

Sunday, March 18, 2007, 5pm
Zellerbach Hall

Alfred Brendel, *piano*

PROGRAM

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809) Piano Sonata in C minor, H. XVI:20 (1771)
Allegro moderato
Andante con moto
Allegro

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major, Op. 110
(1821)
Moderato cantabile molto espressivo
Allegro molto
Adagio, ma non troppo — Fuga: Allegro,
ma non troppo — L'istesso tempo di
Arioso — L'istesso tempo della Fuga
poi a poi di nuovo vivente

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Two Impromptus (1827)
Op. 142 (D. 935), No. 1 in F minor:
Allegro moderato
Op. 142 (D. 935), No. 3 in B-flat major:
Andante

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) Piano Sonata in C minor, K. 457 (1785)
Molto allegro
Adagio
Allegro assai

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Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)
Piano Sonata in C minor, H. XVI:20

Composed in 1771.

Haydn once said of himself that he was “not a bad piano player,” but, though he was not a virtuoso on the instrument of the stature of his friend Wolfgang Mozart, he was a competent and busy keyboard performer and composer throughout his career. Haydn began playing the clavier as a child, and he studied the clavichord, harpsichord and organ with fine teachers at the Imperial Choir School in Vienna. After leaving the School in 1749, he taught both clavichord and harpsichord, served as organist in a couple of minor Viennese posts and mastered the art of accompaniment. He was nearly penniless in those early days, living in an attic in an undesirable quarter of the city, and he resorted to his clavier as a source of comfort, as he later told his biographer Albert Dies: “The severe loneliness of the place, the lack of anything to divert the idle spirit, and my quite needy situation led me to contemplations which were often so grave that I found it necessary to take refuge at my worm-eaten clavier...to play away my melancholy.” His appointment in 1758 as Kapellmeister for Count Morzin (he gave the Countess clavier lessons) and two years later to the musical staff of the Esterházy family ameliorated his situation and greatly expanded the possibilities for his keyboard activities. He participated almost daily in chamber or solo performances at the Esterházy palaces, and occasionally acted as soloist in concertos, as well as serving as keyboardist for vocal concerts and such special occasions as the visit of the Empress Maria Theresa in 1773. After he was appointed director of the Esterházy musical establishment in 1766, he also participated as organist in many sacred and ceremonial events. With the completion of the family’s opera house in 1776, Haydn’s chief function as a keyboardist was as continuo player and conductor from the clavier, a function he also fulfilled in the performances of his symphonies. Even as late as his London visits in 1791 and 1794, Haydn still “presided at the pianoforte” for the presentations

of his rapturously received symphonies, according to the eminent 18th-century British musical scholar Charles Burney. Haydn largely gave up playing during the years of retirement which followed his English tours, but he derived pleasure from having guests perform for him. He sold his harpsichord in 1808, a year before he died, but kept a clavichord, the species of keyboard instrument on which he had learned to play as a child, and he regularly entertained himself with *Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser*, the Austrian anthem he had written and included in his Quartet in C major, Op. 76, No. 3 (“Emperor”), until just five days before his death.

From his earliest clavichord *divertimentos* to his last set of three piano sonatas written in London, Haydn composed more than 60 solo keyboard sonatas, mostly for students and friends, though some were intended for performing virtuosos. Among the most important such compositions were six sonatas (H. XVI:35–39, 20) published in Vienna in 1780 by Artaria, the first issue by that company of music by Haydn, who remained a client of the firm for the rest of his life. Haydn inscribed the collection to the sisters Caterina and Marianne Auenbrugger of Graz, a talented pair of pianists who, Leopold Mozart said, “play extraordinarily well and are thoroughly musical.” Reflecting the changing tastes of the time, the title page of the Auenbrugger sonatas noted that they could be played on either “clavicembalo [harpsichord] or forte piano,” though their dynamic range, ornamentation and general style suggest that they were intended for the latter rather than the former. According to the date on the manuscript, the C minor Sonata (H. XVI:20) was composed in 1771, suggesting that Haydn included it in the 1780 set to round out the six pieces expected in such a publication by music lovers of that time. The Sonata is thoroughly imbued with the turbulent, proto-Romantic expression of the *Sturm und Drang* (“Storm and Stress”) style that Haydn had learned from his study of the keyboard works of C.P.E. Bach. Each of the composition’s three movements (*Allegro moderato—Andante con moto—Allegro*) follows the essential progress of traditional sonata form, but

Program Notes

the strong emotion and sense of tragic heroism were exceptional for the time of the work's creation, and are yet another evidence of Haydn's remarkable invention and stylistic daring. H. C. Robbins Landon wrote of the piece, "The Sonata possesses a strength of personality that makes it the first in a distinguished line of C minor keyboard sonatas by each of the principal figures in the Viennese Classical School: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert. In Haydn's own career, the Sonata is fully the equal of the best of his contemporary music.... No other sonata [of his] quite matches the authority of this work."

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)
Piano Sonata No. 31 in A-flat major,
Op. 110

Composed in 1821.

Beethoven's painful five-year court battle to secure custody of his nephew Karl from his brother Caspar's dissolute widow (whom the composer disparaged as the "Queen of the Night") finally came to an end early in 1820. He "won," but lost the boy's affection (Karl, half crazed from his uncle's overbearing attention, tried, unsuccessfully, to kill himself); the case also exploded his pretension that he was of noble blood. Beethoven was further troubled by deteriorating health and a certain financial distress (he needed a loan from his brother Johann, a prosperous apothecary in Vienna, to tide him over that difficult period), so it is not surprising that he composed little during the time. With the resolution of his custody suit, however, he returned to creative work, and began anew the titanic struggle to embody his transcendent thoughts in musical tones. In no apparent hurry to dispel the rumors in gossipy Vienna that he was "written out," he produced just one work in 1820, the Piano Sonata in E major, Op. 109. The A-flat Sonata was dated on Christmas Day, 1821, and his last Piano Sonata, the Op. 111, appeared just three weeks later. The year 1822 was the most productive he had known in a decade: the *Missa Solemnis* was completed, as were the Overture to *The Consecration*

of the House, most of the *Diabelli Variations* and a few smaller works, and substantial progress was made on the Ninth Symphony and the Op. 127 String Quartet. It was in the three piano sonatas which launched this burst of creativity that Beethoven first realized the essential technique—the complete fusion of sonata, variation and fugue—which fueled the soaring masterpieces of his last period.

The Op. 110 Sonata, one of the very few of Beethoven's major works to have been published without a dedication (though Anton Schindler claimed that the intended inscription to Antonie Brentano, whom Maynard Solomon has convincingly identified as the "Immortal Beloved," was omitted through publisher's oversight), is one of the towering peaks of the piano literature. Or, perhaps more appropriately, one of its sublimely peaceful Alpine valleys, since its essence is halcyon rather than heaven-storming. In his fine book on Beethoven's last decade, Martin Cooper noted that in this music the composer moved away "from the dramatic principle of contrast with its implicit idea of struggle. In its place we find a unified vision where music borrows nothing from the theater...and aspires to its own unique condition.... The listener is taken as a friend whose interest and understanding can be taken for granted, rather than an audience to be captured, dazzled, touched or excited. In this work, the rhetorical element is virtually non-existent." In place of the dramatic gesture, which he had used so successfully in his middle-period works, Beethoven here posited a language of pure music, one impenetrable by mere words and upon which even the most learned technical analysis seems little more than an inquisitive flea upon an elephant. Cooper: "However we regard it, we can hardly avoid the impression that Beethoven's [goal] is the contemplation of a harmonious world whose laws are absolute and objective, neither subject to human passion nor concerned with anything beyond themselves." The forms and balances of the movements of Beethoven's late works were no longer subject to the traditional Classical models, but grew inexorably from the unique qualities and potentials of each individual composition. The opening

movement of the Op. 110 Sonata is technically in sonata form, but one so seamlessly made and so consistently sun-bright in mood that unity rather than contrast is its dominant characteristic. Next comes an energetic movement in the spirit (though not the meter) of a scherzo whose thematic material was apparently inspired by two Austrian folksongs for which Beethoven had provided simple piano accompaniments in 1820. Closing the Sonata is a musical essay whose lyricism and ultimate gentleness belie its stupendous formal concept. A mournful *scena*, an *arioso dolente*, is given as the opening chapter, and leads without pause to the life-confirming retort of a tightly argued fugue. This fugue is not, however, one of those mighty, gnarled constructions that Beethoven employed elsewhere in his last years, but a pellucid, songful, joyous example of the form. The *arioso*, with its thrumming, chordal accompaniment, intrudes itself upon the undulant flow of the fugue, and is again answered by Beethoven's celebratory counterpoint, marked, on this last appearance, to be infused by the pianist "more and more with new life."

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Impromptus, Op. 90 (D. 935), Nos. 1 and 3

Composed in 1827.

Schubert composed his eight pieces titled *Impromptu* in the summer and autumn of 1827; they were completed by December. He did not invent the title. The term "Impromptu" had been current in Vienna since at least 1822, when the Bohemian-Austrian composer Johann Vorisek issued a set of brief, ternary-form works of extemporized nature under that name. Schubert was familiar with Vorisek's pieces, as well as with the many independent piano works by Beethoven, Field, Tomasek and others that were flooding the market in the wake of the burgeoning piano manufacturing trade (and falling consumer prices) of those years. Schubert sold his eight *Impromptus* to Haslinger in Vienna, who agreed to publish them in small lots to test their acceptance. He issued the first two numbers of the

series (in C minor and E-flat major) in 1828 as Schubert's Op. 90, Nos. 1 and 2 with some success, but the composer's death on November 19th of that year halted the project, and the remaining pair of Op. 90 *Impromptus* was not published until 1857 or 1858; the four others were issued at the end of 1839 by Diabelli as Op. 142. Robert Schumann, one of Schubert's earliest champions and the catalyst for the first performance of the "Great" Symphony in C major (conducted, at Schumann's insistence, by Mendelssohn at the Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts in 1839), knew the works in manuscript copies, and wrote of their special instrumental character: "As a composer for the piano, Schubert stands alone (in some respects, even above Beethoven), in that his writing is more pianistic, that is to say, the piano's full resources are effectively brought into play, than is Beethoven's piano writing, in which tone color is achieved more orchestrally." Perhaps the most remarkable quality of the *Impromptus* is the manner in which Schubert leavened their inherent pianism with his incomparable sense of melody, a situation for which Kathleen Dale proposed the following explanation: "Schubert's continued experience of song-writing had by now so strongly developed his wonderful natural gift of apprehending the spirit of a poem and re-creating it in music, that when he turned from songs to write for piano solo, he inevitably composed works which, though specifically instrumental in character, are so truly lyrical in essence that each is a poem in sound." A Poem in Sound—music that is flowing, evocative, reflective of the rhythms of the heart and the soul and of life itself. Such is the gift that Schubert left the world.

Robert Schumann contended that the four Op. 142 *Impromptus* (D. 935) comprise a loose sonata cycle, with the opening F minor number standing as the first movement. Schumann's argument founders because of the lack of fully realized sonata form in the F minor *Impromptu* (there is no development section) and the unconventional tonal relationships among the later movements, but he was correct in recognizing the grand scale and expressive weight of this opening piece. The initial theme, a stair-step descending motive in dotted rhythms, promises

Program Notes

drama with its bold opening gesture but reveals its true character as amiably melancholy. Three related ideas comprise the second theme group: a tenor melody in evenly paced notes, strewn with right-hand arpeggios, of emotionally unsettled character; a sweet song of inspired lyricism, grown from the preceding evenly paced motive, in chordal harmonies; and an episode of rippling arpeggios woven around a theme divided between a close-interval call in the treble and an answering response in the bass. The series of themes is repeated, with some truncation, as the second half of the *Impromptu*, which ends with a reminiscence of the opening stair-step motive.

Schubert was apparently particularly fond of the lovely melody of the *Impromptu* No. 3 in B-flat major—he had used it previously in the *Entr'acte* No. 3 for the Incidental Music to *Rosamunde* (1820) and the A minor String Quartet, D. 804 (1824). It here serves as the theme for five variations that are led into some deeply expressive harmonic areas as they proceed. The brief coda recalls the theme in its original form.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) **Piano Sonata in C minor, K. 457**

Composed in 1785.

Throughout Mozart's career there was an undercurrent in his works of a particularly probing sort of expression, one very different from the rococo charm and surface prettiness of the vast bulk of 18th-century music. As early as 1771, his overture to the oratorio *La Betulia Liberata* (K. 118) was cast in a solemn minor mode. In 1773, when he was seventeen, the unexpected expressive elements that pierced the customary *galanterie* of his opera *Lucio Silla* so disturbed and puzzled Milanese audiences that his earlier popularity in Italy began to wane and he never returned to that country. Later that same year, he visited Vienna and learned of the new, passionate, Romantic sensibility—the so-called *Sturm und Drang* (“Storm and Stress”)—which was then infusing the music of some of the best German and Austrian composers, including Joseph Haydn.

When Mozart returned home to Salzburg in September, he wrote his stormy “Little” G minor Symphony (K. 183).

As Mozart reached his full maturity in the years after arriving in Vienna in 1781, his most expressive manner of writing, whose chief evidences are the use of minor modes, chromaticism, rich counterpoint and thorough thematic development, appeared in his compositions with increasing frequency. It had regularly been evident in the slow movements of his piano concertos, but in 1785 he actually dared to compose an entire work (the Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K. 466) in a minor key. At that same time, perhaps the most productive period of his life (twelve of his last fourteen piano concertos were written between 1784 and 1786), Mozart created a series of three piano works cast in the tragic key of C minor—the Sonata, K. 457, completed on October 14, 1784; the Fantasy, K. 475, May 20, 1785; and the Concerto No. 24, K. 491, April 1786. The Fantasy and Sonata were published together in a single volume by Artaria in December 1785 with a dedication to Therese von Trattner, the composer's 23-year-old piano student who was the second wife of the 64-year-old court printer and publisher, Johann Thomas von Trattner. Mozart was close to the Trattners during that time, and he hired the ballroom of their palace in Vienna to present his Lenten concerts of 1784. He sent Frau von Trattner a series of letters concerning the proper execution of the Fantasy and Sonata, but these missives have unfortunately been lost (or destroyed—speculation has it that the letters may have referred to some delicate personal matters that associates and family of neither the lady nor the composer wished to have revealed); Alfred Einstein said that if they ever turn up, the letters would be among “the most important documents of Mozart's aesthetic practice.” The C minor Sonata is formalistic in structure—sonata-form opening *Molto allegro*; slow-tempo rondo that comes close to being a set of free variations; and quick closing movement—but deeply felt in emotion.

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About the Artist



Alfred Brendel is recognized by audiences the world over for his legendary ability to communicate the emotional and intellectual depths of whatever music he performs. A supreme master of his art, his accomplishments as an interpreter of the great composers have earned him a place among the world's most revered musicians. Mr. Brendel's 2006–2007 season includes orchestral concerts and solo recitals throughout Europe, as well as his annual North American tour featuring solo recitals in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles' Disney Hall, Vancouver, North Carolina, et al., as well as performances of Mozart Piano Concerto in G major, K.453 with the Chicago Symphony and the Boston Symphony, with James Levine conducting. In some cities and universities, he is also presented in readings from his several volumes of poetry. Alfred Brendel marked the 250th Mozart anniversary January 27, 2006 with a special performance of Mozart's final piano concerto, K.595, with the Berlin Philharmonic and Simon Rattle at Carnegie Hall, which they performed together thereafter with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Mr. Brendel has performed with virtually all leading orchestras and conductors. He has appeared in the major cultural centers of Europe and the Far East, and his annual tours of North America have taken him from coast to coast. In recent seasons, Mr. Brendel has performed with the Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra and Chicago Symphony with Daniel Barenboim conducting, the Minnesota Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in the inaugural season of the new Disney Hall. He is an annual visitor to Carnegie Hall, where in 1983 he became the first pianist since the legendary Artur Schnabel to play all 32 Beethoven sonatas. At Carnegie Hall in 1999, he appeared six times in just over three weeks to delight audiences with recitals, chamber music, lieder with baritone Matthias Goerne, poetry reading and a Mozart concerto with James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Mr. Brendel's performance at Carnegie Hall the year before—on April 26, 1998—marked the exact anniversary of his first public recital 50 years ago at the Kammermusiksaal in Graz, Austria. The same series of celebratory events took place later that year at the Lucerne Festival.

Alfred Brendel is one of the most prolific recording artists of all time, and for the past 30 years has recorded exclusively for Philips Classics. He is the first pianist to have recorded all of Beethoven's piano compositions and one of the few to have recorded the complete Mozart piano concertos. An extensive discography includes *The Art of Alfred Brendel*, a deluxe limited-edition collection of his comprehensive and varied repertoire. His recent releases include a live recording of Schubert sonatas; the five Beethoven piano concertos with Simon Rattle and the Vienna Philharmonic (the fourth time Mr. Brendel has committed these works to disc); Mozart concertos with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Charles Mackerras; works by Haydn, Schubert and Liszt recorded live in Salzburg; and the first four discs of an ongoing series of Mozart sonata recordings. Also

About the Artist

recently released is a recording of the complete Beethoven sonatas for piano and cello with his son, cellist Adrian Brendel. He has won many prizes for his recordings, notably the Grand Prix du Disque, the Japan Record Academy Award, *Gramophone's* Critics' Choice, the Edison Prize and the Grand Prix de l'Académie du Disque Français.

Mr. Brendel is well versed in the fields of literature, language, architecture and films. In addition to his latest books, *Alfred Brendel on Music* and *Ausgerechnet Ich* ("Me, of All People"), he has published two collections of articles, lectures and essays. He is a frequent contributor to *The New York Review of Books*, having written articles on Mozart, Liszt and Schoenberg. His volumes of poetry include *One Finger Too Many*, published in the United States by Random House, and he is the subject of the BBC documentary *Alfred Brendel—Man and Mask*.

Born in Austria, Alfred Brendel spent his childhood traveling throughout Yugoslavia and Austria. His father, an architectural engineer, businessman and cinema director, also ran a resort hotel on the Adriatic. The younger Brendel began piano lessons at the age of six but, owing to the family's continuous travel, had to give up one piano teacher after another. In his teens, he attended the Graz Conservatory, where he studied piano, composition and conducting. He also showed talent as a painter and, when he made his recital debut at the age of 17, an art gallery near the concert hall was showing a one-man exhibition of his watercolors.

He discontinued formal piano studies soon after, preferring to attend occasional master classes, including those given by the famed pianist Edwin Fischer. To this day, Mr. Brendel regards his untraditional musical background as something of an advantage. "Many times a teacher can be too influential," he says. "Being self-taught, I learned to distrust anything I hadn't figured out myself." Although Mr. Brendel's artistic interests as a young man did not focus on music alone, his winning the prestigious Busoni Piano Competition in Italy launched his career as a performing musician. He quickly established a reputation of unusual integrity and insight into the music of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann and Schubert, as well as the works of Liszt and several 20th-century composers.

Alfred Brendel is the recipient of honorary doctorates from Oxford, London, Sussex and Yale universities. He is only the third pianist in history to be named an honorary member of the Vienna Philharmonic, a distinction he shares with two of his illustrious predecessors, Emil von Sauer and Wilhelm Backhaus. He has been awarded the Leonie Sonning Prize, the Furtwängler Prize for Musical Interpretation, London's South Bank Award, the Robert Schumann Prize presented in Zwickau, Schumann's birthplace, and, most recently, the Ernst von Siemens Prize. In 1989, he was appointed an honorary Knight Commander of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II for "Outstanding Services to Music in Britain," where he has made his home since 1972.

Education & Community Events

Alfred Brendel, *pianist and author*

"In Conversation," March 16, 2007, 5pm

Great Hall, Bancroft Hotel, 2680 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

Esteemed pianist Alfred Brendel will read his poetry and engage in conversation with Anthony J. Cascardi, Director of the Doreen B. Townsend Center for the Humanities, as a prelude to his March 18 recital in Zellerbach Hall.

Presented by the Townsend Center in association with Cal Performances.