

Of the four *Fantasies* written for piano duet by Franz Schubert, the one in F minor, opus 103, is perhaps of greatest interest. It was written in 1828 during the same year as the *Wanderer Fantasy* for piano solo, and it is dedicated to Countess Karoline Esterhazy, Schubert's former pupil with whom he was said to be in love.

The work is cast in one long movement containing several sections. The haunting opening theme is ushered in by a soft, restless accompanying figure in the piano. This captivating melody appears several times throughout the work and gives it a sense of cohesion. Like an interlude, the second section is a *Largo* in the distant key of F-sharp minor. A brief heavenly melody foreshadows romantic tendencies of years to come. The longest section of the work, marked *Allegro vivace*, is an energetic scherzo with a delicate trio section in D major. The return of the opening theme heralds the fugal finale which includes a counter subject from an important figure in the first movement.

The work is full of Schubert's extremely accessible melodies and seemingly obvious harmonic schemes. This should not obscure the fact that exactly this type of simple beauty—ultimately profound and original—is the result of an enormous amount of work on the part of a true genius. Originally scored for piano duet, this arrangement enhances its lyrical beauty with the expressive capabilities of the violin and clarinet while retaining the work's poetic pianoforte style.

Michael Zearott (b. 1937, San Francisco, California) is a conductor, composer, pianist, and music educator. He spent most of his early years in the Los Angeles area and was the first student to earn a Ph.D. in composition at the University of California, Los Angeles. His piano background includes work with Alexander Karnbach, Bernard Comsky, Gyorgy Sandor, Leo Smit, and Jakob Gimpel. Accompanying study was with Emanuel Bay and Gwendolyn Kodolfsky. Zearott has been a pianist for the Heifetz Master Class and toured the United States with the chorales of Roger Wagner and Robert Shaw.

Zearott is active as a composer with a large list of compositions in all media. He has transcribed several works for the Verdehr Trio. He has co-authored, with Annette Klover, a book on basic music theory called *MUSIC X 12*.

As a First Prize, Gold Medal winner of the Dmitri Mitropoulos International Conducting Competition, Zearott conducted the New York Philharmonic in Lincoln Center. He made his European debut on the special series *Les Concerts du Palais Princier* in Monaco on invitation of Prince Rainier. He has been Assistant Conductor of the Atlanta Symphony, Associate Conductor of *l'Orchestre National de Monte Carlo*, Music Director of the Ojai Festival and the Los Angeles Guild Opera. He frequently appears as a guest conductor for major orchestras in the United States and Europe.

Zearott has been a faculty member of the University of California, Los Angeles; California State University, Los Angeles and Long Beach; and Marymount College. He was Conductor-in-Residence and Visiting Professor at Michigan State University, and is currently on the faculty at Lewis-Clark State College.