

Élégie gives evidence of Chopin's influence, while the *Humoresque* is redolent of the music of Rachmaninoff's compatriot, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky.

Schumann's inspired and significant *Symphonic Etudes in the Form of Variations* was written when he was only twenty-four years old. The pianistic writing of these etudes requires technique of a superior order. They run the gamut from capricious and alluring, through clamorous and demonic, to highly poetic and sensuous. On this program, Anne Koscielny plays the twelve variations Schumann included in his original publication of the work.

There are five additional variations that Schumann wrote at the same time but did not include initially. These were added after his death by Johannes Brahms, who edited the work and published it in 1873 in a supplementary volume of his *Complete Works of Schumann*.

Program notes by Elmer Booze

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

For the convenience of concertgoers the Garden Café remains open until 6:30 p.m.

The Sixty-second Season of

THE WILLIAM NELSON CROMWELL and
F. LAMMOT BELIN CONCERTS

National Gallery of Art



2488th Concert

ANNE KOSCIELNY, *pianist*

Sunday Evening, 7 March 2004
Seven O'clock
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

and teacher Raymond Hanson, now live in Massachusetts, where she remains active as a recitalist, orchestral soloist, chamber musician, and lecturer.

Program Notes

Haydn's *Sonata in A Major, Hob. XVII/26*, is the last of a group of six known as the *Esterházy* sonatas. Haydn dedicated them in 1773 to Prince Nicholas Esterházy, in whose service he was employed from 1761 to 1776. The work opens with the classical sonata-allegro format: exposition, development, and recapitulation. The second movement (*Menuetto al rovescio*) contains an unusual feature for Haydn, a *rovescio*, or palindrome. When the first theme of the movement is repeated, it is played backwards (retrograde). The same technique is used when the theme of the trio section is repeated. The finale (*Presto*) is a dazzling *moto perpetuo* of only forty seconds' duration.

Chopin's waltzes embody the charm and sophistication inherent in his musical expression. They are consistent in their ABA format, which is also common to Chopin's mazurkas, etudes, nocturnes, and polonaises. He apparently intended his early waltzes as music for dancing as well as for listening. John Gillespie says of the waltzes: "In the early waltzes, titled *Valses brillantes*, Chopin reminisces about souvenirs of a ball: resplendent costumes, sparkling illumination, and graceful dancers. Not long after, however, Chopin stylized his waltz form to the 'salon' waltz, his special creation" (*Five Centuries of Keyboard Music*). *Three Brilliant Waltzes* is the collective title of *Op. 34*, from which Anne Koscielny has selected the *Waltz No. 3 in F Major*. Nicknamed the "*Cat Waltz*," it is a virtuoso showpiece designed to please the listener.

The loveliness of Chopin's *Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2*, is consistent with the presumption that he wrote it as he was planning to marry his beloved Maria Wodzinska (the union never materialized). The work presents a seamless lyrical melody born of a single theme. It incorporates thirds and sixths in a manner reminiscent of a love scene from the operatic composer Bellini, whose music Chopin adored. The American

writer on music, James Huneker (1857–1921), described this nocturne as "a song of the sweet summer of two souls, for there is obvious meaning in the duality of voices."

The polonaise is a Polish processional dance in three-quarter time and moderate tempo. According to *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the French name dates from the seventeenth century. In its numerous forms, the polonaise served both peasants and courtiers. Enormous in proportion, Chopin's *Polonaise in F-sharp Minor, Op. 44*, reaches beyond the boundaries of a peasant or ceremonial dance to become a battle cry of defiance that remains one of music's strongest patriotic utterances. The work possesses an unrelenting rhythmic drive that is reinforced with surging octaves, making it difficult to execute and therefore infrequently heard on recital programs. Conforming to Chopin's preferred ABA format, the work opens with a section marked *Moderato* that is merely an introductory statement for the ensuing muscular polonaise. The stirring strains eventually give way to the B section, a mazurka that functions as a trio. The mood at this juncture is restive and full of yearning. The opening section (A) returns when the introductory statement is heard in the form of repeated scale passages, after which Chopin introduces a rambunctious coda. He cuts the form short, however, with a blatant outcry of defiance, a singular chord that ends the work.

If Chopin was the quintessential composer of virtuoso miniature piano pieces in the nineteenth century, then his twentieth-century counterpart would have to have been Rachmaninoff, whose *Études-tableaux (Opp. 33 and 39)* were a "farewell to the medium of the small virtuoso piano pieces," according to the French writer Heuwel Tircuit. Within Rachmaninoff's miniature tone-poems one finds some of his most powerful and kaleidoscopic mood statements. Rendering them properly and authoritatively requires a combination of peerless technique and mental acuity found only in the elite among pianists. The *Étude tableau, Op. 39, No. 9, in D Major*, is an intrepid "oriental march" that is uncompromising in its technical and physical demands. Both the *Élégie, Op. 3, No. 1*, and the *Humoresque, Op. 10, No. 5*, are youthful works, but even they require a fluent technique and are not for the faint-hearted. The