

Program Notes: Dmitri Atapine, *cello*; Hyeyeon Park, *piano*

Notes on the program by Dr. Richard E. Rodda

ALFRED SCHNITTKE

(Born November 24, 1934, Engels, Russia; died August 3, 1998, Hamburg, Germany)

Musica Nostalgica

Composed: 1992

Dedication: Mstislav Rostropovich

Other works from this period: String Quartet no. 4 (1989); 3 x 7 for Clarinet, Horn, Trombone, Violin, Cello, Bass, and Harpsichord (1989); Violin **Concerto** no. 2 (1990); Symphony no. 6 (1992); Improvisation for Solo Cello (1993–1994)

Approximate duration: 4 minutes

Alfred Schnittke was born in 1934 in Engels on the Volga, in the Russian steppes, five hundred miles southeast of Moscow. He showed enough musical ability to receive an audition at the Central Music School for Gifted Children in Moscow in May 1941, but the following month the Germans invaded Russia and the opportunity for early training vanished. In 1945, after the war, his journalist father, Harry Schnittke, got a job with a German-language newspaper in Vienna published by the occupying Russian forces. He brought his family to the city the following year, and there twelve-year-old Alfred had the world of music opened to him through his first piano lessons and attendance at operas and concerts. The city of Mozart and Schubert inspired Schnittke's earliest attempts at composition.

When the Viennese paper ceased operations in 1948, the Schnittkes returned to Russia, where Alfred gained admittance to the October Revolution Music College in Moscow; in the autumn of 1953, he entered the Moscow Conservatory. His early works gained him a reputation as a modernist, and he was accepted as a member of the Composers' Union following his graduation in 1958 as much to tame his avant-garde tendencies as to promote his creative work. He tried writing Party-sanctioned pieces during the next few years—the 1959 **cantata** *Songs of War and Peace* was his first published score—but the fit was uncomfortable on both sides, and during the 1960s and early 1970s, when performances of his works were officially discouraged, he devoted most of his creative energy to scoring three or four films a year. In 1962, he started teaching part-time at the Moscow Conservatory (the Soviet officials would not grant him a full-time appointment), leaving little opportunity for original creative work. In 1972, he resigned from the conservatory to devote himself to composition.

Schnittke composed prolifically during the following years, and by the early 1980s, he had won an international reputation. In 1989, he accepted a grant that allowed him to live in Berlin for a year, after which he settled in Hamburg. During his later years, Schnittke was invited regularly to attend performances of his works from Tokyo to Leipzig to Santa Fe, but his travels were limited because of his allergies, migraines, kidney disease, and three serious strokes suffered between 1985 and 1994. However, he proved remarkably resilient in carrying on his creative work until his death in Hamburg on August 3, 1998.

Musica Nostalgica, composed in 1992 for the celebrated Russian cellist and conductor Mstislav Rostropovich, is Schnittke's modern analogue to the old **minuet** with a few sly touches and a ghostly reprise of the **theme** whistled high in the cello's **harmonics**.

*Bolted terms are defined in the glossary, which begins on page 94.

LUIGI BOCCHERINI

(Born February 19, 1743, Lucca, Italy; died May 28, 1805, Madrid, Spain)

Cello Sonata in A Major, G. 4

Composed: 1772

Other works from this period: Six **Sonatas** for Violin and Piano, **op. 5** (1768); Six String Quintets, **op. 11** (1771); Six String Trios, **op. 14** (1772); Six String Quartets, **op. 15** (1772); Six Cello Sonatas (1772)

Approximate duration: 14 minutes

Luigi Boccherini was the foremost Italian composer of instrumental music in the late eighteenth century. The son of a cellist, he learned his father's instrument early and well and made his public debut in his native Lucca at the age of thirteen. The following year, 1757, he and his father took up appointments in the orchestra of the court theater in Vienna, where Luigi's reputation as a performer began to be matched by that of his compositions. In April 1764, he returned to Lucca as composer and cellist at the church of Santa Maria Cor-teorlandini. At the end of 1766, Boccherini embarked on a concert tour that ended several months later in Paris, where his playing and compositions were much admired. In 1768, he moved to Madrid at the urging of the Spanish ambassador to Paris. The following year he was appointed to serve the Infante Luis Antonio of Spain as *virtuoso di camera* ["chamber virtuoso"] e *compositor de musica*. The next fifteen years were a time of security and steady activity for Boccherini, but this happy period came to an end in 1785, when both his wife and Don Luis died. The following year Boccherini won an appointment as chamber music composer to Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia.

The records of Boccherini's activities for the decade following 1786 are scarce, but he seems to have remained in Madrid, where he filled Friedrich's commissions as well as those from several Portuguese, Spanish, and French patrons. Following Friedrich's death in 1796 and the refusal of his successor to continue Boccherini's employment, Boccherini's income became undependable. Occasional commissions came his way, as did a small pension granted to him by Don Luis, but the pianist and composer Sophie Gail reported finding him in distress during her visit to Madrid in 1803. His condition had been exacerbated by the deaths the preceding year of two daughters; his second wife and another daughter passed away in 1804. Boccherini died in Madrid on May 28, 1805, from respiratory failure; in 1927, his remains were returned to Lucca.

Boccherini's Sonata in A Major, which dates from the period of his tenure in Madrid with Don Luis, was originally composed for two cellos and was probably written for his own use. The opening **movement** (*Adagio*) traces a delicately drawn melodic line subtly touched by nostalgic wistfulness. The *Allegro* is a vivacious essay exploiting both the singing qualities of the cello as well as the instrument's capacity for tasteful virtuosity.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

(Born Bonn, Germany; baptized December 17, 1770; died March 26, 1827, Vienna, Austria)

Seven Variations in E-flat Major on *Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen* (A Man Who Feels the Pangs of Love) from Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* (The Magic Flute) for Cello and Piano, WoO 46

Composed: 1801

Published: 1802, Vienna

Dedication: Count Johann Georg von Browne-Camus

Other works from this period: Detailed in the notes below

Approximate duration: 9 minutes

In 1795, Beethoven appeared publicly as a pianist for the first time in Vienna, an event which gained sufficient notice that the following year he was invited to give concerts in Prague, Nuremberg, Dresden, and Berlin. In the Prussian capital, he was introduced to the music-loving King Friedrich Wilhelm II, a capable amateur cellist who had warmly received Mozart and Boccherini at his court and graciously accepted the dedication of Haydn's **Opus 50** quartets. While he was in Berlin in 1796, Beethoven also met Friedrich's eminent French cello virtuoso, Jean-Louis Duport, and he was inspired by his playing to compose a pair of sonatas for his instrument and piano, which were published together the following year as **Opus 5** with a dedication to the king. In 1796, Beethoven also created sets of **variations** for cello and piano on themes by Handel (*See the Conquering Hero Comes!* from *Judas Maccabaeus*, WoO 45) and Mozart (*Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen* from *The Magic Flute*, published in 1797 with the indefensibly high opus number of 66). In 1801, Beethoven again mined Mozart's Masonic masterpiece for the theme for another cello and piano work, a set of seven variations on the duet of Pamina and Papageno, *Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen* (*A Man Who Feels the Pangs of Love*). The occasion and performer that inspired the piece are unknown, but the score was dedicated to Count Johann Georg von Browne-Camus, an important patron of Beethoven during his early years in Vienna.

When Beethoven first broached the cello and piano medium in 1796, the cello was only just completing its metamorphosis from a **Baroque continuo** instrument to an equal companion with the higher strings. The two early sonatas are modeled in their form on the **Classical** piano sonata with violin accompaniment but are distinctively progressive in the way that they accord almost equal importance to both instruments. A similar partnership of cello and piano marks the variations on *Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen*. The first five variations are largely figural in nature, preserving the tempo and structure of the original theme, but the sixth variation, an expressive *Adagio* stanza, lends the composition a depth of feeling that sets it apart from many of the earlier Classical works in the form. The final variation is bounding in rhythm and outgoing in spirit, and it reaches its closing measures by way of some **harmonic** peregrinations not attributable to Mozart's original melody.

KARL DAVIDOFF

(Born March 15, 1838, Goldingen, Latvia; died February 26, 1889, Moscow)

Allegro de concert, op. 11

Composed: 1862

Other works from this period: Detailed in the notes below

Approximate duration: 10 minutes

The Russian cellist, composer, and teacher Karl Davidoff was born in Goldingen (now Kuldīga, Latvia) on March 15, 1838, to a Jewish doctor and an amateur violinist. He earned a degree in mathematics at Moscow University while simultaneously studying cello with Heinrich Schmidt in Moscow and Karl Schuberth in St. Petersburg. After his graduation in 1858, Davidoff decided to devote himself to musical composition, so he enrolled the following year at the Leipzig Conservatory to study with Moritz Hauptmann. At the invitation of Ignaz Moscheles, a distinguished virtuoso and a piano teacher at the conservatory, and Ferdinand David, for whom Mendelssohn wrote his Violin Concerto, Davidoff played his own Cello Concerto in b minor with the Gewandhaus Orchestra on December 15, 1859. A year later he was appointed Principal Cellist of the Gewandhaus and professor

at the conservatory. He was thereafter in such demand as a soloist and chamber player that his performance career quickly came to overshadow his ambitions as a composer. He returned to Russia in 1862 to succeed his former teacher Karl Schuberth on the St. Petersburg Conservatory faculty and at the same time became Principal Cellist of the Imperial Italian Orchestra and a member of the Russian Musical Society's quartet. He was appointed Director of the conservatory in 1876, a post he held until his retirement in 1887. He then toured Russia and Western Europe before settling in Moscow, where he completed his *School of Cello Playing* before his death in that city on February 26, 1889.

Though his creative output was limited by the demands of his concert and educational activities, Davidoff wrote four concerti and three smaller concerted works for his instrument, a **symphonic poem** (*The Gifts of the Terek*), a sextet and a quartet for strings, a piano quintet, some songs, and a number of recital pieces for cello. The *Allegro de concert*, written in 1862, perhaps as an affirmation of the prominent positions he was to fill upon his return to St. Petersburg that year, consists of four large formal paragraphs, each beginning with a song-like melody that quickly gives way to breathtaking virtuoso pyrotechnics.

ALFREDO PIATTI

(Born January 8, 1822, Bergamo, Italy; died July 18, 1901, Crocetta di Mozzo, Italy)

Caprice on a Theme from Pacini's Niobe for Solo Cello, op. 22

Composed: ca. 1843

Published: 1865

Other works from this period: *L'Abbandono* for Cello and Piano, op. 1 (1842); *Passe-temps sentimental* for Cello and Piano, op. 4 (1844); *Souvenir de la sonnambula* for Cello and Piano, op. 5 (1844); *Mazurka sentimentale* for Cello and Piano, op. 6 (1845–1846)

Approximate duration: 10 minutes

Alfredo Piatti was born in 1822 in Bergamo, where he was nurtured in music from infancy by his father, the Concertmaster of the local orchestra. When little Alfredo showed an interest in the cello at age five, he began instruction in that instrument with his great-uncle, Gaetano Zanetti; two years later he was playing beside his teacher in Bergamo's theater orchestra. Piatti was admitted to the Milan Conservatory at age ten, made his formal debut playing his own concerto there in 1837, and began touring the following year. His playing was praised everywhere, but his finances crumbled when he became ill in Pest in 1843 and had to sell his cello for some ready cash. At a stop in Munich on the way home to Bergamo, he met Franz Liszt, then at the height of his fame as a virtuoso, who invited him to share a concert with him (on a borrowed instrument). Liszt was so impressed by Piatti's playing that he encouraged him to go to Paris and presented him with a fine Amati cello as a gift soon after he arrived. Piatti resumed touring and found an especially warm welcome in London upon making his debut there on May 31, 1844. He toured the continent and Russia for the next two years and settled in London in 1846 to begin his long and influential career as a performer and pedagogue in England. During his later years, he summered at his "Villa Piatti" on Lake Como to recover from the strenuous concert season in London, and he spent his last months at the home of his daughter at Crocetta di Mozzo, near his native Bergamo, where he died on July 18, 1901.

In Greek mythology, Niobe was the Queen of Thebes. Vain and arrogant, Niobe infuriated Leto, goddess of motherhood, by taunting her that Niobe's fourteen children made her more worthy of praise and honor than did the goddess's mere two offspring. As punishment, Leto slayed all the children of Niobe, who, in her grief, retreated to a mountain outside the city, where she was turned into a stone that

weeps throughout eternity. Homer included Niobe's story in *The Iliad*, Aeschylus based a now-lost play on the tale, Ovid recounted her fate in *Metamorphoses*, Agostino Steffani premiered his opera *Niobe, regina di Tebe* in Munich in 1688, and the popular and prolific (i.e., ninety operas) Italian composer Giovanni Pacini opened his *Niobe* at the Teatro di San Carlo in Naples on November 19, 1826. The **aria** *I tuoi frequenti palpiti* (*Your Frequent Palpitations*) from Pacini's *Niobe* became a hit that prominent singers included in their recital repertory and several composers used as the theme for variations and **fantasies**, most notably a virtuoso *Grande Fantaisie* in 1836 by Franz Liszt. (Clara Schumann often used Liszt's *Fantaisie* as an encore.) By 1843, when he performed in Pest, Alfredo Piatti had written a showy **Capriccio sopra un tema** [*I tuoi frequenti palpiti*] della *Niobe di Pacini* for unaccompanied cello, which comprises a **recitative**-like introduction, an elaborated version of the theme, three large variations (fast–slow–fast), and an inserted **cadenza**.

JOHN FIELD

(Born July 26, 1782, Dublin, Ireland; died January 23, 1837, Moscow)

Nocturne no. 5 in B-flat Major for Solo Piano

Composed: 1812

Published: 1817, St. Petersburg

Other works from this period: **Rondo** in E-flat Major for Solo Piano (before 1811); Piano Concerto no. 3 in E-flat Major (1811); **Nocturne** no. 1 in E-flat Major (1812); *Adagio and Rondo* in C Major for Solo Piano (before 1815)

Approximate duration: 3 minutes

John Field, born in Dublin in 1782, was the son of a theater violinist and the grandson of a local organist. The two elder Fields oversaw young John's early instruction with such severity that he once ran away from home, returning only when he was near starvation. When he was nine, he was sent for piano lessons with Tommaso Giordani, and he made his public debut, as a concerto soloist, just a year later. In 1793, Papa Field moved his family first to Bath, England, and then to London, where he found work playing at the Haymarket Theatre. John was apprenticed to the eminent pianist-composer Muzio Clementi, who had also established himself as one of the day's leading piano manufacturers. Field built a solid reputation as a concert pianist in the city and began to draw notice for his compositions.

In 1802, Clementi set out on an extensive European tour, taking Field along as his protégé and valet. Early the next year, they descended on St. Petersburg, where Field's playing made him an instant celebrity. Field remained in St. Petersburg after Clementi went back to England in June 1803, becoming the idol of fashionable society and the most sought-after (and expensive) piano teacher in Russia. He lived alternately in St. Petersburg and Moscow for the next two decades, returning to London only in 1831 to seek treatment for the rectal cancer that would end his life six years later. His health was sufficiently restored that he was able to tour through England, France, Belgium, and Switzerland, but he got only as far as Naples before his health collapsed in the spring of 1834. He underwent several operations during the ensuing nine months before being rescued by a noble Russian family who agreed to provide his support if he returned to Moscow. Field gave three concerts in Vienna on the way to his adopted country, but, except for writing a few nocturnes, he was unable to play or compose further before his death in Moscow on January 23, 1837.

Though Field's compositions, all for or with piano, include seven concerti, several chamber works, a half-dozen piano duets, and a large number of miscellaneous pieces, he is chiefly remembered for his eighteen nocturnes. The title had been applied (sparingly) in the late eighteenth century to multimovement compositions for social occasions, a sort of "evening music." Field used the term not in this

traditional sense, however, but to indicate a sensitive, lyrical, one-movement piece of reflective, consolatory quality. His nocturnes, with their gently arching melodies reminiscent of **bel canto** arias, graceful decoration, and intimate expression, were among the most popular keyboard pieces of the nineteenth century and provided the models upon which Frédéric Chopin later built some of his most haunting creations.

FRANK BRIDGE

(Born February 26, 1879, Brighton, England; died January 10, 1941, Eastbourne, England)

Cello Sonata

Composed: 1913–1917

Other works from this period: Three Poems for Solo Piano (1913–1914); *Lament* for Strings (1914); String Quartet in g minor (1915); *Sally in Our Alley* and *Cherry Ripe* for String Quartet (1916); *Thy Hand in Mine* for Voice and Piano (1917)

Approximate duration: 23 minutes

Frank Bridge was one of the leading English musicians during the years between the two World Wars. Born in 1879 in Brighton, where he played violin as a boy in a theater orchestra conducted by his father, he entered the Royal College of Music as a violinist but turned to composition after winning a scholarship in 1899. Following his graduation, Bridge played in the Grimson, Joachim, and English String Quartets and also earned a reputation as a conductor good enough for Thomas Beecham to appoint him to be his assistant with the New Symphony Orchestra in 1906. Bridge thereafter conducted opera at the Savoy Theatre and Covent Garden and appeared at the Promenade Concerts and with such major orchestras as the London Symphony and Royal Philharmonic. In 1923, he toured the United States as conductor of his own music, giving concerts in Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, and New York. When he returned to England, he bought a small country house at Friston in Sussex, near Eastbourne, and spent most of his remaining years there, composing, accepting an occasional conducting engagement, and guiding the progress of his gifted student Benjamin Britten.

Bridge's Cello Sonata gestated over several years—1913 to 1917—and it stands as a fine example of his mature musical language: lyrical without being folksy, inventive and wide-ranging in harmony without sacrificing its underlying sense of traditional tonality, expansive but logical in form, and carefully crafted for the instruments both individually and in ensemble. The opening movement is an adaptation of conventional **sonata form**, with its themes reversed in the **recapitulation**. A long, grandly arched cello melody with broad triplet rhythms provides the main theme. An agitated transition passage in restless **cross-rhythms** leads to the subsidiary subject, a noble strain that begins quietly and ascends through the piano's range to achieve a fine climax before being passed on to the cello. The **development** section is largely given over to elaborations of the main theme, so the **recapitulation** is begun with an intense iteration of the subsidiary subject that soars into the cello's highest **register**. Calm is restored for the return of the main theme, and it, too, is brought to an expressive peak before the movement subsides to a tranquil close. The second movement telescopes several formal sections into a single span of music. It begins as a mournful **threnody** (*Adagio ma non troppo*) that serves as the sonata's slow movement. A brief passage in gently flowing **phrases** (*Andante con moto*) bridges to the swift **episode** (*Molto allegro e agitato*) that provides the work's **scherzo**. The *Andante* and then the *Adagio* are recapitulated in altered forms, and the Cello Sonata is brought to an energetic end by a dashing recall of the main theme from the first movement.

BOHUSLAV MARTINŮ

(Born December 8, 1890, Polička, Bohemia; died August 28, 1959, Liestal, Switzerland)

Variations on a Theme of Rossini

Composed: 1942

Published: 1949

Other works from this period: Cello Sonata no. 2 (1941); Piano Quartet (1942); *Madrigal Sonata* for Flute, Violin, and Piano (1942); Violin Sonata no. 3 (1944); Flute Sonata (1945)

Approximate duration: 8 minutes

Bohuslav Martinů was born in the Czech village of Polička in the church tower where his father was watchman and keeper. As a boy, Bohuslav took violin lessons, but his real interest was in composition. He started composing at age ten and studied first at the Prague Conservatory (from 1906 until 1910) and then privately with Josef Suk before winning a small scholarship that enabled him to settle in Paris in the summer of 1923. Martinů lived there in great poverty for seventeen years, but he was invigorated by the heady artistic atmosphere of the French capital. One of the surprising results of his Parisian residence was a new-found interest in the music of his homeland—ironically, it was only when Martinů left Czechoslovakia that he became a nationalist composer. Blacklisted by the Nazis, he fled from Paris in June 1940 and emigrated to America the following year. Though his popularity and the demand for new works spread quickly in the New World, Martinů's heart remained in Czechoslovakia. An invitation to teach at the Prague Conservatory came after World War II, but he was unable to accept it because of the establishment of the Communist regime in 1947. Instead, he took a summer teaching post at Tanglewood and joined the music faculty of Princeton University the following year. He left that post in 1953 and moved to Nice for two years but returned in 1955 to teach at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. The following year, he accepted a faculty position at the American Academy in Rome. He died in Liestal, Switzerland, in 1959.

In 1942, the year after he arrived in America, Martinů was invited by Koussevitzky to teach at Tanglewood, and there he met the brilliant Russian-born cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, who had accepted a faculty position at the Curtis Institute just before World War II erupted across Europe and was then also heading the chamber music program at the summer festival in the Berkshires. Later that year, Martinů, inspired by Piatigorsky's artistry and friendship, wrote for him the *Variations on a Theme of Rossini*, though the piece should have rightly been titled *Variations on a Theme of Rossini As Modified by Paganini*. In 1819, Paganini wrote a *Moses Fantasy* for himself based on two themes from Rossini's *Mosè in Egitto* (*Moses in Egypt*), which had premiered in Naples earlier that year with great success: the solemn choral prayer *Dal tuo stellato soglio* (*From Your Starry Throne*) and a march **motif** from Act III around which Paganini wove an essentially new melody appropriate for the showy variations he worked upon it. Martinů took as the subject for his work Paganini's transformation of Rossini's original and composed on it four variations plus a racing **coda** and a reprise of the theme as a postlude. The lighthearted, virtuosic nature of the piece is given expressive balance by the slow, pensive variation at its center.

ZOLTÁN KODÁLY

(Born December 16, 1882, Kecskemét, Hungary; died March 6, 1967, Budapest, Hungary)

Sonatina for Cello and Piano

Composed: 1922

Published: 1969

Other works from this period: *Este* (*Evening*) for Mixed Choir (1904); *Nyári este* (*Summer Evening*) for Orchestra (1906); *Énekszó: Dalok népi versekre* (*Songs on Hungarian Popular Words*) for Voice and Piano, op. 1 (1907–1909); Cello Sonata, op. 4 (1909–1910); Duo for Violin and Cello, op. 7 (1914)

Approximate duration: 9 minutes

Zoltán Kodály, eighteen years old, arrived in Budapest in 1900 from his home village of Nagyszombat, a hundred miles to the northwest, to study composition and education at the city's university and at Eötvös College. In the Hungarian capital, he met Béla Bartók, a fellow musician and kindred spirit just one year his senior, and the two became inseparable friends. They were drawn together not just by their age and shared profession but also by a true missionary zeal to research and preserve the disappearing indigenous music and customs of their land, and in 1905, they set out on the first of many expeditions into the countryside to collect folk songs and dances. Though both Kodály and Bartók were much drawn to the fashionable idioms of Strauss, Brahms, and Debussy during their early years, they soon abandoned those influences in favor of establishing a distinctive musical style, one that would reflect the unique character of the Hungarian people through its basis in native folk song. In 1906, Kodály completed his doctoral degree (on the stanzaic structure of Hungarian folk song) and arranged a set of twenty Hungarian melodies for solo voice and piano, some of his earliest music to employ traditional Magyar material.

Among Kodály's first original works to incorporate the characteristic idioms and ethos of native folk song and dance into the late Romantic idiom of his student days was the Sonata for Cello and Piano (op. 4) that he wrote in 1909–1910. He chose the work's scoring to take advantage of his personal knowledge of the cello, which he had taught himself to play as a teenager in Nagyszombat so that he could join friends in readings of Haydn's quartets. The sonata originally consisted of the traditional three movements, but he was dissatisfied with the first one and withdrew it before he allowed the work to be performed as a diptych soon after it was written. He tried to write a new opening movement when he returned to the score in 1922 to prepare it for publication but found that his compositional style had evolved so much during the ensuing decade that he could not then match the work's earlier idiom. He revised the movement at that time as a separate piece titled **Sonatina** for Cello and Piano, but it was not published until 1969.

The sonatina opens with a piano introduction whose improvisatory style may derive from the village bards Kodály encountered in the Hungarian countryside but whose harmonic idiom is indebted to Debussy. The cello enters with a songful, soulful melody in the tenor and bass registers as the main theme of this sonata form without development section (sonatina = "little sonata"); the subsidiary theme is more flowing and lighter in mood. Both themes are extended and elaborated upon their returns before the sonatina closes with a coda that echoes motives from the introduction.

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN

(Born March 1, 1810, Żelazowa Wola, near Warsaw, Poland; died October 17, 1849, Paris)

Introduction and Polonaise brillante in C Major for Cello and Piano, op. 3

Composed: 1829–1830

Published: 1831, Vienna

Dedication: Joseph Merk

Other works from this period: Piano Trio in g minor, op. 8 (1828–1829); Piano Concerto no. 1 in e minor, op. 11 (1830); Mazurka in C Major for Solo Piano, op. 68, no. 1 (ca. 1830); Three Nocturnes for Solo Piano, op. 9 (1830–1832)

Approximate duration: 9 minutes

Frédéric Chopin was nineteen and in love in 1829. When he finished his studies at the Warsaw Conservatory that summer, he was already an accomplished pianist and composer, so as a graduation present his father sent him to Vienna, where he gave two successful concerts and found a publisher for his Variations for Piano and Orchestra on Mozart's *Là ci darem la mano* (op. 2). Though he enjoyed his visit to the imperial city, his thoughts were often back in Warsaw, centered on a comely young singer, one Constantia Gladowska. Chopin first saw Constantia when she sang at a conservatory concert on April 21, 1829. For the first time in his life, he fell in love. He followed Constantia to her performances and caught glimpses of her when she appeared at the theater or in church, but he never approached her. As an antidote to this hyperventilated affair, Chopin's father encouraged his son to accept an invitation from Prince Anton Radziwill, an early friend and patron of the pianist-composer, to spend a short holiday at his country estate at Antonin, near Poznań, in October. Radziwill's two piano-playing daughters, Wanda and Eliza, Papa Chopin reasoned, would provide sufficient distraction for Frédéric to overcome his longing for Constantia and push on with his career. (A serious romance with the princesses would have been unlikely for the commoner Chopin.) Prince Anton was a man of considerable musical accomplishment, who displayed fine talent as a cellist and composed **incidental music** for Goethe's *Faust* with enough skill for Chopin to judge that it showed "much ingenuity, even genius." It was for Wanda and her cello-playing father that Chopin composed his **Polonaise brillante** during his eight days at Antonin.

Though it temporarily diverted Chopin's attention from Constantia, the sojourn with the Radziwills did not erase the lady from his thoughts. Finally, in April 1830, Chopin met—and actually talked with—Constantia. She was pleasant to him, and they became friends, but he was never convinced that she fully returned his desperate love. She took part in his farewell concert in Warsaw on October 11th, and he kept up a correspondence with her for a while. Her marriage to a Warsaw merchant in 1832 caused him intense but impermanent grief, which soon evaporated in the glittering social whirl of Paris, his new home.

The *Introduction and Polonaise brillante* is a showy piece much in the flamboyant virtuoso style that was fashionable in Europe during the 1830s. (Paganini's career had just ended; Liszt's had just begun.) The slow opening section is a lyrical song liberally decorated by both cello and piano. The dashing *Polonaise* was modeled after the Polish national dance that served as the inspiration for many of Chopin's most characteristic creations.

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