

Program Notes

Fantasy in F Minor for Four Hands, D.940

Schubert's Fantasy in F Minor for four hands was composed in 1828, which was recognized as one of the greatest masterpieces of the last work of his life and also the most important piano duet among his piano duet works. Among many piano duet works Schubert composed, he wrote 5 piano duets titled "fantasy", including D.1, D.1B, D.9, D.48, and D.940. Fantasy in F Minor is the very last one and after 15 years from the last fantasy piano duet that he wrote. This piece has a similar structure to his another outstanding fantasy, "Wanderer' Fantasy in C major, D. 760". Both are single movements, continuously attached but divided into four different sections within the movement.

The first section is *Allegro molto moderato*. The theme is presented in dotted rhythm and runs through the whole piece. The melody is very intimate and sentimental, like whispering to tell a story, which is a typical Schubertian feature. The theme is presented both in Major and minor with abundant color changes, which engraves variety in the piece. The second section is *Largo*, beginning with a series of trills, and many double-dotted rhythms throughout this section, which differentiate the first movement's sentimental feeling from a march-like and overture-like feeling. The Third section is *Allegro vivace*, where the character is completely different from the former two sections, which is a very uplifted and dance-like feeling, with sparkling miniatures. The fourth section is a recapitulation of the first section. The second theme is presented in a fugal structure, pushing the music to the climax point, and then suddenly going quiet at the coda, circling back to the first theme to silently end the music.

Impromptu No.3 in G-Flat Major, Op.51

Chopin composed four impromptus. The last one "Fantasie-impromptu in C-sharp minor" is actually the first impromptu that he composed, which was in 1834. After he tried out this idiom, he decided to write the other three impromptus, the first one of the three impromptus was composed in 1837 which is the same year he first met George Sand. All four impromptus are in ternary form (*ABA*) and all share a variety of similar materials. The third Impromptu is Chopin's personal favorite, it was composed at the beginning of 1842 for Chopin's concert with mezzo-soprano Pauline Viardot at the *Salle Pleyel* on February 21st of that year. This Impromptu is very beautiful and charming, where everything is just there, and the nuances of the rhythm and the richness and adventure of the harmonies all flow naturally with the music itself. The middle section is slower, marked *sostenuto*, and the melody from the right-hand treble clef switches to the left-hand bass clef, which is more affectionate, making it feel like the melody was sung by a mezzo-soprano singing before switching to a baritone.

Années de pèlerinage II: Italie, S.161

IV. Sonetto 47 del Petrarca

V. Sonetto 104 del Petrarca

VI. Sonetto 123 del Petrarca

The Tre Sonetti di Petrarca are settings of three sonnets by Petrarch in which the fourteenth-century poet describes his love for the unattainable Laura. Liszt devoted a lot of attention to Petrarca sonnets in his works including vocal and piano solo pieces, and he worked four times on these three Petrarca sonnets, showing his enthusiasm towards this poem. He gained inspiration from Petrarch's Sonnets while traveling in Italy with Marie, Countess d'Agoult, with whom Liszt fell in love. Liszt originally wrote three Petrarch Sonnets for piano and voice(S. 270) in 1843-1846, and he transcribed the song version into a piano version (S.158) later on. Though the piano version was composed after the vocal version, it was published before it in 1846, and the song version followed later on in 1847. During the second period of Liszt's Composition(around 1837-1849), he spent his time mostly as a touring virtuosic pianist and got brilliant piano technique, also after hearing Chopin's compositions, which inspired him to revise many of his former works including these two sets of three Petrarch sonnets. Liszt first revised three piano works of three Petrarch Sonnets in 1846 and published them in the set of *Années de pèlerinage II: Italie*, before revising the songs in 1864-1882.

The three Petrarch sonnets are unabashedly lyrical, infused with elements of Italian bel canto operatic writing. Liszt used a lot of markings such as *molto espressivo*, *cantabile con passione*, *Cantando*, etc. to describe these lyrical phrases. "Sonnet No.47" portrays the inner excitement of a crush or first love. The music is well interpreted as the poem wrote: "Blessed be the day, the month, the year, the season, the hour, the place ... where I was found and enslaved by two fair eyes."

"Sonnet No.104" described an extremely struggling feeling in love. Throughout the piece, from its start with a surge of the intensity of octaves, and then comes to an operatic style singing, and then the structure and texture get thicker and complex and ends very softly, which corresponds to the poem that "I fear, yet hope; I burn, yet am turned to ice; I soar in the heavens, but lie upon the ground"; "I hate myself, but love another. I feed on grief, yet weeping, laugh; death and life alike repel me; and to this state, I am come, my lady, because of you." He feels so desperate that can't be with the lady that he's in love with, making the music ends quietly and fade away.

"Sonnet No.123" described the lover as an angel from heaven, which showed the purity and beauty of the girl that he loves. The dreamy mood created by the accompaniment voice is dominated by arpeggios which are evoked in the poem: "I saw on earth figures of angelic grace ... no leaf stirred on the bough, and all was celestial harmony."

Piano Sonata No. 2 in G-sharp Minor, Op. 19 "Sonata-Fantasy"

This "*piano sonata*" was composed in 1892-1897 which is during the first period of Scriabin's composition. In this period he resembled and employed a lot of Chopin's genres in his music. Like in this sonata. It has late romantic style music but also a kind of impressionist music touch. This piece contains two movements, where the first movement is *Andante*, and the second movement is *Presto*, both movements are in classic sonata forms. Scriabin himself wrote about this sonata: "The second sonata reflects the influence of the seashore. The development section is the dark agitation of the deep, deep ocean. The E Major middle section shows caressing moonlight coming after the first darkness of night. The second movement, presto, represents the vast expanse of ocean stormily agitated." The opening section of the first movement creates a very mysterious and agitated sense, and the second theme suddenly becomes quite calm, like the smooth sea, and then more and more waves come, until the development, before the waves get bigger and turn into the raging sea. The second movement resembles a continuous big wave, where the first theme is very intense, but the development has a vast and grande feeling.