

The British Council

PRESENTS

a piano recital

BY

JOHN CLEGG

at the

Manoel Theatre, Valletta

Saturday, 15 February, 1975

503

PROGRAMME

VARIATIONS IN F MINOR

HAYDN

Subtitled 'un piccolo divertimento' this is a late work and consists of a theme followed by two variations and a finale, which is, in effect, an extended third variation. The theme itself is in two halves — a major section following the opening minor half — and the variations follow the classical pattern of ornamental elaboration. The finale is mainly in F minor but after a dramatic cadenza climax there is a magical change to the major in the closing bars, thus preserving the minor-major balance inherent in the theme.

SONATA IN C MINOR Op. 13 (Pathétique)

BEETHOVEN

Grave — Allegro di molto e con brio

Adagio cantabile

Rondo: Allegro

Originally published under the title 'Grande Sonate Pathétique' this is one of the composer's best known works for the piano. The sombre mood is immediately established in the opening bars and the allegro sections which follow intensify the atmosphere; dramatic contrasts occurring whenever the opening motif returns. After such a turbulent first movement the slow adagio which follows makes an even greater contrast in its repose, and the final rondo provides a lively and immediately attractive ending, though it too has its moments of drama and the final flourish into a C minor chord does not dispel the essential sadness of the work.

BARCAROLLE IN F SHARP Op. 60

CHOPIN

One of the great works from Chopin's final years this is surely his most 'Italian' piece, with the rocking gondo'la rhythm and long expansive melodies evocative of the human voice. The main themes are developed with a masterly sense of style and architecture culminating in a triumphant statement of the principal melody followed by a nostalgic coda.

NOCTURNE No. 5 IN B FLAT Op. 37

FAURÉ

BARCAROLLE No. 6 IN E FLAT Op. 70

IMPROMPTU No. 3 IN A FLAT Op. 34

Of all writers for the piano none is more unjustly neglected than Gabriel Fauré. Even the fiftieth anniversary of his death in 1974 failed to provide the revival of interest that is long overdue. The early works owe much to Chopin, though they are never merely imitation or pastiche (as the first and last of these pieces show); the middle period works show increasingly bold structural and harmonic innovations (as in the Barcarolle Op. 70); while his last works are entirely individual in musical idiom and in expression.

EL AMOR Y LA MUERTE (from 'GOYESCAS')

GRANADOS

This piece, literally 'of love and death', is from the set of six pieces called Goyescas inspired by the early paintings of Goya. It is the most spaciouly conceived of the set and, although there is no detailed programme, the opening recitative clearly delineates the confrontation of Death and Love. Towards the end the theme of 'The Maiden and the Nightingale' is recalled with poignant tenderness and, shortly afterwards, the death of the major is heard in a quiet discord; and the piece ends with the melancholy tolling of a bell.

ONDINE

RAVEL

TOCCATA

These two pieces, the first from 'Gaspard de la Nuit', the second from 'Le Tombeau de Couperin', vividly illustrate the two main sides of the composer's character, the impressionistic and the classical. Ondine tells the story of a mermaid who tries to persuade a mortal to become her consort; a piece with cascades of watery sounds and shadowy images. The toccata, dating from 1918, is the last movement of a suite dedicated both to friends killed in the first world war and to the memory of Couperin; its basic motif is rapid repeated notes and the delicate figuration and relentless energy give a sense of exultation for audience and performer alike.

— I N T E R V A L —



JOHN CLEGG

John Clegg