



SCHUMANN

Piano Sonatas for the Young

Gesänge der Frühe

Original Movements from
Sonatas No. 3 and 4

Jinsang Lee, Piano

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Three Piano Sonatas for the Young, Op. 118 · Gesänge der Frühe, Op. 113

Robert Schumann is in many ways typical of the age in which he lived, combining in his music a number of the principal characteristics of Romanticism, as he did in his life. Born in Zwickau in 1810, the son of a bookseller, publisher and writer, he showed an early interest in literature and was to make a name for himself in later years as a writer and as editor of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, a journal launched in 1834. His father encouraged his literary and musical interests and at one time thought of sending him to study with Weber, a proposal that was abandoned with the death of the latter, closely followed by the death of Schumann's father.

Schumann's career now followed a more conventional course. In 1828 he entered the University of Leipzig, where his attention to his studies was as intermittent as it was to be the following year at Heidelberg. He was eventually able to persuade his mother and guardian that he should be allowed to study music under the well-known piano teacher Friedrich Wieck, whose own energies had been directed with some intensity towards the training of his daughter Clara, a pianist of prodigious early talent. Schumann's ambitions as a pianist, however, were frustrated by a weakness in the fingers, whatever its true cause, and his other musical studies had, at the very least, lacked application. Nevertheless in the 1830s he wrote a great deal of music for the piano, often in the form of shorter, genre pieces, with some extra-musical literary or autobiographical association. There was an affair with one of Wieck's pupils, later broken off, but by 1835 he had begun to turn his attention to Clara Wieck, nine years his junior. Wieck had good reason to object to the liaison. His daughter had a career before her as a concert performer and Schumann had shown signs of instability of character, whatever his abilities as a composer might be. Matters were taken to an extreme when resort was had to litigation, in order to prevent what Wieck saw as a disastrous marriage.

It was not until 1840 that Schumann was eventually able to marry Clara, after her father's legal attempts to

oppose the match had finally failed. The couple married in September, remaining first in Leipzig, although journeys took place for concert appearances by Clara, generally accompanied by her husband, whose position was of lesser distinction. In 1844 they moved to Dresden, where it seemed that Schumann might recover from the bouts of depression that he had suffered in the earlier days of marriage. Here again no official position seemed to offer itself and it was only in 1849 that the prospect of employment arose, this time in Düsseldorf, where Schumann took up his position as director of music in 1850.

Mendelssohn had enjoyed an uneasy relationship with the Düsseldorf authorities, and Schumann, much less skilled in administration and conducting, proved even less able to cope with the difficulties that arose. The pressures on him led to a complete nervous breakdown in 1853 and final years spent in an asylum at Endenich, where he died in 1856.

The greater part of the present recording is devoted to music written towards the end of Schumann's life. Literary interests had always been of importance to him, and these are reflected in his *Gesänge der Frühe* (Songs of Dawn), a set of five short piano pieces, written in the closing weeks of 1853, after his replacement as conductor in Düsseldorf. The pieces were originally headed *An Diotima*, a reference to the poet Hölderlin's beloved and wife of his employer, Susette Gontard, who appears under this name both in poems and in Hölderlin's epistolary novel *Hyperion*. Diotima appears in Plato's *Symposium* as a seer and poetess and as the source of inspiration to Socrates. Schumann would have been well aware of both identities of Diotima and early in his life had been fascinated by the tragic madness into which Hölderlin descended from 1807 until his death in 1843. In the event, however, the overt reference to Hölderlin and to Plato was abandoned in favour of a dedication to 'the high poetess' Bettina von Arnim, widow of Achim von Arnim and sister of Clemens Brentano, collectors and editors of the seminal *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (The Boy's Magic Horn). Bettina von

Arnim was herself a figure of some importance in the world of letters. Earlier, she had privately expressed some misgivings about Clara Schumann's performances as a pianist, having met her after a concert in Berlin in 1837. Schumann had, as a young man, vainly solicited from Bettina von Arnim some contribution to his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. It was through Joseph Joachim, however, that she met the Schumanns when she and her daughter visited Düsseldorf in October 1853. She was to have a later part to play in Schumann's life when, in 1855, having heard that Schumann was unhappy with his treatment at the asylum in Endenich, she visited him there, and was able to report that the innovative regime to which Schumann was exposed was thoroughly unsatisfactory.

At Endenich Schumann still took care that the *Gesänge der Frühe* should be published, perhaps foreseeing the fate of other late works that were either suppressed or destroyed by his widow, anxious to defend a reputation that might otherwise have been tarnished. The first of the pieces, *Im ruhigen Tempo* (At a calm tempo), has the feeling of a strange hymn. It is followed by a second piece, also in D major, but marked *Belebt, nicht zu rasch* (Lively, not too fast), pressing onward with a continuing accompanying triplet rhythm. The third of the set, with the direction *Lebhaft* (Lively) and in A major, brings characteristic chordal textures in its dotted rhythm 9/8 metre. The following piece, in F sharp minor and marked *Bewegt* (Agitato), presents a melody above constant descending demisemiquavers, and the final piece, in D major once more and marked *Im Anfange ruhiges, im Verlauf bewegteres Tempo* (At first in calm tempo, then with movement), reflects the tempo direction, starting in the mood of the first piece, followed by a melody accompanied by continuing semiquaver figuration.

Schumann wrote his *Three Piano Sonatas for the Young, Op. 118*, in June 1853, intending them originally for his own children. The first sonata, dedicated to Schumann's third daughter, Julie, starts with a ternary form movement in G major, followed by a slower theme in E minor, with five variations. The third movement, *Puppenwiegenlied* (Doll's Lullaby), is in C major, to be followed by a final G major *Rondoletto*.

The second sonata, in D major and dedicated to Schumann's second daughter, Elise, is more elaborate and demanding, with a longer first movement, leading to a lively B minor *Canon*, a G major third movement *Abendlied* (Evening Song) and a final *Kindergesellschaft* (Children's Party).

The final sonata, in C major, is dedicated to the eldest of Schumann's daughters, Marie, and starts with a cheerful movement in march tempo, leading to an expressive F major *Andante*, a rapid A minor *Zigeunertanz* (Gypsy Dance) and a final *Traum eines Kindes* (Dream of a Child), with reminiscences of the first of the sonatas.

Written in June 1836, Schumann's third piano sonata appeared first in the same year with its original five movements reduced to three and under the title *Concerto sans orchestre*, presumably at the wish of the publisher, Tobias Haslinger. The second of the two omitted scherzos was later included by Schumann, when the work took its final form in a revision of 1853, which brought other adjustments. Dedicated to Ignaz Moscheles, what finally became the *Dritte grosse Sonate* (Third Grand Sonata) had a new finale. The demanding original final movement, has been transcribed and completed by Frederick Moyer and Paul E. Green, Jr.

The surviving sketches for another F minor sonata date from the same period of Schumann's life, a work that may have been intended for the use of material discarded from its predecessor. The fragments of the final movement of what has become known as *Sonata No. 4* were completed in 2010 by the Danish writer and composer Karl Aage Rasmussen. Fragments of a first and a final movement were unearthed in 2009 by Paul Green and the pianist Frederick Moyer. 66 bars of the *Allegro molto* exist, apparently suggesting two disparate elements, while 166 bars of the final *Agitato* offer something more substantial, if incomplete. A full account of their interesting search can be read online at www.frederickmoyer.com.

Keith Anderson

Jinsang Lee



Jinsang Lee won First Prize at the Concours Géza Anda in 2009, as well as the Schumann Prize, Mozart Prize and Audience Prize for his mature interpretations of these composers' works. He had earlier made his mark at the international piano world by winning top prizes at a number of international piano competitions including First Prize at the Hong Kong International Piano Competition (2008) chaired by Vladimir Ashkenazy, First Prize, Scarlatti Prize and Orchestra Prize at the International Pianoforte Competition Cologne (2005), and Second Prize at the Sendai International Music Competition (2001). These were preceded by a number of top prizes awarded during his childhood in Korea. He has appeared in concerts with renowned conductors and orchestras throughout the world and played at a number of the world's most prestigious music festivals. In addition to his flawless technique as a pianist, Jinsang Lee's passion in searching for the perfect sound, aided by his flawless technique, has led him to the world of piano manufacturing and tuning. He embarked upon this interesting journey by working at Steinway Austria for two years under the guidance of master piano technician Stefan Knüpfer (star of the docu-movie *Pianomania*), seeking better to understand the piano as a living instrument. Subsequently he moved to Steinway Hamburg to learn the piano manufacturing process himself. He pursues a productive concert career across different continents, sharing with his audiences his quest to find the perfect piano sound. Jinsang Lee started his musical education with Daejin Kim in Seoul, and continued in Germany with the support of Wolfgang Manz, before completing his studies under the guidance of Pavel Gililov.

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Robert Schumann's dramatic life and transcendent music can be considered an archetype for the Romantic age in which he lived. Most of the works on this recording were written towards the end of his life, and *Gesänge der Frühe* (Songs of Dawn) was completed just months before Schumann's final breakdown and confinement to the asylum in Endenich, its strange beauty infused with ideas of double identity. Schumann had his own daughters in mind for the utterly charming *Klavier-Sonaten für die Jugend* (Piano Sonatas for the Young), while the earlier sonata movements have recently been transcribed and edited from the composer's incomplete or discarded sketches.

Robert SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Gesänge der Frühe (Songs of Dawn), Op. 133 (1853)

15:59

- 1 I. Im ruhigen tempo 4:12
- 2 II. Belebt, nicht zu rasch 2:35
- 3 III. Lebhaft 2:39
- 4 IV. Bewegt 2:41
- 5 V. Im Anfange ruhiges,
im Verlauf bewegteres Tempo 3:52

Drei Klavier-Sonaten für die Jugend (Three Piano Sonatas for the Young), Op. 118 (1853)

Jugendsonate No. 1

9:20

- 6 Allegro (Lebhaft) 1:57
- 7 Thema mit Variationen:
Ziemlich langsam 2:48
- 8 Puppenwiegenlied: Nicht schnell 1:57
- 9 Rondoletto: Munter 2:38

Jugendsonate No. 2

13:25

- 10 Allegro (Lebhaft) 6:17
- 11 Canon: Lebhaft 1:08
- 12 Abendlied: Langsam 1:55
- 13 Kindergesellschaft: Sehr lebhaft 4:05

Jugendsonate No. 3

15:22

- 14 Allegro. Im Marschtempo 5:07
- 15 Andante: Ausdrucksvoll 4:00
- 16 Zigeunertanz: Schnell 1:29
- 17 Traum eines Kindes: Sehr lebhaft 4:46

Original Final Movement of Sonata No. 3 in F minor, Op. 14 (ed. Paul E. Green Jnr and Frederick Moyer) (1853/2010)

5:38

18 Presto possibile

Sonata No. 4 (realised from Schumann's sketch by Karl Aage Rasmussen) (1837/2009)

7:35

19 Agitato

Unfinished Sketch of Sonata No. 4 (ed. Paul E. Green Jnr and Frederick Moyer) (1837/2009)

6:48

- 20 Allegro molto 2:37
- 21 Agitato 4:11

Jinsang Lee, Piano

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