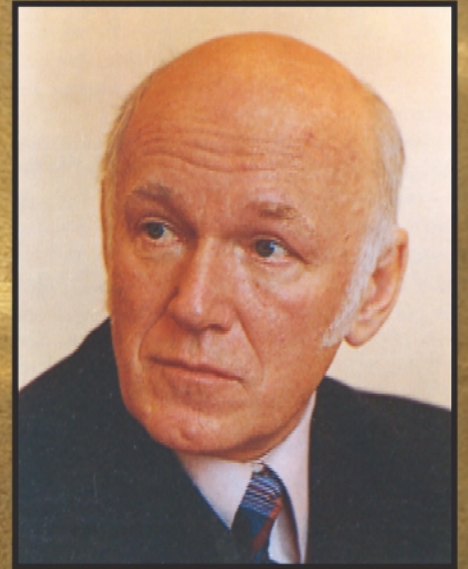


Schumann Piano Works



Sviatoslav
Richter

alto

Robert Schumann (1810-56)

Études Symphoniques, Op.13

[1]	Theme	1:32
[2]	No. 1. Poco piu vivo	1:05
[3]	No. 2	2:36
[4]	No. 3. Vivace	1:09
[5]	No. 4	1:00
[6]	No. 5	1:04
<i>Variations "Anhang zu Op. 13 aus dem Nachlasse":</i>		
[7]	Variation I -	1:37
[8]	Variation II -	2:08
[9]	Variation III -	1:30
[10]	Variation IV -	2:42
[11]	Variation V	2:39
[12]	No. 6. Agitato	0:53
[13]	No. 7. Allegro molto	1:11
[14]	No. 8. Andante	2:27
[15]	No. 9. Presto possibile	0:49
[16]	No. 10. Allegro	1:09
[17]	No. 11. Andante con espressione	2:21
[18]	No. 12. Finale. Allegro brillante	6:06

Bunte Blätter, Op.99

Three Pieces

[19]	I. Nicht zu schnell mit Feurigkeit	1:51
[20]	II. Sehr rasch	0:49
[21]	III. Frisch	0:56

Five Album Leaves

[22]	IV. Ziemlich langsam	2:11
[23]	V. Schnell	0:35
[24]	VI. Ziemlich langsam, sehr gesangvoll	2:11
[25]	VII. Sehr langsam, sehr gesangvoll	2:04
[26]	VIII. Langsam	1:26
[27]	IX. Novelette. Lebhaft	2:27
[28]	X. Praeludium. Energisch	1:10
[29]	XI. Marsch. Ssehr getragen	8:54
[30]	XII. Abendmusik. Menuett-tempo	3:41
[31]	XIII. Scherzo. Lebhaft	4:11
[32]	XIV. Geschwindmarsch. Sehr markiert	3:00

Fantasiestücke Op. 12

[33]	No.5: In der Nacht	4:06
[34]	No.7: Traumes-Wirren	2:38

Sviatoslav Richter, *piano*

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Robert Schumann arrived in Leipzig in 1828 where he enrolled at the university there as a law student. Law however failed to hold his attention and in 1829 he began to take piano lessons with Friedrich Wieck, whom he had met the previous year. Schumann soon became Wieck's lodger and he became friendly with Wieck's young daughter Clara, already a promising pianist. Under Wieck's tutelage Schumann became a fine pianist and Schumann's early compositions showed a great deal of character.

An industrial accident in 1832 put paid to his piano studies but he had by then begun to develop another string to his bow when he became a contributor to the influential musical periodical *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*. In 1833 he co-founded a new magazine *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, acting as its editor for ten years.

A new musical light appeared in Leipzig in the latter part of 1835 in the person of Felix Mendelssohn who, in addition to being a superb composer, was an inspirational director of the orchestra who raised their quality to previously unheard-of standards of excellence. Mendelssohn, just 26 at the time that he took up his appointment, already had a wealth of experience and his reputation drew other leading composers and performers to Leipzig, many of whom Schumann was able to meet as a result of his friendship with Mendelssohn.

Études Symphoniques was published in 1837 but was begun some time earlier in 1834 with the working-title *Etuden im Orchester-Charakter von Florestan und Eusebius*. (It should be explained that Schumann often made use of these names in his work: Florestan represents impetuosity, whilst Eusebius is Schumann's reflective self). It was dedicated to the English composer William Sterndale Bennett (1816 – 75) whom Schumann had met in Leipzig in 1836 and who was later described by Schumann as 'a thorough Englishman, a glorious artist and a beautiful and poetic soul'. Later subtitled by Schumann 'Études en forme de variations', the initial musical theme was composed by Baron von Fricken (whose

daughter Ernestine had caught Schumann's eye in 1834) but in the twelfth and final variation Schumann quotes from Heinrich Marschner's opera *Die Templar und die Jüdin* (first produced in Leipzig in 1829) based upon Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* – always assumed to be a reference to Sterndale Bennett's England.

Also from 1837 come the group of eight pieces comprising Schumann's Opus 12 called *Fantasiestücke* dedicated to the 18 year old English pianist Robena Laidlaw (1819 – 1901), a pupil of Herz in Paris and Berger in Berlin whom Schumann had met during her visit to Leipzig and who had given a number of concerts locally with the young English singer Clara Novello (1818 – 1908). That these two English musicians were in Leipzig at this time was largely the work of Mendelssohn who invited Novello there having heard her in England. The pair then toured other German and Austrian cities under the domineering management of Novello's mother before ending their financially successful European tour in Milan.

In 1837, the year of the *Études* publication, Schumann became secretly engaged to the 18 year old Clara Wieck. They had fallen in love two years earlier but Clara's father was determined that nothing should stand in his daughter's way of becoming a successful concert pianist. He was also decidedly unimpressed by Robert Schumann's character and in 1836 forbade them to meet, going to great lengths to ensure that their paths did not cross. Not surprisingly Schumann reacted badly to this apparently unreasonable behaviour, taking to drink and getting seriously into debt. Eventually Clara sought legal permission to marry without her father's consent and in 1840 they finally tied the knot. Inevitably Clara was disowned by her father.

The newly-weds enjoyed several years of domestic harmony; sharing similar interests, they studied musical scores and great literature together (which acted as preparation to the great songs Schumann composed around 1840). Gradually the emphasis in Schumann's oeuvre shifted from piano miniatures to larger-scale orchestral works. Clara's concert career appeared to take second fiddle to Robert's compositions: on the occasions when her concert

tours took Clara apart from Schumann, the composer became depressed and unable to concentrate on his work. Following a trip with Clara to Russia in 1844, Schumann suffered a breakdown and the couple thought it best to up sticks and move to Dresden, a city they subsequently found quite stultifying.

In late 1849 Robert Schumann was offered a conducting post in Düsseldorf and it was with some pleasure that he, Clara and their children moved there next year. The couple's happiness at their move can be gauged by the amount of music completed by Schumann in 1850 including the '*Rhenish*' *Symphony* and the *Cello Concerto* as well as a number of songs.

The pieces that make up ***Bunte Blätter*** (literally 'Coloured Leaves') Op 99 were composed between 1832 and 1849 and published in 1851. The title of the work stems from the original idea of presenting each piece in a different colour. Three of the pieces (Nos 6, 11 and 13) were in fact new versions of themes previously discarded by Schumann. In 1853, by which time Schumann was in seriously declining mental health, the young Brahms was given an introduction to Robert and Clara by the violinist Joachim and immediately became devoted to the couple. The following year Brahms sent a recently completed set of *Variations Op. 9* that he had composed, and the theme of his homage to the Schumanns was based upon No 4 of *Bunte Blätter*. Clara had herself already chosen No 4 as the subject of a set of variations presented to her husband on his birthday in 1853.

NOTES ON THE ARTIST

Sviatoslav Richter (1915–97) gave his first public recital in Odessa in 1934 and was taught by Heinrich Neuhaus at the Moscow Conservatory. Having played Prokofiev's Fifth Piano Concerto under the composer's direction, Richter gained a formidable reputation in the USSR and played in the West for the first time in 1960. Each subsequent visit was eagerly awaited, however Richter became highly selective in his choice of venue, (always preferring smaller venues and following an extensive tour of the USA in 1970, he chose not to return to that country; Aldeburgh and selected sites in France and Italy became his preferred venues outside Russia). In 1986 Richter gave ninety- one concerts over a four-month period during a massive tour by car from Leningrad to Vladivostok and then back to Moscow. In addition to numerous solo concerts Richter often played alongside friends such as Britten, Rostropovich, Fischer-Dieskau, Schreier, Oistrakh and Fournier.

Sviatoslav Richter played only six of the eight *Fantasiestücke* during his concert career but they were some of the most popular pieces in his repertoire: *In der Nacht* (No 5) appeared 98 times in concert programmes and he played *Traumes Wirren* (No 7) on 90 occasions. Richter, whose repertoire was vast, was nevertheless often highly selective in his choice of works, disregarding those he did not feel inclined to play. On one occasion he was criticised by the composer Shostakovich for only picking some of the Preludes and Fugues to play. Richter's reply was to say 'There was no reason for him to feel offended: I played the ones that I liked, why should I play the ones that I didn't?' (Sviatoslav Richter: *Notebooks and Conversations* Faber 2001). The *Études Symphoniques* entered Richter's repertoire at much the same time (1944) and like the *Fantasiestücke* was played well over 80 times. Richter first played the *Bunte Blätter* in public in 1951.

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Alto ALC1136 5055354411366

Études Symphoniques and *Bunte Blätter* recorded September 1971, Schloß Klesheim, Salzburg

Producer: **Fritz Gans**

Engineer: **Horst Lindner**

Fantasiestücke recorded 24 February 1979 at NKH Hall, Tokyo

Producer: **Tomoo Nojima**

Engineer: **Takashi Watanabe**

Mastered for alto by **Paul Arden-Taylor**

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Design produced by **Imergent Images Ltd**

Reissue producer: **Robin Vaughan**

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