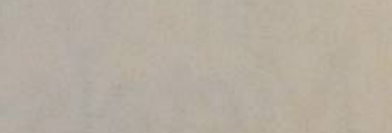


VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY

The Australian Broadcasting Commission

in its Golden Jubilee Year

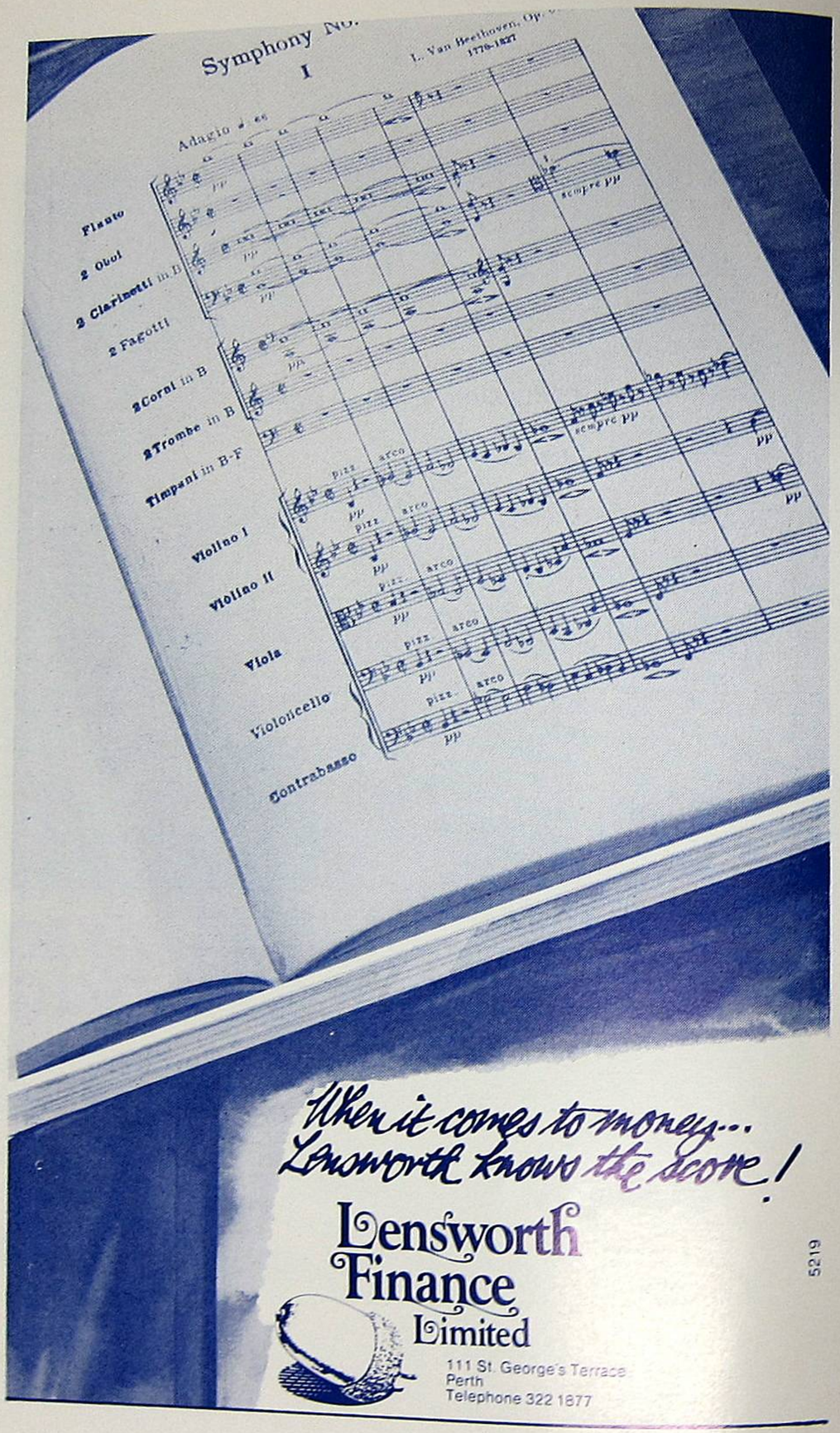
presents

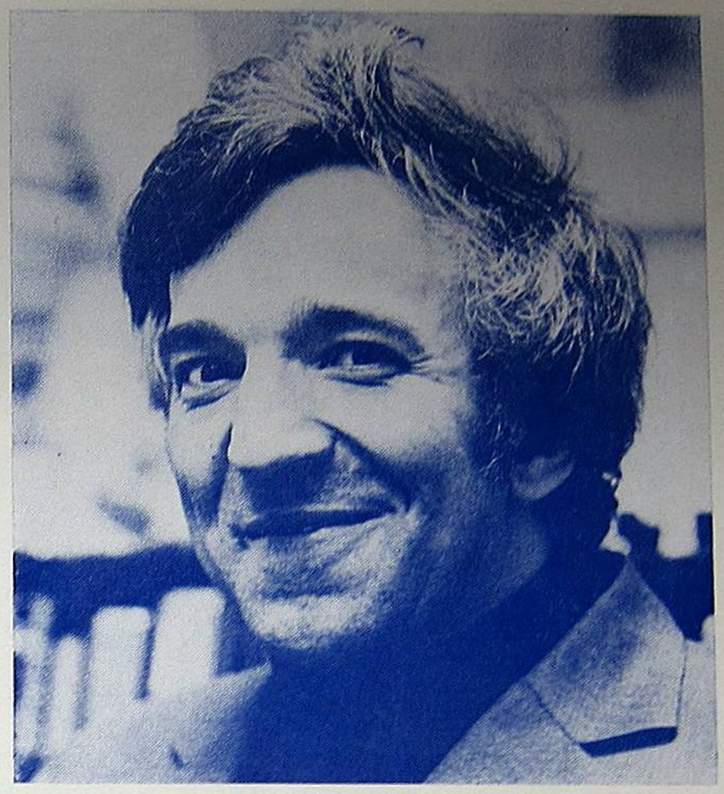
VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY

in a special recital

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1982, at 8 p.m.

PERTH CONCERT HALL





VLADIMIR ASHKENAZY

Ever since he won first prize in the Second International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1962, Vladimir Ashkenazy has been a household name throughout the musical world. He has made countless tours around the globe including three previous tours for the ABC. In 1963 he left the USSR with his family and after periods spent in London and Reykjavik, he now lives in Switzerland with his wife and children.

In recent years Mr Ashkenazy has devoted an important part of his activities to conducting, working closely with the Philharmonia Orchestra of London, of which he is now Principal Guest Conductor. Apart from concerts in London with the Orchestra he has toured with them in Europe and Japan. Recordings with the Philharmonia include the major symphonies of Tchaikovsky, three records in a complete Sibelius cycle and several recordings of Mozart piano concertos. Appearances with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam have also led to recordings, while future conducting engagements include those with the Philadelphia and Cleveland Orchestras.

Vladimir Ashkenazy continues, nonetheless, to devote himself to his career as a pianist. He has undertaken such major projects as the complete cycle of Beethoven concertos in Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Vienna, New York and Washington and the Bartok concertos in San Francisco, Pittsburgh and New York. He appeared as soloist in the Gala Opening Concert of the new Barbican Concert Hall in London and in 1983 he will celebrate the 150th anniversary of Brahms' birth with performances of both piano concertos in New York, Los Angeles, London, Paris, Vienna and Copenhagen. His list of recordings as pianist is encyclopaedic, covering all the concertos of Beethoven, Rachmaninov, Bartok and Prokofiev, as well as all Beethoven's Piano Sonatas. Further projects will cover all the piano works of Chopin, Rachmaninov and Scriabin.

The Program

1. Sonata No. 28 in A, Op. 101 — BEETHOVEN

2. Sonata No. 30 in E, Op. 109 — BEETHOVEN

— *Interval* —

3. Two Nocturnes, Op. 27 — CHOPIN

4. Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58 — CHOPIN

Tonight's recital is being broadcast direct to the Eastern States and is being re-broadcast on 6WN at 11.15 p.m. tonight.

Also, the first half of tonight's recital will be broadcast on ABC FM Stereo on 12th January and the second half on 13th January.

In addition, the recital is being recorded for television and will be shown on a date to be advised.

Notes on the Program

1. Sonata No. 28 in A, Op. 101 — *Beethoven* (1770-1827)

Etwas lebhaft, und mit der innigsten Empfindung (Allegretto, ma non troppo)
Lebhaft—Marschmässig (Vivace alla Marcia)
Langsam und sehnsuchtsvoll—Zeitmass des ersten Stückes:
Geschwind, doch nicht zu sehr, und mit Entschlossenheit (Adagio, ma non troppo, con affetto—Tempo del primo pezzo: tutto il Cembalo, ma piano—Allegro risoluto)

If musical productivity be measured simply in terms of annual rate of completion of major compositions, then the six years commencing in 1815 were the most barren of Beethoven's maturity, yielding only two *Cello sonatas* Op. 102, three *Piano Sonatas* Opp. 101, 106 and 109, and the song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte.* While there is no shortage of distracting exigencies in the composer's life to account for these lean years, notably the protracted legal battle for custody of his nephew Karl, one would find sufficient explanation in the changing style of Beethoven's music as he entered what is now commonly recognized as his Third Period.

Beginning with the composition of the two *Cello sonatas* of Op. 102 (written in 1815, one year before the present *Piano sonata in A*) Beethoven followed a path of progressively more uncompromising individuality, forsaking the extrovert dramatism with which, during his Second Period, he had extended the classic conventions inherited from his First Period. Instead, his music became more introverted, more a personal confession of inner struggles and, in that non-pejorative sense, self-indulgent. Such music, by the inevitable demands it places upon the listener, is naturally less 'popular' than the output of the Second Period and Beethoven, through the hostile responses elicited by some of his late works, would have known the risks and frustrations of appealing to an ever diminishing audience. The relatively exclusive appeal of 'late-Beethoven' persists to this day despite greater opportunities for familiarity.

For most of Beethoven's late compositions to succeed there must be a three-way rapport between composer, performer and listener. The essential intimacy of such an experience is suggested at the outset of Op. 101 where the music commences as if already in progress. As with the opening of the *Cello sonata* Op. 102, No. 1, the listener feels invited to join a pre-existing conversation. This effect is heightened by the ambiguous tonality of the opening phrases and the fact that more than seventy bars of this highly compressed sonata form movement elapse before the tonic key is unequivocally established. The dreamlike contemplation engendered by the *Allegretto* is rudely interrupted as the second movement (the *Scherzo* of the piece) begins its nervous display of jerky rhythms, angular modulations, disturbed accents and extremes of dynamic contrasts. The Trio section is considerably smoother in outline, being fashioned from a

more timid and much repeated rhythmic figure and a singing phrase that receives an extended canonic development. The contrapuntal writing is here so sparse that a highly sympathetic interpreter is required if a dull, schoolroom effect is to be avoided. The return to the March section is highly effective as a sudden crescendo wrests the initiative from the hesitating *pianissimo* of the rhythmic figure. The *Adagio* in A minor, marked 'full of yearning', runs a relatively brief canonic course before passing via an introspective *cadenza* to a statement of the opening of the *Allegretto* as if in search of a suitable idea for the *Finale.* This is found in the form of the descending third of the sonata's opening phrase, seized upon with mounting excitement and, after a flourish of trills, becomes the driving motive of the entire final *Allegro.* This is one of the great fugal movements of Beethoven's late style, cast in sonata form, with a strict four-part fugue (commencing *pianissimo* in C major) serving for the development section.

The *Sonata in A* was dedicated to Baroness Dorothea Ertmann, one of Beethoven's favourite pupils and, through her performances of his earlier piano works, reputedly one of the finest contemporaneous pianists in Vienna. Whether the composer's dedication was rewarded by the Baroness assimilating this work into her repertoire with a sympathetic grasp adequate to the sonata's intellectual demands is an intriguing question that must remain tantalizingly beyond the reach of even the most erudite scholarship of our time.

2. Sonata in E, Op. 109 *Beethoven*

Vivace, ma non troppo
Prestissimo
Andante, molto cantabile ed espressivo

'He fled the world because in the depths of his loving nature he found no means by which to deal with the world. If he withdrew from men it was because they did not want to climb up to him and he could not descend to them. He dwelt alone, because he found no second self. Yet to the end his heart beat for all men . . .
'Thus he was, thus he died, thus will he live till the end of time.'

(the poet Franz Grillparzer at Beethoven's funeral)

Beethoven composed his last three piano sonatas in the early 1820s, at a time when his external circumstances were exceedingly trying. He had been involved in a long and bitter law-suit to gain custody of his nephew Karl, to whom Beethoven gave continual affection with little return: the case was resolved in Beethoven's favour only in April 1820. His financial situation was precarious and his domestic circumstances unsettled. In addition, his chronic ill-health and deafness isolated him from friends. This detachment from his surroundings sometimes led to misadventures: at Baden, in 1820, he wandered from his rooms early in the morning and walked until evening when, having lost his way, he alarmed residents by peering in their windows; the local constable arrested him despite his protestations. When Beethoven continued to claim that he was indeed himself, the constable interrupted the Commissioner of Police at a party saying,

'We have a ragamuffin of a tramp in jail yelling that he is Beethoven'. Only at midnight did Beethoven's insistence that Herzog, the musical director of Wiener Neustadt, would identify him and bring the composer's release. The incident ended with Herzog entertaining Beethoven throughout the night and the Commissioner of Police sending him home in the magisterial state-coach.

Beethoven's detachment is also reflected in the sonatas of this period, as well as in the *Symphony No. 9* and the *Missa Solemnis* on which he was concurrently working. The reflective spirituality of the three sonatas gives a sense of infinity and of conflict resolved in transcendence.

'. . . music is the one incorporeal entrance into the higher world of knowledge which comprehends mankind but which mankind cannot comprehend . . . Every real creation of art is independent, more powerful than the artist himself and returns to the divine through its manifestation. It is one with man only in this, that it bears testimony to the mediation of the divine in him.' (Beethoven in 1810).

The *Sonata in E* (as well as the Op. 101 in A and Op. 106 in B flat) bears the inscription *für das Hammerklavier*, for the pianoforte. Beethoven was again stating his conviction that compositions for the piano and the harpsichord were not interchangeable. In 1796 he wrote to his friend the piano maker Johann Streicher: 'There is no doubt that as far as the manner of playing is concerned, the pianoforte is still the least studied and developed of all instruments; often one thinks that one is merely listening to a harp. And I am delighted, my dear fellow, that you are one of the few who realize and perceive that, provided one can feel the music, one can also make the pianoforte sing.'

This sonata is unusual in form, even for Beethoven's late compositions. In the first movements two sections, fast and slow are dovetailed together: the delicate, volatile, *Vivace* which opens the work is soon disrupted by an ornate *Adagio espressivo*; the two interweave with swift undulation. The passionate *Prestissimo* bears no resemblance to a scherzo in mood or form; compactly constructed, it flashes by almost in a breath and gives way to the pinnacle of the sonata, a set of free rhapsodic variations on a slow theme.

The theme of the *Finale*, to be played 'like a song and with deepest feeling', is luminously beautiful and simple. The six variations give a fine indication of how Beethoven could 'make the pianoforte sing'; the last variation is the most complex, developing in an increasingly elaborate progression, brought to rest with the final simple restatement of the theme.

— Interval —

3. Two Nocturnes, Op. 27

Chopin
(1810-1849)

Though the title nocturne had been used in the eighteenth century for lightweight instrumental suites like the cassation and serenade, it was the Irishman John Field who first emphasized its special meaning as a night-piece when applying it to a particular kind of dreamy, intimate miniature for solo piano, often characterized by an expressive *cantabile* melody (much decorated with the *fioritura* of contemporary Italian opera) sung by the right hand over a simple chordal or arpeggio accompaniment in the left. But it was Chopin who brought the *genre* to its fullest flower in a great set of eighteen, besides one or two posthumously published pieces, growing from all periods of his life. The *Nocturne in D flat* dates from 1834-35, when Chopin was in Paris and a close friend of Bellini (until the latter's death in 1835), in Chopin's eyes the perfector of the Italian *bel canto* style he himself had always loved so well.

The Nocturne in C sharp minor (1836) is one of the most beautiful of them all: it is difficult to believe music so mature came from a young man of only twenty-five. The melody steals in mysteriously, almost as if waking from a dream. Gradually the tension mounts and the music works to an impassioned central climax before sinking back into the mood of the opening—but with a final gleam of light as the E natural of C sharp minor changes to the E sharp of C sharp major.

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You may be interested to know that during a test in the Royal Festival Hall, London, a note played Mezzoforte on the horn measured approximately 65 decibels of sound. A single uncovered cough gave the same reading. A handkerchief placed over the mouth when coughing assists in obtaining a Pianissimo.

A REMINDER

Taking photographs or recordings during any performance presented by the Australian Broadcasting Commission is prohibited.

4. Sonata No. 3 in B minor, Op. 58 *Chopin*

Allegro maestoso
Scherzo: molto vivace
Largo
Finale: presto non tanto

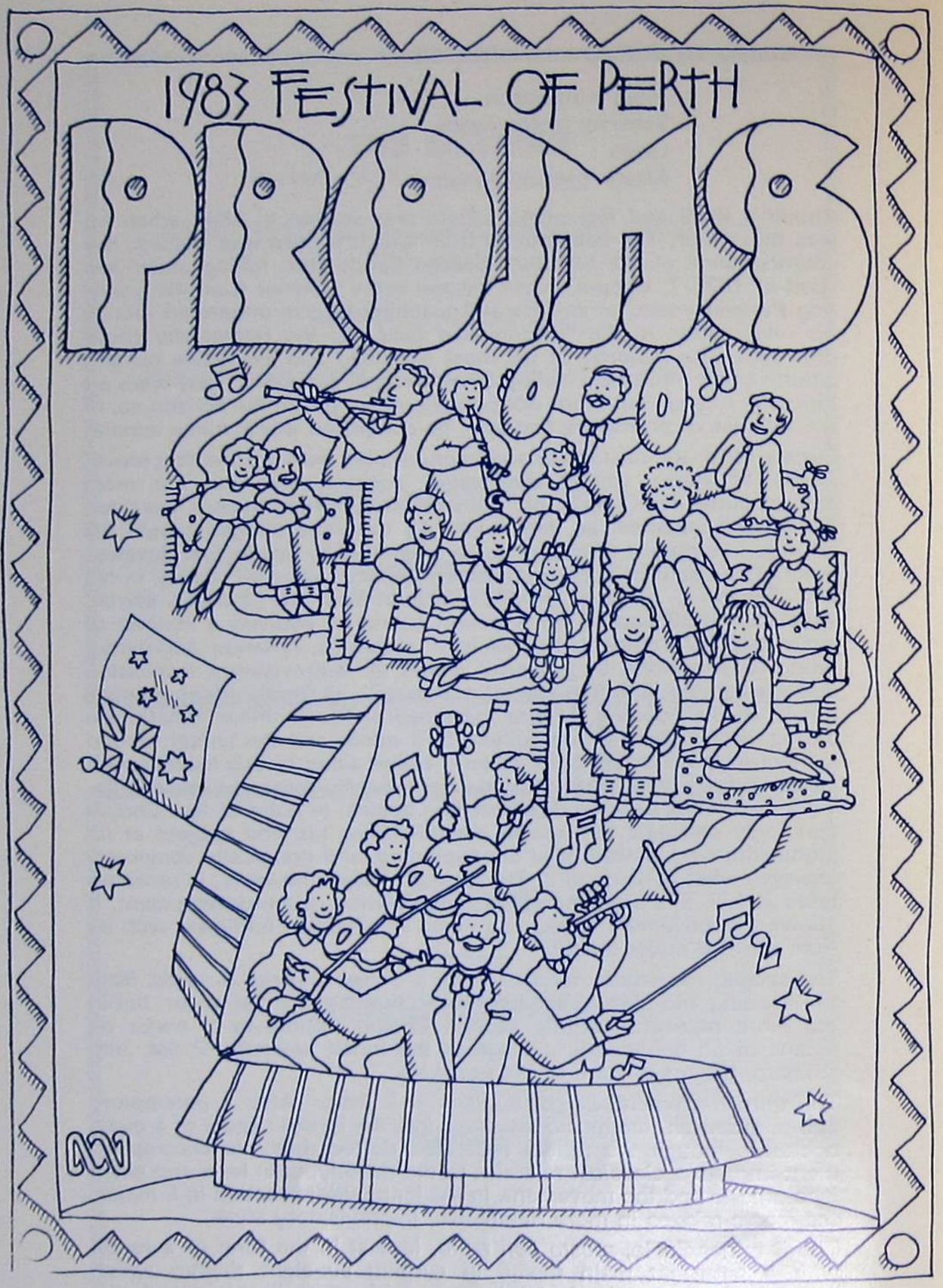
Chopin's third and last piano sonata was written in 1844 when he was thirty-four. The background from which it grew was Nohant, the country home of the novelist, George Sand; after falling under her spell in 1836-7, Chopin would escape every summer from the gruelling Parisian round of soirées and teaching to give unfettered rein to his imagination in the freedom and peace of the retreat she could offer him. The majority of his most extended and expansive compositions came into being during these tranquil summers. They were all too soon to end. But there were no clouds as yet on the horizon as, in the fullness of premature maturity, he composed this B minor sonata.

Sonata-form, the customary architectural plan used for the first movements of works calling themselves sonatas, was not the most natural outlet for Chopin; his predominately lyrical themes were too complete in themselves, too much like exquisite images caught for all time in a phrase of poetry, to be submitted to intellectual development. The strain of such procrustean methods showed heavily in his first *Sonata in C minor* of 1827. But in both the 'Funeral March' sonata of 1839 and in the B minor sonata he evolved a method of sustaining his arguments by means of 'sequence, variation, and modulation, swept along by powerful winds of improvisatory inspiration and worked out with fine attention to detail', as Gerald Abraham once put it. In the opening *Allegro maestoso* of the B minor sonata, the strong, proud chordal first subject in B minor and the lyrical second subject in D major are both, in turn, swept along in this manner with so powerful a wind that the listener is hardly aware where the development ends and the recapitulation begins. In point of fact Chopin cunningly conceals the join by recapitulating his first subject at its eighteenth bar, instead of at the beginning, and drastically compressing even what remains of it. The second subject, however, is recapitulated in full, and after the restless modulation of the development, it allows the movement to end in a mood of confident fulfilment with its rich, warm B major tonality.

The second movement, *molto vivace*, is a fleet-fingered *Scherzo*. Both the opening and closing sections are in the key of E flat major, but in the more reposeful middle section Chopin returns to B major by means of an enharmonic change of the initial key-note, E flat, into D sharp, the major third of his new key.

The third movement, *Largo*, is again in B major. After a peremptory call to attention, the music dissolves into the lyrical beauty of a *quasi* nocturne, though the rigidly reiterated dotted rhythmic accompaniment imparts a classical restraint to the melody, both here and when it returns to end the movement. In the long middle section in E major, the music relaxes in more ruminative, improvisatory style.

The B minor finale, *presto non tanto*, is cast in the form of a rondo with a recurrent main theme in surging six-eight rhythm which emerges from the depths and grows with magnificent, cumulative excitement as the movement progresses.



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