



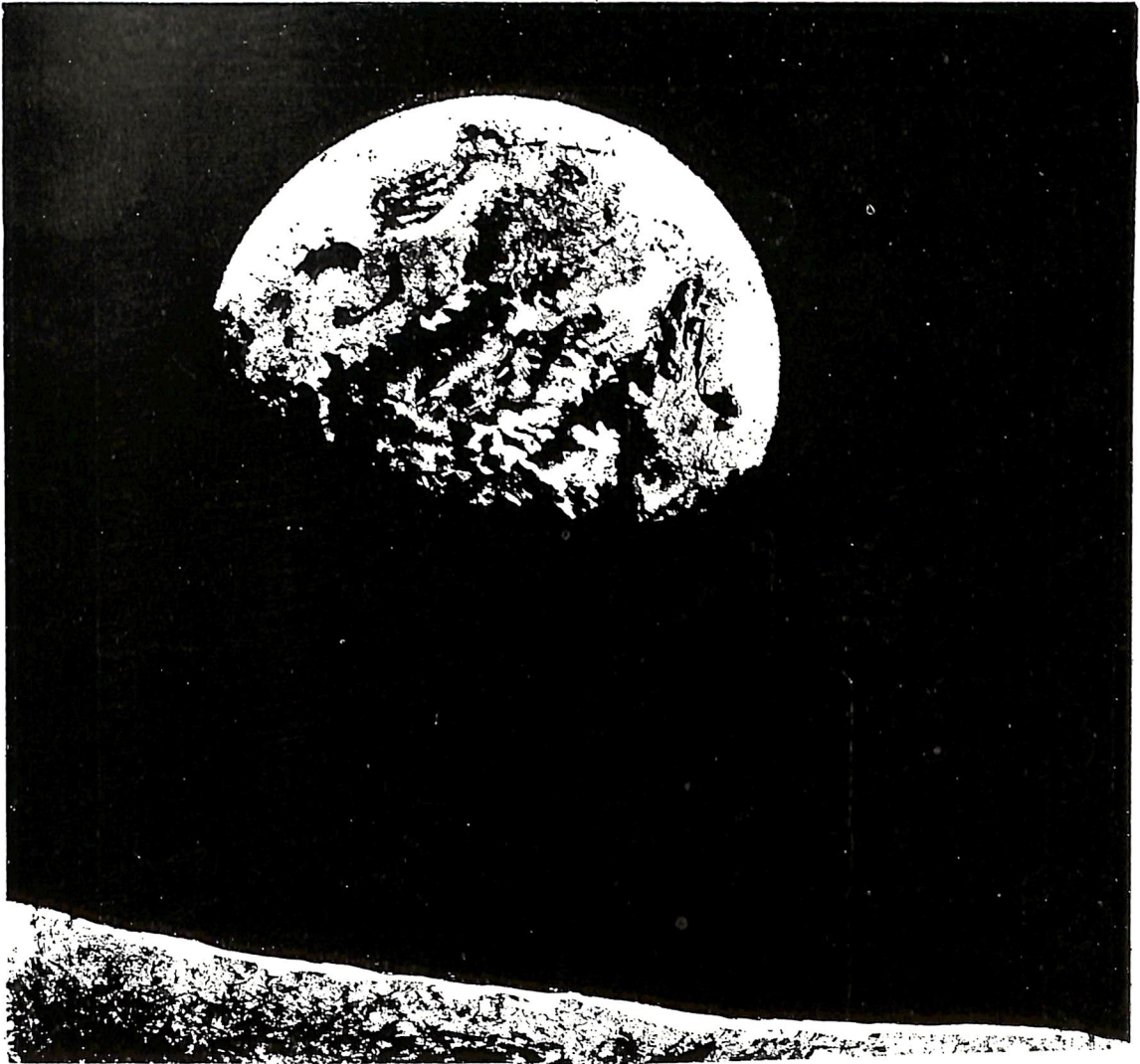
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*Piano Ricordi
by Kater*

17.1.77

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THE MANOEL THEATRE
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

presents

a

PIANO RECITAL

by

PETER KATIN

at the

MANOEL THEATRE

Monday 17th January 1977

PROGRAMME

Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue

J. S. BACH

This work was written between the years 1720 and 1723, during Bach's period of six years at Cothen, where much of his chamber music was composed. As well as the Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue he also completed the English and French Suites, the Inventions and the first book of the 48 Preludes and Fugues.

The Chromatic Fantasia and Fugue is perhaps one of the most adaptable of his keyboard works from the pianist's point of view. The chord writing in the Fantasia is sparing, as distinct from, say, the Italian Concerto in which some of the left-hand chords tend to sound muddy when played on a modern piano, and the recitative part of it seems to suit the piano, in its own way, as much as the harpsichord. The attempts by Busoni and von Bulow amongst others, to make the Fantasia more pianistic by thickening the writing in various ways, have not really succeeded because the result resembles a transcription of an organ work, and I have found it more effective to stick fairly closely to the original with a few additions as unobtrusive as possible. The fugue, a rather extended one, is remarkable for its clarity of outlay and also for its variety of material contained in the three voices.

Amberley Wild Brooks

JOHN IRELAND

Amberley is in Sussex, the county of England where John Ireland lived for much of his life and which certainly inspired a good number of his works. Amberley Wild Brooks is the second of two pieces written during the summer of 1921 (the first is entitled For Remembrance) and, as the title suggests, it evokes a typically English scene. The music flows along through various keys, sunlight brilliantly reflected here and there, until the whole thing explodes in a cascade of fountain-like sound. It finally comes to rest with a reference to the opening theme and a gradual slowing-down until the brook lies still in the sunset.

Sonata in A Minor, D 537

SCHUBERT

Allegro ma non troppo, Allegretto quasi Andantino, Allegro vivace

This sonata was written in 1817, when Schubert was only twenty-one. To me, it is unaccountably neglected, especially by comparison with the other two sonatas in the same key; that of D. 845 is obviously a more 'major' work, comparing in length with the B flat sonata and having as its slow movement a theme which is subjected to lengthy and intricate variations, while the D.784 is probably the most unsmiling sonata of all. However, here is a work of directness and conciseness as well as the predictable youthful exuberance. The first movement, strongly rhythmical, makes clear its extrovert character, right from the start. The second subject may be more muted in feeling but does not allow the lilt to slacken, and indeed the development section draws even more attention to it by the use of sharply accented chords. The second movement consists of a beautifully simple theme which Schubert used later in the finale of the A major sonata, D. 959. This movement is in rondo form, and so the theme returns twice, skilfully embroidered each time, once after a lyrical section in the remote key of C major, and then after a rather 'processional' section in D minor, the right hand tune being accompanied by soft staccato chords. A magical coda takes the music further and further away until we are left with three softly repeated chords. The finale teases with what sound like false starts, until it lets loose a

flow of energy which is not halted for long by the wistful second subject. The whole thing is repeated, finally bringing the music back to its original key, and a long diminuendo which makes the last unexpected fortissimo chord resemble a sudden shout of laughter.

INTERVAL

Suite Bergamasque

DEBUSSY

Prelude: Menuet: Clair de Lune: Passepied

This work dates from 1889 but it was not published until 1905 in a revised version. Of its four movements Clair de Lune has attained an almost unrivalled popularity — and rightly so, for it is I think one of the most exquisitely evocative pieces in the piano repertoire. However, although the same could hardly be said of the other three movements, each has a charm of its own, and the Passepied in particular is imbued with such delicate wit and sparkle that it surely deserves far more attention, even if it were played as so often with Clair de Lune, as a separate piece. As a suite the whole thing fits together admirably as an example of the many ways in which Debussy puts forward ideas of eggshell delicacy and weaves them together within a framework of "miniaturist" dynamics. No great outbursts here, as with l'Isle Joyeuse, for example, but countless nuances that give the Suite the elusive shadings of a rainbow.

Sonata in B Minor Op. 58

CHOPIN

Allegro maestoso — Scherzo: Vivace Largo, Presto, non tanto

This sonata was written when Chopin was at the height of his creative powers, in 1844. From 1839 until 1846 he spent every summer, with one exception, at George Sand's country house in Nohant, where he could work in conditions he had not known before. Despite all that has been said about George Sand, she alone could provide the setting for works which conceivably would not have otherwise been written, and one must realise that all Chopin's major compositions since he left Warsaw were written there — including the other sonata, the famous funeral march of which had been written nearly three years previously and Chopin had looked in vain for the right atmosphere in which to complete it. In the B minor sonata one is aware of something exultant, exuberant. We can feel it in the first movement's outpouring of ideas (for which the conciseness of sonata form had to give way to the elasticity of Chopin's inspiration), the commanding, forthright nature of the very opening, and in that soaring D major theme. The development is restless, snatching here and there at the wealth of material, and serves to balance the rest of the movement emotionally. The Scherzo movement is a single exclamation, heard twice, a feathery, elusive subject which is contrasted by the syncopations of the middle section. In the Largo we have a long and expansive theme, a trio of ever-shifting colours, and a code of that kind of beauty such as may be observed in the glow of an Alpine sunset. The finale is at once triumphant and proud, with an overwhelming coda in the major key which seems to take the listener with it to a level of unrestrained jubilation.



Peter Katin's career started in 1948 with a recital at London's Wigmore Hall which was acclaimed in such a way that within a very short time he was regarded as the finest pianist of the post-war generation. Despite the many competitions for which he was eligible as a student of the Royal Academy of Music he came away with only one — the Eric Brough Memorial Prize — and he ruefully admits that he had always been unable to play in a competitive spirit. His reputation was therefore built up by lucky "breaks" and the major orchestras in England and also the BBC quickly discovered that he possessed a unique versatility in the way in which he could adapt to a wide range of styles; as a result he found himself playing programmes of almost everything from Bach or Mozart to first performances of some extremely complex works.

At that stage, however, his greatest successes were in the more classical repertoire, a performance in London of Beethoven's fourth concerto proving to be a landmark and drawing eulogistic praise from the late Richard Capell in the Daily Telegraph. Only three years later his image changed almost overnight after a performance of Rachmaninov's third concerto at a Henry Wood Promenade Concert which practically stopped the show after nine calls, and for the next fifteen years he was looked upon as primarily a virtuoso and a leading player of many such works.

By 1968 he found that he was drawn more and more to impressionist work, and also to Chopin, whose music fascinated him in its balance of romantic expression and disciplined writing. Making a detailed study of Chopin's works entailed giving up for an indefinite period most of the virtuoso showpieces with which he had been so closely associated, but as a result he has become regarded as a great Chopin interpreter, and he has also had the chance to develop his talents in the direction of Lied and chamber music. There are now few pianists who can bring such panache to a work such as the Rachmaninov-Paganini Rhapsody while sustaining an uncompromisingly slow tempo in the slow movement of Schubert's B flat sonata.

The 1976-77 season has brought to Peter Katin not only a full schedule in the U.K. but also two long tours which have taken him to Greece, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Japan, there are also appearances in the Festivals of Helsinki and Prague in addition to a return tour of Poland following his very successful collaboration with the eminent soprano Victoria de los Angeles in Barcelona and Warsaw is a recital at the Royal Festival Hall and a recording for Polydor of the complete Chopin songs, and his projected book on Chopin has been accepted by Barrie and Jenkins.

Peter Katin's outside interests are extremely varied. He is an ardent (but, he claims, inept) fisherman, he has made a considerable study of photography and he has a great interest in recording technique which has stood him in good stead during sessions. His record collection is uniquely wide ranging, mostly because he finds a fascination in the way that both performances and recording methods have changed even within one generation. As though this were not enough he reads avidly and insists on writing his own programme notes. It is hardly surprising that his teaching activities have been severely curtailed in recent years but he always takes a great interest in young artists generally and his infrequent master classes are regarded as events not to be missed.

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