUBERT: Impromptu in B-Flat  
Op. 142 #3

MOZART: Sonata in A, K. 331  
Andante grazioso ▪ Menuetto ▪ Alla Turca

Total Playing Time: 62:04

Carol Rosenberger, piano

**Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827): Sonata in E, Op. 109 (22:58)**

1. Vivace, ma non troppo (4:04)
2. Prestissimo (2:42)
3. Andante molto cantabile ed espressivo (16:12)

**4. Franz Schubert (1797-1828): Impromptu in B-Flat, Op. 142 No. 3 (13:10)**

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): Sonata in A, K. 331 (25:56)**

5. Andante grazioso (15:10)
6. Menuetto (7:12)
7. Alla Turca (3:34)

Total Playing Time: 62:04

**Carol Rosenberger, piano**

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Recorded May, 1997, First Congregational Church, Los Angeles, California

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Boesendorfer Imperial Concert Grand Piano

Piano Technician: Richard Davenport

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I recorded this program in 1997, as a “Companion Disc” for a children’s album entitled “...such Stuff as Dreams...” The children’s CD itself was a sequel to the earlier “Perchance to Dream,” which had been the beginning of the Delos Young People’s Series a few years earlier. The repertoire for both children’s programs was chosen very carefully. I wanted each track to contain a masterpiece — serene, innocent, simple and of course melodious throughout.

For “...such Stuff...” I was tempted to include three wonderful themes from some of my favorite theme-and-variations masterpieces by Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven. They had all of the desired qualities mentioned above, but I hesitated about extracting them from their musical contexts. Then Delos founder Amelia Haygood and I hit upon the idea of letting the lovely themes be part of the children’s disc, and during the same sessions, I would also record the entire works built on these themes for a second “Companion Disc.” We hoped that some of the young people, or adults encountering this music for the first time, would want to take the leap and become acquainted with the complete works.

Now, some 17 years after the release of “...such Stuff as Dreams...” it has been suggested to me that it is time for the “Companion Disc” to have its own identity as an all-ages CD. In the three sets of variations, the themes have a masterful simplicity about them. The Schubert theme seems to take your hand and guide you into a beautiful natural landscape; the Beethoven theme, in its encompassing warmth, enables you to fuse your inner being with the universe, somehow. Both the Schubert and the Mozart melodies bring joy and pleasure. Mozart’s elegantly simple theme is perfection itself, and gently finds its way into your heart.

My **Mozart** roots go back to early childhood, as do those of most pianists, and include long and happy associations with a number of his incomparable piano works, especially the concerti, in my touring years. A longtime bond with the **Sonata in A Major, K. 331** began when I played the third movement at around age seven. In my sheet music it was called by its English title, *Turkish March*. It was fun then, and it’s fun now as the *Alla Turca*. A few years after my first *Turkish March* experience, I became acquainted

with the sonata's other two movements, and played the work on an early recital program. This sonata has stayed with me ever since: the touching simplicity of the first movement's theme; the first gentle, and slightly questioning variation, with its affirmative finish to each section; the cheery variation with running triplets; the gliding minor variation; the magical variation with thirds soaring gently in the treble; the aria-like variation, almost a movement on its own; and of course the bright, cheery last variation. I've always heard hints of the "Turkish" element also suggested in that wonderfully inventive first movement, and even extended to the *Menuetto* second movement. In the *Menuetto*, I have long imagined an 18th century gilded ballroom filled with dancers in period costumes, whose varied subtle personal emotions and communications weave throughout the dance.

The **Schubert Impromptu in B-Flat, Op. 142, No. 3** represents another treasured part of my piano-playing life. I have loved and toured with various combinations of his eight Impromptus (the four Op. 90 and four Op. 142), and with some of his glorious sonatas (especially the Sona-

tas in B-Flat, D. 960, and in A, D. 959). During student years I spent in Vienna, there were countless opportunities to immerse myself in Schubert's wonderful *Lieder*, deepening the connection with his unique musical spirit. "No other music speaks of the Austrian landscape, reflects the Austrian sky to such a degree," German writer Annette Kolb said of Schubert. Pianist Arthur Schnabel, who brought many of Schubert's piano works to the public after a century of neglect, called them "a safe supply of happiness." The great teacher Nadia Boulanger observed that a Schubert melody was a supreme example of genius, of that magic one cannot define, "so simple that there's nothing to it, just innocence and an irresistibly spontaneous movement that makes it a masterpiece."

Schubert's melody lines are always vocal, and therefore human; his settings often suggestive of a benign outdoor environment. In our fast-paced era, in which peaceful places and quiet moments become increasingly rare, such music is perhaps even more precious. It invites us to live a musical phrase that suggests the luminous ideal, but is within the human



context. Schubert could take us — or go with us — anywhere, and make any day a more beautiful one. Music such as this Impromptu allows us to draw a long breath while we put daily cares into perspective. There is lovely serenity in the theme, and an increasingly joyous lilt in the variations that follow; the wistful minor variation brings a cloud or two that give the entire experience greater depth; a variation in G-flat affirms contentment; the final variation, back to B-flat, is cascading joy; the rich chordal return of the theme is quiet reassurance. It is indeed a beautiful example of that “safe supply of happiness.”

I like to imagine how the three great composers represented on this album might respond to hearing their music on a Boesendorfer Imperial grand. Perhaps Schubert, the master of the *Lied*, or German art song, would have loved its singing quality in expressing his incomparable melodies, including the theme of the Impromptu in B-flat Major. Mozart might also have liked that singing quality, especially appropriate in the lovely, inventive theme-and-variations movement of his A Major Sonata. He probably

would have chuckled at the commotion the instrument’s rich bass could cause in the *Alla Turca* third movement, which is, after all, humorous.

Beethoven, in particular, might have enjoyed the sound of his masterpieces on the Boesendorfer Imperial. He was dissatisfied with the pianos of his time, and always pushing piano makers towards new developments in the piano’s dynamic range, strength of tone and resonance. He surely wished for a fuller and richer sound. He brought his innovative genius to full utilization of each new development in the instrument during his lifetime, and yet he wrote, not only for the piano he knew, but far beyond it. One can be reasonably certain that what he heard in his immense imagination would have had as its ideal something unfettered by limitations of the then-current instrument.

My personal history with **Beethoven’s Sonata in E, Op. 109** goes back to an almost-10-year period, beginning in my early 20s, when I was prevented by illness from playing the piano at all. During that difficult period I found Op.109, along

with its two “brethren,” the Op. 110 and Op. 111 sonatas, to be endlessly rewarding to “live inside.” I studied them in an analytic manner with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, and after moving to Vienna, immersed myself in the fascinating Schenker analysis of Beethoven’s unsurpassed musical architecture. But mostly, I kept thinking my way through these three wonderful creations, hearing them in my mind’s ear, and feeling comforted, inspired and buoyed by them. Not only did they reassure me about the world in general, but they also allowed me to entertain the hope of being able to play them some day.

When I was able to return to the concert stage, I sometimes played those last three Beethoven sonatas as a complete recital. I always found the Opus 109 a welcoming way to begin the program. One has the feeling, in the opening of the first movement, that the music has already been going on before you can hear it — floating in from some gentle, mystical place — and all you have to do is join it. The ongoing musical thread can be followed, stretched at its highly expressive, quasi-improvisatory heights and in its quiet

reflective moments, but never broken. Its tonal architecture is strong and grand in scope, while remaining intimate, and creates a world of its own just in those very few minutes. Then the *Prestissimo* second movement says “Ah, but there’s this side too!” – its vigor and sudden robustness adding exhilaration to the soulful emotions.

By the time the sublime third movement comes along, we are ready to welcome it. The theme’s simplicity is infused with warmth and generosity, along with an expansiveness that makes it feel open to all of our joint human experience and potential. Beethoven asks that it be played in a manner that is “Gesangvoll, mit innigster Empfindung” (songful, with deepest feeling). As the variations progress, we are taken through beautiful experiences — the first delicate and gently expansive; the next bursting with excitement; then one that gently encircles and reassures; then on to a joyous fugue, and finally to the last variation. Here, some of the aspirations aroused by the first movement are gloriously realized, and it is the culmination of the third movement theme’s potential. What could be more moving than

the theme's gentle reappearance, building in its climax to a triumphant constellation shining gloriously above cumulative textures and trills, and then ending in reassuring simplicity, a quiet final word.

For me, "getting into" this sonata is to experience one of the wonders of the world. One feels the transformations of the theme's "deep song," and its reappearance, as the summary of life and art and heart and soul. It is touching to remember that by the time Beethoven wrote this transcendent music he could hear almost nothing and was locked in a silent world where all of the music was inside of him. He had distilled to its essence the summary of an intense life experience, with music such as this expressing his complete and radiant vision. This magnificent 23 minutes of music offers a profoundly moving glimpse of a great soul.

— Carol Rosenberger

American pianist **Carol Rosenberger** has attracted an international audience for bringing her special blend of refined virtuosity and poetically compelling interpretations to both traditional and contemporary repertoire. "Eloquent and sensitive playing" wrote *The Times of London*, while that city's *Daily Telegraph* commented: "Her playing was alive to every fleeting sense impression, yet intellectually commanding. These were ideal performances."

Beginning with the debut tour that elicited such comment in New York, Boston, London, Paris, Vienna, Berlin and other capitals, Carol's distinguished recital programs and guest appearances with orchestras carried her to most major European and American cities. More recent concert appearances include New York's Town Hall, Philharmonic Hall and the Great Hall of the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow, Peter the Great's Palace in St. Petersburg, Italy's Rossini Opera House, and tours of Scandinavia and the U.S., with the Moscow Chamber Orchestra under Constantine Orbelian.

Over 30 recordings on the Delos label have extended Carol Rosenberger's in-



dividual vision to a wide range of piano repertoire. Her recording of Howard Hanson's *Fantasy Variations on a Theme of Youth*, with Gerard Schwarz and the New York Chamber Symphony, brought her a 1991 Grammy Nomination for Best Performance, Soloist with Orchestra. Rosenberger and Schwarz followed this recording with the rarely-heard Hanson Piano Concerto with the Seattle Symphony. Together with Constantine Orbelian and the Moscow Chamber Orchestra, Carol has recorded the premiere of Frank Bridge's Chamber Concerto for Piano and String Orchestra (arr. C. Orbelian), an arrangement of the Quintet (1912).

Carol's celebrated series of concept-recordings began with *Water Music of the Impressionists*, which was selected by *Stereo Review* as one of the 25 Best Classical Compact Discs of all time, by *Gramophone* as a Recording of the Year, and by *Billboard* as an All-time Great Recording. The Impressionistic *Night Moods* was the successful sequel; and a second water-music disc, *Singing on the Water*, included Barcarolles written especially for the album by Sir Richard Rodney Bennett and the American composer David Diamond.

Together with co-producer Amelia Haygood, Carol led the way into another area of concept recordings with the 1989 release of *Perchance to Dream, Lullabys for Children and Adults*. One of the first classical CDs designed primarily for young people, *Perchance* struck a responsive chord with all ages. The *American Record Guide* called it "a splendid disc, to be treasured by young and old, and *Fanfare* commented that it is "the perfect gift among recordings for introducing a child to the intimacies and universality of music." Subsequent albums of relaxing piano music were *Reverie* and *Such Stuff as Dreams* — the latter a lullaby album including themes from three major works of Mozart, Schubert and Beethoven heard in their entirety on a companion disc. She has also appeared as soloist on two orchestral CDs designed to be relaxing in nature: with Constantine Orbelian and the Moscow Chamber Orchestra in *Mozart Adagios*, and with James DePreist and the Monte Carlo Philharmonic in *A French Romance*.

Carol and Amelia guided and co-produced the Delos Music for Young People Series. As producer of special recording

projects combining music and narration, Carol has worked with such distinguished narrators as James Earl Jones, Michael York and Natalia Makarova. She also wrote the script for Makarova's narrated version of Stravinsky's *The Firebird*, a recording that won the American Library Association's "Notable Recording" award.

Carol's affinity for the late works of Beethoven and Schubert resulted in highly acclaimed recordings of the Beethoven Sonatas Op. 111 and 57, and the Schubert Sonata in B-flat, together with the Impromptus Op. 90. Her contribution to the performance of 20th Century music is reflected in her recordings of the Hindemith *Four Temperaments* with James DePreist and the Royal Philharmonic, and an all-Szymanowski disc, including the *Masques*, a group of Mazurkas, and the Etudes op. 4 and op. 33.

The Schwarz/Rosenberger recording of the Haydn D Major Concerto with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra was called "the best recording of that work now available" by *American Record Guide*, and the subsequent recording of the Haydn

G Major Concerto with the same collaborators brought to light a rarely-heard work. With the London Symphony, Rosenberger and Schwarz recorded the Falla *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* and the Beethoven Concerto No. 4; with the Seattle Symphony they recorded the Strauss *Burleske*, and with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra the Shostakovich First Piano Concerto.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, Carol studied in the U.S. with Webster Aitken and Katja Andj; in Paris with the legendary Nadia Boulanger; and in Vienna with harpsichordist/ Baroque scholar Eta Harich-Schneider and Schenker theorist Franz Eibner. In 1976 she was chosen to represent America's women concert artists by the President's National Commission on the Observance of International Women's Year. She has been the subject of articles in many of the nation's leading newspapers and magazines, and has been on the faculties of the University of Southern California and California State University Northridge. She has given performance workshops for young musicians on campuses nationwide.

Carol has given numerous benefit performances for physical rehabilitation programs, an effort motivated by her own experience. Her official debut was delayed ten years by an attack of paralytic polio at the outset of her career. She spent those ten years of seclusion and rehabilitation partly in Vienna, studying Baroque style and theory at the Academy, and absorbing German *Lieder*, opera, instrumental music and literature.

Upon Carol's return to the concert stage, not even her management knew, at the beginning, about her long ordeal. As her story became known, she proved to be an inspiration to many, and is currently working on a book about her experiences. She feels that her successful struggle to overcome the after-effects of polio taught her a great deal that she has been able to pass on to others. She has taught workshops, at the University of Southern California and other universities, in the wide-ranging area of physical and psychological preparation for performance.

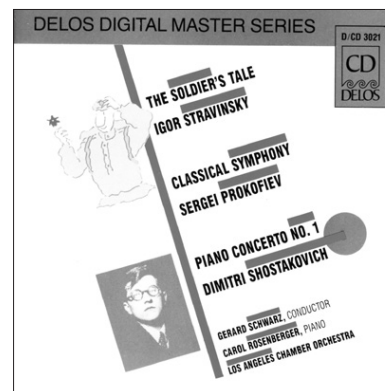
In an enthusiastic review of a Rosenberger recital at Carnegie Hall, Mark Kanny, then Music Editor of *FM Guide*, had his

own response to the artist/person he heard that night: "Her performances have an unforced quality that has nothing to do with lack of energy. Rather her playing draws on an inner calm. One hears this too when she talks about the problems of a woman pianist, or about the need for a more engaging concert format...she has retained her humanity; her name is worth remembering."

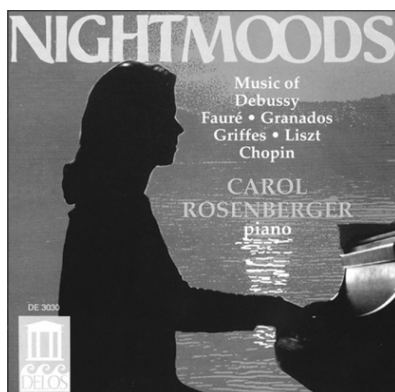
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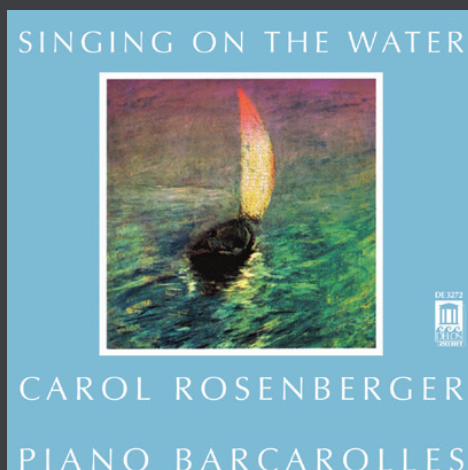
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