

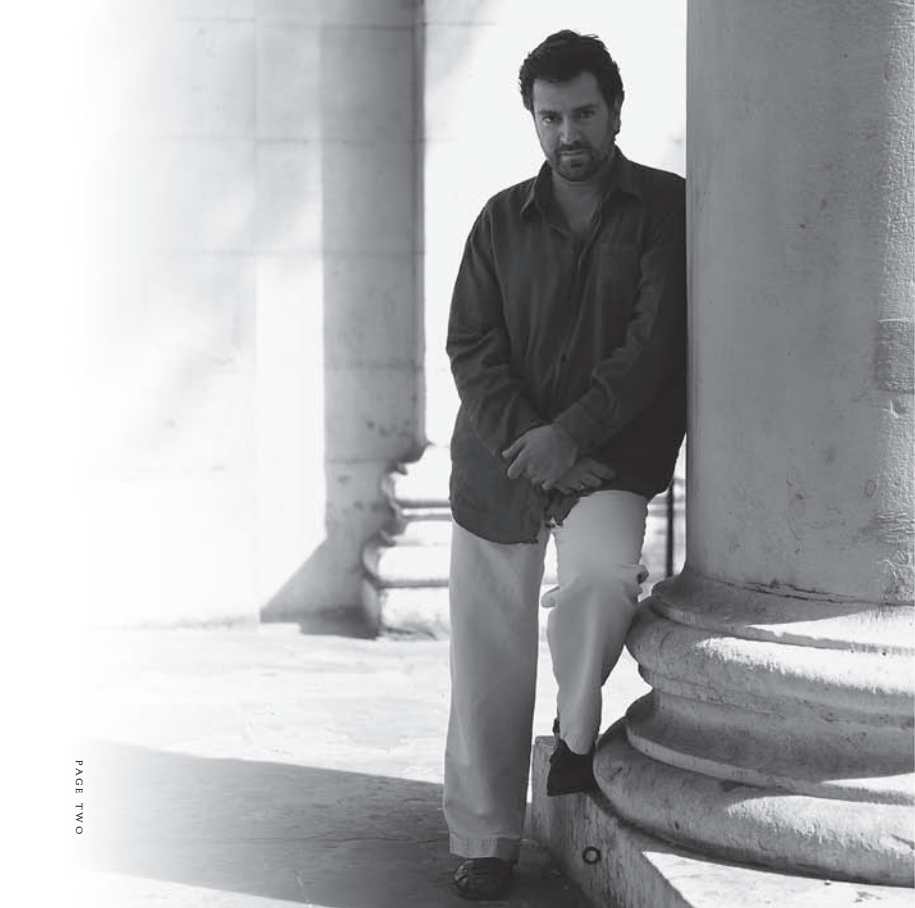
A portrait of pianist Artur Pizarro, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark blue suit jacket over a dark shirt. The background is dark and out of focus, with a chair back visible in the lower left corner.

ARTUR PIZARRO

Frédéric Chopin

SONATAS OPP.35 & 58

BARCAROLLE Op.60 - VARIATIONS Op.12



Frédéric Chopin

Artur Pizarro piano

- 1 Variations Brillantes Op.12
- 2–5 Sonata No.2 in B-flat minor Op.35
Grave; Scherzo; Marche Funébre; Presto
- 6 Barcarolle in F-sharp major Op.60
- 7–10 Sonata No.3 in B minor Op.58
Allegro maestoso; Scherzo; Largo; Presto non tanto

TOTAL TIME : 77.22

RECORDED AT POTTON HALL, UK, 17-24 JUNE 2004

PRODUCED BY PHILIP HOBBS

ENGINEERED BY JULIA THOMAS

POST PRODUCTION AT FINESPLICE, UK

PHOTOGRAPHS OF ARTUR PIZARRO BY SVEN ARNSTEIN

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PIANO PREPARATION BY BRUNO TORRENS

PAINTING OF FREDERIC CHOPIN, AFTER 1900, BY B. FRANZ

AFTER CONTEMPORARY PORTRAIT – SUPPLIED BY AKG IMAGES LONDON

THE ROMANTIC PERIOD IN MUSIC IS OFTEN COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD AS A RELATIVELY continuous evolution in style stretching from Beethoven's last years until the beginning of the 20th century. In typical time delay, however, the beginning of exploration of the romantic sensitivity and aesthetic goals applied to music virtually coincided with the end of that stylistic current in the literature, where the music had found its inspiration in the early 19th century. As this was the era of the foundation of many music conservatories in Europe, where, for educational purposes, the practice of the previous - classical - era was codified, there was a need to define the current meaning of the term "sonata", its principal form, both as a four-movement form and in its more restricted reference to the first movements of sonatas, symphonies and chamber music forms such as the string quartet. Music theorists began to refer to the sonata as an ideal in music and subsequently the word "sonata" was used regarding the musical form as well as particular works. This led to the 19th-century theory notion of the "sonata principle" according to which a symphony was understood as a "sonata for orchestra".

The "sonata principle" was described in gender-biased terms as one of opposition between two groups of themes, where the characteristic of the first theme was "masculine", that is energetic and rhythmic and the second theme was based more on vocal melody, and therefore considered "feminine". For many influential theoreticians, such as Wagner, the implied contrast represented the core of the tension necessary to develop musical material in a coherent form. Particularly the first movement of the form, known as "Sonata-Allegro", had been the subject of theoretical works and was seen as the most important aspect of compositional technique. In consequence, 19th-century composers were taught to favour this form over others.

The formal plan for writing sonatas largely did away with the monothematic exposition, more common at the time than nowadays recognized, and the two theme groups were expected to contrast in character. It is only understandable that Romantic composers frequently found themselves torn between the freedom of

poetical expression and the rigour of formal design, although later Romantic theory even proposed that the "sonata principle" should be applied to all the movements of a "sonata-form" work. The theoretical explanation of differences between the three and the four movement layouts was that the "concerto" (considered "Italianate") was laid out in three movements, and the "symphony" (considered "German") in four, the latter being the superior layout. Chopin's three piano sonatas, for example, follow the "symphonic layout", and because the "sonata" concept now referred to the layout of the whole work, theoreticians would often feel the need to rationalize the use of the word, as was the case of J.W. Davison, in his *The Works of Fredrick Chopin* (1843): "Such are the impressions to which we are subject under the influence of this wonderful work - a very triumph of musical picturing - a conquest over what would seem it be unconquerable - viz. - the mingling of the physical and metaphysical in music - the sonata representing a dual picture - ... the battle of the actual elements and the conflict of human passions - the first for the multitude, the last for the initiated".

Following the trend established by Beethoven and the parallels between Romantic poetry and music, the focus became more and more on the development section, and terms such as "rhapsody" and "tone poem" entered music. The sonatas of the Romantic period reflect the variety of personal and rising national styles, while generally falling into two categories: those by composers such as Schubert, Chopin, Schumann and Brahms expand the traditional form while still adhering to its principles; the other category includes works more experimental in nature and in form, such as both sonatas by Liszt. A widely held view maintains, however, that the sonata is a quintessential reflection of the Classical style only and that it hindered spontaneous musical development afterwards. Indeed, if one were to compare Mozart's and Beethoven's total sonata output (70 and 55 sonatas, respectively) with the next generation's significantly - in numbers, at least - scarcer contribution (13 by Mendelssohn, 8 by Schumann and Brahms, 4 by Chopin and 2 by Liszt), the most obvious explanation would be that the composers were gradually abandoning the form

since it stifled their freedom and natural development of the musical material. However, an alternative interpretation of these figures might find the reason for the decrease in the rising relative importance of a sonata in a composer's opus: as indicated by Rosen, after Beethoven the sonata was the vehicle of the sublime and symbolised greatness just as the fugue did craftsmanship, raising therefore the level of responsibility of the composer. The task was being made more difficult by the contemporary critics' contention that Romantic composers were inexperienced in handling complex structures and development procedures, and incapable of conceiving large organic wholes – in comparison to the Classical greats, that is. This situation culminated at one point in Schumann's declaration of the death of the sonata. Amusingly enough, he backtracked a few years later, lamenting that now everyone was writing miniatures and that there was a need for larger forms, such as sonatas, symphonies and string quartets (needless to say, all of them employing the sonata principle). Because of the relative formal restrictions, however, most composers returned to the original formal layout rather than continuing the exploration and development of the form. Therefore, although the notion of sonata was for the most part of its existence intrinsically related to tonal harmony (where it could be defined in terms of key groups and conclusive tonal cadences), even the gradual weakening, and then loss, of tonal functionality in the 20th century did not lessen the importance of the tradition of the "sonata idea" or do away with the use of the term "sonata".

After a juvenile (written for his teacher Elsner as a compositional problem), monothematic but procedurally encumbered attempt (Sonata Op.4 in C minor), Chopin's Second and Third Sonata show clearly the complexity of the Romantic approach to sonata: although their formal plan and the application of thematic procedures related to Austro-German tradition can clearly be associated with the past model, Chopin's musical language and expression add a very distinctive quality and individuality to these works. His language was formed by the influences of the concert and salon music of the early 19th century and enriched by genres such as the keyboard works by J.S. Bach and Italian opera arias (his melodic lines having been defined

as ornamental in nature). The formal modifications Chopin made to the classical model result in Romantic sonatas with intensified contrasts and multiple changes of rhythm and tempi, often even within individual movements. The most notable formal difference is that a scherzo appears as the second movement and the third movement is slow (something Beethoven has also done after the Sonata Op.26), while the overall contrast between those movements is more pronounced than in classical sonatas. The French pianist Alfred Cortot saw the most important shift from Beethoven's to Chopin's sonatas as the shift from inspiration by the ideals of universality to the suffusion of the music by the composer's personal feelings and emotions.

THE SONATA IN B-FLAT MINOR, OP.35, was written in 1839 and published the following year. Unusually, Chopin initially approved the *Sonata funébre* title, but later took out the adjective in the 3rd French edition. He described the work in an August 1839 letter to Julian Fontana thus: "Here I am writing a Sonata in B-flat minor, containing the march that you know. There is an allegro, then a Scherzo in E-flat minor, the march and short finale, perhaps 3 of my pages; the left hand in unison with the right, gossipping after the march." As is apparent from this remark, the Funeral March was composed earlier, probably in 1837, as witnessed by an album leaf containing the first eight bars of the Trio and dated "Paris, 28. September 1837". This movement was orchestrated by Henri Reber to be played in the Madeleine's Church in Paris at Chopin's own funeral in October 1849. The other three movements were concluded in the summer of 1839, in George Sand's manor house at Nohant, right after their return from Majorca. While quickly gaining popularity, the work was misunderstood by critics from the very beginning. Thus, while Anton Rubinstein called the piece "Death poem", Robert Schumann was baffled by it, admitting it possessed beauty, but apparently misunderstanding its musical ideas and the structure, since he referred to it as "four of Chopin's maddest children under the same roof" and to the last movement, devoid of melody and clear key, as "a jeer, but not music". There was something of a tradition of belittling Chopin's attempts at sonata form in general, and here it was

centred in particular in the apparent lack of relationship between the two halves of the piece – a view that has since been rebuffed by 20th-century analysts. Chopin's student Wilhelm von Lenz wrote: "Nothing is easier than to reduce this trio to the tritest platitude, nothing more difficult than to raise its melodic spell to the level of the sorrow that hangs over the whole poem which this Funeral March is... This trio is a touchstone for recognizing whether the performer is a poet or merely a pianist; whether he can tell a story or merely play the piano." It has been suggested that this sonata was modelled on Beethoven's Sonata Op.26 in A-flat major, also known as the "Funeral march", which Chopin often played and taught.

The creative process involved in writing a large-scale work must have been very taxing for Chopin, who, as witnessed by George Sand, was often going through true torment while arriving at a final solution for even the most minute detail: "His creation was spontaneous, miraculous. He found it without searching for it, without foreseeing it. It came to his piano suddenly, complete, sublime, or it sang in his head during a walk, and he would hasten to hear it again by, tossing it off on his instrument. But then would begin the most heartbreaking labour I have ever witnessed. It was a series of efforts, indecision, and impatience to recapture certain details of the theme he had heard: what had come to him all of a piece, he now over-analyzed in his desire to write it down, and his regret at not finding it again 'near,' as he said, would throw him into a kind of despair. He would shut himself up in his room for days at a time, weeping, pacing, breaking his pens, repeating and changing a single measure a hundred times, writing it and effacing it with equal frequency, and beginning again the next day with a meticulous and desperate perseverance. He would spend six weeks on one page, only to end up writing it just as he had traced it in his first outpouring." On some occasions, Chopin revisions were so extensive, even after a work had been published, that he would ask his publisher to print the updated version of it. While taking into account his habit of issuing his pieces with slight text differences almost simultaneously in France, England, and one of the German-speaking states (thus increasing his income and reducing the chance of piracy), that must have certainly

been the true reason why Troupenas published a total of four separate impressions of its French edition of this Sonata.

Written five years after the Second Sonata and published in 1845, the **SONATA IN B MINOR, OP.58**, lies on the other side of the transition period that many see as pivotal in Chopin's life. This work was completed a few months after the Berceuse, and was written in times of tranquillity and relatively good health. The largest of all of Chopin's works for piano solo, it represents – together with the *Fantasie* and the 4th Ballade – the apotheosis of his creativity. Its first movement is characterised by the pervasive use of imitative passages in truly polyphonic musical thinking. Vincent d'Indy called its extensive development section "a true exercise of a student who has firmly decided to write a development, because that is the habit, but all logic is carefully avoided." The Scherzo is a veritable study of light-fingered dexterity but its fleeting arabesques make one oblivious of technical requirements. Bruce Hungerford recounted an anecdote told by Ernest Hurcheson who, on one occasion, had attended a recital in Carnegie Hall by Leopold Godowsky and was sitting in a box next to Josef Hofmann. The B minor Sonata was on the program and as Godowsky began the Scherzo, Hofmann leaned over and whispered to Hurcheson, "Too fast!" "Then," continued Mr. Hurcheson, "a week or so later I was at a recital by Josef Hofmann, also in Carnegie Hall, and also on the programme was the B minor Sonata. Sitting next to me was Godowsky. As Hofmann began the second movement Godowsky leaned towards me and muttered, "Too fast!"

The introduction of *Largo* opens with majestic punctuated rhythm in unison, suggesting a march played by low brass, which is then balanced by chords suggesting full orchestration. A lyrical and yet declamatory theme is accompanied by the continuous punctuated pulsation in the bass that, in its next appearance, changes to suggest a barcarole. The suggestiveness of the theme's operatic grandiloquence and of the conclusive calmness is unparalleled. The last movement follows the formal structure of the first one, and its natural flow and spontaneous lyricism are not

restricted by the complexity of motivic development and the well-defined form. Its incessant, almost obsessive, momentum that increases with each presentation of the theme breaks out as an overwhelming force of nature in the coda, with an intensity that is hard to match in the piano literature. It is reported that Liszt used to play the last, exalted, invocation of the theme with the middle finger, supported by the thumb and index finger, to give it a vibrant and metallic sonority.

In May 1833 Chopin heard Louis Joseph Ferdinand Herold's (1791–1833) opera *Ludovic*, finished by Hålevy. The **VARIATIONS BRILLANTES "JE VENDS DES SCAPULAIRES" OP.12**, based on the homonymous aria from the opera, are Chopin's final variation set and a virtual farewell to the virtuoso style cherished in Paris. Written after the early nocturnes and etudes and in the year he wrote his first ballade, it almost represents a regression or a final concession to the bravura *stile brillante*, so much clichéd – in particular in variation form – that it entered dictionaries as such: "First there are simple quavers and triplets, then arpeggios, syncopations and octaves, without forgetting the adagio in the relative mode and the tempo di polacca." (Castil-Blaze, *Dictionnaire de Musique Moderne*, 1825). Although Arthur Loesser called it "a masterpiece in its own way", already at the time Schumann called it "writing à la mode" and thought that "they belong altogether to the drawing-room or concert-hall, and... are far removed from any poetic sphere." This piece, together with *Bolero* and *Rondo* Op.16, represents Chopin's last attempt at such conventional and fairly anonymous writing that perpetrated the tradition of contemporary concert-hall crowd pleasers. Nevertheless, Franz Liszt apparently referred to the set as Chopin's favourite piece of his own, commenting after hearing Chopin play it for himself: "Such a poetic temperament as Chopin's never existed, nor have I ever heard such delicacy and refinement of playing. The tone, though small, was absolutely beyond criticism, and although his execution was not forcible, nor by any means fitted for the concert room, still it was perfect in the extreme."

Called "the most beautiful nocturne of all" by A. Hedley, "ravishing" by J. Rink, "messianic" by K. Stromenger and "stunning" by H. Leichenritt, Chopin's *Barcarolle* was also greatly admired by artists such as von Bülow and was found by M. Ravel to be "the synthesis of the expressive and sumptuous art of this great Slav", and to express "languor in excessive joy" by A. Gide. The *Barcarolle* represents a case in point of Chopin's ornamental genius. Ravel wrote: "Chopin was not content merely to revolutionize piano technique. His figurations are inspired. Through his brilliant passages one perceives profound, enchanting harmonies. Always there is the hidden meaning which is translated into poetry of intense despair."

Chopin may have begun his work on the *Barcarolle* because he suddenly found himself with time on his hands, an idea of a trip to Italy in the autumn of 1845 having been cancelled due to the opposition of George Sand's son, Maurice. The work carried over into the next year, which is when the piece was finalized and published.

Originally the typical song of Venetian gondoliers, the barcarolle was often used in the Romantic period due to its exotic ambience and the 6/8 or 12/8 lilting rhythm. J. Chantavoine suggested that Chopin's *Barcarolle* may have been a result of George Sand's stories about Venice. Chopin constructed it formally as one of his nocturnes, in three sections, where the middle one draws particularly on the boat-song 12/8 rhythm and imagery. Harmonically, it is one of his most advanced works and it also explores trills in a way that Beethoven has done in his late sonatas. In a 1933 article published in Warsaw, J. Iwaszkiewicz even suggests that it represents a landscape, which Chopin depicted "painting it impressionistically", adding "its water and forest do not have clear contours".

Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that the work received considerable attention from Debussy and Ravel. Debussy's student, Madame Gérarde de Romilly, reported that the piece was Debussy's favourite, indicating that "the way in which he explained and analysed this piece was something special." In addition, some similarities between this piece and Debussy's *L'isle joyeuse* were identified by the Chopin scholar Jim Samson. Ravel's comments on the piece, published in *Le Courier Musical* in 1910,

give an extremely condensed and apt synopsis: "In the *Barcarolle* glowing harmonies clothe the subject, flexible and subtle in thirds. The melodic line is constant. In one moment, the 'melopoeia' disappears, it is suspended and then re-created delicately, softly, tempted by magical accords. The intensity increases. The new subject erupts, full of splendid lyricism, thoroughly Italian. Everything calms down. From the depth, a quick luminous trail rises and floats shimmering above the refined and tender chords. Some mysterious apotheosis comes to mind."

Charles Hallé, a friend of the composer, was present at Chopin's very last Paris recital, in 1848, and reported that the already frail author played the *Barcarolle* "from the point when it demands the utmost energy, in the opposite way, pianissimo, but with such wonderful nuances that one remained in doubt if this new rendering were not preferable to the accustomed one."

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ARTUR PIZARRO

ARTUR PIZARRO WAS BORN IN LISBON, PORTUGAL, IN 1968, and first played the piano on Portuguese television at the age of 4 having been introduced to the instrument by his maternal grandmother, pianist Berta da Nóbrega, and her piano-duo partner Campos Coelho who was a student of Vianna da Motta, Ricardo Viñes and Isidor Philipp. From 1974 to 1990 Artur Pizarro studied with Sequeira Costa who had also been a student of Vianna da Motta, Mark Hamburg, Edwin Fischer, Marguerite Long and Jacques Février. This distinguished lineage immersed Artur in the tradition of the Golden Age of pianism and gave him a broad education in both the German and French piano schools and repertoire.

After initial studies in Lisbon, Artur moved to Lawrence, Kansas, in the USA and continued working with Sequeira Costa who is Distinguished Professor of Piano at the University of Kansas. Artur began performing publicly at the age of 13 with a recital début at the São Luiz Theatre in Lisbon and gave his concerto debut with the Gulbenkian Orchestra later in the same year. While still under the tutelage of Costa, Artur Pizarro won first prizes in the 1987 Vianna da Motta Competition, the 1988 Greater Palm Beach Symphony Competition and the 1990 Harvey's Leeds International Pianoforte Competition which saw the beginning of an international concert career.

Artur Pizarro performs internationally in recital, chamber music and with the world's leading orchestras and conductors including Charles Dutoit, Sir Simon Rattle, Jean Fournier, Philippe Entremont, Pascal Tortelier, Sir Andrew Davis, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Yuri Temirkanov, Vladimir Fedoseev and Sir Charles Mackerras. Artur is an active chamber musician and has performed at chamber music festivals throughout the world. In 2005 he formed the 'Artur Pizarro Piano Trio' with violinist Raphaël Oleg and cellist Josephine Knight. Artur also performs in a piano duo with Vita Panomariovaite and they will soon record works by Rimsky-Korsakov for Linn Records.

Artur has recorded for Collins Classics, Hyperion Records, Harmonia Mundi and more recently for Linn Records. For Linn Records he has recorded two CDs of Beethoven piano sonatas and this disc is the second Chopin CD. For Naxos, Artur has recorded the complete piano works of Joaquin Rodrigo and for Brilliant Classics he recorded the complete Hungarian Rhapsodies of Liszt. For the Klara label, Artur recorded the second piano concerto of Arthur de Greef with the Flemish Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Yannick Nezet-Seguin.

Throughout 2003-04 Artur Pizarro performed the complete cycle of Beethoven Piano Sonatas at St John's Smith Square in London having previously performed the cycle in the USA and Portugal. All 8 concerts were broadcast on BBC Radio 3's 'Performance on 3' and the cycle earned Artur a Royal Philharmonic Society Award Nomination for 'Best Series'. During 2005-06 Artur performed the complete solo piano works of Ravel & Debussy in a special concert cycle broadcast by BBC Radio 3. In 2006

Artur will repeat the cycle in Portugal and in Denmark and he will also record the complete solo piano works of Ravel for Linn Records. Concerto appearances include Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto with Sir Charles Mackerras and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Liszt's First Concerto with Lawrence Foster and the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Mozart's Coronation Concerto with the Portuguese Symphony Orchestra, Schumann Piano Concerto with Okko Kamu and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Tchaikovsky First Concerto with Christian Mandeal and the Gulbenkian Orchestra and Saint-Saëns Fifth Concerto with Vladimir Jurowski and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

(Visit Artur Pizarro's official website at www.tomcroxonmanagement.co.uk)



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