

Charles Rosen

Piano

Sunday, October 24th, 1982
Arts Club Theatre
Granville Island

3rd Season 1982 — 1983



vancouver
Recital
Society

Programme

Sonata in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2
Allegro vivace
Largo appassionato
Scherzo: allegretto
Rondo: grazioso

Beethoven
(1770—1827)

Sonata quasi una fantasia in c sharp minor
Op. 27, No. 2 (Moonlight)
Adagio sostenuto
Allegretto
Presto agitato

Intermission

Dichtungen (Fantasy in C Major), Op. 17

Schumann
(1810—1856)

“Through all of life’s varied sounds, there runs one secret tone, for the man who knows how to listen.” F. Schlegel

1. Ruins — Legend
2. Arch of Triumph
3. Constellation

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Thank you . . .

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Programme Notes

by Charles Rosen

Unfortunately, Mr. Rosen's notes for Beethoven Sonata in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2 were not available at time of printing.

Beethoven Sonata in c sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 (Moonlight)

A performance of the Moonlight sonata in a hall seating three thousand people would be an absurdity if one hoped to realize Beethoven's expectations of what the music would sound like. The extraordinary delicacy of the "almost fantasy-like" first movement, the veiled mist of pedal that Beethoven directed for this piece, and the subtle nuances of the dynamics make this the most intimate of his piano sonatas. (Only two of his sonatas, in fact, were played publicly in Vienna during his lifetime, and the solo piano is actually less public than the string quartets.)

It is, paradoxically, just this intimate character that has given the work its immense and enduring fame as well as its sentimental and, by now, indelible title. The Moonlight sonata provides the public with the irreplaceable experience of hearing something that appears to be a private improvisation. Even when played only in the salons of Vienna, it became immediately famous — so famous that Beethoven grew tired of hearing it praised, and became resentful. "I have written much better pieces," he said.

The lyricism of the first two movements is complementary: the first, melancholy and brooding; the second, resignedly and gracefully cheerful. This second movement, a Scherzo, retains the dance rhythm of the old minuet.

The finale, on the other hand, is ostentatiously and deliberately too big for salon performance, and it explodes with a concerto-like, and even symphonic, virtuosity. The passion of this movement was unequalled in Beethoven's keyboard music before the *Apassionata*. The Moonlight reunites the extremes of public and private music, and breaks down the framework of Beethoven's concert world and of our own.

Schumann Dichtungen (Fantasy in C Major) Op. 17

The Schumann *Fantasy in C*, Opus 17 (originally titled *Dichtungen*, or *Poetic Creations*) was written as a homage to Beethoven and dedicated to Liszt, who had proposed that a number of German composers each contribute a work to be sold to raise money for a monument to Beethoven: the *Fantasy* was Schumann's contribution.

With the opening measures, we are already in a different world from Beethoven's. The first note of the left hand is to be given a sharp accent but all others are played *piano* with the pedal down, and contain in this blurred form the notes of the main theme. The theme is played *fortissimo* by the right hand over the soft accompaniment — as if the melody gave shape to what is only indicated, unformed and chaotic, in the harmony. The first theme, like all the other themes of this movement, is derived from the last song of Beethoven's song cycle *To the Distant Beloved*, but we do not know that until the end of the movement: on the last page (which has also, astonishingly, the first C major cadence in a work that is, however, clearly in C major), we hear a literal quotation of Beethoven's theme, which has inspired everything in this movement. This is the first work in history in which the basic material is stated only at the end.

The first movement was originally called *Ruins* (Schumann cancelled the titles on publication). It is in something like sonata form with a trio (entitled *Legend*) in place of a development. The principal tempo mark is "to be played fantastically and passionately throughout."

The second movement, called *Arch of Triumph*, is in a march tempo: "Moderately, and always energetically." It has a relentless, almost hypnotic dotted rhythm for most of its length, with a much more lyrical middle section, heavily syncopated, and an exhilarating coda in a somewhat faster tempo, with the famous brilliant skips for both hands in contrary motion.

The final movement is in a slow tempo, and was entitled *Constellation*. It originally ended like the first movement with the theme of *To the Distant Beloved*. One theme, however, recalls the entrance of the solo piano in the slow movement of the Beethoven *Emperor* Concerto and another theme based on a passage from his Seventh Symphony. This finale is an extraordinary expressive improvisation, repeated once with some variants. Schumann tried hard to compose away from the piano as Mozart and Beethoven had done, but he did his finest work improvising at the keyboard. The beautiful finale of the *Fantasy* is the result of much improvisation: it is, as Schumann himself said, the kind of music to which the composer would surrender himself for hours.

The motto on the first page of the *Fantasy* comes from the poet and philosopher Friedrich Schlegel, who wrote that manifesto of German romanticism.

The version played this evening is that of the original manuscript in Budapest, before changes were made for publication. Beside the altered ending and the cancelled titles, other small melodic changes were made in the last movement, and a few passages in the middle movement were made easier by Schumann. The changes all tended to make the work less personal and even less intelligible.

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Meet the Artist

Charles Rosen has an international reputation not only as one of the foremost pianists of our time but also as a scholar of extraordinary perception in the field of musical history and analysis.

Born in New York City, he was enrolled at the Juilliard School of Music at the age of six. Five years later he left Juilliard to begin studying under Moritz Rosenthal, a pupil of Liszt. He was also taught by Rosenthal's wife, Hedwig, a pupil of Leschetizky. In 1951, the year he completed his doctorate, he made a memorable *début* in New York and launched a phenomenal performing career.

Since then he has been showered with many honours including a Guggenheim Award and honorary doctorates from Trinity College, Dublin and the University of Leeds in England. As the incumbent of the Charles Eliot Norton Chair of Poetry at Harvard in 1980—81, Mr. Rosen joined the illustrious company of such luminaries as Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, e.e. cummings, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Ben Shahn and Igor Stravinsky. His Norton lectures will be published in book and cassette form by the Harvard University Press. Mr. Rosen's best known books are *The Classical Style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*, picked by the London Times as the best book of 1971, *Arnold Schonberg and Music - Public and Private, 1750-1850* and *Sonata Form*, which was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

Charles Rosen is a distinguished recording artist. His diverse and prolific discography on Columbia Masterworks, Vanguard, Odyssey and Nonesuch, includes works by Beethoven, Scarlatti, Haydn, Mozart, Brahms, Liszt, Chopin, Schumann, Schubert, Martinu, Debussy, Ravel, Bartok, and Schonberg. Among his most acclaimed recordings are two three-record sets, *The Last Keyboard Works of Johan Sebastian Bach* and *The Last Six Beethoven Sonatas*. His recent recording of Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* was nominated for a Grammy Award.

This is Mr. Rosen's first appearance in Vancouver.



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Mira Zakai, Contralto

with Mikael Eliassen, Piano.

Sunday, November 28th, 1982 at 8 p.m.

Alte Liebe, Op. 72 No. 1	Brahms
Verzagen, Op. 72 No. 4	Brahms
Über die Heide, Op. 86 No. 4	Brahms
Wieraft ich mut auf, Op. 32 No. 1	Brahms
Meine liebe ist grün, Op. 63 No. 5.....	Brahms
Dein blaues augen, Op. 59 No. 8	Brahms
Der gang zum liebchen, Op. 48 No. 1	Brahms
Spändchen	Brahms
Four Serious Songs, Op. 121	Brahms
Liederkreis Op. 39 (12 songs).....	Schumann