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.

ANNE KOSCIELNY, pianist

Sunday Evening, 7 March 2004
Seven O’clock
West Building, West Garden Court
Admission free
Program

Joseph Haydn
(1732–1809)
Sonata in A Major, Hob. XVI/26
(1773)
Allegro moderato
Minuetto al rovescio
Finale: Presto

Frederic Chopin
(1810–1849)
Waltz in F Major
Op. 34, No. 3 (1838)
Nocturne in D-flat Major
Op. 27, No. 2 (1835)
Polonaise in F-sharp Minor
Op. 44 (1840–1841)
Élégie in E-flat Major
from Morceaux de fantaisie, Op. 3 (1892)
Humoresque in G Major
from Morceaux de salon, Op. 10
(1893–1894, rev. 1940)
Étude tableau in D Major
Op. 39, No. 9 (1916–1917)

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873–1943)
Humoresque in G Major
from Morceaux de salon, Op. 10
(1893–1894, rev. 1940)

Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)
Symphonic Etudes in the Form of Variations
Op. 13 (1834–1837)

The Musician

A native of Florida, Anne Koscielny began piano studies at age six. She has performed in solo recitals since she was ten years old and has appeared with many orchestras and chamber music ensembles throughout the United States, Central America, Europe, and Asia. Her London debut in 1972 was received with great critical success. The Daily Telegraph noted Koscielny’s “fire and feeling...outstanding interpretations...power and control. This was a remarkable debut.” The winner of many awards and prizes, including first prizes in the Kosciuszko Chopin Competition in New York City and the National Guild of Piano Teachers Recording Competition, Koscielny received the bachelor of music degree with distinction and a performer’s certificate from the Eastman School of Music. She received scholarships from the Manhattan School of Music, where she earned the master of music degree, and from the Fulbright Foundation for two years of study in Vienna, Austria.

Anne Koscielny’s reputation as a master pianist has been firmly established by her four previous performances at the National Gallery (1963, 1986, 1991, and 1995) and by numerous concerts for the Washington Performing Arts Society and the Phillips Collection. As a convention artist for many state music teachers’ associations, she has played and lectured in Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Georgia. Other concerts, master classes, lectures, and workshops have taken her to more than seventy-five college and university campuses. Koscielny has adjudicated several competitions, including the Fulbright Screening Committee in New York City, the Gina Bachauer Competition, the Maryland International Piano Competition, and the Young Keyboard Artists’ Association. In May 2002 she traveled to China, where she gave recitals, lectures, and master classes in Shenyang, Yantai, and Xiamin, and several other cities.

Koscielny has held professorships of music at the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut, the University of Maryland at College Park, and the Eastman School of Music, where she was a visiting professor during the spring term of 2002. She and her husband, pianist
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. XVI/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, études, 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 C-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