

CARNEGIE HALL

Michelangelo Carbonara in Recital

Wednesday, June 13, 2007, at 8 PM

Joan and Sanford I. Weill Recital Hall

Michelangelo Carbonara, Piano

A Private Recital for the
Carnegie Hall Notables and Special Guests

Generously Underwritten by Nicola Bulgari

C A R N E G I E H A L L
N O T A B L E S

THE PROGRAM

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)	Sonata in E Minor, D. 566 (unfinished) I. Moderato II. Allegretto
Domenico Scarlatti (1685–1757)	Sonata K. 35 in F-sharp Major Sonata K. 124 in G Major Sonata K. 147 in E Minor Sonata K. 82 in F Major
Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)	Sonata No. 3 in F Minor, Op. 5 I. Allegro maestoso II. Andante espressivo—Andante molto III. Scherzo: Allegro energico—Trio IV. Intermezzo (Rückblick): Andante molto V. Finale: Allegro moderato ma rubato

PROGRAM NOTES

by Cody Franchetti

Schubert: Sonata in E Minor, D. 566

Composed in June 1817, Schubert's Sonata in E Minor is one of his lesser-known early sonatas. This is a pity, because the sonata exemplifies Schubert's poetic perfectly: with Beethoven, musical form itself is elevated to a dialectic and therefore poetic level; with Schubert, lyricism is the central preoccupation.

The E-Minor Sonata fits the mold (if ever there was one) of the Classical sonata perfectly; yet its expressivity lies

elsewhere. The themes themselves and the sonority animate the sonata; the descending answer of the opening theme, the moody second subject, even the touching closing theme prefigure the expression of Schubert's astonishing last Sonata in B-flat Major: the themes flow into one another in an unending lyric utterance throughout the exposition. The structural junctures are the only movements where the music does not spring naturally and effortlessly; one may even

say that in his earlier music, Schubert's treatment of these pitfalls is prosaic, as the formal barriers of sonata form hinder his emotion. But Schubert's genius was soon to conquer this shortcoming. Just a few years later, Schubert would create rapturous structures of ardent expression and sound—if original—construction.

It has been remarked by some that the Sonata in E Minor is Schubert's answer to Beethoven's own Sonata in E Minor, Op. 90. There is some truth to that: both have a relatively concise first movement and a longer, more discursive cantabile second movement in E major.

Four Scarlatti Sonatas

Massimo Mila, the great Italian music critic, once said, "Scarlatti was a real man of the 18th century: his expression never tires the listener." In fact, in the myriads of sonatas he wrote, it would be hard to find a tedious sonata. Throughout Scarlatti's extraordinary music there is the widest range of expression, as this evening's selection clearly demonstrates. The sonata K. 35 has a more archaic flavor than most of Scarlatti's output; it resembles a Baroque toccata. The sumptuous sonata K. 124 has dazzling arpeggios and piquant chime-effects—a spirited and irresistible sonata. K. 147's harmony is dissonant and biting, though in the second half of the section the sonata is animated by 16th notes in rising melodic thirds. The sonata K. 82 is unlike other sonatas in that it is not bipartite. Rather, it is a brisk toccata that in some sources appears as the first movement of an earlier suite consisting of two minuets (K. 78 and 94) and a gigue (K. 85).

Brahms: Sonata in F Minor, Op. 5

In the 19th century, a scission in musical poetics provoked an endless stream of polemic among composers, theorists, and the public. After Beethoven, who had seemingly exhausted the sonata form's possibilities, the musical world found itself at odds. Was it viable, or indeed possible, to pursue old instrumental forms, or were composers to try and conceive of other configurations for their compositions? The dilemma was aggravated by the simultaneous appearance of conflicting theories attempting to codify sonata form—some descriptively, some prescriptively. This formal quest had multifarious aspects too lengthy to recount here, nor should we hint to clearly demarcated factions, which were yet to polarize only around 1850. Let it suffice to say that while a new generation of composers was achieving great success with the aesthetic of the miniature, a quintessentially Romantic form of expression, everyone felt the need to measure himself with sonata form. But, for a while, the "perfect" sonata seemed a chimera.

"A new and significant talent has appeared; a musical force has announced itself ... [at last] one man would be singled out to make articulate in an ideal way the highest expression of our time. His name is Johannes Brahms." Thus in 1853 Robert Schumann wrote the most famous launch in classical music. For two decades he lamented the proliferation of etudes, preludes, fantasias—in short *morceaux*. "Nobody writes quartets or sonatas anymore" he said; in Brahms, he had found his man: three huge piano sonatas were his choice of immediate presentation and with them, surely, any suspicion of frag-

mentary inspiration could be abolished. They are potent works in which formal preoccupations reign supreme.

The most successful and unified sonata of the three is the F-Minor Sonata, Op. 5. In it, Brahms employs Lisztian techniques of thematic transformation, bracing them in the formal boundaries of the Classical sonata—formal boundaries that are stressed and underlined as they stand as solemn pillars of their own inflexible frame. The first movement's monumentality has already been alluded to; but it contains a languorous, more intimate vein, too. It is found after the monumental chords of the first theme and resurfaces at the end of the recapitulation.

The second movement offers a foretaste of Brahms's own lyricism in his late piano pieces. Formally, the movement follows the structure of double-trio minuet, but here the initial theme fails to return.

The *Scherzo's* audacious initial arpeggio is inspired by gypsy-like music. Brahms

wrote scherzi for all his sonatas, and all are among his most accomplished early instrumental pieces. Bettering even these perfect scherzi is the present one, which demands of the player tremendous technical capability.

The *Intermezzo "Rückblick"* (retrospect) is a reminiscence of the second movement, based indeed on the initial descending thirds motive that started the *Andante* but had been abandoned—here to reappear and dominate the *Intermezzo*. In the middle of the movement there is a section consisting of alternating open fifths that prefigure the sonorities of impressionistic music that would follow 60 years later.

The last movement is a formal *tour de force*. Brahms manages a blend of rondo and sonata form, solving the Romantic conundrum of creating a large and successful closing movement—an overwhelming obsession of Schumann's.

of Santa Cecilia, including the Grant as Best Graduate of the Year, and became the Academy's youngest graduate. He continued his studies at the Salzburg Mozarteum and at the Académie Musicale de Villecroze in France. At age 18, he made his international orchestral debut in Austria. In 2001 he was admitted to the famous Theo Lieven International Piano Foundation and the International Piano Academy Lake Como, headed by Martha Argerich, where he participated in master classes led by Leon Fleisher, Graham Johnson, Alicia de Larrocha, Andreas Staier, Dmitri Bashkirov, and other distinguished teachers.

Mr. Carbonara has won 17 prizes in International Piano Competitions, including the Schubert International Piano Competition in Dortmund, and has recorded for the Papageno and Tactus labels. In 2003, he gave his first performance in China and led a master class at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. His American

debut followed in 2005, and he now performs regularly in Europe, America, Asia, and Africa, giving around 70 concerts a year. In the next months his engagements will include concerts in Germany, the US, Poland, Spain, China, Canada, Malta, Belgium, Turkey, and Japan. The prestigious Keyboard Charitable Trust of London selected him for a tour of Europe and the US during 2005–07. After his appearance as conductor and soloist with the Orchestra Sinfonica Verdi in Milan and Lecco, he will perform all Mozart's piano concertos on an extensive international tour in 2006–07. His repertoire covers all the Schubert sonatas; the piano works of Schubert, Weber, Brahms, and Schumann; sonatas of Beethoven, Clementi, Platti, Haydn, and Scarlatti; and works by Polish composers including Chopin, Szymanowski, Lutosławski, and Paderewski. In 2005 the Italian Ministry of Education awarded him the National Arts Prize for services to Italian Music. Mr. Carbonara is also an active composer.

THE ARTIST

Michelangelo Carbonara

Born in Salerno, Italy, in 1979, Michelangelo Carbonara began his musical studies at age five and was composing music and giving concerts at age six. His formative piano teachers included Sergio Perticaroli, William Grant Naboré, and Fou Ts'ong. At 17 he graduated with top honors from the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia in Rome. In 1999 he was awarded a Piano Specialization Degree from the Academy



SPECIAL THANKS

The Carnegie Hall Board of Trustees would like to thank Nicola Bulgari for his extraordinary generosity in hosting this special evening for the third consecutive year for the Carnegie Hall Notables.

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