

SCHUMANN 1849

SCHUMANN LITERATURE TRANSCRIBED AND RECORDED ON THE TROMBONE

by

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Schumann 1849: Schumann Literature Transcribed and Recorded on the Trombone.

Thesis directed by Associate Professor William Stanley

Abstract:

The purpose of this dissertation project was to transcribe and record selected works of Robert Schumann on the trombone. Nearing the end of his life and suffering from years of debilitating mental illness, Robert Schumann had an unusually prolific year of composition in 1849. It was during this fruitful period that he wrote *Fantasiestücke* op. 73, *Drei Romanzen* op. 94, *Adagio und Allegro*, op. 70 and *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* op. 102. For each of these works, Schumann had indicated on the score additional instruments on which the pieces could be played. This CD features the aforementioned works performed on the tenor and alto trombone. This recording features Aaron Zalkind on the trombone and Keith Teepen on piano. Recorded and engineered by Kevin Harbison.

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Schumann 1849

Aaron Zalkind, trombone

Keith Teepen, piano

Track List

Fünf Stücke im Volkston, op. 102 [15'26]

1. *Mit Humor* [2'48]
2. *Langsam* [3'37]
3. *Nicht schnell, mit viel Ton zu spielen* [4'08]
4. *Nicht zu rasch* [1'47]
5. *Stark und markiert* [3'03]

Fantasiestücke, op. 73 [11'28]

6. *Zart und mit Ausdruck* [4'09]
7. *Lebhaft, leicht* [3'09]
8. *Rasch und mit Feuer* [4'06]

Drei Romanzen, op. 94 [11'07]

9. *Nicht schnell* [3'10]
10. *Einfach, innig - Etwas lebhafter* [3'50]
11. *Nicht schnell* [4'04]

Adagio und Allegro, op. 70 [9'05]

12. *Adagio* [4'19]
13. *Allegro* [4'41]

Nearing the end of his life and suffering from years of debilitating mental illness, Robert Schuman had an unusually prolific year of composition in 1849. It was during this fruitful period that he wrote *Fantasiestücke* op. 73, *Drei Romanzen* op. 94, *Adagio und Allegro*, op. 70 and *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* op. 102. It is interesting to note that Schumann lists with each score of these chamber works additional instruments on which the pieces could be played. For instance, the *Drei Romanzen* op. 94 is written for oboe, but Schumann indicates on the score that it could also be performed on violin or clarinet. Schumann's publisher at the time didn't think the alternative instrumentation should be listed on the score, and wanted to instead produce separate editions for the other instruments. Schumann responded with, "If I had originally written the work for violin or clarinet, it would have become a completely different piece."¹

¹ Georg Meerwein, "Three Romances op.94 for Oboe and Piano," (G. Henle Verlag 1987), preface, 3-5.

Fünf Stücke im Volkston, Op. 102

Written on the opening pages of Schumann's *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* (5 Pieces in Folk Style) are the words "*vanitas vanitatum*" (vanity of vanities, all is vanity). This is most likely inspired by Goethe's eponymous poem, in which a soldier tries to find his life's purpose, but instead comes to the conclusion that he must place his trust in nothing and "command the world...[to]...bow."² *Fünf Stücke im Volkston* was originally written for the cello, though it is indicated in the score that it can also be played on the violin.

The first movement, marked *Mit Humor*, is boisterous and lively, though not without a tinge of darkness. In stark contrast, the second movement, marked *Langsam* (slowly), moves like a rhapsodic fantasy – a welcome relief after the first movement. The third, marked *Nicht schnell* (not fast), opens with what feels like a dark waltz, followed by a passionate series of double-stops and eventually concludes with a final iteration of the waltz. The fourth movement, marked *Nicht zu rasch* (not too quickly), opens with a rhythmic, almost militaristic march, but like the third movement, its middle section is dark and lyrical. The drawn out melodies in this section remind me of the opening of *Dichterliebe*. The work concludes with the fifth, *Stark und markiert* (strong and well-marked). Harsh and aggressive, the ending comes abruptly and somewhat unsettlingly, perhaps an allusion to the sinister vanity of Goethe's soldier.

Fantasiestücke, Op. 73

A testament to the compositional prowess of Robert Schumann, *Fantasiestücke* (Fantasy Pieces) *op. 73*, is said to have been composed in only 2 days. Schumann originally wrote *op. 73* for clarinet, though noted in the score that the piece could also be played on viola or cello.

² Leo Black, "The Demotic Schumann (so what Is This 'tone of the People?'): Fünf Stücke Im Volkston Op.102," *The Musical Times* 151, no. 1911 (2010): 19-38.

Fantasiestücke has three movements, each with the compositional form of A-B-A. The first piece, titled *Zart und mit Ausdruck* (tenderly with expression), opens expressively in A minor. Somewhat wistful and dark, the movement does eventually conclude in A major, foreshadowing what is to come in the second movement. The second fantasy, titled *Lebhaft, leicht* (lively, light), continues in A major, though now much brighter and comical. A notable feature is the constant dialogue between the trombone and piano, as the voices trade off chromatic triplets and accentuated outbursts. The third fantasy, *Rasch und mit Feuer* (quick and with fire), opens with a flourish. The motive lands with force on a jarring E sharp, which lingers slightly before giving the relief of the resolution. The fantasy comes to an end in a triumphal arpeggio, back home in the key of A Major.

Drei Romanzen, Op. 94

Composed as a Christmas gift for his wife, Clara, who described *Drei Romanzen* (Three Romances) in her diary as “...songs [that] breathe the spirit of perfect peace, they seem to me like spring, and laugh like blossoming flowers.”³ *Drei Romanzen* was originally written for the oboe, though Schumann made sure to indicate on the score that the pieces could also be played on violin or clarinet.

Picking up where he left off in *Fantasiestücke*, *Drei Romanzen* also begins in the key of A minor. The first movement, *Nicht schnell* (not fast), begins in an open ended call and response between the piano and trombone. Aside from a soaring moment of solace in C major, the movement remains quite dark and haunting. A descending chromatic passage leads the listener back to the opening key, where the movement concludes in a whisper. The second movement, marked *Einfach, innig* (simply, heartfelt), immediately lives up to its title. The dreary disposition of the previous movement is replaced with a joyful spirit. The B section opens with a bang, dissonance coming from both chromatic harmonies and displaced rhythms. The storm settles rather quickly, and Schumann brings us back to the comfort of the opening melody. The third romance, marked *Nicht schnell*, unfolds in a slow unison between the two instruments. The voices break off into an argumentative dialogue,

³ Georg Meerwein, “Three Romances op.94 for Oboe and Piano,” (G. Henle Verlag 1987), preface, 3-5.

which unsurprisingly also takes place in A minor. Schumann deceives the listener at the coda, giving the impression that the movement will close in the same dire manner as the first. Standing on the dominant for the last several bars, the romance concludes in a peaceful A major.

Adagio und Allegro, Op. 70

Schumann wrote two groundbreaking works for the newly developed valved horn in 1849, *Konzertstücke*, op. 86 and the *Adagio und Allegro*, op. 70. Schumann arranged two additional versions of *Adagio und Allegro*, which could be played on either viola or cello.

Marked *Langsam, mit innigem Ausdruck* (slowly, with intimate expression), the *Adagio* plays out an emotional conversation between the trombone and piano. Schumann conveys tension in the stress and resolution of half step motives throughout the movement. The *Allegro*, marked *Rasch und feurig* (quick and fiery), blasts off in a flurry of triplets, perhaps in the spirit of a hunting horn call. Schumann again conveys drama with his use of half steps, though this iteration is much more spirited and lively. Marked *Schneller* (faster), the coda carries the momentum of the *Allegro* to a brilliant close, with a trio of A flat major harmonies.

About the artists

Trombonist Aaron Zalkind is an orchestral musician, chamber musician and educator living in Boulder, Colorado. Zalkind has been a member of several music festivals throughout the United States, including the National Repertory Orchestra, the Texas Music Festival and the National Orchestral Institute. Zalkind has also performed with a number of professional ensembles, including the Colorado Symphony, the New World Symphony, the Breckenridge Music Festival and the Boulder Philharmonic. In 2019, Zalkind was awarded second prize at the Steven Zellmer Trombone Competition, as well as two first prize awards at the International Women's Brass Conference competitions. An avid chamber musician, Zalkind was a member of the Juilliard Trombone Quartet, who in 2016 took first prize at the American trombone workshop in Washington D.C. Zalkind is currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Colorado. His primary mentors include William Stanley, Joseph Alessi, Peter Ellefson and Larry Zalkind. Aaron holds a master's degree from the Juilliard School and a bachelor's degree from Indiana University.

Collaborative pianist, Keith Teepen, has performed in Europe, Asia, South America and throughout North America. He has collaborated with many of today's important artists including trumpeter Tine Thing Helseth, internationally renowned euphonium virtuosos Adam Frey and David Thornton, tuba virtuosos Øystein Baadsvik and Alan Baer, internationally renowned trombonist Scott Hartman, as well as Broadway stars Laura Osnes and Donna Vivino. Teepen has taught on the piano faculty at Pró-Música Music Festival in Juiz de Fora, Brazil. For the past three years, Teepen has been the "official pianist" for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions—North Dakota-Manitoba District. He is also a collaborative pianist for the International Euphonium and Tuba Festival in Atlanta, Georgia. Teepen has held collaborative piano positions at DePauw University School of Music and Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. From 2014-2019, Teepen was on the faculty of the University of North Dakota as a piano instructor/collaborative pianist. Teepen is currently working as a teaching assistant while pursuing his doctoral degree in collaborative piano. He has the privilege of studying with both Alexandra Nguyen and Margaret McDonald.

Recorded, edited and mastered by Kevin Harbison. Recorded in Grusin Music Hall at the University of Colorado Boulder.

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