

34th



香港藝術節
Hong Kong
Arts Festival

9.2-12.3.2006



Stefan
Vladar PIANO RECITAL

舒德芬·弗拉達爾鋼琴演琴會

19.2.2006

香港大會堂音樂廳
Concert Hall, Hong Kong City Hall

演出長約 1 小時 25 分鐘，包括一節 15 分鐘中場休息
Running time: approximately 1 hour and 25 minutes with a 15 minute interval

為了讓大家對這次演出留下美好印象，請切記在節目開始前關掉手錶、無線電話及傳呼機的響鬧裝置。會場內請勿擅自攝影、錄音或錄影，亦不可飲食和吸煙，多謝合作。

To make this performance a pleasant experience for the artists and other members of the audience, PLEASE switch off your alarm watches, MOBILE PHONES and PAGERS. Eating and drinking, unauthorised photography and audio or video recording are forbidden in the auditorium. Thank you for your co-operation.

舒德芬·弗拉達爾鋼琴演奏會

Stefan Vladar Piano Recital

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舒德芬·弗拉達爾：視野無限的鋼琴家
Stefan Vladar
The Pianist with an Eye for Everything



舒德芬·弗拉達爾

Stefan Vladar

奧地利鋼琴家舒德芬·弗拉達爾自1985年成為維也納貝多芬國際鋼琴大賽歷來最年輕的優勝者後，憑着卓越才藝，成就輝煌事業，在同輩音樂家中備受矚目。

As the youngest winner ever of the International Beethoven Competition Vienna in 1985, Austrian pianist Stefan Vladar has established a brilliant career as one of the most interesting and versatile musicians of his generation.

維也納出生的弗拉達爾，在維也納音樂大學修業，師從克萊瑪-派辛海默和彼得曼德爾。

弗拉達爾的音樂足跡遍佈世界各地的主要音樂廳，曾在多位著名指揮家執棒之下演奏，包括阿巴多、小澤征爾、提勒曼、霍格伍德、馬連拿、曼奴軒爵士、霍斯特·史坦、普拉頌和哈汀；他也常與皇家音樂廳管弦樂團、鹿特丹愛樂樂團、芝加哥交響樂團、聖馬田樂團、薩爾茨堡室樂團、蘇黎世音樂廳樂團、東京NHK管弦樂團及歐洲室樂團等。

在世界各大音樂節中也常見到弗拉達爾的名字，最近他就參與了薩爾茨堡、石勒斯維格-荷爾斯坦、萊茵高、路維斯堡的音樂節，以及舒伯特音樂節；他並經常與維也納-柏林樂團和維也納藝術家弦樂四重奏合作。

弗拉達爾現任維也納施提利亞省紐伯格文化節和上奧地利音樂節的藝術總監，2002至2005年間更擔任奧地利格拉茲市新成立的樂團的首席指揮。這個樂季，他將和多個樂團演奏及擔任指揮，包括史圖加愛樂樂團、貝多芬學院、海牙市立管弦樂團及薩爾茨堡室樂團。

弗拉達爾現為維也納音樂暨表演藝術大學鋼琴教授，曾替多間大唱片公司錄製專輯不下二十張。

A Viennese by birth, Stefan Vladar studied at the Vienna Music University with Renate Kramer-Preisenhammer and Hans Petermandl.

His international career has led him to the major music centres and festivals of the world, and he has performed under the baton of Claudio Abbado, Seiji Ozawa, Christian Thielemann, Christopher Hogwood, Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Yehudi Menuhin, Horst Stein, Michel Plasson and Daniel Harding. His appearances with orchestras have included engagements with the Vienna Philharmonic and Vienna Symphony Orchestras, the Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, the Academy of Saint Martin in the Fields, the Camerata Salzburg, the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich, the NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe.

His recent festival appearances include the Salzburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Rheingau, Ludwigsburg and Schubertiade Festivals. He appears regularly with the Ensemble Wien-Berlin and the Artis Quartet of Vienna.

Stefan Vladar is the Artistic Director of both the Neuberg Festival in Styria, Austria, and the Upper Austria Summer Music Festival, and from 2002 to 2005 he was the Chief Conductor of the newly founded Grosses Orchester Graz, Austria. This season he will play with and conduct the Stuttgart Philharmonic, the Beethoven Academie, the Residentie Orchestra of The Hague and Camerata Salzburg, among others.

Vladar is currently Professor of Piano at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna, and has released more than 20 recordings with major record labels.

法國航空公司為舒德芬·弗拉達爾提供航空服務
Stefan Vladar is flown in by

AIR FRANCE


貝多芬 (1770-1827)

升C小調奏鳴曲，作品27/2，《月光奏鳴曲》

持續的慢板
稍快板
激動的快板

拉威爾 (1875-1937)

《夜之加斯巴》

美人魚安婷
絞刑台
吸血妖斯卡保

— 中場休息 —

舒曼 (1810-1856)

《狂歡節：四個音符的小景》，作品9

前奏曲
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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata in C sharp minor, Op 27, No 2
Moonlight Sonata

Adagio sostenuto
Allegretto
Presto agitato

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Gaspard de la Nuit

Ondine
Le Gibet
Scarbo

– Interval –

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Carnaval: scènes mignonnes sur quatre notes, Op 9

Préambule
Pierrot
Arlequin
Valse noble
Eusebius
Florestan
Coquette
Réplique, Sphinxes
Papillons
ASCH-SCHA (Lettres dansantes)
Chiarina
Chopin
Estrella
Reconnaissance
Pantalon et Colombine
Valse allemande
Paganini
Aveu
Promenade
Pause
Marche des Davidsbündler contres les Philistins

貝多芬 (1770-1827)

升C小調奏鳴曲，作品27/2，《月光奏鳴曲》

德國的樂評人萊爾斯畢 (1799-1860) 從這首升C小調奏鳴曲聯想到月光灑落在琉森湖上的美景，故把此曲題為「月光」；這個浪漫的比喻使這首奏鳴曲成為十九世紀最流行的演奏曲目之一。貝多芬在1801年寫成並發表此曲，並題獻給一位年青的學生桂芝艾迪女伯爵，此舉引起了外間猜測兩人的感情關係，使樂曲更添音樂以外的話題。

《月光奏鳴曲》是貝多芬在1800至1801年間所作的三首奏鳴曲中的最後一首；貝多芬在這三首作品中都拓展了鋼琴奏鳴曲的一貫作法。第一首是降A大調第十二奏鳴曲，作品26，第一樂章並非奏鳴曲式，反而採用了主題與變奏，再由諧謔曲和著名的葬禮進行曲承接。至於作品27的兩首奏鳴曲，寫法一反傳統，貝多芬認為它們「堪稱為幻想曲」。在《月光奏鳴曲》的第一樂章，貝多芬示範了奏鳴曲的快板曲式可以怎樣的收放自如，一般的元素俱在：主題樂思由呈示部帶出，音樂在發展部推展，然後再回到主題樂思；然而，樹立這個樂章獨有風格的，是持續的三聲部織體。低音背景上的三連琶音，造成了樂章的引子，然後是哀怨、低吟的調子，貝聿士因此曾形容此調子為「哀歌」。

第二樂章是等音的主音大調(降D大調)，在不作稍停下立即奏起。和弦的織體和較輕鬆的氣氛，讓這個樂章有別於其餘兩個而獨樹一幟；李斯特曾形容第二樂章為「兩個深淵間的一朵花」。貝多芬在終曲用了傳統的奏鳴曲式，精煉出三個樂章中最長、最激動人心、技巧要求最高的樂章。三聲部的織體不時呼應第一樂章，音色亦帶出相同的效果。研究貝多芬的學者靳達文形容它為貝多芬少數帶着「始終如一的悲劇性」的終曲之一，它把樂曲帶至一個喧鬧的終結，不枉了樂曲一直維持着的高度吸引力。貝多芬不認為《月光奏鳴曲》是他的傑作，但這二百年來，聽眾的想法可不一樣。

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827)

Sonata in C sharp minor, Op 27, No 2, *Moonlight Sonata*

It was the German critic Ludwig Rellstab (1799-1860) who conferred upon the Sonata in C sharp minor the title 'moonlight,' finding it reminded him of the glow of the moon on Lake Lucerne. This Romantic imagery has long helped to make the sonata one of the most widely performed works of the 19th century. Completed and published in 1801, Beethoven dedicated the Sonata in C sharp minor to a young student, the Countess Giulietta Guicciardi, fuelling speculation of a romantic link between the two, and adding to the work's extra-musical attractions.

The *Moonlight Sonata* was the last of three sonatas Beethoven composed in 1800-1801. With each, Beethoven extended the conventions of the piano sonata. The first of these, Sonata No 12 in A flat, Op 26, begins not with a movement in sonata form but with theme and variations, followed by a *Scherzo* and the famous funeral march. For the two sonatas of Op 27, Beethoven felt they were sufficiently unconventional that he referred to each as 'quasi una fantasia'. With the opening movement of the *Moonlight Sonata*, Beethoven demonstrates how elastic the sonata-*allegro* form could be. The usual elements are there: the main ideas are presented in an exposition, expanded upon in the development section, and then returned to. But the defining character of the movement is a persistent three-part texture. It opens with an introduction of triplet *arpeggios* over an underlying bass, before the entry of the mournful, murmuring melody that Hector Berlioz once described as a 'lamentation'.

The second movement, in the enharmonic tonic major (D flat major), begins without a pause. The chordal texture and lighter mood distinguishes it from the outer movements. Liszt once described the second movement as 'a flower between two abysses'. For the finale Beethoven did use a traditional sonata form, producing with it the longest, most dramatic, most virtuosic of the three movements. Its three-part texture often recalls the first movement, as does its tone. The Beethoven scholar William Kinderman describes it as one of the few Beethoven finales with an 'unremittingly tragic character'. It brings the work to a tumultuous close worthy of the level of interest it has maintained. Beethoven did not consider it one of his best efforts. The public has for 200 years thought otherwise.

拉威爾 (1875-1937)

《夜之加斯巴》

雖然法國詩人貝特蘭的作品不為英語世界熟悉，但他的作品不但感染了其他詩人如波特萊爾、蘭波、馬拉美等的創作，更啟發了超現實運動，並替拉威爾其中一首出類拔萃的作品提供了故事素材。《夜之加斯巴的幻想》1842年首度面世，是貝特蘭死後翌年。終年三十四歲的貝特蘭，其詩作分六冊出版，另加十三首詩組成一套「零散作品」。

是鋼琴家韋涅斯在1896年把《夜之加斯巴的幻想》介紹給拉威爾。拉威爾只從貝特蘭詩集中選了三首詩，〈美人魚安婷〉選自第三冊，而〈絞刑台〉和〈吸血妖斯卡保〉都選自「零散作品」。在出版的樂譜中，每首樂曲之前都印有相對的詩文，文字與音樂間的直接關係，明明白白。

跟〈美人魚安婷〉的原版一樣，在樂譜中詩文的前面先有布里諾作品的節錄：「睡夢中我彷彿聽見一把模糊而和諧的聲音在唸着魔法咒語，在我身邊，呢喃低語猶如悲傷溫柔的歌聲，忽斷忽續。」安婷是美人魚，她愛上人類，但愛人厭棄她而投向一位凡間女子。拉威爾透過細緻動人的旋律線在閃爍的背景織體上爬升，勾劃出安婷在水中的一舉一動。

在〈絞刑台〉詩句之前是來自《浮士德》的節錄：「我看見那在絞刑台附近徘徊的，會是什麼？」詩文接着提出對這個問題的可能答案，然後以正確的答案總結：「在極目盡處，傳來了小城城牆的鐘聲，被吊死的人的屍體在黃昏夕照下發着紅光。」作品的另外兩個樂章都是激動的，有大幅的起落和清晰的漸強音，但這個中間樂章卻獨具一格，重複的音形成為主導特徵，造成強烈的對比，拉威爾似乎是想樂曲的演奏「盡量單調」。

在低沉中間樂章後，帶着強烈的漸強音和漸快音、戲劇性的靜止和激越不安的重複音符的〈吸血妖斯卡保〉，衝擊的效果更為突出。在樂譜中，〈吸血妖斯卡保〉的原文之前有一段霍夫曼《誌異小說》的節錄：「他翻遍床底下、火爐裏、櫥子裏，空無一人！他不明白他從哪裏進來，從哪裏離去。」斯卡保是惡夢裏的侏儒吸血鬼：「我不知多少次聽到他的笑聲，在小房的暗影裏，他的指甲刮擦着圍着我的床的絲質窗簾！」就在你瞥到他的一剎那，他就會消失無蹤。

— 中場休息 —

Maurice Ravel (1875-1937)

Gaspard de la nuit

Although nearly unknown in the English-speaking world, Aloysius Bertrand's work influenced the poets Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Mallarmé; inspired the Surrealist Movement; and provided the storyline for one of Maurice Ravel's most remarkable works. *Les fantaisies de Gaspard de la nuit* first appeared in 1842, and was published in six volumes, with an additional 13 poems in a set called 'pièces détachés'.

It was the pianist Ricardo Viñes, who introduced the composer to *Gaspard* in 1896. Ravel selected just three poems from Bertrand's collection. *Ondine* is from the third book and both *Le Gibet* and *Scarbo* come from the 'pièces détachés'. He left no doubt of the direct connection between words and music by having each of the three poems printed before the compositions in the published score.

As in the original publication of *Ondine*, in the score a quotation by Charles Brugnot precedes the poem: 'I thought I heard a vague harmony casting a spell over my slumber, and near me a murmuring breaks out like the interrupted song of sad and tender voice'. Ondine is a mermaid, who falls in love with the man who spurns her in favour of a mortal woman. Ravel evokes the movement of Ondine in the water through delicate melodic lines rising across shimmering background textures.

Preceding the text of *Le Gibet* (The Gallows) is a quotation from *Faust*: 'What is it I see stirring around that Gibbet?' The poem then goes on to suggest possible answers to the question and concludes with: 'It is the bell that sounds from the wall of a town beyond the horizon, and the corpse of a hanged man that glows red in the setting sun'. Unlike the outer movements, with their dramatic extremes and well-defined crescendos, in this contrasting middle movement repetition is the dominant feature, and Ravel apparently wanted it to be played 'as monotonously as possible'.

The overall quietness of the middle movement makes the impact of *Scarbo* all the more jarring, with its intense *crescendos* and *accelerandos*, its dramatic silences and agitated repeated notes. In the score, the text of *Scarbo* is preceded by a quotation from E T A Hoffman's *Nocturnal Tales*: 'He looked under the bed, in the fireplace, in the cupboard — no one. He could not understand where it had got in, or where it had got out'. *Scarbo* is the vampire dwarf from your nightmares: 'How many times have I heard his laughter buzz. In the shadows of my alcove, and his fingernails scratching on the silk curtains round my bed!' No sooner have you spotted him, than he vanishes.

舒曼 (1810-1856)

《狂歡節：四個音符的小景》，作品9

身為一位書商之子，舒曼深受文學薰陶，無論在他的音樂創作或評論中，都充斥着許多虛構的人物。1830年代初，舒曼創造了「大衛同盟」，以對抗那些讓音樂藝術變得平庸的「菲利士人」。他個性中的不同片面組成了同盟的主要成員，並以不同的筆名發表各自的見解，如佛羅倫斯坦、歐塞比斯和拉羅；「大衛同盟」主導了舒曼1834年的工作，舒曼後來稱呼這一年為他生命中最重要的一年，他當時要兼顧寫作、音樂創作，以及隨來自萊比錫的鋼琴老師維克學習。這一年他創辦了《新音樂雜誌》，並着手創作《狂歡節》——這首融合文學與音樂意念的作品。

這二十一首不同凡響的小曲，亦稱為「四個音符的小景」，是舒曼堪稱「鋼琴小品創作大師」的明證，當中多首都只一至兩分鐘長，全由舒曼名為「獅身人面獸」的音符串所構成，這些音符串在樂譜裏可以找到，但並不在表演中彈奏。根據德國的記譜法，這三組音符分別是：Es (降E) - C - H(B) - A、As (降A) - C - H (B)、A - Es (降E) - C - H (B)；要解開「獅身人面獸」的字謎，只須把代表音符的字母拼合，就可看到舒曼名字的縮寫 (SCHA) 和波希米亞的一個小城阿序 (ASCH) 的名字。

阿序是愛妮絲妲·凡弗利肯的出生地，她是一位十七歲的鋼琴學生，舒曼與她秘密地訂了婚；樂曲中的第十三首〈愛絲特蕾拉〉(帶豐富感情)就是代表了愛妮絲妲，可是這段感情並不長久，可能是舒曼知道愛妮絲妲是私生女後取消了婚約，也可能是愛妮絲妲的父親凡弗利肯男爵覺得舒曼不會是一個好女婿而把婚事叫停；無論分手的原因是什麼，舒曼很快就把心思轉移至老師維克的女兒——天資聰穎的克拉娜身上，而第十一首〈齊亞麗娜〉(熱情的)就是她的化身。樂曲代表的其他人物還有：舒曼的兩個自我兼筆名：歐塞比斯及佛羅倫斯坦，而其他「大衛同盟」的成員則偽裝為意大利喜歌劇的傳統人物(潘特隆與可倫彬、頭腦簡單的白衣丑角和狡猾的花丑)、音樂家蕭邦(詼諧版)和帕格尼尼。所有這些人物穿插於化妝舞會內充滿惡作劇的世界，而這個化妝舞會則以〈蝴蝶面具〉、〈德國的圓舞曲〉及〈大衛同盟對抗菲利人進行曲〉去表達，這首作結的圓舞曲同時呼應着開場的〈前奏曲〉。

樂曲介紹：拜恩·湯臣

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Carnaval: scènes mignonnes sur quatre notes, Op 9

As the son of a bookseller, literary associations were second nature to Robert Schumann and fictional characters were to populate his work as a composer and critic. In the early 1830s, he created the Davidsbündler (League of David) to battle the artistic mediocrity accepted by Philistines. Different aspects of his own personality made up most of its ranks, and expressed themselves in his writings under such pennames as Florestan, Eusebius and Raro. The League figured prominently in Schumann's activities in 1834, the year he later referred to as the most important in his life. He was then dividing his time between writing, composing and studies with the Leipzig piano teacher Friedrich Weick. This was also the year that he launched his journal *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Music Journal), and began *Carnaval*, a work in which he was to bring together his literary and musical visions.

These 21 remarkable character pieces, or 'little scenes on four notes', show Schumann to be a master of the piano miniature, with few longer than a minute or two in duration. All are generated from fragments presented by Schumann as 'Sphinxes' — sequences of notes presented in the score but unplayed in performance. The German spellings of these three groups of notes, Es (E flat), C, H (B), A; As (A flat), C, H (B); and A, Es (E flat), C, H (B), are cryptograms representing Schumann (SCHA) and the Bohemian town of Asch.

Asch was the birthplace of Ernestine von Fricken, a 17 year old piano student, to whom Schumann had secretly become engaged. Ernestine herself is represented in No 13 of the set, *Estrella (Con affetto)*, but the relationship did not last. Schumann may have called it off on learning of Ernestine's illegitimate birth or Ernestine's father, Baron von Fricken, may have viewed Schumann as an unpromising son-in-law and put the kibosh on the engagement. Whatever the reason for the split, Schumann's interests soon turned towards Wieck's talented daughter, Clara, who appears as No 11 *Chiaria (Passionato)*. Among the others represented are Schumann's alter egos (and pennames) Eusebius and Florestan; other members of the Davidsbündler disguised as traditional characters from Italian *commedia dell'arte* (Pantalon et Colombine, the simple-minded Pierrot and the cunning Arlequin); fellow musicians Chopin (in a parody) and Paganini. All of these personages pass through the mischievous world of a costume ball, itself represented by *Papillons (Masks)*, the *Valse allemande* and the concluding *Marche des Davidsbündler contres les Philistins* — a waltz that echoes the opening *Préambule*.

舒德芬·弗拉達爾： 視野無限的鋼琴家

文：彼得·科西

弗拉達爾在家鄉維也納的貝多芬國際鋼琴大賽中勝出，已是二十年前的事情。在這種國際級比賽，由當地樂手取得最高榮譽殊非常事（除了以前莫斯科和華沙那些「為人敬重」的比賽吧！）。當年這位最年輕的參賽者寂寂無聞，即使鋼琴圈內人對他亦所知甚少，我們可以想像弗拉達爾的摘冠是那麼教人驚喜感動。

這位在維也納的音樂大學裏受克萊瑪·派辛海默和彼得曼所教導的年輕鋼琴家，不但在比賽這種特殊環境中能保持輕鬆自如，也準確地把握了這次勝利帶來的時機，通過音樂會的演出和媒體把自己推介紹給廣大樂迷；而當時唱片市場上的最新發展——小巧實用的鐳射唱片的面世，亦機緣巧合地幫了他一把，弗拉達爾在比賽後不久即推出首張鐳射唱片，以其獨特的個人風格演繹五首貝多芬鋼琴協奏曲，演出如水晶剔透，充滿陽剛氣，細膩而層次分明。

弗拉達爾一方面是在國際樂壇冒起的年輕奧地利鋼琴家，同時亦擔當着這個文化國度的大使，發揚其音樂遺產。後者不只是一種向上的動力，也是一個擔子。經過二次大戰的洗禮，這個阿爾卑斯山的小國居然培養出不少獨當一面的鋼琴大師，當中最著名的有布蘭德爾、古爾達、巴杜拉-斯科達、海布勒、德慕斯、茵那和布赫賓德。弗拉達爾似乎追隨着古爾達的路子；一般的鋼琴家把自己獻給鋼琴，努力雕琢完美的技巧，然後接受作為獨奏家的藝術生命，但弗拉達爾的追求並不只限於此，他替自己的事業作了一個跨界的定位。

在1980年代，弗拉達爾以鋼琴這個機械性卻也感情豐富的樂器為中心起點，作出不

少藝術上的探索與追尋，並超越鋼琴，成為一位全能的音樂家，這也是古爾達渴望達至的境界。跟古爾達不同，弗拉達爾並沒有涉足爵士樂，但多才多藝的他，以衝勁、熱誠和謹慎的工作態度，擴展自己的藝術領域，擔當的角色包括指揮、受歡迎的室樂拍檔、藝術節的創辦人 and 總監，以及維也納音樂大學的鋼琴教授。

若果我在心中重新聆聽一遍弗拉達爾過去二十年的鋼琴演繹，我可以聽到令人喜出望外的進步，他不但信心愈來愈強，而且技巧日漸紮實，對細節的掌握清澈通透，為樂段賦予意義的同時又能保持作品的整體性。憑着這些特質，弗拉達爾演繹巴赫的《戈爾德堡變奏曲》就使聽眾眼前一亮。他演奏的蕭邦前奏曲和四首敘事曲扣人心弦，充滿懸疑和色彩。難能可貴的是，他把這樣的曲目表現得充滿氣氛、明麗優雅，勇敢地表現出戲劇性，和作品中蘊含着一種曖昧的斯拉夫還是法國式風格，能達到這樣的造詣，在奧地利音樂家中可說是絕無僅有（很奇怪地，他們總與蕭邦的音樂不太投契）。

弗拉達爾很瞭解自己的長處，他充滿自信，擅於與人溝通，也清楚自己在音樂藝術上的角色，例如當他在鋼琴的位置上指揮莫扎特的協奏曲，或是當他在室樂演奏中領導其他樂手，他仍能恰如其份地充當伴奏。弗拉達爾走出了自己摸索的道路，他憑着對音樂敏銳而準確的直覺，在風光無限的音樂境界帶着清晰的視野昂首前行；這位藝術家在鋼琴前不會講道，是音樂透過他在說話。

場刊中譯：黃家慧

Stefan Vladar — The Pianist with an Eye for Everything

by Peter Cossé

Twenty years have past since pianist Stefan Vladar won the International Beethoven Piano Competition in his hometown, Vienna. At that time, this youngest participant was hardly known, even to insiders. One may therefore justly claim that Vladar's triumph was sensational, particularly since it seldom happens at renowned competitions that artists from the host country receive the highest honours (with the exception of the venerable competitions in Moscow and Warsaw in the past).

The young pianist, trained in Vienna at the Music University by Renate Kramer-Preisenhammer and Hans Petermandl, not only seemed to be perfectly at ease in the special circumstances of a competition — he also made the best use of his victory as an opportunity to introduce himself to a wide public by performing live in concert and via the media.

The latest innovation on the record market — the development of the small, practical Compact Disc — came at the right time. Very soon after the competition, Vladar's crystal-clear, masculine, detailed and differential, highly personal rendering of the five Beethoven piano concertos was available on CD.

As a young Austrian pianist working towards international recognition, being a



messenger of a cultural nation's musical heritage not only means motivation, it can also be a burden. After the sufferings of the Second World War, this small Alpine country brought out an amazing number of considerable, in certain ways formative pianists: Alfred Brendel, Friedrich Gulda, Paul Badura-Skoda, Ingrid Haebler, Jörg Demus, Alexander Jenner, Rudolf Buchbinder — to name a few of the most well-known. Stefan Vladar seemed to be following in the footsteps of Friedrich Gulda, in the way that he did not just dedicate himself to the piano, striving towards manual perfection and accepting

the life and fate as 'soloist', but understood his profession as a call to cross borders.

During the 1980s, the piano as the central switching point, as a mechanical yet emotional conversation partner, seemed to be the habitat for this searching, exploring artist. Beyond that, however, Vladar has become more and more a 'complete musician', the way Friedrich Gulda aspired to in the most extreme way. Different from Gulda, however, Stefan Vladar did not venture in the field of jazz, but instead expanded his artistic sphere of influence with energy, ambition and circumspection towards conducting; as a sought-after chamber music partner; as a founder and director of festivals; and as a Piano Professor at the Vienna Music Academy.

If I play Stefan Vladar's piano interpretations of the last 20 years in my 'inner ear', I can easily recognise not only a strong intensification of his purpose but also a remarkable strengthening of his skills. Illuminating in his grip for details, establishing meanings in the larger sections while always keeping an eye for the entire work — in this way Vladar surprised the audience with his reading of the *Goldberg Variations* by Johann Sebastian Bach. His interpretation of Chopin's *Préludes* and the *Four Ballades* was gripping, packed with suspense and colour — this being a repertoire only rarely presented so atmospherically and elegantly, yet at the same time courageously in dramatic gestures and in its Slavic-French ambiguity (and almost never so by Austrian colleagues, who surprisingly have a problematic relationship with Chopin's music).

Vladar knows his strengths; he is self-confident and communicative. But he also



knows his responsibilities and obligations towards Art, the scores of the large masters. One can feel this, for instance, when he conducts Mozart's Concerto from the piano, or when he takes over leading functions as a chamber musician, without forgetting at the same time to hold back as a supportive accompanist. Stefan Vladar made his way, he has found it himself. He moves forward with a clear view for the essential and — as it seems to me — with good instincts for what cannot be denominated in the endless landscapes of music. At the piano, this artist does not lecture, but music speaks through him.

Translated by Rico Gulda