

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Alfred Brendel, *piano*

Sunday, April 11, 2004, 7 pm
Zellerbach Hall

PROGRAM

- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart Fantasia in C minor, K. 396 (K. 385f)
(completed by Maximilian Stadler)
- Mozart Sonata in B-flat major, K. 281 (K. 189f)
Allegro
Andante amoroso
Rondeau
- Mozart Sonata in E-flat major, K. 282 (K. 189g)
Adagio
Menuetto I – Menuetto II
Allegro

INTERMISSION

- Franz Schubert *Drei Klavierstücke*, D. 946
No. 1 in E-flat minor
No. 2 in E-flat major
No. 3 in C major
- Ludwig van Beethoven Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109
Vivace, ma non troppo. Sempre legato –
Adagio espressivo – Tempo I –
Adagio espressivo – Tempo I
Prestissimo
Tema: Andante molto cantabile
ed espressivo – Variazioni I-VI

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Fantasia in C minor, K. 396 (K. 385f)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791)

In 1782, one year after he had bolted from Salzburg to take up life as a free-lance composer and pianist in Vienna, Mozart developed a new, gleaming admiration for the music of Bach, Handel, and other masters of the early 18th century. He had been exposed to the works of such Italian Baroque composers as Leo, Caldara, Durante, and Alessandro Scarlatti in Salzburg, where their scores were used for performance and for study, but his interest in Bach grew from his association in Vienna with Baron Gottfried van Swieten, the Habsburg Court Librarian and musical *amateur* who had developed a taste for the contrapuntal glories of German music while serving as ambassador to the Prussian court at Berlin. Van Swieten, who is also remembered as the librettist for Haydn's two late oratorios, *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, produced a weekly series of concerts in Vienna devoted to "ancient music," and hired the best available musicians, including Mozart, to perform and arrange the compositions for those events. (Among other projects for van Swieten, Mozart scored Handel's *Messiah* for classical orchestra.) Mozart, perhaps history's greatest adept at absorbing musical styles, learned much about the fine workings of Baroque music from his close involvement with the compositions of Bach and Handel.

The Fantasia in C minor (K. 396/385f), one of the pieces from Mozart's early Vienna years in which he tried out his newly learned Baroque mannerisms, was started in 1782 as the first movement of a sonata for piano and violin. Mozart completed the exposition, and added a sketchy violin line, but then abandoned the piece. After Mozart's death, the Abbé Maximilian Stadler, a noted composer and historian of Austrian music who helped to organize Mozart's musical legacy, finished the Fantasia as a solo piano piece by filling out the development and recapitulation, using as a guide not only Mozart's manuscript, but also the character of his keyboard improvisations. The Fantasia, arranged as a large sonata-form movement in slow tempo, is expansive in scale and somber in mood, and, more than almost any other of his works, offers a window onto Mozart's virtuosic and expressive style as a solo pianist.

Sonata in B-flat major, K. 281 (K. 189f)
Sonata in E-flat major, K. 282 (K. 189g)
Mozart

Much of the biography of Mozart's life could be written in terms of his job hunts. From the time that he was a teenager, both Wolfgang and Papa Leopold worked inordinately hard at placing the young composer in a prestigious position in one of Europe's music capitals. January 1775 found father and 19-year-old son in Munich for the premiere of *La Finta Giardiniera*, an opera buffa commissioned by the Court Theater in that city with which Mozart hoped to create enough of a stir to win a position on the musical staff of the Elector, Maximilian Joseph III. (Salzburg was then part of Bavaria, and subject politically to the Elector of Munich.) The opera did not gain Mozart a place at court, however, and he and Leopold left Munich, disappointed, on March 6th.

In the months preceding the Munich venture or immediately after arriving in the Bavarian capital, Mozart composed a set of six piano sonatas (K. 279–284 [K. 189d–h, K. 205b]) to display to local music lovers there and for possible publication. They were his first works in the form, except for four pieces written a decade earlier (when he was 10 years old) and long lost. It is possible that some or all of the sonatas were written for Baron Thadeus von Dürnitz, whom Mozart met in the autumn of 1774 during the preparations for *La Finta Giardiniera*. There is no record that he ever received any payment from the Baron, however, nor were the pieces (except for K. 284) published until after the composer's death. (The genesis of the contemporaneous Bassoon Concerto, K. 191, was also long attributed to Dürnitz's urging, but that composition's provenance likewise remains unsubstantiated. The only extant work directly attributable to Dürnitz's commission is the happy little Duo Sonata for Bassoon and Cello in B-flat major, K. 292/K. 196c.) Mozart thought highly enough of these initial forays into the sonata field to keep them in his performing repertory—he offered them during a *soirée* at the home of Kapellmeister Christian Cannabich immediately after arriving in Mannheim in search of a position there in November 1777; three weeks earlier, he had played K. 281 and K. 284 for

Ignaz von Beeke, music director for Prince Kraft Ernst von Oettingen-Wallerstein, at the Prince's country estate in Hohen-Altheim.

The influence of Haydn is clearly discernible in the first two movements of the youthful Sonata in B-flat major (K. 281/K. 189f). The sonata-form opening Allegro, with its patterned figurations, tightly motivic themes, and busy textures, recalls many of Haydn's instrumental movements of the 1770s, while the lovely Andante amoroso seems to have been modeled directly on Haydn's Sonata No. 20 in F major, which had been published shortly before Mozart began this work. After the first two movements, "which seem more like Haydn than Haydn himself," wrote Alfred Einstein in his study of the composer, "we are suddenly faced, in the finale, with Mozart at his most characteristic and individual. Haydn and even Johann Christian Bach are forgotten. If the date of this rondo, with its air of modest concerto and its melodic grace, were not so definitely fixed, we should certainly place it 10 years later, in the Vienna period."

The Sonata in E-flat major (K. 282/K. 189g) is a product of the time when the form, style, and architecture of the modern instrumental genres were still gestating. Rather than beginning with the vigorous quick-tempo movement in crystalline form that later came to characterize most works of this type, this sonata first presents a rather pensive Adagio in loose sonata structure (i.e., the main theme is heard not to begin the recapitulation, but only as the very final gesture of the movement). Next comes a pair of minuets, the first (repeated to round out the movement), polite and genteel; the second, more fiery in character. The work concludes with another compact sonata-form essay, "one of the best movements in this series of sonatas," according to William Glock. "Here the pianist should sit with a sword at his side, all spirit and bravado."

Drei Klavierstücke
("Three Piano Pieces"), D. 946
Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Schubert was among the first practitioners of the so-called "character piece," the species of compact, single-movement, sharply etched piano composition designed for the burgeoning home music market of the early 19th century.

There grew to be a virtual musical tidal wave of these popular miniatures in the years after Schubert's death in 1828—the masterful examples by Chopin, Schumann, Brahms, Liszt, Mendelssohn, Fauré, Grieg, and others occupy the heart of the piano literature—but the form was still new when he took it up around 1815 to provide keyboard entertainment at the convivial local gatherings, known as "Schubertiads," which featured his music and performances. Beginning in 1824, during what proved to be the last years of his pitifully brief life, Schubert created a fine and characteristic series of character pieces that parallel his superb late sonatas. First among this group were the endearing *Moments Musicaux*, whose six movements occupied him between 1824 and 1827. During the last six months of 1827, he composed eight pieces which he called *Impromptu*. 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 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.

It seems likely that the three piano pieces Schubert wrote in May 1827 were intended as the nucleus of a third set of *Impromptus*, though their manuscripts bear neither title nor number. When Johannes Brahms edited them and oversaw their initial publication in 1868, he labeled them simply *Drei Klavierstücke*. Perhaps the most remarkable quality of these character pieces 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.

The *Drei Klavierstücke* are arranged according to a pleasing tonal plan: E-flat minor, E-flat major, and C major. They are in simple three-part structures (the second adds an additional intervening episode: A–B–A–C–A), and almost opulent in the warmth of their sonority and harmony. No. 1 (E-flat minor) opens and closes with an anxious strain whose febrile quality is enhanced by layering its duplet melody upon a triplet accompaniment; the central Andante is, by way of expressive balance, quiet and meditative. No. 2 (E-flat major) is based on a tender theme that Schubert borrowed from the chorus that opens Act III of his 1823 opera *Fierrabras*; the movement’s two contrasting episodes are unsettled and mysterious. No. 3 (C major) exhibits a teasing rhythmic ambiguity reminiscent of a Slavic dance that is countered in its middle region by a rather stolid paragraph in block chords.

Sonata No. 30 in E major, Op. 109 Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

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 publicly exploded the composer’s 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 time), so it is not surprising that he composed little dur-

ing the period. With the resolution of his custody suit, however, he returned to creative work with a set of three piano sonatas, 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 Sonata in E major, Op. 109. The Sonata in A-flat was dated on Christmas Day, 1821, and his last piano sonata, the Op. 111 in C minor, appeared just three weeks later. It was in his three last sonatas that Beethoven realized the essential technique—the complete fusion of sonata, variation, and fugue—that fueled the soaring masterpieces of his final period.

Beethoven composed the Op. 109 Sonata between May and September 1820 in the Austrian village of Mödling, south of Vienna, where he had rusticated for the two previous summers (though he had to find new lodgings that year since his landlord of 1819 refused to rent to the stone-deaf composer again because of his “noisy disturbances”). These country residences were times of spiritual and creative retreat for Beethoven, when, according to his amanuensis and biographer Anton Schindler, he was “rapt away from the world.” Sketches for the sonata appear among those for the Credo and the Benedictus of the *Missa Solemnis*, an appropriate balance of the personal and public manifestations of the transcendent visions he was seeking to embody within the creations of his last years. The sonata was published by the Berlin house of Schlesinger in November 1821 with a dedication to Maximiliane Brentano, the daughter of Franz Brentano (a Frankfurt merchant who acted as the composer’s agent with the publisher Simrock) and Antonie Brentano (whom Maynard Solomon in his study of Beethoven convincingly identifies as the “Immortal Beloved”). “A dedication!!!,” Beethoven wrote to Maximiliane on December 6th. “Well, this is not one of those dedications that are used and abused by thousands of people. It is the spirit which unites the noble and finer people of this earth and which time can never destroy. It is this spirit which now speaks to you and which calls you to mind, and likewise your beloved parents—your most excellent and gifted mother, your father imbued

with so many truly good and noble qualities and ever mindful of the welfare of his children.... The memory of a noble family can never fade in my heart. May you sometimes think of me with a feeling of kindness. My most heartfelt wishes. May heaven bless your life and the lives of all of you forever.”

The dominant emotional state of the outer movements of the Sonata in E major is optimism and joy (perhaps a reflection of Beethoven’s gratitude over the court decision regarding Karl), which is thrown into relief by the stormy central Prestissimo. The opening movement is the epitome of Beethoven’s distillation of the sonata principle in his late works: the two themes (the first, fast, flowing, diatonic, arpeggiated; the second, slow, ruminative, chromatic, chordal) are given in bare, economical juxtapo-

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. In the 2003–04 season, Brendel’s annual North American tour includes solo recitals in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington (DC), Vancouver, and the new Disney Hall in Los Angeles; Schubert’s *Winterreise* in Los Angeles with baritone Matthias Goerne; all-Beethoven concerts with his son, cellist Adrian Brendel; and Beethoven’s Concerto No. 3 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In some cities, he also reads selections from his collections of poetry.

Brendel performs with virtually all leading orchestras and conductors. He has appeared in all 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, Brendel has performed with the Boston Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and The Cleveland Orchestra. 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. In 1999, he appeared six times in just

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sition, without introduction or transition. The development section is a seamless, superbly directed elaboration of the main theme that reaches its peak at the moment the recapitulation begins. The second subject returns before the movement ends with a luminous coda built upon the principal theme. The fiery Prestissimo, which serves as the work’s scherzo and its emotional foil, is also in sonata form, though, unlike the opening movement, its themes are little contrasted with each other. The finale, twice the length of the first two movements combined, is an expansive set of six variations founded upon the hymnal two-part theme presented at the outset. An ethereal restatement of the theme, virtually a benediction to the entire work, brings the sonata to a sublime close.

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

over three weeks to delight audiences with recitals, chamber music, lieder with baritone Matthias Goerne, poetry readings, and a Mozart concerto with James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Brendel’s performance at Carnegie Hall 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.

One of the most prolific recording artists of all time, Alfred Brendel has recorded exclusively for Philips Classics during the past 30 years. 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 large and varied repertoire, and current recording projects include the complete Beethoven cello sonatas with Adrian Brendel, Schubert lieder with Matthias Goerne, and a fourth Mozart concerto disc with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and Charles Mackerras. Recent releases include a live recording of Schubert sonatas; the five Beethoven piano concertos with Simon Rattle and the Vienna Philharmonic (the fourth time Brendel has committed these works to disc); the

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World-class pianists and their beautiful instruments have a home at Zellerbach Hall thanks to SHERMAN CLAY. As the corporate sponsor of Cal Performances' 2003–04 Recital series, SHERMAN CLAY is instrumental in bringing some of the world's most accomplished pianists—including Emanuel Ax, Yefim Bronfman, and Alfred Brendel—to the Bay Area.

As America's leading retailer of pianos, and the Bay Area's only authorized Steinway dealer, for over 130 years SHERMAN CLAY has excelled in its goal of bringing value and culture to the American home by providing the finest in musical keyboard instruments. With its strong commitment to music

education and to the cultural life of our community, SHERMAN CLAY has generously supported Cal Performances since 1998.

From June 11–13, 2004, SHERMAN CLAY will hold its fifth annual piano sale in Zellerbach Hall, featuring more than 100 new and used pianos, including Steinway, Boston, Kohler & Campbell, and Baldwin brands, among others. The annual piano sale is an excellent way to support one of Cal Performances' most devoted sponsors and, in the process, to help us present the finest musical talent. Mark your calendars now for the June 2004 event and take advantage of outstanding prices on the top names in pianos sold by SHERMAN CLAY—a Cal Performances *Corporate Partner*.



Schumann and Schoenberg piano concertos; Mozart sonatas and the complete Beethoven Bagatelles; and works by Haydn, Schubert, and Liszt recorded live in Salzburg. He has won many prizes for his recordings, notably the Grand Prix du Disque, the Japan Record Academy Award, *Gramophone's* "Critics' Choice," the Grand Prix de l'Académie du Disque Français, the Edison Prize, and the British Music Trades Association Prize.

Brendel is well-versed in the fields of literature, language, architecture, and films, and augmented his 1997/98 North American tour with an evening of his thoughts and commentaries on music, literature, and the visual arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. 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 several 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 to parents of no particular musical bent, Alfred Brendel spent his childhood traveling throughout Yugoslavia and Austria. His father, who worked at various stages in his life as an architectural engineer, businessman, and cinema director, also ran a resort hotel on the Adriatic. Brendel began piano lessons at the age of six, but owing to continuous travel had to give up one piano teacher after another. In his teens, he attended the Graz Conservatory and also showed talent in the areas of painting and composition. 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 revered pianist Edwin Fischer. To this day 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 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 performer. 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. Brendel has been awarded the Leonie Sonning Prize, the Furtwängler Prize for Musical Interpretation, London's South Bank Award, and most recently, the Robert Schumann Prize in Zwickau, Schumann's birthplace. In 1998, 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.

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