



The Sixty-sixth Season of
The William Nelson Cromwell and F. Lammot Belin
Concerts

National Gallery of Art
2,645th Concert

Paul Badura-Skoda, *pianist*

November 11, 2007
Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm
West Building, West Garden Court

Admission free

Program

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor, BWV 903 (1730)

Joseph Haydn (1732–1809)

Variations in F Minor, Hob. XVII:6 (1793)

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827)

Sonata no. 21 in C Major, op. 53 (“Waldstein”) (1804)

Allegro con brio

Introduzione: Adagio molto

Rondo: Allegretto moderato

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Moments musicaux, op. 94, D. 780 (1828)

I: Moderato

II: Andante

III: Allegro moderato

Schubert

Sonata in A Major, D. 959

Allegro

Andantino

Scherzo: Allegro vivace

Rondo: Allegretto

The Musician

Austrian pianist Paul Badura-Skoda is one of the most important musicians of our time. A legendary artist, he has played in all the world's greatest concert halls and for years was the pianist with the largest number of commercial recordings available on the market. His style is characterized by a complete immersion in music, a passionate search for its essence, and a sense of artistic responsibility.

In 1945 Badura-Skoda entered the Vienna Conservatory. Two years later, he won first prize in the Austrian Music Competition and a scholarship that allowed him to study with Edwin Fischer. In 1949 Wilhelm Furtwängler and Herbert von Karajan became aware of Badura-Skoda's outstanding talent and invited him to perform. Practically overnight the young Viennese pianist became a world-famous artist. Since then Badura-Skoda has been a regular and celebrated guest at the most important music festivals and a soloist with the world's premier orchestras. In addition to Furtwängler and von Karajan, he has collaborated with renowned conductors Karl Böhm, Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Sir Georg Solti, and George Szell, among others.

Badura-Skoda continues to tour internationally with performances in China, France, Italy, Japan, Singapore, and the United States, where he celebrates his eightieth birthday with this concert and concerts at the Gateways Festival in Rochester, New York, and the Piano Texas International Academy and Festival in Fort Worth. He appears at the National Gallery by arrangement with Hunstein Artist Services of New York City.

Program Notes

The exact dates of composition of Johann Sebastian Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue* are not known, although there is evidence that Bach began to compose it in 1720 and continued to perform and refine it over a period of ten years, finishing it in Leipzig in 1730. Considered one of his greatest single works for keyboard, it is written in three parts. The first section acts as a prelude and is similar in style to his toccatas, with grand flourishes and improvisatory abandon. The middle part resembles a recitative and is musically challenging, requiring a mature and sensitive interpretation. The third part, or fugue, begins with a strict chromatic exposition. This intensifies to a more expansive and free development, and incorporates passage work and a thicker, chordal texture with the final statement of the theme.

Joseph Haydn was rare among eighteenth-century composers in that he enjoyed a great deal of success, both financial and otherwise, during his lifetime. Though he was not a pianist himself, he wrote more than fifty sonatas and several short pieces for the instrument, primarily during the first part of his career—only three were written during the last twenty years of his life. The *Variations in F Minor* were written for pianist Barbara von Ployer, who was a gifted student of Mozart's. There is quite a bit of speculation and evidence to show that Haydn secretly dedicated them to a dear friend and perhaps his last great love, Marianne von Genzinger. Genzinger died in 1793, the same year the variations were written, and given the depth and tone of the music, it is likely that she was his inspiration. Written as a set of double variations, the work presents two themes: a mournful first theme and its variations in F minor are interspersed with variations on a more restful and consoling theme in F major.

Written in 1804, Beethoven's twenty-first piano sonata is nicknamed the "Waldstein" because it was dedicated to the composer's good friend and benefactor, Count Ferdinand von Waldstein. This sonata comes from Beethoven's middle period during which time he began to stray from classic sonata form and take advantage of the mechanical improvements in the

piano. Extremely challenging from a technical standpoint, the “Waldstein” is a precursor to the sonatas of the late period, and was clearly not intended to be played by the amateur “salon” pianist. In addition, Beethoven wrote this work when he was unusually happy and untroubled, and this sense of optimism is reflected in the music’s color and style. It has just two movements, although the second movement does have a brief introduction. Originally Beethoven wrote a slow middle movement for the piece, but it became too long, so he published it separately. The first movement, *Allegro con brio*, is written in sonata form, with an extended coda acting as a second development before the conclusion. The *Adagio molto* introduces the final *Rondo: Allegretto moderato*, a tour de force filled with challenging passage work and extended trills.

Franz Schubert was a master composer of short pieces that convey a distinct mood. He wrote more than five hundred lieder that convey the tone, action, or setting of a poem, ranging in theme from a spring day next to a babbling brook to a terrified child riding a horse. Since Schubert began all his works at the keyboard, it is no surprise that he created—perhaps even invented—the “character” piece for piano. His six *Moments musicaux*, written over the course of several years and published the year he died, are miniature gems of melody and expression. Schubert’s final three piano sonatas, all composed in 1828 and published posthumously, represent the composer in his prime. These expansive and profound works were all written after the death of Beethoven, and all pay homage in one way or another to the great master. The four-movement *A-Major Sonata*, D. 959, opens with broad and majestic chords, which give way to a warm and lyrical second theme in the *Allegro*. In the second movement, marked *Andantino*, Schubert presents two opposing themes, opening with a dreamy lullaby that unfolds into a dark and stormy middle section. The playful *Scherzo* lifts the listener out of the mood of the previous movement, and in the final *Allegretto*, the composer borrows a theme from his own *A-Minor Sonata*, D. 537, as well as the Beethovenian texture and sonata-rondo form.

Program notes by Danielle DeSwert

Next Week at the National Gallery of Art

Contemporary Music Forum presents

a world premiere performance

Sanctuary

by Roger Reynolds

featuring Steven Schick and the red fish blue fish ensemble

November 18, 2007

Sunday Evening, 6:30 pm

East Building Auditorium and atrium

For the convenience of concertgoers
the Garden Café remains open until 6:00 pm.

The use of cameras or recording equipment during the
performance is not allowed. Please be sure that cell phones,
pagers, and other electronic devices are turned off.

Please note that late entry or reentry of
the East Building after 6:30 pm is not permitted.

Music Department
National Gallery of Art
Sixth Street and Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC

Mailing address
2000B South Club Drive
Landover, MD 20785

www.nga.gov