

GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

ALDO MANCINELLI, piano

Monday, October 29, 2001

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

RICE UNIVERSITY

the
Shepherd
School
of Music

PROGRAM

Ballade in D Minor, Op.10 No.1 "Edward"

Johannes Brahms

Intermezzo in A Minor, Op.118 No.1

(1833-1897)

Capriccio in C-sharp Minor, Op.76 No.5

Sonata in F Minor, Op.57 "Appassionata"

Ludwig van Beethoven

Allegro assai

(1770-1827)

Andante con moto

Allegro ma non troppo

INTERMISSION

Sonata in E Minor

Joseph Haydn

Presto

(1732-1809)

Adagio

Finale: Molto vivace

Clouds, Op.7 No.4

Charles Griffes

The Night Winds, Op.5 No.3

(1844-1920)

Ballade in B Minor, "Hero and Leander"

Franz Liszt

(1811-1886)

In consideration of the performer and members of the audience, please check audible paging devices with the ushers and silence audible timepieces. The taking of photographs and use of recording equipment are prohibited.

PROGRAM NOTES

Three of the works presented today are programmatic in nature. The Brahms *Ballade, Op. 10 No. 1*, Beethoven's "*Appassionata*" *Sonata*, and Liszt's *Ballade in B Minor* could be entitled, *Patricide, Regicide, and Suicide*. However gruesome as that may sound, they actually contain some of the most powerful, beautiful, and exciting music written for the piano.

Brahms' *Ballade* is known as the "Edward" *Ballade*, as it was inspired by the old Scottish poem, *Edward, Edward*. In the opening conversation between mother and son, who has just returned from a hunting trip, you can hear her first words to him, "Why does your sword so drop with blood, Edward, Edward?" After a series of weak excuses, the "fate motive" (the rhythmic convention of short, short, short, long that Beethoven described as "fate knocking at the door") draws us into the unfolding drama and final horrific admission that Edward has killed his father. This deed was done apparently at her instigation, and he then curses her to hell in a flood of regret. As the music winds down, some hear his faint sobbing, others the drops of blood from his sword, and others the symbolic waning of his father's heartbeats. Those that may want to brave the Old English version will find it in Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, Volume 1.

It is a little known fact that Beethoven intended to reissue his piano sonatas with programmatic titles, revealing the underlying inspiration for each. The German scholar Arnold Schering has managed, through combing Beethoven's conversation books, letters, and written recollections of former friends and students, to link many of his works to specific literary sources. The *Sonata, Op. 57*, (which Beethoven thought his best sonata) was so aptly named "*Appassionata*" by his publisher, that he did not protest. Schering has linked it to Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Macbeth*. One finds this literary work depicting fate, greed, hunger for power, and murder so perfect a match to Beethoven's music, that it seems appropriate to print a few quotes from the play that best illustrate the perfect match.

As one listens to Beethoven's opening lines, recall Shakespeare's opening scene in which the three witches chant, "When shall we three meet again, in thunder, lightning, or in rain? When the hurly burly's done, when the battle's lost and won... Fair is foul, and foul is fair: hover through the fog and filthy air." As the movement unfolds, with the fate motive most prominent, think of Macbeth's words, "Stars, hide your fires! Let not light see my black and deep desires..." The opening of the third movement reminds one of the opening of Shakespeare's fourth act, where the three witches chant their famous, "Double, double, toil and trouble; fire burn, and cauldron bubble... For a charm of powerful trouble, like a hell-broth boil and bubble." Macbeth's murder of the benevolent king Duncan leads to a string of bloody deeds, and as the music continues to grow into a frenzied pitch, we hear the words, "Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath, those clamorous harbingers of blood and death" brought to the close only when Macbeth's bloody head is at last displayed.

Franz Liszt does not present us with a descriptive title to his *Ballade in B Minor*. However, in the oral tradition of Liszt's student, Martin Krause, to his student, Claudio Arrau, to his student, Mr. Mancinelli, we are given the clues to one of his most

theatrical works. Liszt's inspiration was the ancient Greek legend of Hero and Leander, a story of forbidden love, popular among the romantic musicians of the day. Leander swims the Hellespont each night to rendezvous with his lady love. One night he manages to arrive despite a brewing storm. As he must make it home before daybreak, he braves the swelling waves, only to be drowned. Hero, in despair, throws herself into the sea. Notice at the onset of the waves, the beginning of the piece, you hear soon after the fate motive yet again. In Liszt's story there are four crossings, each more violent than the last. The love scenes are unmistakable. We finally hear fate's warnings yet again, his death, funeral bells, and the lovers' ascending spirits.

— Notes by Judith Mancinelli

BIOGRAPHY

Internationally acclaimed pianist, ALDO MANCINELLI, formerly Artist-in-Residence at the University of Tulsa and presently Distinguished Visiting Artist at McMurry University, is the first American to win the coveted Ferruccio Busoni International Piano Competition. He made his debut at the age of eleven performing Beethoven's First Piano Concerto with the Wheeling Symphony Orchestra. After graduating from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, he continued his piano studies with Rudolf Firkušny and later with Claudio Arrau. As the recipient of two successive Fulbright scholarships, Mr. Mancinelli studied with Carlo Zecchi at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and upon graduation, he was awarded the Don Luigi Sturzo Prize as the outstanding graduate of the year. Mr. Mancinelli has performed over 950 concerts throughout Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, and the United States. He made his New York debut as soloist with the National Orchestral Association in Carnegie Hall, and has appeared as guest soloist with major symphony orchestras in the United States and Europe, including the Hague Philharmonic, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the N.D.R. Symphony (Hamburg), the Cleveland Orchestra, the Santa Cecilia Orchestra (Rome), La Scala Orchestra (Milan), and the Dallas Symphony, among others. His recording of Piano Music of Charles Griffes, released by Musical Heritage Society, has received wide critical acclaim. Aldo Mancinelli has recently recorded the Beethoven Fourth Concerto in Prague with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra. Also on the compact disc are two additional works by Beethoven—the “Nel cor piu” Variations and the Sonata in E-flat, Op. 31 No. 3. In July 1999, Aldo Mancinelli performed at three festivals in the Czech Republic and in July 2000, he performed at the Festival Musical des Grands Crus de Bourgogne in France. In July 2001, he returned to the Czech Republic for concerts at several summer festivals. Mr. Mancinelli is a Steinway Artist.



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