

1 **FREDERIC CHOPIN (1810-1849)**
Fantaisie, Op. 49 (12:10)

2 **ELLIOTT CARTER (b. 1908)**
Night Fantasies (22:12)

3 **ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)**
Carnaval, Op. 9 (28:44)

Préambule	Chiarina
Pierrot	Chopin
Arlequin	Estrella
Valse noble	Reconnaissance
Eusebius	Pantalon et Colombine
Florestan	Valse Allemande
Coquette	Paganini
Réplique	Aveu
Papillons	Promenade
A.S.C.H.-S.C.H.A.	Pause
(Lettres Dansantes)	Marche des "Davidsbündler" contre les Philistins

ALECK KARIS

PIANO

Total time: 63:06

Notes by Aleck Karis

Frederic Chopin (1810-1849)

Fantaisie, Opus 49

By the year 1840, Chopin's fame as a composer had spread throughout Europe; his piano playing was already legendary. After two years, his affair with George Sand had settled into a stable, almost domestic arrangement which benefited his work. Summers were spent at Nohant, her country chateau, where he enjoyed respite from the noise and distractions of the city.

The *Fantasy* (1840-1841) is Chopin's only work in this form. Arch-romantic in the breadth and intensity of its expressive range, it has a structure of classical clarity and elegance. The piece begins with a solemn and lyrical *Tempo di Marcia*. This leads to a transition of broken chords, free tempo, and mediant modulations, all reminiscent of the 18th century fantasia tradition. In the second section, marked *agitato*, constantly shifting harmonies and long arching lines reflect subtle changes of mood. It culminates in a series of climaxes capped by another march, very different in character from the opening. Another arpeggiated transition leads to the middle section, a four-part chorale. The descending fourth which began the first two sections of the piece is here transformed into a descending minor third. Fragments of the preceding march are deftly woven into the texture, and

the dynamic surging of the previous section gives way to sustained calm. The bizarrely chromatic harmonies, however, create the impression of disturbing undercurrents beneath a placid surface. The chorale ends on a hushed dominant chord. A stunning evaded cadence jolts the listener back to the recapitulation of the *agitato*. The material is abbreviated and modulated, and the mood, passionate as it was before, is one of heightened intensity. The final march, now *forte* and triumphant, leads to a wild cascading diminished chord. A reference to the middle section and a brief recitative bring the work to a close.

Elliott Carter (born 1908)

Night Fantasies (1980)

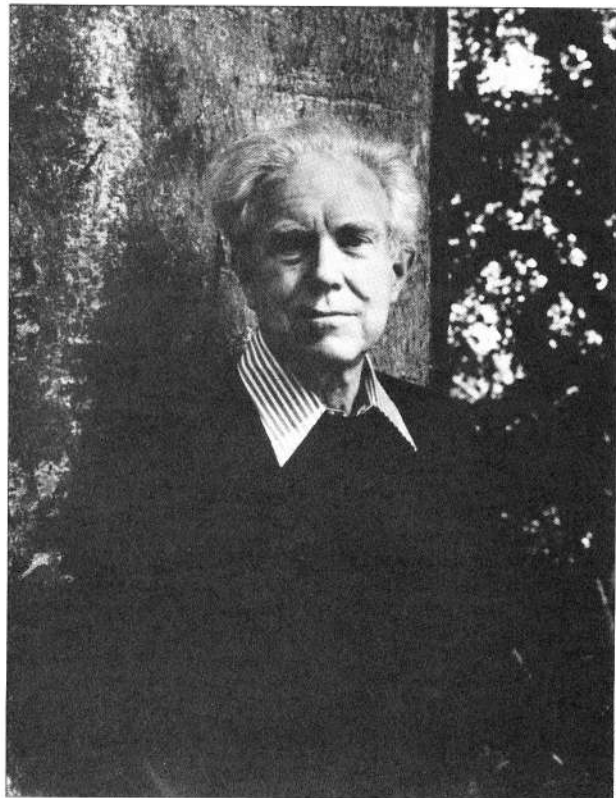
Carter, like Chopin, has succeeded in reconciling seemingly contradictory influences. If Chopin manages to blend the fervor of Polish nationalism with the refinement of the 19th century Parisian salon, Carter combines the European tradition with a uniquely American spirit of daring and innovation. He has absorbed elements of the major and sometimes opposing musical developments of the 20th century and synthesized them into a totally original style of his own.

Carter's first work for solo piano is the *Sonata*, from 1945-46, a mature, fully realized work. During that time his music was rapidly evolving in new directions. The 1950's brought the first and second string quartets, seminal works, and in 1961 came the Double Concerto for piano, harpsichord and two chamber orchestras, which Stravinsky recognized to be an American masterpiece. In 1963-64 he wrote a piano concerto, and in the following years produced a number of chamber works with brilliant piano parts. However, it was not until 1980, after thirty-five years, that his second work for solo piano appeared — the single movement *Night Fantasies*. In his preface to the score, Carter writes:

Night Fantasies is a piano piece of continuously changing moods, suggesting the fleeting thoughts and

feelings that pass through the mind during a period of wakefulness at night. The quiet, nocturnal evocation with which it begins and returns occasionally, is suddenly broken by a flighty series of short phrases that emerge and disappear. This episode is followed by many others of contrasting characters and lengths that sometimes break in abruptly and, at other times, develop smoothly out of what has gone before. The work culminates in a loud, emphatic chord that, as it dies away, brings the work to its conclusion.

In this score, I wanted to capture the fanciful, changeable quality of our inner life at a time when it is not dominated by strong, directive intentions or desires — to capture the poetic moodiness that, in an earlier romantic context, I enjoy in works of Robert Schumann like *Kreisleriana*, *Carnaval*, and *Dauidsbündlertänze*.



Nicholas Tucker

Elliott Carter

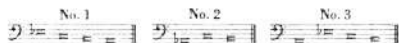
Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Carnaval, Opus 9

Unlike Chopin's *Fantasy* and Carter's *Night Fantasies*, *Carnaval* is a youthful work. It captivates the listener through its sheer exuberance and inspired inventiveness.

In 1834 Schumann was more active as a writer and editor than as a composer. The first issue of the progressive *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* was released in March. This was to be the main forum for Schumann's attacks on musical Philistines — the conservative pedants and empty virtuosos — as well as his praise for the new music of such composers as Mendelssohn and Chopin. In April Schumann met Ernestine von Fricken, who had come to Leipzig to study with Friedrich Wieck, his former teacher. By July he had written to his mother declaring his intention of marrying this baron's daughter, whom he found as beautiful as she was talented. He conceived a set of piano pieces that would contain a hidden allusion to his secret engagement. Ernestine, for all her other attractions, possessed the added advantage of coming from the town of Asch, which could be spelled in not one but two musical ways. Furthermore, the letters ASCH were the only letters in Schumann's last name that could be translated into musical notation. (In German, 'Es' is E flat, 'H' is B natural, and 'As' is A flat.) Thus there appears in the score, between "Replique" and "Papillons", a movement meant not to be played but pondered:

Sphinxes



[E♭ C H A AS C H A E♭ C H]

All the pieces in *Carnaval* except the "Preamble" and "Chopin" contain one of these mottos. The first eight movements, from "Pierrot" to "Papillons", use No. 3. From the ninth ("A.S.C.H.-S.C.H.A.") to the Finale, No. 2 is used. Usually the motto appears at the beginning of each miniature. Sometimes it is slightly disguised, as in "Eusebius" (Schumann's pseudonym for his dreamy side); more often it is straightforward, as in "Florestan" (which represents the active, impetuous side of his character). Other references include the 17th century "Grandfather's dance" which symbolizes the Philistines in the final "Marche des 'Davidsbündler' contre les Philistins", and a fragment from the opening waltz of Schumann's Op. 2, *Papillons*, mysteriously inserted into "Florestan". Not surprisingly, two of the participants of this masked ball, mixed in with *Commedia dell'arte* figures and admired contemporary composers, are Ernestine von Fricken ("Estrella") and Clara Wieck ("Chiarina"). Of course it was Clara that he finally married. Ernestine turned out to be illegitimate, and he jilted her shortly after finishing *Carnaval*, in 1835.

A A D

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Bridge Records thanks Elliott Carter for his supervision
of the recording of *Night Fantasies*.

ALECK KARIS

Hailed as "a brilliant, versatile and musicianly young pianist" (New York *Village Voice*), Aleck Karis is among the select few who can perform the music of his own time as persuasively as the music of the past. A champion of American music, he has presented works of Cage, Carter, Babbitt, Crumb, Davidovsky and Subotnick, among others. He made a highly successful recital debut in São Paulo, Brazil (1981), performing an all Chopin program, and has since appeared throughout Europe, North and South America. He was awarded the Special Prize from the first Kennedy Center – Rockefeller Foundation International American Music Competition, a Special Grant by the Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, and a Solo Recitalists Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. As a member of Speculum Musicae, he is an Associate in Music Performance at Columbia University.

Aleck Karis holds a Bachelor's degree in composition from the Manhattan School of Music and a Master's degree in piano from the Juilliard School. His teachers include Artur Balsam, Beveridge Webster, and, since 1976, William Daghlian.

