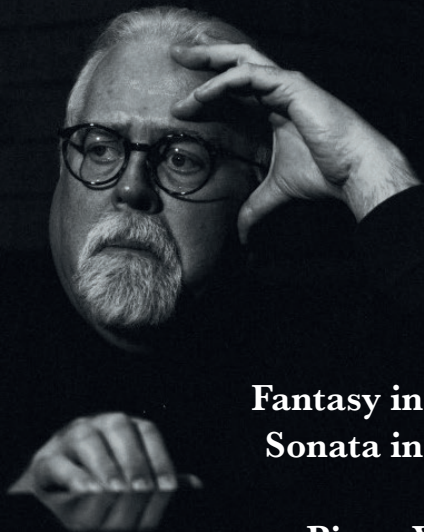


DANIEL RIEPPEL

piano



MOZART

Fantasy in C minor, K. 475

Sonata in C minor, K. 457

COPLAND

Piano Variations (1930)

SCHUMANN

Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13



WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

1. Fantasia in C minor, K. 475	12:38
Piano Sonata No. 14 in C minor, K. 457	21:15
2. I. Molto allegro	6:06
3. II. Adagio	9:34
4. III. Allegro assai	5:25

AARON COPLAND (1900-1990)

5. Piano Variations (1930)	11:43
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ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Symphonic Études, Op. 13	27:40
6. I. Theme. Andante	1:47
7. II. Étude I. Un poco più vivo	1:20
8. III. Étude II	3:27
9. IV. Étude III. Vivace	1:23
10. V. Étude IV	1:09
11. VI. Étude V. Scherzando	1:27
12. VII. Étude VI. Agitato	0:56
13. VIII. Étude VII. Allegro molto	1:14
14. IX. Étude VIII. Sempre marcatissimo	3:13
15. X. Étude IX. Presto possibile	0:40
16. XI. Étude X. Con energia	1:23
17. XII. Étude XI.	2:24
18. XIII. Étude XII. Finale. Allegro brillante	7:17

TOTAL TIME: 73:11

I would like to thank the many people that made this recording possible including Christopher Heagle, the recording engineer; James Unwin, the editor and producer; my children Ingrid Pederson and Erich Rieppel, for their ongoing encouragement and support; and Dr. David Viscoli, for his friendship and the use of the concert venue and facilities at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

I would especially thank the Southwest Minnesota Arts Council for its awarding the grant that made the project initially possible.

I would like to dedicate this recording to four of the most important people in my life – my mother, of blessed memory, Janice Tostenson Rieppel and my father, Sheldon Rieppel, who never wavered in their belief in me nor their support of my study and life work; my original piano teacher, Ms. Gelene Johnson, a musical dynamo and a brilliant teacher/musician, who continues to be a guiding light for me to this day, and, as of this writing, continues to teach and inspire students well into her 80's; and especially and with all my heart, my late wife, Dr. Julieta Margarita Alvarado-Rieppel, a marvelous musician, scholar, teacher in her own right. She was my greatest champion, my most perceptive critic and my bedrock musical and life partner for nearly 35 years.

The pairing of **Mozart's C minor Fantasia and Sonata** may appear, at least in view of their Köchel catalogue designation, presumptuous or even erroneous. True, the Sonata antedates the Fantasia by nearly twenty entries (their numbering is K. 457 and 475, respectively—a handy mnemonic device.) Both works have sufficient *gravitas* as independent compositions; the Sonata is Mozart's longest and some might say, weightiest, while the Fantasia is a turbulent work, full of interesting contrasts and details, both looking backward to CPE Bach and forward to Beethoven, Liszt and beyond. And, indeed, they are often performed separately, to no deleterious effect on their individual reputations. But it is also true that Mozart oversaw the publication of the pieces in an edition that joined them, using the Fantasia as a kind of “opener” to the more motoric energy of the Sonata's first movement, signifying his assent to their pairing in future printings.

The **Fantasia in C minor, K. 475**, the single longest essay of Mozart's in this form (and which may also most represent his possible improvising style), begins ominously with open octaves on C that slither upwards to outline that harbinger of ambiguity, the diminished-seventh chord. After perfunctory cadences in two different registers, he repeats the gesture

one whole step lower—and then does it once again, lower still. This sets the subterranean tone of the piece, in which a Dantesque program would not be impossible to imagine. Mozart eventually alights on the sunnier plains of D major and offers an untroubled aria in that key, replete with opportunities for ornamentation and melisma more characteristic of opera. The ensuing *Allegro* points towards A minor, but only fleetingly. A lovely, yet mercurial aria follows, serving as a pretext to virtuoso passagework, again tracking downwards to what at that time would have been the lowest note on Mozart's piano, an F (F1). A sweeping chromatic scale leads us into the most poised part of the Fantasia, a courtly dance in three. After a storm of 32nd (demisemiquaver) notes, surely the most audacious and virtuosic outburst in keyboard music history heretofore, comes a passage uncannily prescient of Beethoven's *Appassionata*, where we are led back to the beginning, *primo tempo*. The foreboding opening octaves return, now wearied by the Fantasia's journey, which finally ends in an exhausted and desperate C minor scale, ascending 3 octaves.

The **Sonata in C minor, K. 457** follows more conventional routes, but with equally dramatic contours to its progression. The opening theme, again in octaves, now outline a solid C minor triad, spanning the range of a 10th. (Mozart used a similar device in the last movement of his D minor piano concerto, albeit with eighth notes (quavers) and more resembling the “Mannheim rocket” device used so often in the symphonies of Stamitz and Sarmartini.) The development asserts itself in the parallel major, only to introduce the 2nd theme in F minor, a platform for display of triplet broken chords—it ends in the lower range of the piano, *oscuro*. The recapitulation utilises the opening's ascending octaves and the music continues for a time with operatic fervour and dash; the movement ends, sinking into its C minor gloom.

The 2nd movement, marked **Adagio**, leads us fully into a world of operatic effulgence - never before or after in his keyboard writing did Mozart so ravishingly replicate his command of the voice. It is also in this movement that the largest issues of manuscript evidence and editorship are most called into question. To help the listener gain some context into these issues, I will quote from Prof. John Irving's 1997 book on the fantasias and sonatas of Mozart:

“In this coupling they have been familiar ever since, although the various editions printed after Mozart's death followed two main lines of transmission, one emanating from the autograph, the other from the 1785 Artaria print, in which Mozart made some revisions to the Sonata's text, including a wider range of dynamic indications and articulations and significant adjustments to the notes themselves, principally regarding the embellishment of the reprises in the Adagio and

the octave placement of bars 92-101 and 190-210 of the finale.” (Quoted from Mozart’s Piano Sonatas - Contexts, Sources, Style by Prof. John Irving, University of Bristol, Cambridge University Press, 1997. I am very grateful to Prof. David Grayson, emeritus, University of Minnesota School of Music, Minneapolis for alerting me to this material.)

The “significant adjustments to the notes themselves” is what is most notable - indeed, the embellishments written in Mozart’s own hand show in what manner he intended the melodic line to be ornamented; in most cases, quite extensively and certainly in comparison to the rather bare “Dedication Copy” (given to Maria Theresia von Trattner, daughter of Mozart’s landlord and the sonata’s dedicatee). Mozart, ever the man of the theatre and of the voice, brought full dramatic virtuosity and lush intensity to this deeply felt sonata movement.

The final movement of the sonata, marked ***Allegro assai*** in the first edition and ***Molto allegro - agitato*** in the “Dedication” copy, begins with a queasy off-beat entrance tied over the bar, thus effectively “upstaging” the downbeat. The unease is made more pronounced by the chromatic heaving of the left hand accompaniment, which is rudely broken off after the first musical phrase; this statement ends mid-air and is followed by a pause of great anticipation, only to cadence softly in the tonic key. The contrast of *marcato* chords, rest, then quiet resolution, mark the entire progress of the material, interspersed with more peaceful, *cantilena* episodes, true to its sonata-rondo form. Exploring the operatic cast, the pianist affords himself of the opportunities Mozart seems to indicate for cadenza-like commentary within the silences created by the *fermati... “a piacere”*. The movement ends with athletic hand-crossings, separated by more than 3 octaves, bringing the curtain down on this, Mozart’s most turbulent and profound sonata.

Much ink has been spilled regarding **Aaron Coplands Piano Variations** (1930), and rightly so. Quite possibly, aside from the few performances of Charles Ives’s music (which was rarely played in public before 1930, but rather in small settings and usually for invited guests), it was the most significant modernist piece at the time of its premiere, performed by the composer on January 4th, 1931 at a League of Composers Forum in New York City. During a festival commemorating the 25th anniversary of the deaths of both Aaron Copland and Leonard Bernstein’s in 2015 at Southwest Minnesota State University, I gave a lecture on this work and how it forged an alliance between these two men that were to figure so prominently in American music—I quote from my lecture now:

“On a fall evening in 1937, Leonard Bernstein happened to be seated near Aaron Copland at a dance performance and was spontaneously invited to Copland’s birthday party that very night. It

was the start to one of the most profound musical friendships of all time - and the piece that started it all was Copland's own Piano Variations. Composed in 1930, the Variations represent a kind of clarion call to the world that Copland's study of the great European classical tradition and his tutelage with the great Nadia Boulanger in France was over. An astringently dissonant piece that allied itself with the experimental manner of the 2nd Viennese School in style if not method, it caused a furore everywhere it was played and made clear the line dividing partisans of modernism and its detractors. Bernstein often quipped that he could "empty a room, guaranteed, in two minutes", such was the pungency of its harmonic language. His championing of the piece itself offers a potentially stark entre into Bernstein's bifurcated identity through its own molecular structure. Based on a 4-note cell, the "theme" of the variations straddles major and minor tonalities and relishes in intervallic inversionsal play (3rds become 6ths, 4ths to 5ths, when turned upside down, etc.). This binary dualism can serve as a metaphor for Bernstein's own dialectical tendencies, manifested early in life, between "high" and "low" art, popular and classical approaches to music, conducting opposed to composing; perhaps, even Bernstein's own bisexuality can be contextualized within the metaphoric grasp of this incomparable masterpiece."

The **Symphonic Études, Op. 13** by **Robert Schumann's** genesis of the work that came to be known, ultimately, as "Symphonische Etüden", Op. 13 is a long and tortured one - involving two or three potential versions of the score and, more interestingly, a failed love affair. Schumann met Ernestine von Fricken while studying piano with the imperious Friedrich Wieck - who eventually would become Schumann's (unwilling, it seems...) father-in-law. During the courtship and secret engagement, Ernestine's father, the Baron von Fricken sent Schumann a theme and variations, most likely for flute and piano - Schumann, not one to mince words, was openly critical of the work, but decided that the theme might have merit in his own hands for a set of "*variations pathétique*" for solo piano. Soon thereafter Schumann referred to them in a letter to a potential publisher as "études" and it was here that the controversy of *what* Schumann was actually composing starts. Over the course of several years, Schumann renamed the piece several times, composed extra "variations/études" that were then excised, offered two different versions to two different publishers with several appended "variation/études", one clearly unfinished - obviously, Schumann felt great unease with how and in what manner to present the cycle to the public. In May of 1837, with his engagement with Ernestine terminated and even the mention of her father's name in the dedication stricken from the record, the piece finally was published as "12 Études Symphoniques pour le Piano-Forte" and with a dedication to the great English pianist and composer William Sterndale Bennett. Schumann at first encouraged his concert pianist wife Clara Wieck Schumann - one of the most glowingly intelligent musicians of her day - to play

the whole work for her recitals in Vienna. From the commentary of the 2006 Henle edition of Symphonic Etudes:

“Later Clara intended to place the Symphonische Étüden on the program of her Vienna recitals only to decide against it. Schumann, in a letter of 18 March 1838, seconded her decision: “You’ve done well not to play my pieces. They are not suited for an audience, and it would be idle for me to complain later that that audience failed to understand something unconcerned with their applause - indeed, concerned with nothing at all and existing purely for its own sake. Yet I must confess that it would give me great pleasure to create something that would send audiences into raptures of delight when you played it; for we composers are vain, even when we have no cause to be so.”

After a period of 15 years, Schumann revised the work and republished it in streamlined fashion - he excised the two études that were not based on the original theme (Études III and IX), changed other details (such as the ominous left hand “timpami” rolls in the 1st étude, adding a repetition after the first line of Étude IX, excising the introductory bar in the XI, etc.), but more strikingly, deleting the respite from the manic dotted rhythm of the Finale and merely continuing as before, but now heading toward the home key. This last change is notable for several reasons: the original passage not only tries to cool the over-heated, dotted rhythm that has never left our ears since the beginning of the Étude, it also introduces a new melody that serves as a limpid pool of repose and lyricism. Why the vast majority of pianists refuse to play the original setting of Étude XII, which is in every way superior to its revision is beyond the ken of this writer. Although one can imagine a case to be made for following the variation idea to its logical conclusion (thus, eliminating Études III and IX and performing the 1852 revised version of the score in its integrity), it is mystifying to ignore this magical moment Schumann affords us in the earlier version. One cannot say if long-suffering Clara was behind the revision; we can well imagine that the she, the Apollonian lover of symmetry might have won over the Dionysian genius in this case. In any case, although many arguments can be made for which version to use in performance, including those that would include some or all five of the excised etudes, the current rendering tries to stay within the original conception of the piece, leaving off the five discarded etudes and hewing a very close line to the 1837 publication, Schumann’s 2nd thoughts notwithstanding,

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Pianist **Daniel Rieppel**, a Minnesota native of Austrian descent, holds performance degrees from the Cleveland Institute of Music and Indiana University, and earned his Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Minnesota under Lydia Artymiw. His principal teachers include Jack Radunsky and Leonard Hokanson, as well as John Perry at the Aspen Music Festival. Before relocating to the Twin Cities, he studied in Munich, Germany with the eminent German pianist Gerhard Oppitz.

Daniel Rieppel has worked as a chamber musician with members of the Minnesota Orchestra and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and is a founding member of The Schubert Trio. He has appeared as soloist with numerous ensembles, most recently the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra (Minneapolis), where he was soloist in Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor. He is a frequent performer on the Chiron Festival in Brooklyn, New York.

He has performed widely in the US, Latin America and Europe, including the Palais Corbelli in Vienna and in duo recital with the Austrian violinist Risa Schuchter. Dr. Rieppel is a frequent collaborator of the "Alfredo de Saint Malo" International Music Festival, performing with violinist Frank Almond, Concertmaster of the Milwaukee Symphony in recent years.

A recognized Schubert scholar, Dr. Rieppel has lectured and performed Schubert's works in New York City, Vienna, and at Oxford University. He has published articles on Schubert's sonatas, including the journal "Durch die Brille," of the Internationales Franz Schubert Institut. He was awarded a Fulbright fellowship to Vienna, Austria in 2004. Dr. Rieppel has served as Professor of Music at Southwest Minnesota State University since 1998, and is on faculty at the St. Paul Conservatory of Music in the Twin Cities.