

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) — Piano Concerto in G major op. 58 (arr. Lachner)

Often thought to be the finest of all Beethoven's concerti, Beethoven's revolutionary character is present in even the very first chord, the earliest example of a concerto beginning a concerto unaccompanied.

Composed simultaneously with the *Symphony in E-flat op. 55 'Eroica'*, the *Triple Concerto op. 56* and the *Piano Sonata op. 57 'Appassionata'* —very much at the height of Beethoven's powers—publically premiered on the 22nd of December 1808, in a four hour concert in an unheated *Theater an der Wien*, which also featured the premiers of the 5th and 6th *Symphonies*, *Choral Fantasy* and more! Although the concerto was well received in its time, many pianists were slower to take the concerto into their repertoire, sometimes regarded as being the 'lady's concerto', perhaps for its lack of masculine piano writing in favour of softer figurations. The concerto grew in popularity as Mendelssohn began to play it frequently and played it in his last London concert in 1846.

The cadenzas are by Leopold Godowsky, Polish-American virtuoso. Exalted as '*ein Hexenmeister der Technik*', a 'wizard of technique' - most known for his arrangement of other composers' works, epitomised in the fatally difficult *53 Studies on Chopin's Études*. These cadenzas display Godowsky's unfathomable technical skill on the piano, yet also his highly individual composition style. The arrangement for string quintet and piano was made by Vincenz Lachner, published in 1881, and re-edited by Eden Walker in 2016/17. Lachner was from a very musical family, both of his brothers also as composers and all highly involved with the musically rich environment of late 19th century Germany.