



*International
Presentations of
Music & Dance*

THE UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

André Watts

Pianist

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 2, 1988, AT 8:00
HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

PROGRAM

- Sonata in C major, Hob. XVI/48 (L. 58) HAYDN
Andante con espressione
Rondo: presto
- Sonata in F major, K. 332 MOZART
Allegro
Adagio
Allegro assai
- Four Piano Pieces, Op. 119 BRAHMS
Intermezzo in B minor: adagio
Intermezzo in E minor: andantino un poco agitato
Intermezzo in C major: grazioso e giocoso
Rhapsody in E-flat major: allegro risoluto

INTERMISSION

- Sonata in A minor, Op. 143, D. 784 SCHUBERT
Allegro giusto
Andante
Allegro vivace
- Fantasy in C major, Op. 15, D. 760 ("Wanderer") SCHUBERT
Allegro con fuoco, ma non troppo
Adagio
Presto
Allegro

Mr. Watts performs on a Yamaha Piano, provided by King's Keyboard House.

The University Musical Society acknowledges with thanks the generosity of Ford Motor Company Fund for underwriting the printing costs of this program.

This performance is made possible in part by a grant through the Music Program of the National Endowment for the Arts in support of American performing artists.

Cameras and recording devices are not allowed in the auditorium.

Halls Cough Tablets, courtesy of Warner-Lambert Company, are available in the lobby.

PROGRAM NOTES by LEONARD BURKAT

Sonata in C major, Hob. XVI/48 (L. 58) FRANZ JOSEPH HAYDN
(1732-1809)

Haydn was not really a pianist, but in the course of his long life as a musician he wrote more than fifty works that explore and display the greatly varied forms that can be called piano sonatas. He composed sonatas in two, three, and four movements, and there is probably more diversity in them than in his quartets and symphonies, of which he wrote many more. They were generally not "public" music but "private," to be played at home for the pleasure of the performer, not on a concert platform for a public audience.

Around 1784, he composed a set of three two-movement sonatas for one of the Esterházy princesses, but during the next few years other projects occupied him and it was five years before he wrote another, this work in C major, which was commissioned by a publisher for a collection called *Musical Potpourri*, issued in 1789. This is also in two movements, one slow and the other fast, which sometimes gives the impression that the composer had perhaps never gotten around to writing a conventional sonata-allegro to precede them. The two movements, however, are large in scale and make a work that is sufficient as it stands. The first movement is a set of variations on a long three-part theme, *Andante con espressione*, and the second is a big symphonic rondo, *Presto*, with a main subject that is not the usual symmetrical four measures in length, but, surprisingly, five.

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Sonata in F major, K. 332 WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
(1756-1791)

Until quite recently, it seemed certain that Mozart had composed many piano sonatas in Paris during the summer of 1778, but new studies of his manuscripts indicate that some date from the time he spent in Munich during the winter of 1780-1781. It is quite possible that they were conceived in Paris but not set down on paper until Munich. When they were first published, in 1784 in Vienna, they had undergone further revision. Perhaps a gestation of six long years, almost a quarter of the young composer's lifetime to date, accounts for the perfection of these works, which accounts in turn for their popularity.

This F-major Sonata, K. 332, begins with an *Allegro* movement so rich in subject matter, melodic ideas pouring out so freely, so full of almost orchestral sounds, that when the point arrives at which they should be discussed and developed, there simply is not time for all of them. The slow movement is a profound *Adagio* in three parts. In Mozart's manuscript, when the original idea returns after the contrasting central section, it is relatively simply restated, but performers of the time would have altered and ornamented this music on its return. For the first edition of the sonata, Mozart wrote out his own elaborations — which may tell us how he would have played it himself, or else is simply what he thought suitable for the amateur musicians for whom such editions were then intended. The last movement, *Allegro assai*, is a brilliant *tour de force*, yet not just a virtuoso show piece but music that remains personal and intimate as it makes its forceful way to its surprisingly quiet ending.

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Four Piano Pieces, Op. 119 JOHANNES BRAHMS
(1833-1897)

In his youth, Brahms earned his living as a pianist, and in later years he played well enough to get through his difficult concertos, but he played, it was said, like a composer, not a virtuoso. As a young man he also wrote big works for the piano, grand sonatas, and long sets of variations, for example, but after the Second Concerto of 1881, he produced no piano music until 1892. It was the year of his fifty-ninth birthday. He felt old and thought it time to put his affairs in order. Among the results of his labors then were twenty short, intimate piano pieces, probably based on musical ideas that he had been accumulating for a long time, and that were to be published in four varied sets as Opp. 116 to 119. His last works for piano, the pieces are highly personal statements, eloquent soliloquies, like songs without words, and in many ways they are more like his beautiful songs of the 1880s than like his earlier piano music. Nothing binds together the pieces within each opus number, and the reasons for the final groupings are unknown. The earliest recorded public performance of this group, Op. 119, was given in London, on January 22, 1894, by Ilona Eibenschütz. Perhaps to calm her, or else simply out of his habit of belittling his new pieces, Brahms wrote to her that they were "not worth much discussion."

The individual pieces, among the twenty, have vague, indeterminate titles: ballade, capriccio, intermezzo, rhapsody, romance. The distinctions among them are slight, and a single basic structure suffices for all of them: the simple three-part form in which similar opening and closing music surrounds a contrasting middle section. The four numbers of Op. 119 are three Intermezzos, which are generally rather slow, compact, lyrical pieces, and a Rhapsody, a title Brahms seems to have used for rather more expansive pieces.

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Sonata in A minor, Op. 143, D. 784 FRANZ SCHUBERT
(1797-1828)

During a large part of the nineteenth century, the piano sonata did not have the place in concert life that it now holds as a recitalist's equivalent of an orchestra conductor's symphony — a big and generally weighty composition consisting of large and independent movements sometimes bound together by a musical device or by sentiment or spirit, working to keep an audience's attention on the music for a relatively long period of time. We know how concert-life bypassed Schubert, but even Beethoven's piano sonatas had no part in it either, for a long time. As late as 1848, the manager of a serious concert series in London would not allow them on his programs because they were not "public" music. Yet before the century was over, Hans von Bülow made a career of a monstrous program consisting of Beethoven's last five sonatas, which formidably tested the endurance of both performer and audience. Schubert certainly wrote his piano sonatas for private hearing, for he had almost no other kind. In addition, he was, as he once said, "an admirer and worshipper" of Beethoven and wanted to try his hand at almost everything for which there was a model in the older man's work.

Schubert's sonatas did not find their proper place in the concert repertoire until long after Beethoven's had done so. Ideas about musical form changed rapidly and radically during the nineteenth century, and they were thought either too free or not free enough. Because they puzzled musicians, they were simply dropped. It was not until the centennial year of 1928 that the Schubert sonatas were thoroughly reconsidered and began to be widely performed and loved.

Schubert wrote this A-minor piano sonata in February, 1823, his first in three and a half years. In the interval, Beethoven had published three of his late sonatas, which revealed an entirely new kind of piano music. Schubert, in this sonata, does not challenge Beethoven in size or scope, but he, too, is seeking new powers of expression from the piano, with a new seriousness of purpose. The painstakingly revised manuscript shows that his work was not casually undertaken but carefully considered, and the result is an extraordinarily concise work that carries an intensely dramatic message.

It is a time in his young life of grave, early maturity. The "Unfinished" Symphony dates from the preceding autumn, and in the spring he would start on the dramatic song cycle *Die schöne Müllerin* ("The Pretty Miller-Maid"). He had written the "Wanderer" Fantasy, in November, too, but here he shows no interest in the demonstration of the kind of virtuosity that the Fantasy demands. Instead, he requires the pianist to produce a great range of almost orchestral colors from the keyboard.

In the first movement of this highly concentrated sonata, *Allegro giusto*, the themes are built of short motives added together to form long melodies that seem to be combined under pressure into a dense, compact musical structure. The second movement, *Andante*, looks back to Beethoven, forward to Chopin. It is a nocturnal reverie interrupted by a powerful, dramatic outburst that subsides and then breaks out again only in a single chord here and there. The brilliant finale, *Allegro vivace*, mixes the contrapuntal style of a Bach Invention, the full smashing chords of a Beethoven sonata, and an innocent waltz-tune in a manner that ends up being Schubert's alone.

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Fantasy in C major, Op. 15, D. 760 ("Wanderer") SCHUBERT

Schubert's thousand or more compositions are the product of an extraordinary, full, long life that was somehow condensed into less than thirty-two years. It was only at the end that Vienna's musical society, which still revolved about the aging Beethoven whom Schubert worshipped from afar, became aware of his existence and of his genius. When Schubert died, the poet Franz Grillparzer, who had so eloquently eulogized Beethoven sixteen months earlier, wrote his epitaph: "The art of music has buried a precious possession — but even fairer hopes. Franz Schubert lies here."

In November 1822, Schubert wrote a big work for piano that he called a Fantasy. It has four movements like those of a sonata, but they are somewhat freely constructed, are played without pause, and are all based on intimately related subjects derived from a portion of his song *The Wanderer* of 1816. The first major steps in loosening the form of the classical sonata had been taken by Beethoven, who in 1902 had published his so-called "Moonlight Sonata" as one of two works entitled *Sonata quasi una fantasia*. Toward the end of his life, Schubert wrote other fantasy-sonatas, for piano four-hands and for violin and piano.

The unique character of Schubert's *Wanderer* Fantasy springs from the formidable creative power with which he derives the entire work from a single idea. The way he transforms, develops, and extends a germinal figure, a mere fragment of melody, into some twenty minutes of powerfully expressive, greatly varied, tightly organized music became a model for the later Romantics. Liszt, who greatly admired the Fantasy, made what he called "a symphonic arrangement" of it for piano and orchestra, and he adopted its idea of thematic transformation as one of the basic procedures in his own big works. Eventually it became the essential principle behind Wagner's four *Ring* operas, too.

The song, *The Wanderer*, is a grim, tragic piece, a setting of a bitter text by a minor poet, Georg Philipp Schmidt von Lübeck (1766–1849). Its original title was *Des Fremdlings Abendlied* (“The Stranger’s Serenade”), and it tells of the wanderer who travels from the mountains to the sea, searching for a happy land, which is always wherever he is not. The musical theme of the Fantasy is derived from Schubert’s setting of the second stanza of the poem: “The sun seems so cold to me here; blossoms, faded; life, old; talk, empty. I am a stranger everywhere.” The melody has two characteristics that were among the composer’s favorites: repeated notes and the dactylic rhythm of one long beat followed by two short beats.

This is the driving force that opens the stormy first movement and presses forward into its second theme. The slow second movement, *Adagio*, is based on the plainest statement of the *Wanderer* theme, which it treats in a set of variations connected by transitional interludes. Next is a scherzo, *Presto*, based on elements picked up from the first movement. The *Allegro* finale begins as a forceful fugato and develops into the virtuosic climax of the Fantasy.

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About the Artist

André Watts burst forth upon the music world at the age of sixteen, when, at the last moment, Leonard Bernstein asked him to substitute for the ailing Glenn Gould and play Liszt’s E-flat Concerto with the New York Philharmonic. The debut made headlines across the United States and superb reviews followed. Only sixteen days before, Watts had been chosen from an auditioning group of young pianists by Bernstein to play with the Young People’s Concerts of the New York Philharmonic in a debut televised nationwide by CBS.

This season — 1987–88 — André Watts is celebrating the 25th anniversary of that spectacular debut. In the intervening twenty-five years, he has become one of the few superstars to appear annually with the most celebrated orchestras and conductors of the world. His career has taken him not only to Western Europe but to India, Russia, Japan, and South America as well. He schedules time for recordings during the regular season and divides his summer activities between playing at the important outdoor festivals in the United States and at the most prestigious European music festivals.

Chamber music has played an important role in the pianist’s career. One example was his own mini-festival to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Franz Schubert’s death with concerts including two programs of Schubert lieder and three programs devoted to the composer’s complete music for piano and strings.

André Watts has acquired success and acclaim in other areas as well, namely, in the fields of recording and television. His PBS Sunday afternoon telecast in 1976 was not only the first solo recital presented on “Live From Lincoln Center,” but it was the first full-length piano recital in the history of television. More recently, his 1985 “Live From Lincoln Center” performance was the first full-length recital to be aired nationally in prime time. Among many other TV appearances were an internationally telecast United Nations Day performance with Eugene Ormandy and The Philadelphia Orchestra, BBC presentations with the London Symphony and in recital, a rehearsal-performance documentary of a Mozart concerto with Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Brahms Second Concerto with Erich Leinsdorf and the New York Philharmonic on “Live From Lincoln Center,” a PBS special of the Beethoven “Emperor” Concerto, and another PBS telecast with Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony.

Mr. Watts is a recording artist for EMI/Angel and CBS Masterworks. His most recent recordings have been two solo discs of piano music by Liszt, which won the “Grand Prix du Disques Liszt” in Europe, and an album of three Beethoven Sonatas released last fall.

André Watts has played for coronations, inaugurations, and command performances for crowned heads in Europe and for presidents in The White House. At the age of 26, he was the youngest person ever to receive an honorary degree from Yale University. He also has honorary degrees from the University of Pennsylvania, Miami University of Ohio, and Albright College. In 1984, the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University honored him with its Distinguished Alumni Award.

A highlight of André Watts’ 25th anniversary season was the gala celebration concert in New York’s Avery Fisher Hall on January 13, 1988, with Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic. The occasion marked Watts’ historic 25th anniversary of his New York debut with Leonard Bernstein and the Philharmonic in the same hall. The recent “Live From Lincoln Center” concert was televised nationally on PBS. Other engagements for Watts this season include appearances with orchestras in San Francisco, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Chicago, Berlin, London, and Paris. This special season also includes recitals in Vienna, Hamburg, Berlin, Zurich, and other European cities, as well as a coast-to-coast tour of the United States.

In Ann Arbor, André Watts is remembered for his performances in two May Festivals (1971 and 1976), a duo-recital with violinist Charles Treger, and three solo recitals, the most recent in 1986 devoted to the music of Franz Liszt.

The pre-concert carillon recital from Burton Memorial Tower was performed by Anne K. Vanden Belt, class of '89, a student of University Carillonneur Margo Halsted.