

# Musicians Manqués

3:00 pm, Saturday, April 24, 2004, B20 Lincoln Hall

*Piano recital by David Mermin (Professor of Physics)*

Mozart, *Rondo in A minor, K511*

Chopin, *Fantasia-Impromptu*

Beethoven, *Sonata in F minor, Op. 57*

*Allegro assai*

*Andante con moto*

*Allegro ma non troppo*

## AMATEUR PROGRAM NOTES FOR AN AMATEUR PERFORMANCE

### *Mozart: Rondo in A Minor, K 511*

Long ago, when the dollar was strong against the pound, the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music maintained a small retail shop in Bedford Square where you could buy beautiful editions of piano music at low prices. There I once picked up a collection of “miscellaneous” Mozart pieces for the piano, which I put on a shelf and forgot about. But about a year ago I was reading Charles Rosen, and he declared the Rondo in A Minor K 511 to be Mozart’s finest composition for the piano. I had never heard it or even heard of it. I dug out my collection from Bedford Square, and there it was. I immediately fell in love with it and have been working on it ever since. Unfortunately I can no longer remember where Rosen discusses the Rondo. If you remember, please let me know.

### *Chopin: Fantasie-Impromptu*

What can one say about the Fantasie-Impromptu? It is not as hard to play as it might sound, once you have mastered the always hazardous art of playing four in the right hand against three in the left. I once performed it on a wreck of a piano as an after-dinner offering at a sizeable banquet. When I returned to my table one of my dinner companions appreciatively leaned toward me and avowed that it was so very interesting for me to have mixed up all that fast stuff with “I’m always chasing rainbows.”

### *Beethoven: Sonata in F Minor Op. 57*

I hate the nickname “Appassionata.” It sounds like a new kind of Toyota. I have been struggling with Beethoven’s Opus 57 since I was fourteen years old. It have never grown tired of it. I love it as much as a genial professor-semi-emeritus as I did when I was a melancholy adolescent. And though I still have a long way to go — it *is* as hard to play as it sounds — I play it now much better than I did 55 years ago. Indeed, the amazing, mysterious, and comforting thing about playing the piano is that although I don’t do physics nearly as well as I did thirty years ago, I play the piano one hell of a lot better.