UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Murray Perahia, Pianist

Wednesday Evening, March 23, 1994, at 8:00
Hill Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan

PROGRAM

Sontata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2 . . . . . Beethoven
Allegro vivace
Largo appassionato
Scherzo: Allegretto
Rondo: Grazioso

Rhapsody in B minor, Op. 79, No. 1 . . . . . Brahms
Capriccio in B minor, Op. 76, No. 2
Intermezzo in E-flat minor, Op. 118, No. 6
Rhapsody in E-flat Major, Op. 119, No. 4

INTERMISSION

Ballade No. 2 in F Major, Op. 38 . . . . . Chopin
Etude in E Major, Op. 10, No. 3
Etude in C-sharp minor, Op. 10, No. 4
Mazurka in D Major, Op. 33, No. 2
Mazurka in A minor, Op. 17, No. 4
Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, No. 3
Berceuse, Op. 57
Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52

Large print programs are available upon request from an usher.

Special thanks to Hammell Music Inc., Livonia, Michigan, for the Steinway piano used in tonight's recital.

Mr. Perahia records for Sony Classical and is a Steinway Artist.

PROGRAM NOTES

Sonata No. 2, in A Major, Op. 2, No. 2
Ludwig van Beethoven
Born December 16, 1770, in Bonn; died March 26, 1827, in Vienna.

Beethoven's piano sonatas span a greater part of his creative life than do his works in any other form. Three that he wrote as a mere boy were published in 1783; the last dates from five years before his death. The three sonatas of Op. 2, which are the first in the canon of thirty-two sonatas, were published in 1796 with a dedication to Haydn.

In 1792, Beethoven had left Bonn for Vienna, where, in the words of Count Waldstein, he was to "receive Mozart's spirit from the hands of Haydn." Instead, he received one-hour lessons from him in strict counterpoint, which he found tiresome, and he seems to have been relieved when Haydn went off for a long stay in London. Until Haydn died, in 1809, their relationship was one that allowed little more than acknowledgement of professional accomplishment, with occasional restrained admissions of special talent or skill.

Whatever his other virtues, Haydn may not have been the right teacher for a young musician endowed with such original powers as Beethoven's. A tremendous difference in intellectual and social orientation separated their generations. In life and in art, Beethoven was at once impatient and uncompromising and never knew his "place." It was only near the end of his life that he came to understand what Haydn's had been. In February, 1827, the publisher Diabelli gave him a picture of Haydn's birthplace, which Beethoven showed to a young friend, saying, admiringly, "In this simple house, so great a man was born!"

According to one of Beethoven's pupils, Beethoven once said that although he had taken lessons from Haydn, he had never learned anything from him, and also refused the older man's request that Beethoven identify himself as his pupil in his early publications. Nevertheless, after Haydn's return from England, in 1795, Beethoven played the Op. 2 Sonatas for him at Prince Lichnowsky's palace, and he was also pleased to have a place on the program of the important concert at which Haydn gave the first performance in Vienna of some of the new symphonies he had written for London. It seems clear that the two were not entirely estranged, as has often been written, but distantly respectful.

We are not sure when Beethoven wrote the three sonatas of Op. 2, but they seem to have been circulated in manuscript for at least a year before they were printed, in 1796. The first Sonata in the group is an early example of the tempestuous, passionate Beethoven. The second is a gracious work that shows a serious young musician at play, in a manner that foretells his even-numbered symphonies. It is in four movements: a broad-scaled, well developed *Allegro vivace*; a slow movement, *Largo appassionato*, that is an early-Romantic masterpiece; an airy Scherzo, *Allegretto*; and a brilliant final Rondo, *Grazioso*, that comes to a quiet close.

Rhapsody in B minor, Opus 79, No. 1
Johannes Brahms
Born May 7, 1833 in Hamburg; died April 3, 1897 in Vienna.

In his middle years and again late in life, Brahms completed a number of short works for piano that were probably based on ideas sketched or drafted long before. He gave them vague, indeterminate titles and sent groups of them off to be published at various times.

This Rhapsody was given its present form in the summer of 1879, when the composer asked his good friend Clara (Wieck) Schumann – Robert's widow, a talented composer herself, and one of the foremost pianists of the time – to try them out and let him know how she felt about them. Her noncommittal reply was that she thought she would grow to like them when she practiced them more. It was perhaps her relative coolness that led Brahms to dedicate them to a younger women, his former pupil, Elizabeth von Herzogenberg, of whom Clara was at least a little jealous.

Ballade No. 4 in F minor, Op. 52

Chopin wrote the F minor Ballade during the summer of 1842, which he spent with George Sand on her country estate at Nohant. Eugene Delacroix spent the month of June with them there, painting in an attic studio and giving lessons to Sand's son, and he wrote in a letter, "Sometimes a breath of Chopin's music comes to us through a window, mingling with the song of the nightingales and the fragrance of roses."

The Ballade is a melancholy poetic masterpiece, a kind of epic narrative of great rhythmic freedom, without clearly defined, predetermined, formal interrelationships, its main sections set between an introduction and a closing coda.

Chopin published it in 1843 with a dedication to the Baroness de Rothschild, a friend and pupil from the wealthy family to which he had been introduced by Prince Valentin Radziwill.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Murray Perahia is recognized worldwide as a musician of rare musical sensitivity. His recitals and orchestral appearances play to sold-out houses and his extensive award-winning Sony Classical discography makes him one of today's leading recording artists. He performs regularly with all of the major orchestras here and abroad, including those of New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Chicago, Boston, Amsterdam, Berlin, Munich, Vienna, Paris, London and Jerusalem. In recital, he has been heard in all of the world's major music centers, and he has performed chamber music with the world's great instrumentalists and string quartets.

Mr. Perahia has recorded exclusively for Sony Classical since joining the CBS Masterworks label in 1972. Among his over forty recordings, are the complete Mozart concertos, in which he directs the English Chamber Orchestra from the keyboard, and the complete Beethoven concertos with Bernard Haitink conducting the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra both of which have won numerous awards throughout the world. Other recordings include the two Mendelssohn Concertos with the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Schumann and Grieg Concertos with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, and the Chopin Concertos with the Israel Philharmonic. He has also made numerous solo recordings of the music of Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Chopin, Beethoven and Bartók. His most recent recordings feature the music of Mozart, (a concerto album with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and a solo album of sonatas) and Schubert's *Winterreise* with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau which was released in January 1993 on CD and laserdisc.

In the 1993-94 season, Mr. Perahia will perform the complete Beethoven Concerto cycle in Berlin with the Berlin Philharmonic and Claudio Abbado and in Ferrara, Italy with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. In addition to today's performance, Mr. Perahia will perform recitals in Zurich, Munich, Vienna, Milan, Florence, Stockholm, Helsinki, Amsterdam, Paris, London, Vancouver, Portland, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, Toronto, Ithaca and Carnegie Hall in New York.

Mr. Perahia was born in New York in 1947. He now lives in London with his wife and two sons.

This evenings recital marks Mr. Perahia's eighth UMS appearance.

Supported by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

Brahms gave the first public performance of this piece, and of another Rhapsody, one in G minor, on January 20, 1880, in the north German city of Krefeld, where they were billed as "Two Caprices." In the copy he sent to Frau von Herzogenberg in the summer of 1880, he still used this title for the first of the two pieces, and the tempo indications varied somewhat from those published in September.

Rhapsody No. 1 is based on three themes, and is played *Agitato*.

Capriccio in B minor, Op. 76, No. 2

Brahms assembled the eight short pieces of Op. 76 early in the summer of 1878, and then spent the rest of the season working on his Violin Concerto. It was thirteen years since his last work for piano, the Paganini variations; and it may well be that they were the result of a sort of clean-out-the-files process, in which he brought together early essays, sketches, and ideas that had not found their way into longer works, giving them a life of their own.

His friends had heard some of the music as early as 1871, and Clara Schumann even wrote a bit of comic verse urging him to finish them off and send her a copy. Brahms and Clara discussed what should be included and omitted in the published collection, as well as the order in which they should appear. In March 1879, they were at last published, in two volumes, each consisting of four pieces.

The first public concert performance of any of these pieces was given by the composer on September 19, 1879 in the Russian city of Kronstadt. Hans von Bülow played the whole set on October 29 in Berlin.

Capriccio No. 2 *(Allegretto non troppo)*, is a cheery serenade with off-beat rhythms.

Intermezzo in E-flat minor, Op. 118, No. 6

In his youth, Brahms earned his living as a pianist, and in later years he still played well enough to get through his concertos, although, it was said, he played like a composer, not like a virtuoso. As a young man, he wrote grand works for the piano on an heroic scale. But as time went by the intervals between them grew longer. After his Second Piano Concerto, there is a gap of 10 years in which he produced no piano music.

Then in 1892 and 1893, he published a series of 20 relatively short and intimate pieces that he published in four sets. They are personal statements, eloquent soliloquies like songs without words – for in many ways they are more like his beautiful songs of the 1880's than like his big, early piano works.

The titles have no specific meanings although the Intermezzos are generally short and slow; the Capriccios fast; the Ballades somewhat longer than the others. A single structure satisfied Brahms' needs for almost all of them: the basic three-part form, in which the same or similar opening and closing music surrounds a contrasting central section.

Op. 118, No. 6, is an intense expression of tragic, grieving passion.

Rhapsody in E-flat Major, Op. 119, No. 4

The earliest recorded public performance of Op. 119 was given in London on January 22, 1894. The pianist was Ilona Eibenschutz (1873-1967) who studied with Clara Schumann for four years, and of whom she seems to have been a little jealous for having made the acquaintance of this music before she did. Perhaps to calm her, or to simply belittle his own new works, Brahms wrote to her that they were "not worth much discussion."

The Rhapsody in E-flat Major, *(Allegro resoluto)*, is a piece that looks relatively simple on the page but is very difficult to play, and very powerful in effect.

Ballade No. 2, in F Major, Op. 38

Frédéric Chopin

Born ca. March 1, 1810, in Zelazowa Wola, Poland; died October 17, 1849, in Paris.

Over a period of about ten years, Chopin composed four big piano pieces that he called Ballades, but there is almost nothing consistent or uniform among them to define "ballade"

as a musical structure for him. The connection seems to come from the music's association with poems by Adam Mickiewicz, a Pole who spent most of his life in political exile. The two men knew each other in Paris, although they were not intimate friends, and each Ballade is believed to have been inspired by one of the poetic themes in the collection of romances and ballads that Mickiewicz published in Vilna in 1822.

Chopin completed his First Ballade in 1835, and Robert Schumann, when he heard the composer play it, in 1836, declared it to be his finest work. In 1838, Schumann dedicated his *Kreisleriana* to Chopin, who returned the compliment by dedicating his Second Ballade, in F Major, Op. 38, to Schumann. The piece had been started in 1836 and undergone many changes before it was given its final form, in January, 1839. It is sometimes thought to be associated with a Mickiewicz poem about the maidens of a city that has sunk beneath the sea. This Ballade has two contrasting sections, a gentle *Andantino* and a fierce *Presto con fuoco*, which are varied and run together as they are repeated.

Étude in E Major, Opus 10, No. 3; Étude in C-sharp minor, Op. 10, No. 4

The original purpose of the étude, a study piece or exercise, was to teach skills; later it was to display them. Throughout its history, the étude has given consideration to a single technical problem of execution, and is often based on a single theme.

Chopin wrote 27 of them, all extraordinary masterpieces by a young pianist-composer in his twenties, and we have rightly come to value them much more for the beautiful music they are than for their contribution to the development of modern piano technique.

These two études were written to help the pianist develop independence of expression in each hand. No. 3 is slow; No. 4 is a study in velocity; requiring great independence of the fingers and hands, and evenness of tone production.

Three Mazurkas

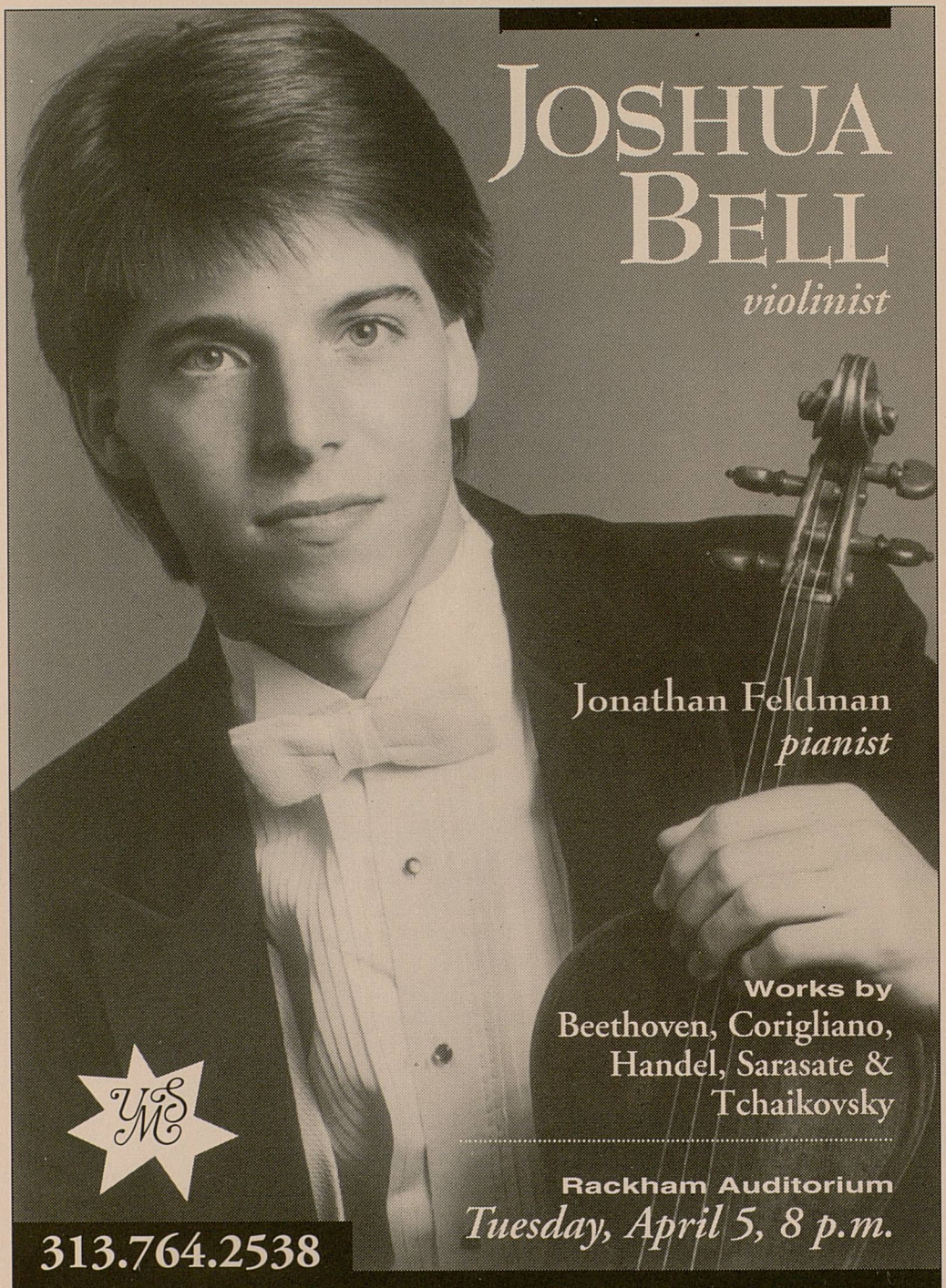
The mazurka is a folk dance that takes its name from the Mazury region, the ancient province of Mazovia in northeast Poland where Chopin was born. It seems to have originated there as early as the sixteenth-century, and in the eighteenth-century, Poland's Saxon rulers introduced it to Germany.

Chopin was the first composer to adapt the style of the mazurka to art music, and between 1830 and the end of his life, he wrote more than 50 of them. In 1852, Franz Liszt published a biography of Chopin in which he wrote, "It is only in Poland that it is possible to catch the haughty yet tender and alluring character of the mazurka. To understand how perfectly Chopin succeeded in displaying its magic, it is necessary to have seen that dance performed on its native soil." Nevertheless, by the time that Chopin made the mazurka an important part of his concert repertoire, the mazurka was being danced in ballrooms from London to Saint Petersburg.

The three mazurkas on this program are early works. The Mazurka in D Major, Op. 33, No. 2 is a sprightly piece written ca. 1838; the Mazurka in A minor, Opus 17, No. 4 was written ca. 1833 and has a nostalgic feeling; the Mazurka in F minor, Op. 7, No. 3 was published in December, 1832 and was dedicated to "Mr. Johns," an American admirer of Chopin's music.

Berceuse in D-flat Major, Op. 57

One of the most extraordinary and most beautiful pieces in all the piano repertoire is this *Berceuse* (French for "Cradle Song" or "Lullaby"), which Chopin completed in 1844. The title describes the style, but when Chopin first offered it to a music publisher, he called it Variations, which specified its form. The music begins with a little rocking rhythmic figure that is played by the pianist's left hand and continues unchanged all the way to the final chords. After it has been heard twice, the right hand plays an elegant melodic phrase that is also repeated over and over again – sixteen times – but never twice in the same way. In the few minutes that it takes to play the *Berceuse*, Chopin demonstrates his inexhaustible powers of melodic invention.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