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Tuesday, December 12, 8:30 p. m.

Program

- I. Two Sonatas *Scarlatti*
C minor, Allegro molto
G major, Prestissimo
- II. Phantasie in C major, Opus 17 *Schumann*
Il tutto fantastico e appassionato
Moderato con energia
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- III. Toccata, Opus 7 *Schumann*
- INTERMISSION
- IV. Scherzo No. 4, in E major, Opus 54 }
Etude, E flat minor, Opus 10 } *Chopin*
Etude, F major, Opus 10 }
Etude, G flat major, Opus 10 }
- V. Two Etudes *Debussy*
Pour les agréments
Pour les huit doigts
- VI. Sonetto 104 del Petrarca }
Au bord d'une source } *Liszt*
- VII. Variations on a Theme from "Carmen" *Horowitz*



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PROGRAM NOTES

TWO SONATASScarlatti

C minor — Allegro molto

G major — Prestissimo

There were two Scarlattis, father and son. Alessandro Scarlatti, the father, was the founder of the Neapolitan school of opera, and wrote considerably over a hundred works for the stage, besides church music, cantatas and instrumental works. Domenico Scarlatti also wrote operas and church music, but is chiefly remembered as a brilliant performer on the harpsichord, and a composer for that instrument. The complete edition of his harpsichord works, edited by Professor Alessandro Longo, contains no fewer than 545 pieces, the majority of which could, in accordance with the convention of his day, be termed Sonatas. This makes identification difficult. There are, for instance, no fewer than fifteen Allegro Sonatas in C minor. Several of the Sonatas have had the circle of their admirers enlarged by inclusion in the Goldoni ballet of "The Good-humoured Ladies," which was arranged by Vincenzo Tommasini and presented by Diaghilev with choreography by Massine.

PHANTASIE, in C major, Op. 17.Schumann

In 1836 a scheme was afoot to raise subscriptions for a monument to Beethoven at Bonn. The project fell into abeyance, but not before Schumann had sketched a work which, in December 1836, he offered to his publishers under the title "Ruins—Trophies—Palms. Grand Sonata for the Pianoforte, for Beethoven's Monument," the intention being that the proceeds should be his contribution to the fund that was then being raised. Eventually the monument was erected in 1845, thanks largely to the princely generosity of Liszt. Meanwhile the work was diverted from its original purpose. On March 17, 1838, Schumann wrote to his future wife: "I have finished a Fantasy in three movements, which I sketched down to its details in June, 1836. I do not think I ever wrote anything more impassioned than the first movement; it is a profound lament about you," and the following year he explained the "lament" by telling her that she could only understand that movement by taking her mind back to that unhappy summer of 1836, when her father had succeeded temporarily in parting the lovers. That was the time when he wrote his F sharp minor Sonata, which is dedicated to Clara, and which he described as his "heart's cry" for her. He also told her that she was the "tone" mentioned in the motto he had taken from Schlegel for the Fantasy:

*Durch all Töne tönst
Im bunten Erdentraum
Ein leiser Ton gezogen
Für den der heimlich lauschet,*

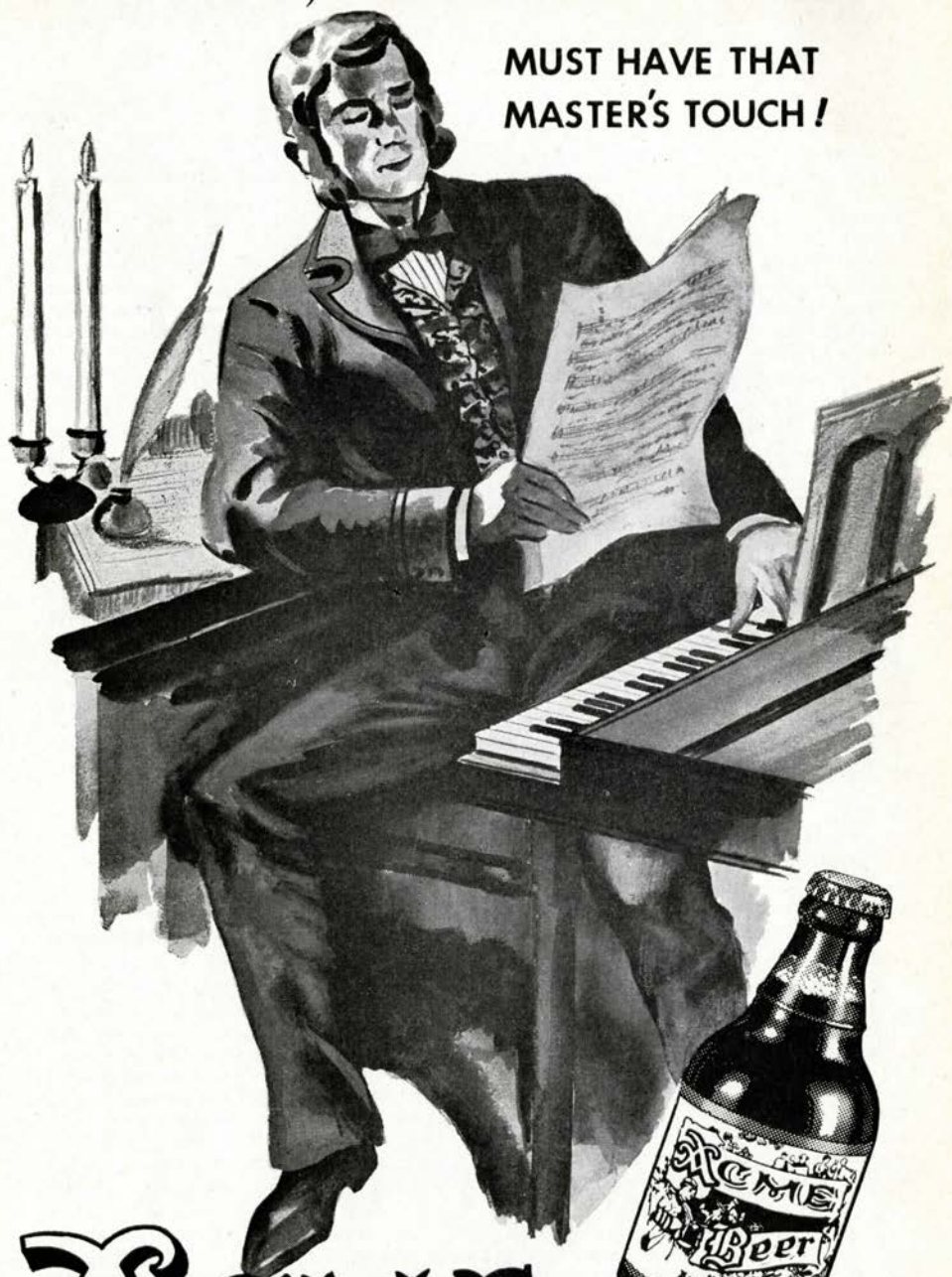
which may be rendered as "In earth's motley dream, through all other tones, there is a soft and gentle tone for him who listens in secret." The Fantasy was published in 1839, with this motto and a dedication to Liszt.

The superscriptions of its three movements are given in Italian, as being the language more generally understood in such connection, but Schumann gave his indications, as usual, in German. He directs that the first movement is to be played fantastically and passionately throughout. It opens with a broadly passionate, yearning phrase over a flowing accompaniment in semiquavers. In its continuation note should be taken of a phrase in D minor as it is to recur in a different context. This section slows down to *Adagio* and a pause, followed by a vigorous episode which brings back the passionate opening phrase. Then the key changes to C minor for a new episode, inscribed *im Legendenton*, with a theme of folk-song character. It leads to a resumption, in A flat major, of the suave, melodic phrase we first heard in D minor. An abridged recapitulation brings the movement to a close.

One of Schumann's discarded titles for the second movement was "Triumphal Arch," and it would not have been inappropriate had he retained it. A massive, festal theme in chords begins it in a march-like rhythm. Then begins one of those sequential episodes which are so characteristic of Schumann. A phrase first heard in an inner part is treated imitatively and in modulation. Eventually it gives way to a livelier rhythm, and this in turn leads to a resumption of the festal march-theme followed by a brilliant and vigorous coda.

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The concluding section, once called "The Starry Crown," is a nocturne, directed to be played piano throughout. It has the nature of a romantic reverie which twice converges upon a central idea, only to leave it again and relapse into a beautiful half-light. There is a short orchestral piece by a modern composer, the title of which might well be borrowed as appropriate to this meditation. It is called "Pensive Twilight."

TOCCATA, Op. 7.....Schumann

The composition of the *Toccata*—one of the most brilliant movements written by Schumann—was commenced during his student days at Heidelberg in 1829, but laid aside and not completed until four years later. It is a concert-study in virtuosity, embodying something of that individual style of pianoforte technique already apparent in Schumann's earliest works. The music has a tremendous energy and rhythmic swing—a succession of four-note figures in thirds, sixths, broken chords, etc.,—both hands being busily employed. From time to time melodic fragments emerge out of these brilliant sound-patterns.

Half-way through there is a momentary lull, then the music resumes and works up to new *bravura* passages in double octaves, chords for both hands, arpeggios, and so forth. Towards the end the four-note figure gives place to one of two notes, then to a series of syncopations charmingly suggesting the slowing down of the rhythmic energy as the music comes to a close.

SCHERZO NO. 4, in E major, Op. 54.....Chopin

Chopin's four Scherzi go far beyond what was implied in his day by that title. Huneker says of them that he "practically built up a new structure, boldly called it a Scherzo, and poured into its elastic mould most disturbing and incomparable music." Many years earlier Liszt had discerned in them "breathings of stifled rage and suppressed anger; they picture a concentrated exasperation and despair which are at one time manifested in bitter irony, at another intolerable pride. These gloomy apostrophes of his Muse have not been so well understood as his most tenderly coloured poems, and the personal character of Chopin, no doubt, had much to do with this general misconception. Being kind, courteous and affable, and of tranquil and almost joyful manners, he would not allow these secret convulsions which tormented him to be even suspected." Another Chopin enthusiast declares that the rhythm of the Scherzi expresses "a certain spirited opposition, a fascinating arrogance." Structurally all of them are remarkable for the amplification of the thematic material. This naturally comes to a head in the codas, and a composer who has closely analyzed Chopin's methods declares that the codas of all the Scherzi should be studied with an eye to their organic development.

The Fourth Scherzo in E major, differs markedly from the others in character. It was published in 1843. One writer says it wears a "kindlier face." Even the more agitated portions are less fiery, and more room is left for the purely lyrical element to assert itself. Possibly this apparent slackening of pulsation may be attributed to the ill health which was then gaining upon him, but if so he would appear to have been a cheerful and resigned invalid. Karasovski, Chopin's biographer, says of it: "Built up by a series of cunning touches and climaxes, and without the mood, depth or variety of its brethren, it is more truly a Scherzo than any of them. It has a tripping lightness, and there is sunshine imprisoned behind its opened bars. Here is intellectual refinement and jesting of a superior sort; I find the fairy-like measures delightful after the other Scherzi. There is the same spirit of opposition, but of arrogance none." To which we may add, in conclusion, Nieck's comment: "The harmonic finesses, the melodic cunning and rhythmical piquancy are too potent to be ignored. The resting place . . . is the sweetly melodious second section, with its long, smooth, gently and beautifully curved lines."

ETUDE, E-flat minor, Op. 10 } ETUDE, F major, Op. 10 }Chopin ETUDE, G-flat major, Op. 10 }

Chopin wrote altogether twenty-seven studies. He began the etudes listed under Opus 10 as early as 1829 when he was barely twenty years of age. They comprise, nevertheless, some of his most imaginative and enchanting creations.

The Etude in E-flat minor—Andante—might be described as an essay in delicate nuances. Its somewhat melancholy melody has a gently moving figuration of accompani-

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LEONIDE MASSINE

ment with a sustained bass. There is a middle section in major key where the mood is somewhat brighter, and the music eventually rises to an impassioned climax, after which the earlier quiet passages are resumed.

The Etude in F major is light in sentiment, and only skims the surface of emotion. Von Bülow styles it "a *bravura* study par excellence," but in the melody in the left hand there is a meaning that captures attention.

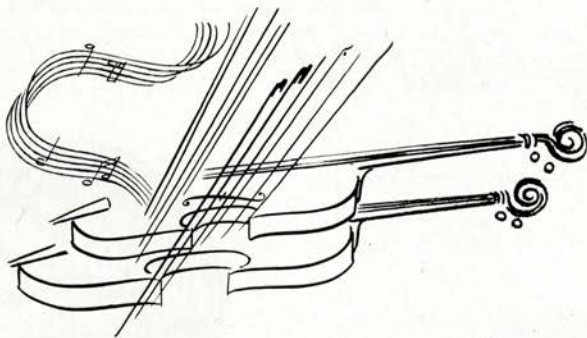
Commonly known as the study on the black keys, the extreme brilliancy of the Etude in G-flat major, has caused it to become one of the most popular of the series. Its vivacity is peculiarly exhilarating, and the conclusion has a special fascination.

TWO ETUDESDebussy

Pour les agréments

Pour les huit doigts

The last of Debussy's works for piano consisted of Twelve Etudes, in two sets of six each, which were completed on September 27, 1915. He hesitated for a time whether to dedicate them to the memory of Frédéric Chopin or Francois Couprin, having, as he said, "an equal respect for these two coposers, both so admirably intuitive." There are many references to them in his correspondence. Writing to André Caplet in 1916 he says that they contain "a thousand different ways of treating pianists according to their deserts." More seriously he confesses elsewhere that they "terrify your fingers . . . You may be sure that mine sometimes halt at certain passages. I have to stop and recover my breath as after a stiff climb." Again, conscious that they would encounter criticism, he wrote, "I am sure you will agree with me that there is no need to render technique more depressing for the sake of making a serious impression; a touch of charm has never spoiled anything. Chopin proved that, and he makes my attempt seem very presumptuous, as I am well aware. I am not sufficiently dead to be safe from the comparisons that will inevitably be made to my disadvantage by my contemporaries." The quotations are from the English edition of Léon Vallas' biography. According to Alfred Cortot, "apart from its musical quality, this was the first work of its kind to formulate, under the aegis of a great name, the principles of modern piano technique."



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The Etudes are entitled in accordance with the particular technical difficulty which characterizes each of them. The Eighth Etude (originally planned to be the twelfth) was completed on August 12, 1915. It is "Pour les agréments," to which he added in a letter, making a play on the word *agréments*, "but not for the entertainment of pianists, the facetious virtuosi will say. It takes the form of a Barcarolle on a rather Italian sea." (Not the "exaggerated Italy" in which Rostand places the scene of one of his minor plays.) Technically it is, as indicated, a study in grace-notes. Describing the Etudes to Jacques Durand, his publisher, Debussy says: "Amongst others there is one in fourths where you will find effects you have never heard before, despite the fact that your ears are inured to all sorts of strange sounds." This is the third Etude and the composer referred to the harmonies resulting from the predominance of fourths, an effect even more pronounced in the sixth Etude, "for the eight fingers," that is to say, without the use of the thumbs, which, as stated in a footnote, would render its execution acrobatic. It is a velocity study, which is, however, to be played softly except at two points, one in the middle and one towards the end.

SONNETTO DEL PETRARCA, No. 104.Liszt

Much of Liszt's best piano music is contained in the three volumes entitled *Années de Pèlerinage*. The one associated with Italian subjects was begun at Bellagio in 1837, but not published until 1848, when it comprised seven pieces, including the three Petrarca sonnets. Like the better-known *Liebesträume*, these originated as songs, vocal settings of the respective poems. They were composed at Rome in 1839, but their transformation into piano pieces did not take place until the year of their publication, 1848. It was more than a transcription or even a paraphrase. In this version they appeared as new compositions. This one, in E major, is a setting of the 104th sonnet, in which the poet describes his condition as rendered desperate by the passion which consumes him, and ends by pathetically begging its object to gaze upon the havoc she has wrought. It is prefaced by a dramatic introductory phrase in octaves. The main section consists of a lyrical melody, extended and developed in the mood of the sonnets.

AU BORD D'UNE SOURCE.Liszt

Au bord d'une source (after Schiller) belongs to the volume of *Années de Pèlerinage* of which Switzerland provided the subjects. The piece is too graphically descriptive to call for detailed account.

VARIATIONS ON A THEME FROM "CARMEN".Horowitz

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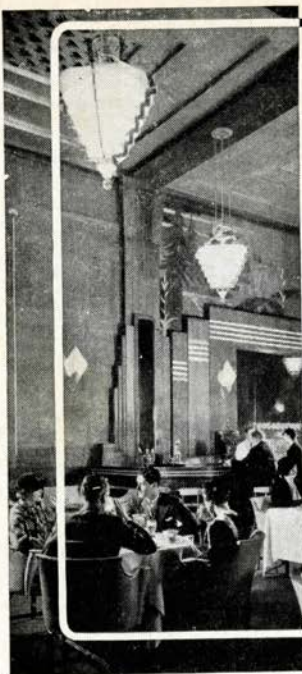


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