

Johann Alexander Huber (Hans Huber) was born on 28 June, 1852, near Aarau in Eppenberg, Canton Solothurn, Switzerland. He grew up nearby at Schönenwerd and moved to Solothurn when he was 10 years old to become a member of the *Choraulen- und Partisteninstitut* (boys' choir of the cathedral) and to attend high school. Two of his notable instructors were Eduard and Carl Munzinger. The latter guided him to the Leipzig Conservatory. After an interlude as a private music teacher and organist in Wesserling, Elsass, he began a career as a musician and composer in Basel. In 1889, he became a teacher at the public music school in Basel, and he took over the directorship in 1896. He achieved great popularity after his *Festspiel* for the Klein Basel Memorial. Due to serious diabetes, he was forced to step down from his duties in 1918, and on 25 December 1921, Huber died in Locarno.

In his early years, Huber was influenced by the music of Robert Schumann, and later by Richard Strauss. His collection of works reflects all genres of opera and stage music, theatrical works, oratorio, masses, choral works, symphonies, concertos, vocals, instrumental chamber music, organ music and educational pieces. These works served to free Swiss music of the 19th century from the dominance of male choir music. His contemporaries recognised him as the most important Swiss musician. He achieved most lasting recognition for his instructional pieces for piano.

In 1912, he wrote the Sonata op. 135 for his friend Eduard His-Schlumberger, president of the Basel Conservatory. The premiere was held on 28 March, 1913, in Basel. For this sonata Huber based the music on four pieces of the yet unpublished cycle *Sechs kleine Konzertstücke für Pianoforte und Violine* (Six small concert pieces for pianoforte and violin) without opus number. Huber used Number 4, *Capriccio*; Number 5, *Menuett*; Number 2, *Romanze* and Number 6, *Rondo Capriccioso*. He did not use Number 1, *Ouvertüre*, and Number 3, *Humoreske*. The original violin part was shared between two violins and a second violin part was added whilst leaving the piano accompaniment virtually unchanged. The two solo violins are of equal importance. Some climaxes are played in unison to add intensity to the music. In the First and Second Movements, the melody line is made more fluid through ornamentation by smaller note values. Through this, the two main themes are more markedly differentiated. Except in the case of the Third Movement of this new sonata, numerous bars were left out, replaced, or newly composed. Titles and tempo were also modified.

Huber sketched the reworking of the sonata as far as possible on the original *Sechs kleine Konzertstücke* score. He had separate sketches for the newly composed sections. This material is conserved in the University Library of Basel.

The 19 bar *Maestoso* introduction to the First Movement is new. The movement was lengthened from 240 bars to 303 bars, of which 85 bars of the original were replaced or omitted. The Second Movement was lengthened from 196 to 226 bars while 13 of the original bars were omitted. The F minor sections were originally written in the major key. Only the last two bars of the Third Movement are new. In the Fourth Movement, a new dotted triplet rhythmic element appears which is effectively exposed in the four new introductory bars. Fourteen new bars were introduced, one bar omitted, and the last nine replaced by 33 new ones, thereby extending the movement from the original 213 bars to 250. The term *un poco animato* in bar 197 can be understood as a slight accelerando for this in the original was marked *molto animato*. The overall form of the work – 1. Slow introduction-quick movement, 2. Menuett (dance form), 3. Slow movement, 4. Finale – suits quite well the scheme of the 19th Century sonata, where the slow movement can often be found after the Menuett or Scherzo. However, the First Movement can be considered as Sonata Form only when the episode section in the in G major from bar 89–117 is interpreted as “second theme and closing group” with a seamless transition into the “development section”. The “recapitulation” begins in bar 185, the 2nd theme beginning in bar 218 in B sharp major, reaching only in bar 230 the Tonic Key.

With its rhythmic energy, lyrical sound, colorful harmony and influence of folk music, this sonata is representative of the typical style and characteristics of Huber's music. It is a valuable work in its unusual scoring for concert and home performance.

The new edition follows the first edition, published by Leuckart, Leipzig, between 1912 and 1914, an example of which can be found in the Central Library, Solothurn. The numerous printing errors in the first edition (if they were doubtlessly recognisable as errors) were implicitly corrected in this new edition, some doubtful cases are marked in the partition.

Hans-Rudolf Binz

Duration of Performance: ca. 20 minutes.

(English translation: Mary Kay Bider-Dunleavy)