

## The (50) Variations (not by Beethoven) on a Theme by Diabelli Monstrosity or Monument?

Professor Peter J. Roennfeldt, *Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University*

*Diabelli's Vaterländischer Künstlerverein (Patriotic Artists' Association) project resulted in a two volume publication that appeared in 1823-1824. The more famous Part One comprises Beethoven's final piano work Opus 120, but its companion volume has received relatively little artistic or scholarly attention. As an enterprising pedagogue, composer and publisher, Diabelli brought together a virtual kaleidoscope of composers then active in Vienna and the Austrian Imperial states. While not exactly without precedent or sequel, this unusual collective work could be described as a musical monstrosity. The 50 variations based on Diabelli's Waltz in C were published purely in alphabetical order, thus exhibiting no overriding structural logic other than the implicit unity that his fecund theme provides.*

*Further investigation reveals a work containing many points of interest, and one that invites various pedagogical and performance approaches. It is also a starting point for investigation into the careers and contributions of an extraordinarily diverse composers' collective, including a host of lesser-known musicians that modern pianists and audiences might enjoy exploring further. A virtual 'who's who' of Austrian music c.1820, Diabelli's unusual conception and his extensive network of colleagues and acquaintances resulted in the creation of what is indeed a rare and valuable musical monument.*

Anton Diabelli (1781-1858) is best known today for three types of output: as a composer of pedagogical pieces for piano; as Schubert's first publisher; and most notably as the instigator of the project based on his epigrammatic waltz theme that resulted in Beethoven's final piano work. These roles pedagogue / publisher / composer - are distinct but interrelated. While he made a significant contribution to each sphere, his overall reputation has remained that of a lesser figure, overshadowed by his more esteemed contemporaries. Like many other early 19<sup>th</sup> century composers who contributed extensively to the burgeoning genre of pedagogical piano genres (Czerny, Cramer, Clementi, Hiller, Henselt), Diabelli is usually viewed as only a creator of 'small' or 'teaching' works, and therefore devoid of broader aspirations or great artistic ranking. Diabelli's relationship as the first (and for many years the major) publisher of Schubert has been tainted by evidence that his business dealings deprived the struggling composer of a fair income, though he did recognize their posthumous value. Beethoven's notorious description of Diabelli's C major Waltz theme as

nothing but a ‘cobbler’s patch’ (*Schusterfleck*) has tended to perpetuate the view of Diabelli as a mere servant of the greater artist, whose supreme creativity was needed to turn the feeble ‘sow’s ear’ into a marvellous ‘silk purse.’

### The Diabelli Project in Overview

This paper focuses on aspects of one of the most enterprising compositional and publishing projects ever conceived, the *Vaterländischer Künstlerverein* (Patriotic Artists’ Association) published by Diabelli in two volumes in 1823-1824. Part One - Beethoven’s *33 Variations and Fugue on a Waltz by Diabelli Opus 120* is better known. This landmark work represents a culmination of Beethoven’s lifelong interest in monothematic genres and his unsurpassed development technique. It is also a *fin de siècle* monument or keyboard *tour de force* that many performers aspire to master. Thus it is very clearly on a par with other major sets, such as Bach’s *Goldberg*, Brahms’ *Handel*, or Rachmaninov’s *Paganini* variations.

Diabelli’s original conception as a massive project that would bring together all the major composers of the day in a single publication, is usually little more than a historical footnote to Beethoven’s well known treatment. The development of a performance ‘canon’ during the later 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries has also tended to limit the general awareness of many lesser known works and composers. In this case, anyone who has seriously dealt with Beethoven’s Opus 120 is aware of the existence of Part Two, but few have investigated it further, and so the greater familiarity of Part One is perpetuated. Despite this posthumous phenomenon, the fact that such a large proportion of the leading musicians of Diabelli’s day chose to contribute is a validating gesture that warrants a closer look. As proudly noted on his frontispiece: “*componiert von den vorzüglichsten Tonsetzern und Virtuosen Wien’s und der k. k. oesterreichischen Staaten*” (composed by the most eminent composers and virtuosos of Vienna and the royal and imperial Austrian states), and the list of contributors which follows (Brosche, 1983, pp.1-2), this collective work is a virtual ‘who’s who’ of music from that time and place.

### The Sources: Scores, Recordings and Literature

Despite its interesting provenance, Part Two remains an enigma, sometimes alluded to by scholars, but hardly ever experienced by performers or listeners. In comparison to numerous renditions of Beethoven’s Opus 120, the Part Two ‘collective’ appears to have seen only three recordings to date:

1. Rudolf Buchbinder recorded a 2 CD set titled *Diabelli's Waltz: The Complete Variations*, released in 1997 by Teldec (0630-17388). This recording includes both the Beethoven and the 50-composer work.
2. Ian Fountain selected and re-ordered 33 variations from Part Two, with the intention of producing an anthology that parallels Beethoven's work in terms of genre and keyboard styles, released as *The Diabelli Collection* in 1999 by Meridian (CDE 84424). This concept grew out of a live concert, where the Beethoven was performed in full, alongside his selection from Part Two on the other half of the program.
3. Doris Adam's recording *Variationen über einen Walzer von Diabelli* released in 2001 by Camerata (28CM-662) takes advantage of the maximum number of repeats that would fit within the constraints of a single CD.<sup>1</sup>

The score itself appears not to have enjoyed an extensive circulation period beyond the 1820s. A facsimile reprint appeared in 1983 within the series *Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich* (Monuments of Austrian composition), complete with extensive critical notes and editorial amendments based on primary sources. Its editor Günter Brosche has provided a major service for those wishing to explore this little-known work, by including not only scholarly commentary but also two additional unpublished variations (by Mozart jnr. and Rieger), which hitherto existed only in manuscript. As the edition states, not all contributions can be traced to a primary source, but a large majority of the manuscripts (38 of the published composers) were kept by Diabelli himself and donated to the Imperial court library in 1829 (Brosche, 1983, vii-viii). The edition is also now readily available on-line via the International Music Score Library Project (<http://imslp.org>), to which readers of this article are encouraged to refer.

A small but significant body of scholarship has appeared in the past hundred years, however comparatively little is published in English. The first study was a fairly comprehensive article by Heinrich Rietsch (1905) that emphasized the Austrian cultural heritage and the career achievements of the 50 composers which Diabelli included in Part Two. On the occasion of the Beethoven bicentenary, a short article with cursory observations on the compositional techniques employed by the various composers by Hans Kahn (1971) appeared. As if to balance the equation, Wolfgang Teubner produced an article (1981) on the occasion of Diabelli's own bicentenary, which provides a fairly comprehensive overview of his publishing and

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<sup>1</sup> The liner notes for this CD recording were written by the Australian scholar John A. Phillips, whom the current writer thanks most sincerely for assistance in the preparation of this paper.

composing career. A PhD dissertation on Diabelli's Part Two appears to be in progress at the University of Bochum in Germany (<http://www.chm1L.indiana.edu>). Further information about many of the lesser known composers featured in Diabelli's Part Two can be found in some of the standard reference texts for Beethoven and Schubert. Another useful reference work for a wealth of Viennese classical era personalities, but viewed from the perspective of their relationship to the 'big four' (Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert), is the 1984 volume *Kleinmeister zur Zeit der Wiener Klassik* compiled by Agnes Ziffer.

### Performance Considerations

Despite being now available in print and on-line, and to a limited extent via recordings, Diabelli's Part Two is still unlikely to see many live performances, for obvious reasons. The sheer size of the undertaking is rather daunting. As stated above the Adam recording already maximizes the available disc space (c.78 minutes) by omitting numerous repeats. As performers of the *Goldberg Variations* will know, the difficult choice as to whether to preserve all the repeats, and thus run the risk of overtaxing both the performer's and audience's stamina, and their shared ability to concentrate (amounting to well over one hour of music without interval), is not a matter to be discarded lightly. Questions of internal balance and maintenance of the theme's bipartite structure come clearly to the fore both the Bach and Beethoven works, and also Diabelli's Part Two. This problem is further complicated by the presence of a number of through-composed settings, one of which is nearly 5 minutes in duration (Förster, No.8). It might appear unfair to deprive some settings of the chance to stand *in toto*, simply because they might initially appear 'excerptable' with removal of one or both repeats, when some other more verbose variations can not be reduced in size without drastic editorial cuts. The convention of varying otherwise literal repeats in classical era works is also drawn into the debate. The more technically demanding variations, which are mostly in faster tempi with brilliant figurations, do not easily invite such variance. In contrast, the simpler or slower variations might make their own case for such treatment, but time constraints overall might argue otherwise.

The present writer's own performance (in Brisbane, March 2009) endeavoured to reach a compromise. In order to focus on the element of contrast, deviations away from the home key, mood and structure of the theme were highlighted as much as possible. All those variations that did not conform to the C major bipartite waltz structure were played in full, while others whose overt musical interest is somewhat less on an initial hearing, were performed with only the first or neither repeat. The problem of the work's alphabetical ordering, and thus its implicit lack of an

overriding coherent structure, is also something to be addressed by any potential performer. Having made the decision to preserve the original order (though one might envisage a re-ordering), some rather self-evident groupings of variations can be devised. Thus the larger or more climactic variations can be set apart by generous breathing points, and thus provide an opportunity for performer and audience to pause and reflect. It is somewhat fortuitous that the original order resulted in some of the more virtuosic composers (the two Webers and Winkler in Nos. 45 to 47), and a group of ‘lull before the storm’ type settings (Weiss, Wittassek and Worzischek in Nos. 48 to 50), which together create a strong trajectory towards Czerny’s brilliant Coda finale. Audience feedback indicated that the work did demonstrate a certain coherence, but that it was obvious that some variations were more memorable than others: Schubert’s No.38 was the clear favourite. Surprisingly, some settings by well known composers seemed rather perfunctory in comparison to those by some of the *Kleinmeister*. It must also be recognized that the reliance on a single 16-bar theme is in itself a strong unifying force, even when a through-composed or contrapuntal treatment was the approach adopted.

### **Chronology of the Work’s Genesis within Diabelli’s Publishing Career**

An examination of the chronology of the *Vaterländischer Künstlerverein* and its collaborators reveals some interesting aspects that further inform study of its pedagogical or artistic aspects. Commentators disagree on the actual date the invitation went out from Diabelli to potential contributors (possibly in 1819), and it is not known which composers were invited but declined, except for Beethoven, who participated in any case via the Part One publication. No scholar has denigrated Beethoven for not wishing to be merely *primus inter pares*, particularly at that stage of his career. At the age of 50, he was already well underway with production of the final large-scale instrumental works, and also obsessed with the completion of the *Missa Solemnis* in honour of his pupil and patron Archduke Rudolph (who is also represented in Part Two No.40). Writing anything less substantial, let alone something appearing only in an anthology, would have been a much less interesting proposition.

Diabelli had only recently, in 1818, established himself as a full partner in the newly formed company of [Pietro] Cappi & Diabelli. Thus the idea of a ‘patriotic’ collective anthology would no doubt have been devised in part as a reputation-forming strategy. The earliest dated manuscript is Czerny’s No.4 (7<sup>th</sup> May 1819) and the latest is that by Wittassek’s No.49 (16<sup>th</sup> January 1824), thus nearly 5 years passed during the work’s genesis (Brosche, 1983, viii). While a full chronology is not possible, it is interesting to note that more than half of the dated manuscripts cite a time of completion in the

latter half of 1823 or early 1824. This possibly indicates that Diabelli was awaiting the neatly rounded and impressive number of 50 before going to print. In support of this theory, the final one received (from Wittassek) appears to have been the result of second thoughts due to the publisher's prompting reminders, as indicated by his rather lengthy apology for late submission (Brosche, 1983, p. 53).

In the meantime, Beethoven's work had been completed and published by Diabelli in mid-1823. One could suggest that the delay in producing the collective set, as per the original plan, was a deliberate ploy to ensure its success as a parallel work alongside a major work by the most famous living composer. Indeed, Diabelli's notice in the *Wiener Zeitung* on 9 July 1824 clearly refers to Beethoven's work as a form of self-validation (cited in Brosche, 1983, vii). Another interesting fact is that the new business name of 'Diabelli & Compagnie' is proudly listed on Part Two, as if to indicate that he no longer needed others' names to assert his pre-eminence as a publisher. Diabelli was later to acquire several other major publishers' operations during the 1830s (Weigl, Artaria and Leidesdorf), and he retained his commercial independence until retiring at the age of 70 in 1851, about 30 years after these early entrepreneurial efforts.

As well as coming at a critical point in his publishing career, the 'patriotic' aspiration was probably genuinely derived from Diabelli's own experiences during the Napoleonic years. His early career plan to enter holy orders was thwarted by the secularization of the monasteries in 1803, and he was already resident in Vienna during the French occupations of 1805 and 1809. The rise of a new world order that was the outcome of the Congress of Vienna was possibly another driving force for the celebration of local creativity. Many Viennese musicians were drawn into the spotlight during 1814-15, when most of the crowned heads and leaders of Europe converged on the city to deal with the Napoleonic problem. Viennese achievements such as advances in piano manufacturing were also witnessed by the visitors and endorsed by them through the dispersal of instruments to distant countries. These years also saw Beethoven's increasing preference for German language markings on his scores, while in the popular domain, the growth of various movements focusing on local culture and brotherhood were evident, such as the male-voice Liedertafel choral societies.

### **The 'Collective' Composition    Precedents and Sequels**

It is therefore not surprising that an upcoming musician like Diabelli, whose interest in publishing had grown from early experiences working as proofreader and also through self-initiated projects, would choose this type of project to make his mark on the musical landscape. A recent prototype

of a collective composition project was the *In questa tomba oscura* series of 1808-1814. This collection of 68 song settings of Carpani's short poem, by another group of 50 composers, interestingly includes six musicians that Diabelli would himself invite for the Waltz variation project. What is more relevant to piano repertoire is that his 1824 publication possibly became a model for a number of other collective works that appeared during the decade, including several anthologies to which quite a few of the same composers would contribute (see Table 1). The first of these, published by the rival firm of Sauer & Leidesdorf in January 1823, was possibly produced so as to pre-empt the coming to fruition of Diabelli's long-awaited project, but it included 'only' 40 composers. Having not yet appeared, despite a gestation period of three or four years, the 'Patriotic Artists' Association' was probably by then a point of active discussion amongst composers and publishers, but no-one could know its final dimensions. In this context it is interesting to note that two of the works appearing in 1825 perpetuated Diabelli's model of mid-1824, consisting of 50 individual composers including a Coda by one of their number, to provide a sense of cohesion and climax.

As Kahn (1971, p.80) notes, the genre of collectively created works involving the piano continued during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a predominance of variation sets. The *Preciosa Variations* (1833) was a joint work by Moscheles (who had featured in the 1824 set) and Mendelssohn, while both the *Hexaméron Variations* (1837) and the *Rule Britannia Variations* (1838) featured within their creative teams two triumvirates from the Diabelli group: Czerny-Liszt-Pixis and Hummel-Kalkbrenner-Moscheles respectively. A few later 19<sup>th</sup> century works appeared in Russia with some of the 'Mighty Handful' participating, and the case of the FAE sonata for violin and piano from the 1850s by Brahms, Schumann and Dietrich is well known. The phenomenon of joint compositions continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the *Album Des Six* (1921) for piano by the French 'Les Six' group, and the *Mont Juic* orchestral suite (1937) by Britten and Berkeley being cases in point.

### Diabelli's Team of Collaborators

The roster of composers includes not only well-known figures, but also virtuoso performers including some string players and a singer, various publishers, theory or performance teachers, theatre directors and Kappelmeisters, and a number of noble dilettantes. Thus Diabelli's plan was obviously to attempt coverage of the Viennese musical spectrum as fully as possible, without necessarily providing an exclusively keyboard perspective. Imperial politics also played a part, with inclusion of a number of Bohemian (10), Moravian (1) and Hungarian (2) musicians who were

variously based in Prague, Pest, Graz, as well as the capital itself. Various contributors derived from German states as far afield as Berlin, Mannheim or Trier (7), while 3 were from the previously independent state of Salzburg. Only 11 could claim to be Viennese by birth, but overall the vast majority were either based in Vienna around the time of this publication, or resided in the capital for the bulk of their working life. The careers of several contributors also indicate that a position in Vienna was not their ultimate goal. As the author of the earliest known study (Rietsch, 1905, p.440) noted, a number of distinct groups can be devised. Starting with the royal family and various dilettante nobles, groups of sacred or secular Kapellmeister, pedagogues and theorists, virtuoso pianists and string players emerge.

Before examining some of the more interesting figures in the collection, it is worth mentioning some of the eminent musicians that are not included. As noted by Brosche, there was probably a good reason why some leading figures did not contribute. Imperial Kapellmeister Salieri was already infirmed and died soon after in 1825, while Court Kapellmeister Joseph Eybler and Court opera director Joseph Weigl, and other musicians of similar stature such as Wenzel Müller, Adalbert Gyrowetz and Ignaz Ritter von Seyfried were probably either too busy or disinterested to respond (Brosche, 1983, vii). One senses that even some of the more famous contributors only participated out of a sense of collegial loyalty, but did not expend much creative energy on the project, for example Hummel (No.16) and Moscheles (No.26).

### **Keyboard Writing and Other Musical Attributes**

It is not surprising that keyboard prowess should figure prominently in the profile and output of some of these composers, since the variation genre has much in common with that of the *étude*. Carl Maria von Bocklet (No.2) was a virtuoso pianist who performed various solo and chamber works by Schubert and Beethoven, and is possibly the only treatment that aligns with Beethoven's general approach, in its use of hand crossings, trill motives, and register displacement. Quite extreme virtuosity is required by some composers whose collective output, otherwise virtually unknown, might reveal some similar technical challenges. This is seen in the double octave technique employed in Hüttenbrenner's variation (No.17), contrary motion octave leaps by Lannoy (No.22), and above all the mind-bobbling array of demands including double thirds, black vs. white note alternating chords, massive chordal leaps and a glissando in sixths by F.D. Weber (No.45). As if they were in collusion, the following two virtuoso variations by Franz Weber (No.46) and Winkhler (No.47) do not allow the pianist any opportunity to relax. Czerny's own variation (No.4) is rather mild in comparison, but his Coda bristles with technical demands, including

chromatic chordal progressions and figurations, series of 10<sup>th</sup> leaps, and extended passages of octaves in either hand. Given the contemporary fashion for piano arrangements of orchestral works, and the theatrical circles in which many of the Diabelli contributors worked, the use of orchestrally inspired textures also features here, most notably in the ‘quasi Overture’ setting by Drechsler (No.7).

In such a large work where the predictability of structure could become burdensome, one is thankful for even occasional departures from the home key. Thus Horzalka’s Field-like nocturne (No.14) in A-flat major, followed by the spritely setting in the same key by Huglmann (No.15) provide a timely moment of relief from C major, around the end of the work’s first quarter. Similarly Kerzkowsky’s variation (No.20), in the pastoral key of F major, is a welcome buffer between several highly animated settings on either side. Panny’s A minor variation (No.29) is similar well placed, and is set apart from the rest by its rather subtle referencing of the theme and clever use of registration. Riotte’s F minor / F major variation (No.34) explores the full range of the 6-octave keyboard, leading smoothly to the following variation in A-flat major by Roser (No.35). In turn, both Förster’s fugue within a ‘Capriccio’ (No.8) and Schenk’s through composed Caprice (No.36) modulate to the flat side of the tonic key. The final variation which departs from C major is Schubert’s slow waltz (No.38) in C minor. As Rietsch (1905, p.447) noted, it is a rather striking coincidence that of all the composers featured in Diabelli’s work, the two which have maintained an undiminished reputation, Schubert and Liszt (No.24), were the only ones to write their variation in the tonic minor key, and furthermore they share the same first name. The fact that Liszt provided some of the most enduring piano solo versions of Schubert’s Lieder is another point of contact, though it is not certain if the two ever met in person.

Several ‘genre’ pieces are to be found, which contribute an element of locality or periodicity. Mayseder’s variation (No.25) begins in the style of an Austrian Ländler (though this is not explicitly stated as such), while Tomaschek (No.43) offers a Polonaise. Counterpoint features in a few variations, either as an episode (Forster’s No.8), or as a fugato / invention treatment by Hoffmann (No.13). Sechter’s ‘Imitatio quasi Canon’ (No.39) admirably sets the listener up for the more extended ‘Fuga’ by Archduke Rudolph (No.40). At a time when strict counterpoint was viewed as a rather deliberate anachronism, it is possible that Rudolph might have personally felt an obligation to maintain the integrity of his input by offering what his former teacher Beethoven might have himself created, and to do so in grand style. The abrupt cadential progression to the chord of A flat, which resolves to the tonic via a German Sixth chord after being sustained for several bars, is also a clear Beethovenian touch.

## Personal Connections within Diabelli's Team and with Other Musicians

As might be expected from such a diverse group of contemporary musicians, there are a number of interesting personal and collegial relationships. At least ten of them, including Hummel (No.16), Gelinek (No.11) and Gänsbacher (No.10) had studied at some point with Albrechtsberger, one of the major longstanding teachers of counterpoint in Vienna. At least six, including Liszt, Schubert, Hüttenbrenner (No.17) and Moscheles (No.26) studied with Antonio Salieri, also a leading teacher and mentor. Quite a few held various positions in Viennese theatres, including the Theater and der Wien, the Kärntnertheater, and the theatres in Josefstadt and Leopoldstadt. In particular, Drechsler (No.7), Kreutzer (No.21) and Umlauff (No.44) were extensively engaged in one or more of these theatres over several decades, some of them achieving fame through their composition of successful operas such as Lannoy (No.22), Payer (No.30), Roser (No.35) and Schenk (No.36). A number were also involved in significant leadership positions in churches such as the Stefansdom (Gänsbacher No.10), the Schottenkirche (Assmayr No.1) and the Piaristenkirche (Plachy No.32) in Vienna, or the St Vitus Cathedral in Prague (Wittassek No.49). Another significant sub-group is those who were associated with the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna, the Styrian Music Society in Graz, or the Mozarteum in Salzburg, in particular Assmayr and Dietrichstein (No.6). Mosel (No.27) was custodian of the Imperial Library and founder of its important music collection.

Within Diabelli's cohort, a number had teacher-student relationships, the most well-known being Czerny and Liszt. The virtuoso Bocklet (No.2) had previously studied with Tomaschek (No.43) and F.D. Weber (No.45) in Prague, Liedesdorf (No.23) and Schoberlechner (No.37) had studied with Förster (No.8), while Dietrichstein (No.6) had studied with Mosel (No.27). In similar vein, Dietrichstein was closely connected with the young Schubert, having set some of the same texts some years before him, and was himself the dedicatee of Op.1, the famed *Erlikönig*, also published by Diabelli. A large number of them had longstanding involvement as pedagogues, working either in private practice, within noble households, self-founded music schools, or in prestigious institutions in various parts of Europe. A few also left major theoretical or pedagogical treatises, such as Bocklet, Kalkbrenner (No.18) and Sechter (No.39).

A number of composers are most interesting because of their associations with other musicians whose time was yet to come. For example, Czapek (No.3) later became a close friend of Chopin. He was instrumental in making his Polish friend's Viennese sojourn pleasant and

enjoyable, having previously spent some years teaching at the Warsaw Conservatory (Tarantová, 1983, p.34). Some of the violin works by Panny (No.29) were played by none other than Paganini. Sechter (No.39) was one of the most influential theorists and teachers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, counting Bruckner amongst his students at the Vienna Conservatory. Joachim Hoffmann (No.13) founded a private music school whose students included Johann Strauss II. Moscheles (No.26) was one of Mendelssohn's most loyal colleagues, moving at his invitation from a successful career in London to take up a teaching position in the newly established Leipzig Conservatory, where he remained for the rest of his life. Further afield, the influence of Diabelli's collective was to be seen through figures such as Kalkbrenner (No.18) whose students in Paris included Stamaty, the teacher of Saint-Saens. Even more far-reaching is the influence of Schoberlechner (No.37) who spent several years in St Petersburg where he taught Dargomysky, the teacher of Glinka and therefore one of the founders of the Russian school.

Quite a few of the composers knew Michael and/or Josef Haydn and Mozart, or studied with Albrechtberger and/or Salieri, and thus were part of the core tradition of Austrian classicism. The inclusion of the younger surviving son of Mozart (No.28) would have been a deliberate move by Diabelli to ensure that a certain aura of legitimacy of Austrian heritage was attained. Although he was born in Vienna, and visited several times before settling there at the end of his career, W.A. Mozart *fil's* was mainly a resident musician in Lemberg and thus a less likely inclusion compared to some others represented. A retrospective and more direct connection with this composer's famous father was via Freystädler (No.9), also a native of Salzburg, and who was immortalized in one of Mozart's humorous canons, K.232. The posthumous controversy over the score of Mozart's Requiem drew forth intervention by Mosel (No.27) and commentary by Stadler (No.41). Many were also associated with Beethoven as working colleagues, such as Umlauf (No.44). He was sometimes the shadow conductor during his master's later public appearances, where extreme deafness prevented his taking any effective leadership of the ensembles. Another connection is via Joseph Czerny (No.5) who was engaged at one time to teach Beethoven's nephew Carl. Two of the composers were regular members of the famed Schuppanzigh String Quartet which figure prominently in the early reception history of Beethoven's works, namely the violinist Mayseder (No.25) and the violist Weiss (No.48). Various contributors were equally familiar with Schubert, the most notable probably Hüttenbrenner (No.17) at whose home *Die Forelle* was composed, and who retained custody of the 'Unfinished' Symphony for many years after the composer's death. Bocklet (No.2) was well known for his performances of Beethoven and Schubert, which included some premieres and in turn dedications such as the latter composer's sonata D.850.

The ages and stages of life of these contributors are also quite interesting. The well respected teacher A.E. Förster wrote the longest setting of all (No.8 - 294 bars). This composer unfortunately did not live to see this work in print, passing away in November 1823 at the age of 75. However, he is not the oldest of the group: Rieger (No.33) lived to the age of 91, Stadler (No.41) to 85, and Riotte (No.34) to 80, and in all there are 6 octogenarians and 16 septuagenarians. At the time of publication in 1824, the average age of all the composers involved was 41, but this does not fully reveal the wealth of life experience that the lives of these 50 (or 51 including Diabelli himself) musicians encompassed. The earliest birthdate and latest date of death are nearly 140 years apart, which means that this work represents possibly the broadest timespan of any known composition: the oldest were born just as the baroque style was waning, and the youngest saw the final phases of romanticism. The youngest was Liszt, an ‘11-year old youth from Hungary’ whose very first published composition was his C minor variation on Diabelli’s waltz (No.24).

### **Pedagogical and Performative Issues**

The pedagogical and scholarly opportunities that one’s investigation of lesser known works and composers offer are not to be underestimated. More so than most other historical periods, the active repertoire dating from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries has been dominated for most of the past 150 years been by the outputs of a relatively small number of composers. The seeming universality of the musical language of the so-called classical era has meant that an increasing familiarity with fewer works and composers has been evident, including some who are cornerstones of the entire western musical canon. This situation has been changing in recent decades, particularly with the rise of the early music movement, so that today the keyboard works of Dussek, Hummel, Moscheles, and Field are more frequently studied, performed and recorded, while it is also now possible to investigate more under-represented figures such as Tomaschek, Vorzichek, Jadin, and Pleyel. Even well-known composers who have traditionally been relegated to ‘teaching repertoire’ status, such as Czerny and Clementi, have been undergoing a major re-evaluation. Diversification beyond the ‘big four’ is now more commonplace than previously. However, given the continuing predominance of the canon of active repertoire, and the constant revisiting of the central figures through ever more analyses and scholarly studies, it is inevitable that the better known composers will remain so.

A work such as Diabelli’s Variations reveals just how many new opportunities await those musicians willing to broaden these horizons. Through the process of preparation and performance, the benefits of

examining such a singular, but internally diverse, work can be quite varied and profuse. Firstly, a large number of composers would be investigated for the first time, including many who have hardly left a trace elsewhere in the literature. The experience of performing just the single variation found in this context has left the current writer with a desire to further investigate the Bohemians Czapek, Tomaschek, F.D. Weber, Wittassek and Worzischek. The reputation of Bohemia as being ‘the conservatoire of Europe’ in the 18<sup>th</sup> century clearly had a strong basis in fact, even if one only had these miniature to judge them by. Similarly the Viennese Horzalka, Kerzkowsky, Panny, and Schenk are quite interesting voices that merit further familiarisation. One can not predict where the next major discovery of forgotten genius will occur: many figures readily accessible today (such as Vivaldi) were virtually unknown only two or three generations ago.

The Diabelli Variations need not be studied *en bloc* – excerpting of a few sample variations would be eminently possible. For example, Schubert’s variation (No.38) would make for a delightful encore, or as part of a bracket of his shorter pieces. The Freystädler (No.9), Horzalka (No.14), Kerzkowsky (No.20), and Panny (No.29) contributions would each easily stand alone on a program or as a selection in company with a few of other, perhaps less distinctive variations. Some of the variations are relatively simple and so would be approachable by an intermediate level student – for example the Joseph Czerny (No.5), Moscheles (No.26), Stadler (No.41), and Umlauff (No.44). Having commenced with some of these less challenging variations, a student could easily move upwards in level of difficulty, since there are many which are only marginally more complex.

A further concept could be for a group of students to collectively study the whole work or excerpts. Thus a collaborative project could result perhaps in a whole-of-studio recital, presented in relay fashion. Such an ‘anthology’ would not be dissimilar to the many student recitals that already take place regularly. However the experience of being part of a larger entity is not something that can be easily created by less experienced musicians without some collaboration. Just as the compositional aspect of this unusual work was a collective effort, might not it also be studied and performed in similar vein, with the theme being the binding rationale? This could equally apply to other piano sets which have varying technical demands from one piece to the next. Different levels of performer could participate on an equal basis, and yet have the experience of contributing to a more major event than is possible on their own. Pianists are all too easily prone to a solitary existence, just like their composing colleagues, but this syndrome need not be their only *modus operandi*.

If one did wish to attempt the entire work, one would have specific challenges to address. Beyond the basic technical demands, which are considerable when viewed as a complete work, there is the issue of transferring the lighter and more transparent textures of early 19<sup>th</sup> century repertoire to a modern instrument. The recordings referred to above are all made using a modern grand, but a period instrument would be even more satisfying for all participants, as the present writer's recent experience demonstrated on a Viennese instrument built in the early 1820s. In the absence of a visible performance tradition with virtually no recorded heritage, the pianist must converse with such a score in a different way to standard repertoire. Having made interpretative decisions, there also arises a different type of performance experience by which both pianist and listener knowingly engages with a novel experience of discovery, just as one might do if a world première were taking place. Equally important is the need to be utterly convincing with an unknown work, which the listener might not ever hear again. The performer's obligation to a lesser known composer is even more apparent in a case like this. Performance preparation for such a diverse work is another slightly unusual challenge, but not insurmountable. With the use of a detailed practice diary that plots progress on each variation, while also tracking the development of the whole interpretation, is one workable strategy.

## Conclusions

There are many interesting aspects to Diabelli's 'Patriotic Artists' Association,' either in the context of Beethoven's monumental contribution in the more famous Part One, or through the other circles that his 50 contemporaries represent. Taking this virtual 'snapshot' of musical life around 1820 in Vienna, the Austrian Imperial states and beyond, Diabelli produced a rare insight into the inordinate diversity of contributions by so many musicians whose names are less familiar today than they deserve. The tantalizing insights into many unfamiliar composers could well lead one into an exciting journey of discovery and thus increase the repertoire base beyond the familiar names of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The contribution of some major figures of that time, including some whose star was yet to rise fully, demonstrates that musicians do collaborate effectively and productively when the right circumstances exist. The notion of the solo pianist or composer as a primary or exclusive form of musical expression can and should be challenged in today's environment. This work is also part of a reasonably strong tradition of jointly created compositions from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, which are also worthy of further exploration.

There would be many different ways to approach Diabelli's Part Two, either in full or selectively, with the binding concept of a central theme as a

starting point. A vibrant teaching studio with students of different levels could take on the study of such a work in this way, and perhaps even contribute further. Some original improvisations or newly composed variations could be based on what has proved to be a most fecund, if somewhat unassuming, 32-bar Waltz in C major. At first glance the concept of a rather random collection of 50 composers' settings being published side by side in alphabetical order could easily qualify as a musical monstrosity. It is hoped that the wealth of personal interconnections and the various interesting features within the individual contributions, as outlined in this paper, will support the notion that in fact it is a most extraordinary and fascinating monument.

#### About the Author

Professor Peter Roennfeldt is Director of Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, where he lectures in music literature and co-ordinates early music and choral programs. A graduate of the Universities of Queensland and Adelaide, he also holds a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Cincinnati where he studied with Béla Siki. His research areas include aspects of piano repertoire, baroque vocal genres, and the social history of Australian music. He is immediate past president of the National Council of Tertiary Music Schools, current President of the Australian National Choral Association, and convened the 2001 Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference in Brisbane.

#### Contact Details

Professor Peter Roennfeldt, Director Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University  
PO Box 3428 SOUTH BRISBANE BC QLD 4101  
[p.roennfeldt@griffith.edu.au](mailto:p.roennfeldt@griffith.edu.au)

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Table 1. Diabelli's *Vaterländischer Künstlerverein* Part 2 and other early 19C collective works

	Composer	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Theme	Anton Diabelli (1781-1858)										
Var 1	Ignaz Altmayer (1790-1862)					✓					
Var 2	Carl Maria von Bocklet (1801-1881)			✓							
Var 3	Leopold Eustache Czapek (c1790-1840)			✓	✓	✓					
Var 4	Carl Czerny (1791-1857) [and Coda]	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Var 5	Joseph Czerny (1785-1842)			✓		✓					
Var 6	Moritz Graf von Dietrichstein (1775-1864)										
Var 7	Joseph Drechsler (1782-1852)			✓							
Var 8	Emanuel Aloys Förster (1748-1823)	✓									
Var 9	Franz Jakob Freystädler (1768-1841)										
Var 10	Johann Baptist Gänsbacher (1778-1844)										
Var 11	Josef (Abbé) Gelinek (1758-1825)	✓									
Var 12	Anton Halm (1789-1872)										
Var 13	Joachim Hoffmann (1788-c1856)			✓			✓	✓			
Var 14	Johann Horzalka (1798-1860)		✓			✓	✓	✓			
Var 15	Joseph Huglmann (1768-1839)										
Var 16	Johann Nepomuk Hummel (1778-1837)					✓	✓				✓
Var 17	Anselm Hüttenbrenner (1794-1868)					✓					
Var 18	Frédéric Kalkbrenner (1785-1849)										✓
Var 19	Friedrich August Kanne (1778-1833)										
Var 20	Joseph Kerzkowsky (1791-?)					✓					
Var 21	Conradin Kreutzer (1780-1849)			✓		✓	✓	✓			
Var 22	Heinrich Eduard Josef v. Lannoy (1787-1853)					✓	✓	✓			
Var 23	Maximilian Joseph Leidesdorf (1787-1840)		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
Var 24	Franz Liszt (1811-1886)									✓	
Var 25	Joseph Mayseder (1789-1863)										
Var 26	Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870)										✓
Var 27	Ignaz Franz Edler von Mosel (1772-1844)										
Var 28	Franz Xaver Wolfgang Mozart jnr. (1791-1844)										
Var 29	Joseph Panny (1794-1838)										
Var 30	Hieronimus Payer (1787-1845)		✓		✓						
Var 31	Johann Peter Pixis (1788-1874)		✓							✓	
Var 32	Wenzel Plachy (1785-1858)					✓	✓	✓			
Var 33	Gottfried Rieger (1754-1855)										
Var 34	Philipp Jacob Riotte (1776-1856)			✓		✓	✓	✓			
Var 35	Franz de Paula Roser (1779-1830)										
Var 36	Johann Baptist Schenk (1753-1836)										
Var 37	Franz Schoberlechner (1797-1843)		✓								
Var 38	Franz Schubert (1797-1828)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Var 39	Simon Sechter (1788-1867)					✓					
Var 40	S.R.D. Archduke Rudolph (1788-1831)										
Var 41	Maximilian (Abbé) Stadler (1748-1835)										
Var 42	Josephe de Szalay (1800-1860)					✓					
Var 43	Wenzel Johann Tomaschek (1774-1850)	✓									
Var 44	Michael Umlauf (1781-1842)			✓			✓				
Var 45	Friedrich Dionisius Weber (1766-1842)	✓					✓	✓			
Var 46	Franz Weber (1805-1876)					✓					
Var 47	Charles Angelus de Winkhler (1800-1845)										
Var 48	Franz Weiss (1778-1830)			✓			✓	✓			
Var 49	Johann Nepomuk August Wittassek (1770-1839)										
Var 50	Jan Hugo Worizchek (1791-1825)		✓								

A = 'In questa tomba oscura' 1808-1814, 68 settings of a poem by Guiseppe Carpani.

B = 'Carnival 1823' A Collection of Original German Dances for the Pianoforte', pub. Sauer & Leidesdorf, 1823.

C = 'Musical Souvenir' a collection of 40 Waltzes for the pianoforte, pub. Weigl, 1824.

D = 'Let's stick together' original Austrian dances, pub. Sauer & Leidesdorf, 1825.

E = 'Terpsichore' a collection of 50 wholly new German dances, with Coda by Czapek, pub. Mechetti, 1825.

F = 'Be welcome again!' sequel to 'Musical Souvenir' of 1825, with 50 New Waltzes and Coda, pub. Sauer & Leidesdorf, 1825.

G = 'Seriousness and Playfulness,' various minuets, eossaises, quadrilles, cotillons and gallops, pub. Sauer & Leidesdorf, 1825.

H = 'New Dances of Gotham', pub. Sauer & Leidesdorf, 1826.

I = 'Hexaméron' Variations on Theme from Bellini's 'I Puritani', 1837.

J = 'Rule Britannia' Variations, pub. Schlesinger, 1838.

Full details of the publication notices of the Viennese piano works are to be found in: Deutsch, Otto Erich. (1946). Trans. Eric Blom. *Schubert, A Documentary Biography*. London: Dent.