

# *Claudio Arrau*

<i>October 16th</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>MURRAY PERAHIA</i>
<i>November 6th</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>JOHN WILLIAMS</i>
<i>December 4th</i>	<i>1973</i>	<i>CLAUDIO ARRAU</i>
<i>March 26th</i>	<i>1974</i>	<i>FOU TS'ONG</i>
<i>May 5th</i>	<i>1974</i>	<i>VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY</i>
<i>June 4th</i>	<i>1974</i>	<i>PINCHAS ZUKERMAN</i>

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A piano recital by Claudio Arrau at the Town Hall, Birmingham.

Sonata No. 26 in E flat, Opus 81a, ('Les Adieux') *Beethoven*

Sonata in B minor *Liszt*

Interval

Carnaval, Opus 9 *Schumann*

Although Claudio Arrau has been a resident of New York since his first Carnegie Hall recital in 1941, he remains a citizen of his native Chile where he is accepted as a national hero and where he has streets named after him both in Santiago and in Chillan where he was born.

Arrau had spent his child prodigy days and won his earliest successes in Germany, and when he went to Berlin in 1964, for the first gala season in its new Philharmonie, the Berlin orchestra honoured him with a special Arrau-Beethoven Festival in which he was heard in all the five piano concertos as well as the Choral Fantasy.

In May, 1968, returning to play in the Soviet Union where he had first been acclaimed as a young pianist in two tours in 1929 and 1930 after winning the International Geneva Prize, Arrau's two concerts in Leningrad and two in Moscow sold out in a few hours.

His world tour in 1968 not only included the Soviet Union, but also Australia and Japan as well as Europe, the U.S.A. and South America.

At the Beethoven International Festival in Bonn which opened the official Beethoven Bicentennial Celebrations in 1970, Arrau was awarded one of West Germany's highest orders, the Bundes Verdienst Kreuz for his life-long dedication to the music of Beethoven.



**Sonata No. 26 in E flat, Opus 81a ('Les Adieux')****Beethoven***Les Adieux — Adagio - Allegro**L'Absence — Andante espressivo**Le Retour — Vivacissimamente*

The importance of this sonata, one of the milestones to programme music, cannot be underestimated. In 1809, the French were bombarding Vienna so the Royal Family had to leave the city. With it went Archduke Rudolph, Beethoven's pupil, patron and friend. The composer felt the parting most deeply, and immortalised his feelings in this most subjective work.

A slow introduction introduces a theme from which all the musical ideas stem. Three descending notes mark the rhythm of the word Le-be-wohl farewell. From the first, the harmony is daring, chromatic and poignant. Soon the mood changes to a vigorous Allegro and the movement continues in the normal sonata form pattern. The harmony of the slow movement is the most chromatic and mirrors the feeling of loss of a true friend. It is an Intermezzo with several short themes played and repeated in rotation, which solves the problem of convincing the listener of the depth of feeling without being tedious. The finale follows immediately and ten bars of themeless rushing arpeggios and scales leads to the most joyous of themes and again the shape is sonata form. The mood is almost of childlike, naive rejoicing, which leads relentlessly in to the dazzling last two bars of complete triumph.

H.J.

**Sonata in B Minor****Liszt (1811-1886)***Lento assai — Allegro energico: Andante sostenuto: Allegro energico.*

It may be true to say that Liszt is the most colourful character of the Romantic movement in music. His life reads like a novel, full of contradictions; lecherous yet religious, leader of a new style of composition yet racked with doubt about his own cultural depth. After several years of concert tours he settled in Weimar and from 1848 - 1861 concentrated more than ever on composition. This sonata was written in 1852 - 53. It draws either scorn or admiration from the listener. One cannot be non-committal. It is a fine example of Liszt's philosophy of "transformation of theme", and

to the present writer an example of a phenomenal pianoforte technique at its most disciplined.

There is no division into movements but the tempo markings above show that the work is conceived in three major, though continuous sections. In the first there are three main **motifs** — the first a ghostly descending scale in the base; the second thundering octaves and the third a nervous little theme of repeated notes in the left hand. Later on, still in the first section, a wonderfully romantic rising theme, with pulsating chordal accompaniment makes the first of its many appearances. The combinations, developments and transformations of these four ideas make the B minor Sonata a formidable challenge for the pianist.

H.J.

**Interval - twenty minutes.****Carnaval Op. 9.****Schumann**

This set of twenty one short pieces, subtitled **Scenes migonnes sur quatre notes** was composed in 1835, when the composer was 24 years old. The four notes in question are A S C H which is the name of the village where Ernestine von Fricken (a current lady companion) came from and all can be found in the composer's surname. It is necessary to explain that in the German system of notation S = E flat and H = B natural, thus making possible such a musical motto. The earliest signs of Schumann's mental problems were already evident, and took the form of two contrasting sides of his nature; extreme melancholy alternating with completely extrovert behaviour. The composer was well aware of these contrasts and mirrors them in this attractive music. It also shows his mastery of the keyboard.

The Preamble, a happy prelude, introduces the characters mainly taken from the Italian **Commedia dell'Arte**, who are to appear in the parade. **Pierrot** and **Harlequin** come first, two clowns one reflective, the other exultant. The **valse noble** uses the motto for the first time. **Eusebius** and **Florestan** are again contrasts in mood. **Coquette** is self explanatory and **Replique** is just an echo. **Papillons** (Butterflies) and **Dancing Letters** provide further scherzo elements. **Chiarina** is a loving dedication to Clara Wieck his future wife, and

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