

the witch's cauldron and begs for the spell to be lifted. In a last-ditch effort to seduce and overpower us all, Scarbo rises up to enormous heights, only to vanish in a thrice, as if a light were being extinguished forever.

program notes © Craig Sheppard, 2001

CRAIG SHEPPARD, Associate Professor of Piano, joined the UW School of Music faculty in 1993. A graduate of both the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and The Juilliard School in New York City, he studied with Rudolf Serkin, Sir Clifford Curzon, Eleanor Sokoloff, Sascha Gorodnitzki, Ilona Kabos and Peter Feuchtwanger.

Following his New York debut in 1972, he won the silver medal at the Leeds International Pianoforte Competition in England and moved there in 1973. Over the next twenty years, he established himself through recordings and frequent appearances on BBC radio and television as one of the preeminent pianists of his generation. While living in England, he taught at Lancaster University, the Yehudi Menuhin School, and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, in addition to giving master classes at both Oxford and Cambridge universities.

Sheppard has performed with all the major orchestras in Great Britain and many on the European continent, as well as those of Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Dallas and Rochester, among others, and with such conductors as Sir George Solti, James Levine, Leonard Slatkin, Michael Tilson Thomas, Lord Yehudi Menuhin, Erich Leinsdorf, Aaron Copland, Kurt Sanderling, Neeme Järve, David Zinman, Gerard Schwarz and Peter Erös. He has appeared with the Seattle Symphony on numerous occasions, and in 1999 made his recital debut at the Berlin Philharmonic to great critical acclaim.

During the summer months, he has had a high profile with both the Seattle Chamber Music Festival and the Park City (Utah) Chamber Music Festival, in addition to the Heifetz International Music Institute in Annapolis, Maryland, where he both teaches and performs. In June of 2002, he will make a tour of Japan, and a cycle of the complete Beethoven piano sonatas is envisioned for the 2002-03 academic year.

Craig Sheppard has recorded on the EMI, Polygram (Philips), Sony, Chandos and Cirrus labels. His most recent CDs have been issued by Annette Tangermann in Berlin.

For this evening's performance, Sheppard is using his own Hamburg Steinway. The piano technician is Susan Willanger.

CLASSICAL

KING FM 98.1

UW

 School of Music

DA-14,010
 CDS-14,011
 14,012

University of Washington
 THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Presents a Faculty Recital:

5476
 2001
 10-23

CRAIG SHEPPARD, piano

October 23, 2001

7:30 PM

Meany Theater

PROGRAM

CD 14,011

- 1 The Complete NOVELETTES, (49:12) ROBERT SCHUMANN
 OP. 21 (1838)..... (1810-1856)
1. *Accented and powerful*
 2. *Extremely fast and with bravura*
 3. *Light and with humor*
 4. *At the ball—very lively*
 5. *Glittering and festive*
 6. *Very lively, with much humor*
 7. *Extremely fast*
 8. *Very lively*
 9. *(continuation & conclusion to #8)*

INTERMISSION

CD 14,012

- 1 MIROIRS (1905)..... (26:38) MAURICE RAVEL
 (1875-1937)
1. *Noctuelles (Night moths)*
 2. *Oiseaux tristes (Sad birds)*
 3. *Une barque sur l'océan (A little boat on the ocean)*
 4. *Alborada del gracioso (The dance of the court fool at dawn)*
 5. *La vallée des cloches (The valley of the bells)*
- 2 GASPARD DE LA NUIT (1908)..... (21:22) RAVEL
1. *Ondine*
 2. *Le Gibet (The Gallows)*
 3. *Scarbo*

Reflections on a Program

Robert Schumann and Maurice Ravel hardly seem likely bedfellows at first glance—Schumann, the arch-Romantic—Ravel, the precision 'Swiss clock maker', as Stravinsky once called him. And the mediums they worked in were also sufficiently different—one in traditional diatonic harmony, the other in the more unusual medium of the whole-tone scale. One came from a solid Germanic tradition, the other was undeniably French. But casting aside these obvious differences, one starts to notice certain similarities. Both died of brain degenerative diseases—Schumann of the tertiary stages of syphilis, Ravel of Pick's disease. In his last months, Ravel was not even able to sign his own name. Much more importantly, both were fascinated by and deeply influenced by the great literature of the day. Schumann, perhaps, had more reason to manifest this influence—his father was a well-known book publisher in Germany and a connoisseur of the greatest literati in the German-speaking world. Schumann's own predilection for the grotesque and the weird, manifested in his two favorite authors, E.T.A. Hoffmann and Jean Paul Richter, was a result of this early tutelage. Immediately out of university, Schumann founded the great musical journal of the day, *Die Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, in Leipzig in the 1830's, and his writings in this periodical were to influence more than one generation of European musical thought. Ravel was also from a well-to-do family. Having developed his own love of literature at an early age, he counted among his favorite authors Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and the dark and elusive Edgar Allan Poe.

Schumann's *Novelettes, Opus 21* were written in the last months of 1837 and published in January, 1838. They represent a particularly important moment in his life, when he and his future wife, Clara, were reunited after a forced period of separation that had lasted over eighteen months. Schumann's character was an unstable one, his personality manifesting a classic manic-depressive (and, some say, schizophrenic) disorder. These wonderful *Novelettes*, coming as they did on the heels of his reunion with Clara, unleashed a torrent of passion, playfulness, tenderness, and sheer inventiveness that even surpassed others of his works that are more commonly played today. Each piece has upwards of three contrasting sections, minimally ABA in form, where the first section is repeated at the end. It is apparent in the tempo markings at the beginning of each of the pieces just how excited Schumann's spirit was at that point in time. Each one begins briskly, yet more often than not quickly settles into an

altered state of lyrical beauty, simple passion, fleeting ecstasy. Mood changes, as can be expected from one so volatile in nature, are frequent and wide-ranging, yet they are the very things that allow this work of forty-seven minutes to pass quickly.

Ravel was the archetypal rebel. By the age of 25, he had already composed several notable successes for the piano, including the *Habañera* and his richly inventive, trailblazing *Jeux d'eau*. But the authorities at the Paris Conservatoire refused repeatedly to give him the top prize, the *Prix de Rome*, simply because he wasn't able to produce a suitable fugue! This culminated in 1905 in the famous *affaire Ravel*, in which the administration of the Conservatoire was overthrown in favor of Ravel's own master, the great Gabriel Fauré, thus providing the background for the arrival of Ravel's first great piano cycle, *Miroirs*, that same year. These five character pieces are unique to the entire piano literature. One can literally follow the peregrinations of a night moth in flight, the desolation of a colony of birds isolated on a distant tropical island, a small fishing vessel at the mercy of the overwhelming power of the sea, a court jester's clowning and cajoling at the dawn of a new day, a quiet valley revealing a multitude of diaphanous bells.

Even more evocative is his next and greatest suite for the piano, *Gaspard de la Nuit*, published in 1908. Inspired and based closely on three poems by the early nineteenth century writer, Aloysius Bertrand, these three pieces are among the most technically demanding in all of the piano literature. *Ondine*, the water nymph, beckons a mortal man to visit her palace deep within a potentially tumultuous sea. Certainly this is a reference to the early mariners' fascination with the all-encompassing female, one who through the metaphor of the sea represented infinite passion and feeling. When the gentleman explains to Ondine that he, in fact, loves a mortal woman on land, she lets out a shriek of laughter and disappears into the depths without a trace. *Le Gibet* paints a bleak picture of a hanged man framed by the setting sun over a reddened landscape and a town in the distance. The tolling of a church bell on the soprano B^b occurs non-stop throughout the work, chilling and unrelenting in its effect. *Scarbo* represents something of the supernatural. A sentient being the size of a small insect, Scarbo looks into an empty, haunted room, makes a few idle threats, then suddenly takes off in a whirlwind of malicious activity, his size growing in proportion to his deeds. In a way, he is representative of the spirit taking off, but frighteningly so: the genie let out of the bottle at the wrong moment and in the wrong way, one paradigm of the human condition in today's uncertain world. At one point in the middle of the work, one senses the brewing of