

CRAIG SHEPPARD, Senior Artist-in-Residence in Piano, came to the UW School of Music in 1993. He was born and raised in Philadelphia and graduated from both the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and The Juilliard School in New York City. Sheppard's teachers included Rudolf Serkin, Sir Clifford Curzon, Eleanor Sokoloff, Sascha Gorodnitzki, Ilona Kabos and Peter Feuchtwanger.

Following a highly successful New York debut at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1972, he won the silver medal that year at the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition in England. Moving to England the following year, Mr. Sheppard quickly established himself through recording and frequent appearances on BBC radio and television as one of the preeminent pianists of his generation, giving cycles of Bach's Klavierübung and the complete solo works of Brahms in London and other European centers. While in England, he also taught at Lancaster University, the Yehudi Menuhin School and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

Mr. Sheppard has performed with all the major orchestras in Great Britain, as well as those of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Dallas, Seattle, Buffalo and Rochester, among others, and with such conductors as Sir Georg Solti, James Levine, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson Thomas, Lord Yehudi Menuhin, Erich Leinsdorf, Aaron Copland, David Zinman, Gerard Schwarz and Peter Erös. His work with singers such as Victoria de los Angeles, José Carreras, and Irina Arkhipova; musicians such as trumpeter Wynton Marsalis; and such ensembles as the Cleveland and Bartók string quartets has also played a significant role in his musical development. Mr. Sheppard is also known for his broad academic interests, particularly foreign languages.

He has had a high profile in recent summers with both the Seattle Chamber Music Festival and the Park City (Utah) Chamber Music Festival. Mr. Sheppard was the featured soloist in the opening concerts of the Seattle Symphony's 1996-97 season, and in 1998 again appeared with them in their new home at Benaroya Hall. In April 1999 he made his recital debut at the Berlin Philharmonic to great critical acclaim. On January 13, 2000, Mr. Sheppard stepped in on three hours' notice to perform the Mozart C Minor Concerto, K. 491, with Maestro Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony at Benaroya Hall.

He has recorded on the EMI, Polygram (Philips), Sony, Chandos and Cirrus labels.



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THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

S476
2000
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Presents a Faculty Recital:

CRAIG SHEPPARD, PIANO

March 2, 2000

8:00 PM

Meany Theater

PROGRAM

CD-13,681

1 Blumenstück, Opus 19 (6:51) Robert Schumann
(1839) (1810-1856)

2 Sonata #3 in f minor, Opus 14 (3:45) Schumann
(Concerto without Orchestra) (1835, revised 1853)
Allegro
Scherzo: Molto comodo
Quasi Variazioni: Andantino di Clara Wieck
Prestissimo possibile

INTERMISSION

CD-13,682

1 Nine Études Tableaux (40:05) Sergei Rachmaninoff
Opus 39 (1916-17) (1873-1943)

C minor
A minor
F# minor
B minor
E^b minor

A minor (after the legend of 'Little Red Riding Hood') (1911)

C minor
D minor
D major

2 Prelude in G^{II} minor Op 32 No 12 - Rachmaninoff (2:47)

3 Träumerei - Schumann (2:48)

Reflections on a Program of Departures

In the late 1820's, Robert Schumann had an unsuccessful stint at the University of Heidelberg as a law student, during which time he created something of a reputation for drinking and carousing with the ladies. Perhaps as a result of this behavior, he contracted syphilis and was to die from the tertiary stages of this disease in 1856. In 1832 Schumann moved into the Leipzig home of the foremost piano pedagogue in Germany, Friedrich Wieck. Wieck's young daughter, Clara, was already causing a stir in musical circles all over Europe for her prodigious piano playing. Although nine years his junior, she and Schumann quickly became inseparable companions and a very great love blossomed between them, not least of all based on mutual artistic goals and ideals. Friedrich Wieck, on the other hand, considered Clara *his* property—he felt he had made her what she was. And any suitor, let alone one of Robert's sullied reputation, would have been cause for suspicion, resentment and rage on the part of the father. He also very possibly knew of Schumann's physical condition and, mortified at the prospect that the two might elope and get married, had them separated for a period of over two years, starting in 1836. It was only through a protracted court battle that Schumann and Clara were finally allowed, legally, to get married on September 12, 1840, the day before Clara's twenty-first birthday.

All of Schumann's compositions of the 1830's were deeply influenced by his love for Clara and devoted exclusively to the piano literature, approximately thirty opuses in fact. The little *Blumenstück* (Flower Piece) opening tonight's program is one such instance. As with a budding romance, this flower gradually opens up to reveal a great inner depth of feeling. It was written in 1839, when feelings between the two must have been at a peak. The second Schumann work this evening, the f minor sonata, Opus 14 (later dubbed *Concerto Without Orchestra* by a publisher who wanted to sell the product), is a work based on a seven-note theme by Clara. The theme's appearance can be seen immediately at the beginning of the first movement in the descending passage in the left hand from the dominant to the tonic. In the second movement, we also hear it ensconced cleverly in the middle trio section on two occasions (the theme from this movement, of course, is also derivative). It is only in the third movement that the actual theme is heard in its entirety of twenty-four bars, followed by four very beautiful variations. The last movement, though marked *Presto possibile* (as fast as possible), starts out with a question mark in the first four bars, only to be answered by the 'Clara' theme in the next four. It is a great peroration on love, anxiety, passion, and ultimate triumph. Perhaps more significantly, this sonata, first composed in 1835, was the last of Schumann's piano works to be revised before he entered the asylum at Eendenich in 1853, from which he never returned. Perhaps he wished to leave a perfect testament to his ongoing love for Clara, particularly (and quite ironically) as he would not allow her to visit him subsequently during the last two and a half years of his life in the asylum. In these facts lie the work's beauty, and its tragedy.

There are two things (among probably many others) that would link this Schumann work to the Rachmaninoff *Études Tableaux*. The first is that both composers were manic-depressive, though this in itself is hardly noteworthy, as many composers, including the great J. S. Bach, also suffered from this malady. The second is much more salient—with the exception of a revision of his Opus 1 piano concerto, the Opus 39 *Études Tableaux* were the last works Rachmaninoff composed before leaving his homeland for good in 1917. All were written during this last year in Russia, with the exception of the *one* étude for which there is a known programmatic content, namely #6 in a minor, which has as its basis the legend of Little Red Riding Hood (the Big Bad Wolf pursuing the little girl is one of the most frightening moments in the whole piano literature). This étude was composed earlier, in 1911. Number 1 supposedly represented a stormy ocean, Number 2 the calm beach and sad seagulls. In fact, what we hear in these nine tonal paintings (*tableau*, in French, means picture) is Rachmaninoff's attempt to kaleidoscope the cataclysmic events that were taking place all around him, the dissolution of a thousand years of despotic rule, the utter chaos and destruction of World War I—and, particularly in #7 in c minor, Rachmaninoff's own very deep faith in the Russian Orthodox Church coming under fire. This étude is said to have been a funeral dirge in the rain for Rachmaninoff's classmate, the great composer Scriabin, who died in 1915. All of the études are imbued with notes of the church's *Dies Irae Dominae* (Wrath of the Gods)—#2 in a minor, in fact, has the *Dies Irae* as its cantus firmus in the bass line. It is no mere coincidence that all of the études, with the exception of the last, are in minor keys. Rachmaninoff was known to the outside world as a gloomy sort, though to his family he was fun-loving and generous. This last étude, in D major, surely shows an optimistic nature, with the ultimate triumph of the good in the world that he so wished for.

It is interesting to note that many of the young Russian pianists today who've recently emigrated to the West are also playing these works, either separately or in several instances in their entirety. It could be that the attraction to these great tone poems, apart from their monumental technical and even greater musical difficulties, stems from a feeling of separation from the homeland, as it did with Rachmaninoff.

This evening's program is dedicated to the memory of a dear friend, Dr. Roberta Brockman, who passed away on January 2nd of this year.