

Rudolf Buchbinder, *piano*

Sunday, October 10, 2004, 3 pm
Hertz Hall

PROGRAM

Ludwig van Beethoven Sonata No. 3 in C major, Op. 2, No. 3
(dedicated to Haydn)

Allegro con brio
Adagio
Scherzo: Allegro
Allegro assai

Beethoven Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13, *Pathétique*

Grave – Molto allegro e con brio
Adagio cantabile
Rondo: Allegro

INTERMISSION

Robert Schumann Twelve Symphonic Etudes for Piano, Op. 13

Thema – Andante
I. C-sharp minor – Un poco più vivo
II. C-sharp minor
III. E major – Vivace
IV. C-sharp minor
V. C-sharp minor
VI. C-sharp minor – Agitato
VII. E major – Allegro molto
VIII. C-sharp minor
IX. C-sharp minor – Presto possibile
X. C-sharp minor
XI. G-sharp minor
XII. Finale – D-sharp major – Allegro brillante

Posthumous variations

I. Andante, Tempo del tema
II. Meno mosso
III. Allegro
IV. Allegretto
V. Moderato

Columbia Artists Management LLC
www.cami.com
www.buchbinder.net

*Cal Performances gratefully acknowledges The Shenson Foundation
for its generous support of our 2004/05 Recital Series.*

*Cal Performances thanks the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation,
The Wallace Foundation, and the Zellerbach Family Foundation for their generous support.*

**Sonata No. 3 in C major, Op. 2, No. 3
Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)**

In November 1792, Beethoven journeyed to Vienna, where he was to spend the rest of his life. He immediately took up studies with “Papa” Haydn, who oversaw Beethoven’s first publication, the three piano trios of Op. 1. The piano sonatas of Op. 2 appeared in 1795, representing “the first peak,” as biographer Marion Scott describes them, “in that magnificent series of 32 sonatas that runs parallel to Beethoven’s symphonies like a mountain chain....” As with the trios of Op. 1, Beethoven dedicated the three sonatas of Op. 2 to Haydn, although he remarked privately that Haydn had given him lessons but never taught him anything.

What Haydn did indeed teach Beethoven was the sonata form. Haydn and Mozart had honed it, and Italian contemporary Muzio Clementi had broadened its style, but Beethoven perfected the sonata form by infusing it with his own poetic, emotional content. The sonatas of Op. 2 are not dissimilar to works of Haydn or Mozart in structure, but their insurgent emotional movement foreshadows the concentration and intensity of Beethoven’s later works.

The Sonata in C major, Op. 2, No. 3, is a brilliant and technically challenging piece of piano literature. The first movement introduces themes suggestive of Beethoven’s quartets, and features a spirited cadenza in the style of Mozart. The solemn second movement is interrupted in Beethoven’s characteristic fashion by a thunderous, march-like treatment of its main theme. The piquant Scherzo bears similarities to the composer’s second Bagatelle, hinting at a fugue, but settling into a syncopated chordal figure.

The finale is built on a sonata-rondo form, the structure employed frequently by Mozart in his concertos and by Beethoven himself in many of his sonatas and concerto finales. Concurrently with this sonata, Beethoven was working on his first two piano concertos. The attention to virtuosic technique is on display in this movement, featuring difficult elements such as staccato chords, double thirds, and precarious flights of sixths. The coda, most characteristic of the composer, is full of pauses,

surprising key changes, and false starts—devices inherited from Haydn, but brought to new fruition by Beethoven.

—© 1998, Columbia Artists Management Inc.

**Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 13,
*Pathétique***

Beethoven

The *Pathétique* is one of the most famous of Beethoven’s piano sonatas. Unlike the *Moonlight* and the *Appassionata*, it was given its nickname by the composer himself—not by his publisher as with the other two. This is indeed a brooding and poetic work influenced by his “C-minor mood”—during this period, C minor was practically the only minor key he employed, always resulting in works of particular emotional power.

This sonata greatly influenced many of Beethoven’s contemporaries. One illustration of its hypnotic effect concerns the pianist-composer Ignaz Moscheles, who, on first seeing the score at the age of 10, copied out the entire sonata for himself and thus aroused an adoration for Beethoven that lasted the rest of his life. A later example may be drawn from the fact that the first four intervals of the opening are the same that Tchaikovsky employed in his *Pathétique* Symphony.

Written in 1790 and dedicated to Prince Carl von Lichnowsky, this sonata contains a new compositional device—a dramatic introduction. This section, to which the work owes its title, is passionate and tragic in nature. Unlike the introduction to first movements in works by Haydn or Mozart, this material is dynamically linked with the following section as it appears again, marking the beginning of the development through rhythmic transformation.

The slow movement is pervaded by an intimate mood. It is the perfect refutation to those who maintain that Beethoven could not write a spontaneous melody. This mainly tranquil movement consists of a simple rondo with two episodes, the second of which introduces contrasting harmonic and rhythmic elements.

The final Allegro is also written in rondo form but is more elaborate than the second movement. Although still in a minor key,

it has a generally lighter character, this contrasting with the profound sentiments of the preceding movements. Its mood is mainly wistful, adding occasional touches of playfulness and a sudden energetic ending. Although the least “pathétique” of the three movements, it leaves no doubt as to the essential unity of the work as a whole.

—© 2001, Columbia Artists Management Inc.

**Twelve Symphonic Etudes
for Piano, Op. 13
Robert Schumann
(1810–1856)**

Robert Schumann is a central figure in musical Romanticism; his music is infused with much self-expression, potent lyricism, and extra-musical associations—both personal and literary—thus making him one of the quintessential Romantic composers. Though Schumann was, above all, a composer of piano music and art songs, the concert literature of the 19th century would be greatly impoverished without his orchestral works.

Son of a bookseller, publisher, and author, Schumann demonstrated such talent in both musical and literary spheres while still a schoolboy that his father thought to send him to study composition with Carl Maria von Weber in 1826. Unfortunately, both Weber and Schumann-*père* died before this plan could be realized. In 1828, Robert’s mother sent him to the University of Leipzig to matriculate as a law student. After a rather dilatory pursuit of legal studies in both Leipzig and Heidelberg, he finally won permission to devote himself solely to music in 1830.

Much of this was due to the support of the renowned piano pedagogue Friedrich Wieck, he who later, after much resistance and a court battle, would become Schumann’s father-in-



law. Wieck told Frau Schumann that three years of solid study could see her son one of the foremost pianists of the day. His share of Robert’s tutelage, however, dropped to naught when his daughter Clara showed promise as a concert pianist herself and required his presence on concert tours.

The Symphonic Etudes for Piano, Op. 13, is not only one of Schumann’s greatest works, but also a landmark in the history of piano literature. The title of the work underwent several metamorphoses: Schumann had originally intended to call it *Davidsbündleretuden* in reference to the League of David that he had founded as a symbol of his battle with musical philistines. Later he thought of the more portentous title of “Etudes in Orchestral Character,” finally settling for the double title of “Etudes en forme de Variations, or Twelve Symphonic Etudes.”

The theme is, in fact, not by Schumann, but Baron von Fricken, an amateur composer and the father of Ernestine von Fricken (Schumann’s fiancée at the time). In 1834, the Baron asked Schumann to look at a set of vari-

ations he composed. Schumann, impressed with the theme, used it for his own Symphonic Etudes. But he felt that the somber character of the theme was too prevalent in the Baron's work (a problem Schumann eventually solved by giving his composition a triumphant conclusion). As he explained in a letter to the Baron:

No doubt the subject ought to keep in view but it ought to be shown through different colored glasses, just as there are windows of various colors which make the country look rosy like the setting sun, or as golden as a summer morning.... I am now really arguing against myself, as I have actually been writing variations on your theme, and am going to call them "pathetic." Still, if there is anything pathetic about them, I have endeavored to portray it in different colors.

Strangely enough, Schumann struggled all his life to find the perfect version of this work. He was not only interested in composing variations with the utmost variety, but variations that united structurally to form a work of symphonic proportions.

The first version contained 18 variations, but when it was published in 1837, it had just 12. In 1852, Schumann published a second edition in which Nos. 3 and 9 were deleted and the finale revised. After Schumann's death, Clara Schumann and Brahms published five variations of the six that had been left out of the first edition. Tonight's program presents the first edition, as well as the five so-called posthumous variations.

Etude No. 1 is a rhythmically tense march confined almost exclusively to the middle and lower half of the keyboard. No. 2 pits an assertive and massive triplet accompaniment against a *canto* in duple time. The wide-spaced "violin" arpeggios in the right hand of No. 3 provide a background for the left hand's ele-

gant melody. No. 4 is another march, with full chords in both hands separated from one another by eighth-note rests; it leads directly into No. 5, a scherzo handled in pseudo-canonic fashion. No. 6, marked *agitato*, gets its tumbling, fluttering quality by a complicated figuration divided between the two hands. No. 7 starts with both hands moving close together, in parallel motion, but the right hand gradually gains a separate identity. No. 8, with its persistent dotted rhythm and ascending-descending "slides," resembles the opening of a Baroque overture. No. 9 is another puckish scherzo, to be played *presto possibile*. There is never a pause in the massive, 16th-note progression of No. 10. The left hand is equally persistent in the following etude, but above it the right hand spins out an expressive nocturne.

The finale is more than three times the length of any of the preceding etudes and tends to overshadow them in its brilliance and melodic appeal. As a tribute to the young Englishman William Sterndale Bennet, a close friend of Schumann's to whom the work is dedicated, Schumann used the theme "Du stolzes England, Freue dich" ("Proud England, rejoice") from a Marschner opera, *Der Templer und die Jüdin*, as the theme for the finale.

The first of the so-called posthumous variations presents the theme in quarter notes against an accompaniment of arpeggiated chords. No. 2 plays at a difficult crossing of hands; No. 3 works the theme into a dramatic presentation in triple meter; and No. 4 is a waltz setting with a prominent accent on the second beat of the measure. The final variation of this set combines brilliant finger work with the melody hidden in the offbeats.

Though one of Schumann's most brilliant works, the Symphonic Etudes was received with so much hostility when first performed by Clara that Schumann advised her not to play the work again in public. He said it was written not to please the public but for its own sake.

—© 1995, Columbia Artists Management Inc.
(edited by Mark Williams)

Rudolf Buchbinder (*piano*) is firmly established as one of the most important pianists on the international scene, and is a regular guest of such renowned orchestras as the Berlin Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, London Philharmonic, National Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Royal Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, and Vienna Symphony. He has collaborated with the world's most distinguished conductors, including Maazel, Abbado, Giulini, Mehta, Masur, Harnoncourt, Dohnanyi, and Sawallisch.

Known as a powerful interpreter, particularly of the late Classical and early Romantic works, Buchbinder offers an extensive repertoire including numerous 20th-century compositions. One of his major accomplishments was his cyclic performance of all 32 piano sonatas by Beethoven, which he played in more than 30 cities, including Munich, Vienna, Hamburg, Zurich, and Buenos Aires. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* praised Buchbinder as "one of today's most important and competent Beethoven performers."

Buchbinder has more than 100 recordings to his credit, covering an enormous range of repertoire, including the cycle of Beethoven sonatas and an 18-disc set of Haydn's complete works for piano, for which he was awarded the Grand Prix du Disque. He has also recorded rarely performed pieces such as the collection of "Diabelli Variations." Buchbinder's cycle of the complete Mozart piano concertos, conducting and performing with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and recorded live at the Vienna Konzerthaus, was acclaimed by the famous critic Joachim Kaiser as the 1998 CD of the Year. In 1999, the 100th anniversary year of Johann Strauss' death, Buchbinder released an exceptional CD

of piano transcriptions entitled *Waltzing Strauss*. In 2000, he released a live recording of both Brahms piano concertos with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under the direction of Nikolaus Harnoncourt.

In June 2003, in an unprecedented event, Buchbinder conducted and performed all five Beethoven concertos in one day with the Vienna Symphony to sold-out audiences at the Konzerthaus in Vienna, earning extraordinary critical acclaim. Buchbinder's most recent live recording is a three-CD set of this performance, which was released in 2003 on the ORF label.

Buchbinder has recently performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Sawallisch in Philadelphia at the new Kimmel Center and in New York's Carnegie Hall, and twice with the New York Philharmonic and music director Lorin Maazel in performances of Gershwin's Concerto in F and Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 2 at Avery Fisher Hall.

Born in 1946, Rudolf Buchbinder has lived his entire life in Vienna, where he began his piano studies at age five as the youngest student to ever be admitted to the Vienna Musik Hochschule. He first toured beyond Europe when he was 19 years old, visiting Japan, Central America, and South America. In his spare time, Buchbinder enjoys literature and fine arts and is an impassioned amateur painter.

Representation:

Mary Jo Connealy, *personal direction*
Erin Acheson, *managerial assistant*
Columbia Artists Management LLC
165 West 57th Street
New York, NY 10019
Tel: 212.841.9513
Fax: 212.841.9517
www.cami.com