

Score Reviews

Clara Schumann, *Drei Romanzen für Violine und Klavier, Three Romances for Violin and Piano*, Op. 22, ed. Jacqueline Ross (Basel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2021), ix + 27 pp. € 19.95.

Setting the Scene: Schumann as Composer

2019 was a momentous year for Clara Schumann (1819–1896): the bicentenary, bringing with it fresh ways of thinking about her life, together with a welcome emphasis on her music.¹ That year gave rise not only to new biographies by Beatrix Borchard and Irmgard Knechtges-Obrecht,² but also to a spate of recordings, notably those reviewed by João Martins and Cheryl Tan in this special issue,³ and critical editions of her music, including the *Anniversary Songbook (Jubiläums-Liederalbum)* by Edition Peters, followed in 2021 by Bärenreiter's release of Schumann's *Drei Romanzen für Violine und Klavier*, Op. 22. These developments – reinvigorating the process of discovery set in motion by Nancy Reich's *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (1985 [rev. ed. 2001]) – invite an immersive exploration of Schumann's contribution to musical culture in the nineteenth century and beyond.

Bärenreiter's edition of Schumann's Op. 22, sitting alongside the two-part volume *Clara Schumann: Romantic Piano Music* (1992 and 1994), represents a crucial intervention in the documentation and dissemination of Schumann's music, and in the study of women composers more generally. Editions of this kind not only increase the accessibility of reliable (re)sources for performing and recording Schumann's music, but also provide the bedrock for critical engagement with her compositional approach. In doing so, they contribute – in ways at once pragmatic and intellectual – to the mission of restoring women's creative voices to the music-historical record. To make available editions of their music, together with thematic catalogues and recorded performances, is to provide a much-needed repository of resources from which to continue the exploration of women in music through the ages.⁴

¹ Further on these developments see Joe Davies, 'Introduction: Clara Schumann in the Musicological Imagination', in *Clara Schumann Studies*, ed. Davies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021): 1–12.

² Beatrix Borchard, *Clara Schumann – Musik als Lebensform: Neue Quellen – Andere Schreibweisen* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2019); and Irmgard Knechtges-Obrecht, *Clara Schumann: Ein Leben für die Musik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2019).

³ See Isata Kanneh-Mason, *Romance: The Piano Music of Clara Schumann* (2019); Mo-Ah Kim, *Clara Wieck Schumann: The Art of Preluding* (2019); Daniel Levy and Cristina Mantese, *Clara Schumann: Piano Works and Lieder* (2019); and Miriam Alexandra et al., *Clara Schumann: Complete Songs* (2019).

⁴ On calls for such resources see (among others) Marcia J. Citron: 'Women and the Western Art Canon: Where Are We Now?', *Notes* 64/2 (2007): 209–15; Citron,

The value of this edition lies as much in its attractive presentation and technical precision as in the pedagogical resources (including an Introduction, Critical Commentary, and Performing Practice Commentary) that frame its content. From this emerges a picture of the historical context in which Schumann composed her Romances, of the ways in which the edition relates to and differs from the manuscript and printed sources, and of nineteenth-century performance practices concerning tempo, rubato, rhythmic flexibility, portamento, dislocation and arpeggiation, among other parameters. That the score includes two versions of the violin part – the primary one based on the *Urtext* score (with additional editorial suggestions), the alternative version bearing the markings of violinist Wilhelm Joseph von Wasielewski, to whom Schumann presented a signed copy of the first romance in the set (with the inscription ‘in friendly remembrance’) – captures the sense of stylistic fluidity that was central to performance culture at the time, as exemplified by Schumann’s own programming and performance choices.⁵ All this results in a richly researched and carefully constructed edition of Schumann’s Op. 22 Romances.

The Introduction, provided by Jacqueline Ross, strikes a balance between commenting on the details of Schumann’s Op. 22 and situating these pieces within the context of her life and oeuvre. Yet at times one wonders whether further nuance might have been applied to the characterization of Schumann’s attitudes towards her compositional endeavours. Thus her oft-quoted diary entry of 1839 is summoned as a backdrop to Ross’s commentary: ‘A woman must not wish to compose – there never was one able to do it, should it be my destiny? To think so would be an arrogance, although one encountered by my father long ago’ (iii). Following this is an excerpt, penned by Robert Schumann, from the marriage diary: ‘To have children, and a husband who is always living in the realms of imagination, does not go together with composing. Clara cannot work at it regularly and I am often disturbed to think how many profound ideas are lost because she cannot work them out’ (iii). The foregrounding of these quotations, while giving a sense of the climate in which Schumann lived and worked, risks perpetuating the familiar narrative of women’s creativity in terms of obstacles faced, rather than innovations pursued. Further questioning or problematization of this material, particularly the first diary entry (to what extent does the message fluctuate between personal disclosure and performative utterance? Whose discouraging ‘voice’ was echoing in her mind?) would add additional layers to the evocative sketch of Schumann’s artistry that prefaces the score.

The expressive subtleties of Schumann’s Op. 22 were not lost on contemporaneous reviewers, with one critic noting in the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung* that ‘all three

‘A Bicentennial Reflection: Twenty-five Years with Fanny Hensel’, in ‘Fanny Hensel (née Mendelssohn Bartholdy) and her Circle’: Proceedings of the Bicentenary Conference, Oxford, July 2005’, ed. Susan Wollenberg, *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 4/2 (2007): 7–20; and Susan Wollenberg, ‘“Master of her Art”: Fanny Hensel (née Mendelssohn Bartholdy), 1805–1847’, *Ad Parnassum: A Journal of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Instrumental Music* 3/6 (2005): 33–44.

⁵ See Alexander Stefaniak, *Becoming Clara Schumann: Performance Strategies and Aesthetics in the Culture of the Musical Canon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2021); and Natasha Loges, ‘From Miscellanies to Musical Works: Julius Stockhausen, Clara Schumann, and *Dichterliebe*’, in *German Song Onstage: Lieder Performance in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Loges and Laura Tunbridge (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2020): 70–86.

pieces possess an intimate character and are effectively composed with atmospheric tenderness' (p. v). Such words might be uttered not only in relation to these pieces, but also to Schumann's romances more generally, a genre to which she turned on numerous occasions. On the early side is the Romanze of her Piano Concerto in A minor, Op. 7, composed between 1833 and 1835, where a sense of interiority, *Innigkeit*, is conveyed through the reduction of instrumental forces: the orchestra remains silent as the piano takes centre stage, before joining forces with solo cello in the A' section of the movement's ternary form.⁶ Among later essays in the genre is her Romance in B minor of 1856, in which signs of melancholy, conveyed through the descending chromatic lines that weave their way through the texture, intermingle with the sense of hope and optimism conjured by the contrasting central section in the submediant (G) major. Schumann's Op. 22 Romances, written in 1853, bring together the joyful and the melancholic, the virtuosic and the introspective, in rich and varied ways. From the subdued opening of the first piece, where the arpeggiated figuration in the piano envelops the lyrical contours of the violin part, the mood darkens in the second piece, with the turn to G minor and a pensive quasi-chorale accompaniment, before opening out into the virtuosity of the final romance, its fusion of étude-like writing and soaring lyricism underscored by the *Leidenschaftlich schnell* (passionately fast) marking. Adding to the layers of meaning evoked by these miniatures is the dedication to Joseph Joachim, a topic that Katharina Uhde and R. Larry Todd explore in relation to musical conversations – implicit rather than explicit – between Schumann's Op. 22 and Joachim's *Drei Stücke*, Op. 2.⁷

Continuing the Conversation: A Performer's Perspective

To enter the expressive worlds of Schumann's Op. 22 is something that pianist Lorna Griffitt – whose forthcoming CD with violinist Haroutune Bedelian *Romantic Music of Robert, Clara, and Johannes* features these pieces – describes in terms of capturing the details of the text while simultaneously conveying the sense of spontaneity that is so central to Schumann's creativity:

A classical performer strives to maintain that sense of improvisatory spontaneity. Each performance should be created anew, as if it is the first performance, rather than rotely following the path established in practice, invariably producing an emotionally dry and uninspired interpretation where no risks are taken, nor surprises given. Musical performance, in general should be fluid, fresh, and compelling.⁸

⁶ For more on Op. 7, see Joe Davies, 'Clara Schumann and the Nineteenth-Century Piano Concerto', in *Clara Schumann Studies*, 95–116, at 108–12. Further on interiority see Nicole Grimes, 'Formal Innovation and Virtuosity in Clara Schumann's Piano Trio in G minor, Op. 17', in *Clara Schumann Studies*, 139–64; Alexander Stefaniak, 'Clara Schumann's Interiorities and the Cutting Edge of Popular Pianism', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 70/3 (2017): 697–765; and Jennifer Ronyak, *Intimacy, Performance, and the Lied in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2018).

⁷ Katharina Uhde and R. Larry Todd, 'Contextualizing Clara Schumann's *Romanzen*', in *Clara Schumann Studies*, 165–86, at 175–85.

⁸ All quoted material is taken from a private interview with Lorna Griffitt, conducted at the University of California, Irvine, on Wednesday 1 June 2022. Further insights into Griffitt's engagement with Schumann can be found at <https://music.arts.uci.edu/launching-clara-schumann-studies-celebrating-women-music>.

Ex. 1 Clara Schumann, *Romance in D-flat major*, Op. 22 No. 1, bars 24–27. Music examples by kind permission of Bärenreiter-Verlag Kassel Basel London New York Prague.

Navigating this pathway in Schumann's Op. 22 extends beyond the harmonic vocabulary and the ways in which the inner voices are interwoven, to wider questions concerning pedalling, dislocation and arpeggiation, all of which, Ross writes in the *Performing Practice Commentary*, 'can be employed to varying degrees depending on expressive context' (p. 21).

Such thinking comes to the fore in bars 24–27 (Ex. 1), where the *portato* articulation in the piano part (suggested through the fusion of dots within slurs) can be, in Ross's words, 'accompanied by slight emphasis on each note, or even arpeggiation for added expressiveness' (p. 23). To implement the latter, Griffitt observes, is to strike a balance (in keeping with nineteenth-century performance practice) between what is notated and what is implied. Adding arpeggiation, though not marked, lightens the texture as the material ascends through the register, creating an ethereal quality evoked also by the *piano* and *pianissimo* markings, and shifting attention from the 'vertical' towards the 'linear' nature of the writing. It also recalls the improvisatory style of what Valerie Woodring Goertzen calls Schumann's 'mosaics of small forms', wherein arpeggiated figurations and preludial figurations are used to trace connections among short pieces.⁹ This example, in other words, allows us to connect the technical (whether to arpeggiate and by how much) to the world of ideas, both musical and aesthetic, and to situate Schumann's writing in the first of the Op. 22 Romances in the context of her creativity more generally.

The opening bars of the second Romance (whose G minor tonality recalls that of the second of Schumann's Op. 11 set for solo piano, as well as that of her Op. 17 Piano Trio) offer further potential for freedom with arpeggiation (Ex. 2). In Griffitt's words: 'I dislike beginning with a block chord; it sounds too heavy and dense because of its closed position and low register in the piano, especially our modern-day piano'. Not only would arpeggiating the texture alleviate these

⁹ See Valerie Woodring Goertzen, 'Clara Wieck Schumann's Improvisations and Her "Mosaics" of Small Forms', in *Beyond Notes: Improvisation in Western Music of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Rudolph Rasch (Lucca: Brepols, 2011): 153–62; and Valerie Woodring Goertzen, 'Setting the Stage: Clara Schumann's Preludes', in *In the Course of Performance: Studies in the World of Musical Improvisation*, ed. Bruno Nettl and Melinda Russell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 237–60.

The image shows the first nine bars of Clara Schumann's Romance in G minor, Op. 22 No. 2. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 1-6, and the second system covers bars 7-9. The music is in 2/4 time and G minor. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto' and the performance instruction is 'Mit zartem Vortrage'. The piano part features a quintuplet arpeggiated figure in the right hand, which is a key technical challenge. The bass line provides harmonic support with chords and moving lines. The first system ends with a fermata over the final chord, and the second system begins with a new melodic line in the right hand.

Ex. 2 Clara Schumann, *Romance in G minor*, Op. 22 No. 2, bars 1–9

technical challenges; it would also be intricately connected with the style of the violin writing and the *Mit zartem Vortrage* marking that adorns the piece, both of which suggest, in tandem with the accompaniment, a recitative-like unfolding of the material. As with the previous example, so the implementation of arpeggiation would arise here not so much as a demonstration of theory, but rather through a combination of instinctive response, acquired knowledge (and experience) of the repertoire, and a sensitivity towards the musical context in which the material is found.

The sense of the music's being 'fixed by the notation' but nevertheless sounding as if 'improvised in performance' extends also to the execution of rhythmic patterns, such as the quintuplet arabesque-like figuration that permeates the first of the Op. 22 set.¹⁰ Griffitt, with reference to its manifestation in bar 64 of the piano part (Ex. 3), notes that she instinctively dislocates the material – starting earlier than marked – by way of highlighting the improvisatory nature of the figure and its dialogic exchanges with the violin (as in bars 40 and 46).

Common to these examples – despite their contrasting contexts – is the way in which they encourage a flexible engagement with the score and invite us to imagine a sonic world that lies beyond the notes on the page. Within this, the text serves, to quote Griffitt, as a 'point of departure' that is enriched not only by the edition's informative critical commentaries, but also by wider knowledge of nineteenth-century performance culture. To think in these terms is not to retread the well-worn path of historically informed performance. Rather, it is to reimagine, taking

¹⁰ These terms are borrowed from James Webster, 'The Rhetoric of Improvisation in Haydn's Keyboard Music', in *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric*, ed. Tom Beghin and Sander M. Goldberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007): 172–212, at 176.

Ex. 3 Clara Schumann, *Romance in D-flat major*, Op. 22 No. 1, bars 62–66

our cue from Schumann, ways of performing and analysing music of the nineteenth century and of handling the slippery spectrum between text and spontaneity. The value of Bärenreiter's edition thus lies as much in its concrete offerings, its scrutiny of the autographs, as in its invitation to situate Schumann's music in the nexus of ideas – critical and creative – that shaped her artistic outlook.

Joe Davies

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Antonín Dvořák, *Nocturne in B major for String Orchestra*, Op. 40, Urtext. Edited by Jonáš Hájek, Preface by David R. Beveridge (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2022). Score and Parts BA 11564, x + 9 pp.

Antonín Dvořák conducted the premiere of his *Nocturne in B major* for string orchestra, Op. 40 (B 47), during his first tour of Great Britain in 1884. The trip was a great success – audiences cheered and critics heaped praise on a figure whose fame grew with each passing event. The highlight was Dvořák conducting his *Stabat Mater* at the Royal Albert Hall, where over one thousand performers assembled to give a monumental account of the ten-movement work. By contrast, the *Nocturne* occupies more modest proportions, lasting around seven minutes in performance, but was also favourably received, this time at the Crystal Palace on 22 March 1884, nine days after that triumphant *Stabat Mater* performance.

The genesis of the *Nocturne* begins somewhat earlier in Dvořák's career. Its opening section – featuring a long pedal on the dominant scale degree – is largely drawn from the slow movement of the *String Quartet No. 4* in E minor (B 19). This experimental work was composed in around 1870 when Dvořák's musical language was in a relatively early stage of development. The work demonstrates the influence of Wagner expressed through chromaticism and exploration of the idea of endless melody, and perhaps something of Beethoven too, in its more general character of unconventionality and surprise, in dialogue with supposed norms of a genre. The slow movement – marked 'Andante religioso' – begins with an even longer pedal note of 52 bars than that found in the final *Nocturne* (which lasts 24