

Austin Peay State University
Department of Music presents

A Faculty Recital

Jeffrey Wood, pianist

The Piano Sonata

*Sonatas by Michael Tippett, Leoš Janáček,
and Robert Schumann*

Tuesday, 12 March 2024

7:30 p.m.

George and Sharon Mabry Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Sonata No. 2 (1962)

Michael Tippett
(1905-1998)

Fragment Sonáty I. X.1905 « Z ulice », JW VIII/19 (1905)
[*Sonata Fragment, 1 October 1905 "From the street"*]

Leoš Janáček
(1854-1928)

I. Předtucha [*Presentiment*]

II. Smrt [*Death*]

Bílý mramor schodiště Besedního domu v Brně — Klesá tu zbrocen krví prostý dělník
František Pavlík — Přišel jen horovat za vysoké učení — a byl ubit surovými vrahy.

PAMÁTCE DĚLNÍKA PROBODENÉHO PŘI MANIFESTACÍCH ZA UNIVERSITU V BRNĚ.

[*The white marble staircase of the House of Artists in Brno — a simple worker František Pavlík
falls, stained with blood — He came only to plead for a university — and was killed by cruel
murderers.*

IN MEMORY OF A WORKER BAYONETED DURING DEMONSTRATIONS CALLING FOR THE
UNIVERSITY IN BRNO.]

— LEOŠ JANÁČEK

INTERMISSION

Sonata No. 1 in f-sharp minor ("Große Sonate"), op. 11 (1833-1835)

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Introduzione: Un poco Adagio — Allegro vivace

Aria: senza passione, ma espressivo

Scherzo: Allegrissimo — Intermezzo: Lento, alla burla, ma pomposo — Tempo I

Finale: Allegro un poco maestoso

MICHAEL TIPPETT
SONATA NO. 2 (1962)

During his long career, Sir Michael Tippett (1905-1998) made significant contributions to the keyboard literature. In addition to his wonderful *Piano Concerto* (1953) Tippett wrote four piano sonatas, the earliest dating from 1936 and the last from 1983.

Tippett's second sonata is organized in a highly unusual fashion. There are eight tempos used throughout the sonata. Each of these tempi are associated with easily distinguishable melodic and gestural materials which are used consistently each time a tempo appears:

TEMPO 1	Lento	powerful chords using the entire range of the piano
TEMPO 2	Allegro	octaves in dissonant intervals, equally spread out over the entire range
TEMPO 3	Molto più mosso	rapid parallel double octaves
TEMPO 4	Pochissimo meno mosso	quiet and lyric material marked <i>leggero e scorrevole</i> (light and flowing)
TEMPO 5	Adagio	trills and repeated chords
TEMPO 6	Andante	an theme with trills, alternating with chiming (<i>carillonando</i>) phrases
TEMPO 7	Allegro	rapid, repeated notes followed by powerful glissandi and octaves
TEMPO 8	Lento	deep, low register octaves followed by upper register harmonies

The piece juxtaposes these eight different tempo/gestural ideas in a wide variety of ways throughout the sonata. It is easy to see why Tippett originally planned to call the work *Mosaics*.

The *Sonata No. 2* dates from 1962 and followed the composition of his second opera *King Priam*, a work that marked a dramatic change in the substance and style of his music. *King Priam* is concerned with the impact of war and malevolent fate on a sharply differentiated set of characters, which is reflected in the sonata by the sharply differentiated tempi and gestures. The influence of *King Priam* on his output was far-reaching. As far as the second piano sonata is concerned it can be seen in direct quotations of motives from the opera and, more fundamentally, to the way the different gestural ideas interact with each other. Although the sonata includes passages of great beauty, overall it is arresting and uncompromising.

LEOŠ JANÁČEK
FRAGMENT SONÁTY, 1.X.1905 » Z ULICE « (1909)

The event that inspired Janáček's *Sonata Fragment, 1.X.1905 "On the street"* was an anti-German rally held on the first of October 1905. The rally was intended to demand that the government (at the time the Austro-Hungarian Empire) allow the establishment of a Czech university in Brno. During the rally a workman was killed and it was this that moved Janáček to write the *Sonata*. The original score consisted of three movements, but at the final rehearsal Janáček seized the manuscript of the third movement and, to the horror of witnesses, destroyed it. The remaining two movements were ultimately premiered, but in a fit of depression Janáček destroyed them as well, throwing them into the Vltava river ("They did not want to sink," Janáček wrote later. "The paper bulged and floated on the water like so many white swans."). Fortunately, the pianist who gave the première, Ludmila Tučková (1882-1960), kept her copy of the remaining movements. Janáček only consented to their publication in 1924 four years before his death.

The sonata is a beautiful if disturbing piece. The first movement "Předtucha" [Presentiment] is darkly unsettling, full of strange stops and starts, with flowing rhythms interrupted by passionate outbursts. Of the powerful second movement, "Smrt" [Death], Hungarian author and Nobel Laureate Imre Kertész (1929-2016), wrote,

Five notes ... a seductive melody, a persistent, remote, unavoidable idea. Then something happens to those five notes ... this "something" takes shape. Intensity increases, the sounds grow ever denser, piling up in a dark mass, as if a passing thought had suddenly become grim certainty. Soon calm descends again, but the innocence is gone; now it has hardened into the quiet certainty with which, just before the last note and almost inaudibly, the composer ... poses the eternal and eternally unanswerable question of the human condition. I would venture to maintain that, since Schubert, no one has spoken of death this way on the piano.

ROBERT SCHUMANN
SONATA NO. 1 (GROSSE SONATE) IN F-SHARP MINOR, OP. 11

Robert Schumann (1810-1856), like many of his contemporaries, had a complicated relationship with the piano sonata. While Beethoven wrote thirty-two sonatas for piano, Mozart eighteen and Haydn a whopping sixty, Schumann, like his contemporary Frédéric Chopin, managed only three.

In spite of his difficulties with the form, Schumann's piano sonatas make for an interesting group. The *Sonata in f-sharp minor* was Schumann's earliest published attempt at a large-scale, multi-movement work: of his earlier works, all piano pieces, the best known are the *Abegg-Variationen/Variations on the Name "Abegg"*, op. 1, *Papillons/Butterflies*, op. 2, the *Davidsbündlertänze/Dances of the League of David*, op. 6 and *Carnaval*, op. 9: all were either collections of shorter pieces or movements, or in the form of variations.

The *Piano Sonata No. 1 (Grosse Sonate) in f-sharp minor*, op. 11 was written during the turbulent period in Schumann's life, when he and his beloved Clara struggled against the wishes of Clara's father who vehemently opposed their intended marriage. Originally published anonymously and dedicated to Clara "by Florestan and Eusebius" ("Clara zugeeignet von Florestan und Eusebius": "Florestan" and "Eusebius" were two imaginary characters that were Schumann's own invention, and have been connected by some to Schumann's manic-depressive personality: Florestan represented the extroverted side of his personality, and Eusebius his more introverted side, or as he put it in a letter to Clara, "Florestan the wild and Eusebius the mild"). Schumann sent the piece to Clara during a period of enforced separation imposed by Clara's father. Nevertheless, even though she was forbidden to have any contact with the young composer, Clara performed the sonata on one of her concerts in Dresden in 1837, and Schumann was in the audience. Schumann was still in his early twenties when he wrote this experiment in sonata form, which he described in a letter to Clara as "a solitary outcry for you from my heart ... in which your theme appears in every possible shape." The theme referred to here was taken directly from an early work of Clara Wieck's, the fourth movement of her *Quatre Pièces caractéristiques*, op. 5 (1835), written when she was 16 years old, titled "Scène fantastique: Le Ballet des revenants/Fantastic scene: The Ghost Ballet." There is also a theme associated with the composer himself: after the dramatic opening introduction, the piece gets underway with material that Schumann had sketched earlier as a "Fandango." All of this was part of the secret communication between Robert and Clara, and the two themes permeate the melodic and motivic texture of the sonata.

While the first movement pits Schumann's "Fandango" theme against his beloved Clara's "ghost ballet" theme, the slow movement uses a melody from an early song written when the composer was 18, "An Anna II" ("Nicht im Tale der süßen Heimat, / Beim Gemurmle der Silberquelle" ["Not in the valley of my sweet homeland, / To the murmur of the silvery spring"]) which remained unpublished until Johannes Brahms included it in the supplement to the collected edition of Schumann's works that he, together with Clara Schumann, edited and published between 1879 and 1893. There is even a brief "scene" that is almost operatic in nature that appears during the scherzo movement.

What is perhaps most unusual about the sonata is its highly experimental form: while it more or less adheres to traditional sonata form structure (a first movement in sonata form, a slow, lyrical second movement, a bright scherzo and a thundering finale), it is the intriguing key relationships, the thematic distribution and the overall development of his ideas on a larger canvas that is so striking.