

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

presents

A CONCERT

by

DAVID LEVINE, PIANO

Wednesday
October 9, 1974

Carriage Barn
8:15 p.m.

HAYDN

Capriccio, Hob. XVII:1

MOZART

Ten Variations on a Theme by Gluck, K.455

SCHUBERT

Sonata, D.459
Allegro moderato
Scherzo: Allegro
Adagio
Scherzo con Trio: Allegro
Allegro patetico

I N T E R M I S S I O N

BRAHMS

Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel,
op.24

Some Thoughts on the Program

Some of the most unjustly neglected keyboard music can be found in the collected works of Haydn and Schubert. Pianists, who are quite justifiably accused of somewhat repetitive programming, should take heed of the wealth of beauty to be discovered in the neglected creations of these two masters.

Of the altogether twenty Piano Sonatas of Schubert, we encounter perhaps four in the standard concert traffic -- a great loss considering the value of the earlier Sonatas, including The E Major Sonata, D.459.

Also published under the title "Fünf Klavierstücke", this five movement work exhibits a rare conciseness of form and originality of timbre. Listen especially to the first Scherzo -- the almost twelve-tone feeling of the theme, the broken octave passages in sequence, the sparseness of the Trio in the second Scherzo, the angular rhythmic patterns in the Allegro patetico, and the overall chamber-like feeling of this Sonata, and the deeply personal nature of this work.

The Haydn Capriccio in G is based on an Austrian folk song, "Acht Sauschneider müssen sein". Unfortunately, my efforts to discover the text have been in vain but I have been informed it is a comic song. Gently comic, I gather, as the Capriccio borders on the melancholic and contemplative.

It is quite enough to say that the Brahms Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel is a masterpiece. It is also a great example of a compositional problem posed and triumphantly resolved. What strikes the listener is the inevitability of the entire work, the interrelation of small forms and larger forms and the impetus which struggles to push boldly against the limits of the Theme itself.

Here we see Brahms as a master craftsman in the classical tradition, whose scholarly interest in the older traditions is hardly mentioned today, who edited the complete Handel editions and initiated Renaissance music discoveries and publications.

The manner in which he adapts the older syntax to a contemporary (1861) medium is an achievement of the first order.

For its combination of grace, wit and beauty, the Mozart Variations K455 has no equal. These variations were supposedly improvised by Mozart in Vienna in the presence of Gluck himself.

Composers should always be so lucky!

David Levine