



George Kiorpes

piano

A Chopin Program

A Selection of Nocturnes and Waltzes

Faculty Recital

Tuesday, November 15, 2005

7:30 pm

Recital Hall, School of Music

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Program

Waltz in A^b Major, Op. 69 no. 1 ("L'adieu")
Waltz in C[#] Minor, Op. 64 no. 2

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Nocturne in B Major, Op. 32 no. 1
Nocturne in E Minor, Op. 72 no. 1

Waltz in E Major (Op. posth.)
Waltz in B Minor, Op. 69 no. 2
Waltz in E Minor (Op. posth.)

Three Nocturnes, Op. 9

B^b Minor
E^b Major
B Major

Grande valse brillante, E^b, Op. 18

Intermission

Nocturne in F Minor, Op. 55 no. 1
Nocturne in F[#] Major, Op. 15 no. 2

Waltz in D^b Major, Op. 70 no. 3
Waltz in D^b Major, Op. 64 no. 1 ("Minute")
Waltz in G^b Major, Op. 70 no. 1

Two Nocturnes, Op. 27

C[#] Minor
D^b Major

Three Grandes valse brilliantes, Op. 34

A^b Major
A Minor
F Major

The hall is equipped with a listening assistance system.
Patrons needing such assistance should contact an usher in the lobby.

Program Notes

Two of the most popular genres of Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849), the Nocturnes and Waltzes are almost diametrically opposed in character. The former, literally "night pieces," were originated by Chopin's Irish contemporary John Field, but Chopin enlarged the form and encompassed an almost unlimited emotional range. The charming "singing style" of Field reaches operatic dimensions in some of Chopin's examples, which are often dark and occasionally even morbid in character; others, however, reflect the genial open air of Field. Pianistically they are marvels of sonority, and more than any other of Chopin's genres utilize the entire range of the instrument in a manner that has deservedly been termed "Chopinesque." The Waltzes, on the other hand, are spirited and extrovert pieces for the most part, bright and diatonic as opposed to the sometimes intense chromaticism of the Nocturnes, and not without occasional flights of virtuosic display.

The opening Waltz in A-flat was composed as a parting gift to his youthful sweetheart, Maria Wodzinska, and therefore not published during Chopin's lifetime; it is a touching love lyric in rondo form. The Waltz in C# Minor is a popular favorite, also in rondo form, with two poetic themes that alternate with a rapid whirling interlude.

The Nocturnes in B and E Minor are highly characteristic, with widely spaced harmonic backgrounds supporting appealing melodies, often with elaborate ornamentation. The Nocturne in B has a celebrated dramatic ending in the minor mode, an operatic touch complete with "orchestral" accompaniment.

The three Waltzes that follow are all posthumous. The E major is a charming specimen of the youthful Chopin, high-spirited and content with simple dash and elegance. Both the B minor and E minor examples are more mature pieces, the first slightly melancholy, the second virtuosic with a tender middle section and an exciting coda. It is uncertain why Chopin did not prepare these for publication; the E Minor, at least, is among his most popular works.

The three Nocturnes, Op. 9, though the first to be published, were by no means the earliest ones composed, and hence fully mature works. The Bb Minor, a large ABA design, is seductive, dark, and alluring, while the Eb Major, as well-known as the Mona Lisa or the Venus de Milo, is irresistibly ardent, perfect in its smaller proportions, yet urged unexpectedly to an elaborate coda. The B Major is the most spacious of the three, and includes, as do some later Nocturnes, a dramatic middle section in rapid tempo. The mood is elusive, almost playful and then seductive, turbulent in its central episode, then brimming with passion as it nears its close and finally dissolves in a dazzling ornamental flourish.

The Waltz, Op. 18, is indeed "*grande*" and "*brillante*," beginning with a trumpet-like flourish and continuing with a chain of waltzes. The form is the one most commonly used by the innumerable waltz composers of the nineteenth century: a series of waltzes, each in ABA form, leads to a return of the first theme, and an extended and brilliant coda.

The Nocturne in F Minor has a melancholy opening theme not unlike the main theme of the fourth Ballade in the same key, composed around the same time. This may account for the sudden appearance of a turbulent theme that develops an unpredictable narrative character which persists to an accelerating close in the major key. The F# Nocturne is one of the most popular; it features an exquisite theme, a dramatic middle section, and an abundance of masterly ornamentation.

The three Waltzes that follow are among Chopin's shortest, though all are decidedly longer than the so-called "minute" attached to the popular Db Waltz from Op. 64. According to George Sand, this charming wisp of a piece was inspired by the sight of a little dog chasing its tail. The Db Waltz from Op. 70 is more leisurely, while the one in Gb is rowdy and boisterous, with some perilous leaps.

The two Nocturnes of Op. 27 are large-scale masterpieces that have few equals among the Nocturnes. They make an effective pairing, both sharing the same tonal center, and both decidedly operatic in character. The first is predominantly a dramatic *scena*, the second an elaborate lyrical aria which develops into an impassioned duet. Schumann gave these pieces a rapturous review, using such terms as "luminous" and "transcendent."

The three Waltzes of Op. 34 have none of the unity of the two Nocturnes preceding, yet make an effective group, mainly through contrast. The Waltz in Ab is the most aristocratic of Chopin's waltzes—Schumann suggested that if it were danced, then the dancers should be at least countesses to do justice to this apotheosis of the waltz. At the close, a whirling coda leads to exhaustion, where little remains but the heartbeat of the rhythm in the bass. The beautiful A Minor Waltz is neither "grand" nor "brilliant," but rather one of Chopin's most poetic utterances.

Finally the F Major Waltz, one of the shorter waltzes, is all motion and high spirits. It was once nicknamed the “cat” waltz—as Chopin’s biographer James Huneker suggested, if the “Minute” Waltz was truly inspired by a dog, there had to be one for the cat as well.

--George Kiorpes



George Kiorpes holds the BM degree, Artist Diploma, and MM from Peabody Conservatory, and the DMA from Boston University. His teachers have included Frederick Petrich, Austin Conradi, Julio Esteban, and Bela Nagy. He has also been awarded numerous awards and prizes, including Peabody’s May Garrettsom Evans and Bach-Horstmeier Scholarships and the coveted Paul Thomas Prize for Outstanding Pianistic Achievement. Kiorpes has participated in solo, ensemble, and concerto performances throughout the United States and in the Far East and has participated in convention programs at the state, regional and national level for numerous professional organizations. Concerto collaborations include conductors Reginald Stewart, Arthur Fiedler, David Moskowitz and Herbert Hazelman. In 2002, he was the recipient of the Outstanding Teacher Award in the UNCG School of Music. He has published articles in many national

periodicals and for four years was editor of *The North Carolina Music Teacher*. His compositions for piano have been published by Ditson, Willis, and Kjos music publishers