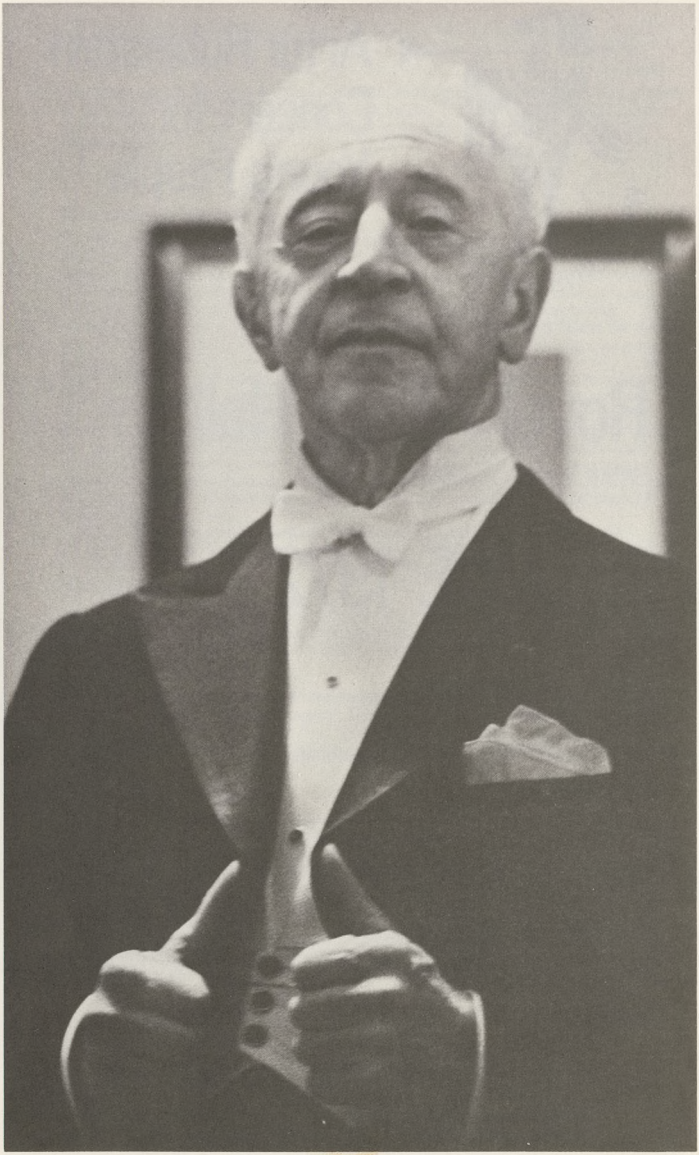

Artur Rubinstein Concert for Young People

Royal Albert Hall

General Manager — F.J.Mundy

18 JUNE 1972

Programme

SONATA in F minor Op 57 — Appassionata	BEETHOVEN
CARNIVAL Op 9	SCHUMANN
INTERVAL	
BALLADE No 1 in G minor Op 23	CHOPIN
TWO WALTZES	CHOPIN
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SONATA in F minor Op 57 – Appassionata **BEETHOVEN (1770-1827)**

Allegro assai
Andante con moto –
Allegro ma non troppo
Presto

This is the twenty-third of Beethoven's thirty-two piano sonatas. It was written between 1804 and 1806, about the same time as the *Waldstein* Sonata (No 21 in the series). Although much troubled by his ears, the deafness, which was to make him withdraw almost exclusively from public life from 1813 onwards, was not bad enough to prevent the composer from making regular concert appearances as a pianist of repute. At the same time he found himself in love with two sisters; one vivacious, fun-loving Josephine von Deym, an attractive widow, while the other was Josephine's introvert, highly sensitive and fascinating sister, the Countess Therese von Brunswick. Between the two they attracted the physical and spiritual sides of the composer, but it is worth noting that, in spite of these – and other – attractions to members of the opposite sex, Beethoven never married. It is probable that his absorption with music made him realise that he could never be able to give more than a small part of himself to a love match. Nevertheless, in the middle thirties Beethoven was human enough to become influenced by romantic attachments, and this passionate sonata was one of several works which may well owe their character to the composer's love life at that time. Nicknames may well be convenient means of identification for the public, but, all too often, they give a misleading idea of the music itself. In most musical cases, these titles are not given to the work by the composer, but are appended by a third party. The title *Appassionata,* for example, was given to the sonata by the publisher Cranz, and certainly suits the two outer movements, although the central *adagio* is serene. Almost as though the tempestuous Josephine had influenced the first and third movements, while the gentler Therese had inspired the slow movement. Under the circumstances Beethoven could hardly choose one of the sisters to receive the dedication of the sonata, and tactfully inscribed it to their brother Count Franz von Brunswick.

The sonata broke new ground in music, foreshadowing the towering works to come with a force and passion which must have shocked and amazed its first audiences. Today, when we have the whole range of classical, romantic and modern music to sharpen our musical palates, the *Appassionata* remains one of the greatest dramatic, exciting, and moving works in the repertory. The subdued turbulence of the opening bars, and the fierce energy which they generate; the subdued, even restful tune which opens the *andante,* and is used as the basis of four variations, ending unexpectedly on two apparently alien chords, full of suspense, allowing the finale to follow without a break; the persistant rhythmic pulse of this restless finale, and the fury of the final pages, make this memorable sonata a musical event of importance in any programme.

CARNIVAL Op 9 **SCHUMANN (1810-1856)**

Preamble: Pierrot: Harlequin: Noble Waltz: Eusebius:
Floristan: Coquette: Réplique(Reply) Sphinxs (not to be played):
Papillons (Butterflys): Dancing Letters – A S C H S C H A:
Chiarina: Chopin: Estrella: Reconnaissance (Recognition):
Pantalon and Columbine: German Waltz: Paganini: Aveu
(Avowal): Promenade (Stroll): Pause: – March of the David
League against the Philistines.

Schumann's *Carnival,* in common with Beethoven's *Appassionata,* was partly influenced by two girls in his life. But, unlike Beethoven, Schumann's romantic nature needed the devoted love of a wife, and at twenty-three he was very susceptible. In 1834 he met Ernestine von Fricken, a striking eighteen year old who was studying piano in Leipzig with Schumann's own teacher Friedrich Wieck. It was a case of mutual infatuation, and they became engaged almost immediately. Schumann discovered with delight that her home was Asch, and wrote the letters A S C H in his musical diary. In German music-writing the note B can be described as H, while the note of E flat is written as Es, and often called S. So Schumann could write ASCH in musical terms as A, E flat, C and B, and also SCHA, being the only four letters of his own name-SCHumAnn-which could be expressed in musical notation. He was delighted, and began work on a set of piano variations on the four letters. Within a few months, however, he found himself losing interest in Ernestine, whose personality was not so interesting as her face and figure. At the same time, his attention was drawn

to Wieck's sixteen year old daughter Clara, who he had known since she was a serious little girl of nine. By now Clara was already establishing a reputation as a pianist, with long tours away from Leipzig. She had always felt a strong affection for Schumann, but it was only in 1835, while working on his variations, that Schumann himself realised that they were made for one another – they were eventually married in 1840 against her father's wishes, and became one of the most famous musical couples in history.

In April, 1834, the first issue of the *Neue Leipziger Zeitschrift für Musik* (The New Leipzig Journal of Music) was printed. This paper, which Schumann had helped to found and shortly began editing, was a major champion for the new, romantic, element in music. Schumann's imagination showed itself in a host of strange names as contributors, many of which were the composer himself under different pseudonyms. Two of these, Eusebius and Floristan, came from Schumann's own secret diaries, where he used their characters to dispute his own different ideas on various subjects. He accepted his own schizophrenia. These, and other friends – both real and imaginary – Schumann incorporated into a fictitious society called the Davidsbund (David's League), so called because they raised their voices against the establishment as David had fought against the Philistines. As they would masquerade in print, so, in the *Carnival* variations, they would show themselves in musical guise. He subtitled the work *Scenes mignonnes sur quartre notes* (Dainty scenes on four notes), and 20 of the 22 short movements open with the four notes in one order or another. The two exceptions are the opening Preamble, a dignified, stately curtain-raiser, and the finale. Once the Preamble is over we meet first Pierrot and then Harlequin, without whom no masquerade carnival ball would be complete. They presumably dance the next waltz. Then the members of the David League begin to arrive. First Eusebius, whose writings in the *Neue Leipziger Zeitschrift für Musik* were as poetic and sensitive as those of Floristan, the next arrival, were bold and outspoken. Coquette seems to belong to the traditional pantomime group, the quick little musical figures seeming to express her flicking a fan, with the hint of a question, which *Réplique* (reply) answers, in seeming conversation with her. Schumann's second completed work, also for piano, was a set of small pieces called *Papillons,* each piece seeming to grow from the one before much as a larvae develops into the mature butterfly. So it was not strange for him to introduce some *Papillons* into his *Carnival* ball. To emphasise the way in which the four notes could fly around perhaps? Certainly the next movement has the four letters dancing all over the place in a happy mixed up waltz, to mark the half-way point.

Chiarina, significantly, is marked *passionato,* and is a musical portrait of Clara. Just as significantly she is followed by his little tribute to Chopin, whose music he has praised highly in print, and whom he was to meet in the autumn of 1835. Then Estrella, marked con affetto (with affection), so different from the passion called for in Clara's portrait, for this is none other than Ernestine. After the animated recognition of *Reconnaissance,* two more members of the old pantomime troup arrive together – Pantalon with Columbine, and they set to to dance a German Dance. Then another of Schumann's real life heroes, Paganini, the fantastic violin virtuoso, who seems to interrupt the waltz, as he performs a fast moving little Caprice. Paganini perhaps sees Estrella listening to him admiringly, and adds her tune to his own. Then the Avowal (surely of love!) the shortest, and perhaps the most effective of the variations, followed by the Promenade as the two now united lovers take a stroll together. It could be argued that the next movement *Pause* is badly named, for it is not an interval or break in the ordinary sense, rather a short introduction, or even a change of mood from the lover's stroll before the tempestuous final movement, where the members of the David League, who have so often attacked the Philistines in print, now do the same in music. But there is a tongue-in-cheek humour pervading the movement, which finally reverts to the opening Preamble, and ends in joyous triumph.

INTERVAL

CHOPIN
(1810-1849)

Schumann and Chopin were both born in 1810, and each made an important contribution to the emergence of the romantic movement in music. They also shared, with Liszt, an understanding of the poetic qualities inherent in the piano, of which Chopin was the supreme master.

BALLADE No 1 in G minor Op 23

Chopin's creation of the Ballade as a purely instrumental concept was the result of his need for a form in which he could express certain ideas of an essentially heroic character, within a free framework, unfettered by existing rules of composition, suited to their own individuality. He therefore went to other existing forms – the sonata, variation form, rondo and song patterns – and from them made the Ballade. In all he wrote four Ballades of which this is the first. It was composed in 1831. He had left Poland for the last time in November 1830. While in Vienna he was constantly aware of the fighting going on between the Russians and the Poles, and thoughts of Poland's epic past were ever in his mind. The Scherzo in B minor and the Ballade in G minor were born in this mood of tragic defiance. It opens with a short, significant introduction, leading to a wistful, sad little tune. This is repeated with warmth and conviction, and rises to an impassioned climax which dies away onto two notes, played in the manner of a soft horn-call fanfare. These two notes then resolve into the first two notes of a new melody, a serene tune which grows in character and becomes brilliant and exciting. It seems to falter for a moment at its climax, but, after a passage of agitated dance-like patterns, its heroism returns. The first theme returns, this time with a sense of foreboding, emphasised by final pages of torrential rushing octaves.

It is amusing to note that when this Ballade was first published in England, the publisher, Wessel of Regent Street, gave it the title of *La Favorite,* since he considered it impossible to sell works by foreign composers without fancy labels!

TWO WALTZES

Chopin composed fourteen waltzes, although only eight were published during his lifetime. There is a wide range of expression, from gay to tragic, from very fast to nostalgically slow, and from naive to eloquent contained in them.

NOCTURNE in D flat Op 27 No 2

There are ninetten Nocturnes, and through them Chopin explores the greatest poetic expression of which the piano is capable. They, too, cover a wide range of emotion, as befits works inspired by the night. This is the eighth of the series, and is a wonderful example of how Chopin could capture the serenity of a beautiful evening. It was composed in 1835.

POLONAISE in A flat Op 53

Chopin's father, Nicholas Chopin, was a Frenchman who left France when a young man and went to live in Poland, where he immediately settled down, became a Polish citizen, spoke fluent Polish and spoke of France as a foreign country. He inevitably married a Polish girl, Justyna, and Frederick was the third of their four children. Thus Chopin, although having a French name, was in every sense of the word a Pole, and a proud member of the race. His first work was a little Polonaise, composed in 1817, and his last was another Polish dance form, a Mazurka, completed in 1849.

Chopin composed sixteen Polonaises for piano, as well as one for cello and piano and an exciting Grand Polonaise for Piano and Orchestra. The Polonaise in A flat is one of the most popular piano works ever written. It was composed in 1842 and is the fifteenth in the series – although the last was entitled Polonaise-Fantasy, and therefore not strictly a Polonaise. It is a virtuoso work of the first order, especially in the insistant left-hand octaves which accompany the tune of the central section, yet it is also a grand example of the elegance and dignity of Poland's national dance.

Programme Notes by Denby Richards (Copyright 1972)