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ROBERT SCHUMANN

Complete Works for Cello

Ella van Poucke cello

Phïon, Orchestra of Gelderland & Overijssel

Günter Neuhold conductor

Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden piano



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ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)

Adagio & Allegro in A-Flat Major, Op. 70

- | | |
|-------------|------|
| [1] Adagio | 3:54 |
| [2] Allegro | 5:08 |

Fantasiestücke, Op. 73

- | | |
|---------------------------|------|
| [3] Zart und mit Ausdruck | 3:16 |
| [4] Lebhaft, leicht | 3:38 |
| [5] Rasch und mit Feuer | 4:35 |

5 Stücke im Volkston, Op. 102

- | | |
|---|------|
| [6] I. Mit humor, in A Minor | 3:28 |
| [7] II. Langsam, in F Major | 3:56 |
| [8] III. Nicht schnell, mit viel Ton zu spielen, in A Minor | 4:08 |
| [9] IV. Nicht zu rasch, in D Major | 2:03 |
| [10] V. Stark and markirt, in A Minor | 3:18 |

Cello Concerto in A Minor, Op. 129

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| [11] Nicht zu schnell | 11:40 |
| [12] Langsam | 4:19 |
| [13] Sehr lebhaft | 7:56 |

Total time 61:26

I would like to invite you into a world I love dearly, the fantasy rich world of Robert Schumann's music. As a child I was intrigued by what I sensed to be the captivating and magical inner world of Schumann's music. Years later I came to understand that the raw intuition that drew me to this music as a child was a spellbinding quality that characterizes Schumann's music and to this day fascinates me.

Schumann himself said: "I cannot write a concerto for the virtuosos. I must try for something else". This "something else" is what I want to share with you on this CD. It goes without saying that all these pieces are instrumentally demanding, but the "something else" is what makes his music so special. Putting the elusive character of Schumann's music into words is something that I will leave to those better equipped in the art of words. I will only venture to say that Schumann's skill at creating a sense of intimacy is profound and deeply human, and that his fondness for the world of fantasy, fairy tale and folklore can carry the listener into far away worlds or into the deepest corners of their souls.

It may have been Schumann's struggle with mental illness that made it possible for him to tap deep into the human condition, creating at times some of the most vulnerable, emotionally loaded and fantasy rich music.

I'm especially grateful to have recorded the duo pieces with Jean-Claude Vanden Eynden. I met him at a festival when I was 13 and the Schumann Fantasiestücke was the first piece we played together. As a young girl I vividly remember feeling extremely honored and excited to play with him and learn from his abundant experience. That feeling hasn't changed and we've had many musical adventures together, (re)discovering music by Schumann and many others..

It was a great pleasure to record the concerto with the Phion orchestra. The recording, made in Corona times, came with all the logistical challenges of the pandemic and I am very happy and thankful that I had this opportunity.

Ella van Poucke

Complete Works for Cello

Schumann composed his Cello Concerto in about two weeks during November 1850, soon after arriving in Düsseldorf to become municipal music director. Now at last he had a regular income. The following month he completed his Rhenish Symphony, but by 1853 his relationship with the Düsseldorf orchestra had deteriorated alarmingly. One witness described his conducting as "completely oblivious to the public, paying little attention even to the orchestral musicians – he lived only in his music."

Before Schumann, few major composers had written cello concertos, Vivaldi, C. P. E Bach, Boccherini and Haydn being notable exceptions. Because of

a hand injury, Schumann had been forced to abandon his aspirations for a career as a concert pianist. His study of the cello was quite brief, so when he thoroughly revised his concerto he sought advice from two local cellists. As in his other concertos, Schumann avoids technical display for its own sake, allowing his characteristic poetic expression, intimacy and fantasy to prevail, although the technical difficulties, especially in the finale, are daunting enough.

After only four bars of introduction the soloist enters with an eloquent, expansive and constantly developing melody. However, the introductory bars – a rising sequence of woodwind chords - also play a significant role throughout the concerto, returning in varied form at important structural points. A vigorous orchestral transition leads to the equally lyrical second theme. The development section features a terse triplet figure, first heard on violas and second violins, and a more four-square idea derived from it, but the opening melody yearningly intervenes in different keys until the original A minor version signals the recapitulation. The coda includes further references to the triplet figure, before dolce woodwind chords dissolve into a glorious cello phrase - a self-quotation from the finale of Schumann's 2nd Piano Sonata in G minor. This allusion leads directly to the slow movement, an exquisite 34-bar song-without-words in which we share in Schumann's intimate dream-world. Here the cello melody is lightly accompanied, while phrase-endings are echoed by woodwind and the orchestral principal cello adds a discreet counter-melody. A recall of the concerto's opening melody brings a tempo increase, then a recitative-like passage which accelerates into the finale. Schumann's obsessive treatment of a little rhythmic figure in

this finale is often maligned as a weakness and glibly attributed to his mental decline, but this kind of idiosyncrasy was always essential to his musical language, even from his earliest period. Here Schumann uses the rhythmic figure as either melody or accompaniment, its character ranging from insistent to delicate. The cadenza begins with unaccompanied cello but continues with discreet support from pizzicato strings and woodwind chords. Elgar, a great admirer of Schumann's music, elaborated on this strikingly original idea when he composed an extended accompanied cadenza in his Violin Concerto of 1909-10. The premiere of Schumann's concerto was given at a Leipzig Conservatory concert in 1860, marking what would have been his fiftieth birthday.

Schumann originally scored the *Fantasiestücke* Opus 73 for clarinet and piano but simultaneously provided alternative arrangements for violin or cello. In his choice of clarinet Schumann was typically innovative, only Weber among major composers having previously composed for clarinet and piano. The three pieces are melodically interrelated, creating a unity underlined by the absence of breaks between them, and their respective keys – 1) A minor moving into A major, 2) A major and 3) again A major. Sometimes Schumann composed at obsessive speed, the two days required for these pieces (in February 1849) being a prime example. Fantasy was an essential element of his musical personality - not restricted to those several compositions to which he gave that specific title. Those works range from the set of eight *Fantasiestücke* for piano, Opus 12 to the Fantasy (or Phantasie) for violin and orchestra, Opus 131. The first piece of the Opus 73 group – in A minor and marked *Zart mit Ausdruck*

(tender or delicate, with expression) - is gently melancholy, the piano's triplet figuration maintained almost throughout. The middle section blossoms into arpeggio-like writing, with contrary motion between clarinet and piano. Belatedly the minor key resolves into A major. The more animated central piece has as its main theme a piano phrase from bar 3 of the opening movement. In the F major middle section the two instruments exchange phrases based on a little ascending figure. The final piece is urgent and impetuous, though the middle section is slightly calmer. A substantial coda includes two increases of tempo and a recall of the opening phrase of the central movement, before crescendoing to the exuberant final bars.

Schumann's *Adagio* and *Allegro* in A flat major, Opus 70 dates from a week after the *Fantasiestücke* Opus 73. Later that year he would compose his astoundingly virtuosic *Konzertstücke* for four horns and orchestra. He originally intended his Opus 70 for the new valve horn, though he named cello, violin or viola as alternative instruments. The piece will always be highly regarded as an outstanding contribution to the meagre chamber repertoire featuring solo horn, but it is also fully characteristic of Schumann's Romantic spirit. The expansive and dreamily romantic *Adagio* gives way to an *Allegro* with a leaping, joyful main theme in 12/8. Here Schumann adopts rondo form, the second of the two episodes being in a slower tempo (*Etwas ruhiger* – somewhat calmer). In both the episodes Schumann derives some of his material from the opening *Adagio*. To conclude this wonderful piece – which moves from its languorous introduction to the exuberant *Allegro* - a faster tempo is marked for the 9-bar coda.

Just as Schumann had wanted “popular elements” to prevail in his Rhenish Symphony (1850), the Fünf stücke im Volkston (1849) are correspondingly simple, tuneful and accessible. Nevertheless Schumann’s creative imagination and wide expressive range are no less apparent. In the first piece (marked Mit Humor) Schumann’s fondness for cross-rhythms is evident in the groupings of 2x3 beats within a 2/4 time-signature. The second piece resembles a lullaby, but Schumann subtly varies the phrase-lengths – 3 bars or 4 bars - so that the simple style is not too predictable. In the third and saddest piece (A minor) the phrase-lengths again are varied while the piano adds gentle punctuation. In the middle section (A major) a passage of double-stopping gives way to an ethereal melody (dolce) above rippling arpeggios. The cheerful and robust fourth piece has a march-like main theme preceded by an introductory flourish which returns as accompaniment to the F sharp minor melody of the central section. The juxtaposition of triplets and duplets characterises the final piece, with its heroic/capricious alternations. While these delightful miniatures may evoke any number of images, Pablo Casals used to refer his pupils specifically to the treasure trove of folk tales by the Brothers Grimm.

Philip Borg-Wheeler



Ella van Poucke

Born in Amsterdam in 1994, she is one of the leading cellists of her generation. Praised for her musical integrity, flawless instrumental abilities as well as her performing presence and intensity, the 27 year old Dutch cellist belongs to the top rank of today's generation of cellists. She is the winner of the prestigious Premio Chigiana 2017, the first prize winner of the International Isang Yun cello competition 2015, Grachtenfestival Prize, the Leopoldinum Award 2015, Prix Nicolas Firmenich 2013, Elisabeth Everts Award 2014, Prix Academie Maurice Ravel 2012, Dutch Musician of the Year 2012, first prize winner of the 2008 Princess Christina Competition and recipient of the special prize in "recognition of an outstanding performance at the Grand Prix Emanuel Feuermann 2014.

After making her debut at the Concertgebouw at the age of 10 she has been performing in all the major halls of the Netherlands, in many top halls in Europe and in the U.S and Asia.

As a soloist Ella has performed with the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, HR-Sinfonie Orchester, Brussels Philharmonic, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Rotterdam Philharmonic Strings, Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn, Orchestre della Toscana, Noord Nederlands Orkest, Havana Youth Orchestra, Varsovia Chamber Orchestra, Symfonie Orchestra of Vlaanderen Polish Chamber Orchestra, Leopoldinum Chamber Orchestra, Junge Sinfonie Berlin, Hamburger Camerata, Tongyeong Festival Orchestra and collaborated with artists as Michael Sanderling and Christoph Eschenbach among others.

In November 2012 she premiered a new cello concerto, which was written for her by the Finnish composer Uljas Pulkkis during the International Cello Biennale in Amsterdam. In September 2013 she premiered the same work in Germany at the Kronberg Festival, with members of the HR-Sinfonie Orchester Frankfurt.

Ella regularly appears on Dutch Radio and Television and has performed for ARTE TV in Germany and France. She appeared in Germany's "Stars von Morgen" hosted by Rolando Villazon.

As a passionate chamber musician Ella has performed with Andras Schiff, Gary Hoffman, Nobuko Imai, Tabea Zimmermann, Christian Tetzlaff, Viviane Hagner, Gidon Kremer, Colin Carr, Pavel Vernikov, Andreas Reiner, Vilde Frang, Simone Lamsma, Christiaan Bor, Philippe Graffin, Prazak quartet, Schumann quartett among many others. Since many years she regularly performs in recital with pianist Jean-Claude vanden Eynden and with her brother Nicolas van Poucke.

She has been guest in numerous international festivals such as Festspiele Mecklenburg Vorpommern, West Cork Chamber Music Festival, Music@Menlo, Krzyzowa Music, Chigiana International Festival, Kaposfest Hungary, Internationaal Kamermuziek Festival Utrecht, Grachten Festival Amsterdam, Kronberg Festival, Cello Biennale Amsterdam and was invited to participate in Verbier Festival Academy in 2009, 2013 and 2014.

As a Dutch 'Rising Star' Ella was invited to give two Carte Blanche concerts in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in 2013-14. In the summer of 2017 she was Artist in Residence with the National Youth Orchestra of the Netherlands and in August 2018 Ella was Artist in Residence of the Grachtenfestival in Amsterdam. In 2019 Ella performed the complete works for cello and piano by Beethoven in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam together with her brother Nicolas among other venues. In 2018 she toured with all the Bach suites.

Born into a family of musicians, Ella began playing the cello at the age of six. Entered the Royal Conservatory of The Hague at the age of 10 and later continued her studies at the Conservatory of Amsterdam with Godfried Hoogeveen. She has taken masterclasses and worked with Andras Schiff, Miklos Perenyi, Daniel Barenboim, Christoph Eschenbach, Yuri Bashmet, Steven Isserlis, Menahem Pressler, Laurence Lesser, Anner Bijlsma, Bernard Greenhouse, Mischa Maisky, the Emerson Quartet among others.

From 2009-2016 Ella studied with professor Frans Helmerson at the Kronberg Academy Masters in Germany. From 2016-2019 she was an Artist in Residence at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Brussels, where she studied with Gary Hoffman.

Ella plays on a 1620 Maggini cello, kindly lend to her by an anonymus benefactor.



Jean-Claude van den Eynden was only 16 when he was proclaimed winner of the 1964 Queen Elisabeth International Musical Competition. He is one of the youngest laureates ever to be elected. This precious distinction marks the start of a brilliant career which has taken him to the most beautiful venues in the world and the most famous festivals. Among others at the Korsholm (Finland), Umea (Sweden), Prades et la Chaise-Dieu (France), Delft (Netherlands), Seoul (Korea), Stavelot and Seneffe (Belgium) Festivals.

He is also a wonderful chamber musician, admired by his peers, who performs with leading Belgian and international partners Véronique Bogaerts, Marie Hallynck, Augustin Dumay, Silvia Marcovici, Michaela Martin, Miriam Fried, Gérard Caussé, Frans Helmerson, José Van Dam, Walter Boeykens, Enesco Quartet, Melos Quartet, Ysaye Quartet, Ensemble César Franck, etc.

His vast and impressive repertoire includes almost all the great concertos, a wide range of chamber music pieces and above all, the complete works for piano solo by Maurice Ravel.

Phíon, Orchestra of Gelderland & Overijssel

The aim of Phíon, the Dutch philharmonic orchestra of the provinces of Gelderland and Overijssel, is to be of significance to as many people as possible through the performance of live symphonic music. Under its chief conductor Otto Tausk, the orchestra brings a wide range of musical programmes to its audiences, aspiring to be both innovative and surprising. The orchestra enters into collaborations with other parties both within and outside its own discipline, which allows it to tell the story of classical music in many different ways. This may be through large symphonic work of the very best quality, surprising new classical formats or pioneering crossovers.

By not only working with cultural partners but also providing coaching to the amateur sector, accompanying the Nederlandse Reisopera and various choirs, and working on music education and talent development, Phíon plays an active role in society in Gelderland, Overijssel and far beyond. As such, it is proud to be a part of the cultural network of these two Dutch provinces.

Phíon, Orchestra of Gelderland & Overijssel, is the product of a merger in 2019 between The Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra and the Netherlands Symphony Orchestra. The Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra has roots dating back to 1889. Over recent decades, the orchestra was led by chief conductors Roberto Benzi, Lawrence Renes, Martin Sieghart and Antonello Manacorda. Under conductors including Martin Sieghart and Antonello Manacorda, it recorded several CDs with works by Mahler, Schubert and Brahms, among other composers.

The Netherlands Symphony Orchestra's history goes back to 1933.

In the 1990s, while under the baton of chief conductor Jaap van Zweden, the orchestra underwent significant development. Van Zweden's successor, Jan Willem de Vriend, was at the orchestra's helm for 10 years, during which time its CD recordings included all of Beethoven's and Mendelssohn's symphonies. Ed Spanjaard led the orchestra until it merged with The Arnhem Philharmonic Orchestra.

With effect from the 2020-2021 season, the new organisation's name is Phíon, Orchestra of Gelderland & Overijssel, with Otto Tausk as Chief Conductor. Otto Tausk is also Music Director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Advisor to the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra School of Music.





Günter Neuhold was born in Graz, Austria, and completed his studies at the Graz Conservatoire with a Masters degree. He then followed advanced courses in Rome with Franco Ferrara and in Vienna with Prof. Hans Swarowsky. Between 1972 and 1980 he was engaged at various

German opera houses, a period he closed as first Kapellmeister in Hannover and Dortmund. After winning several competitions (Florence 1st prize 1976; San Remo „Marinuzzi“ 1st prize 1976; Vienna „Swarowsky“ 2nd prize 1977; Salzburg „Böhm“ 1st prize, 1977 Milan, „Cantelli“ 3rd prize 1977), he began an international career. From 1981 to 1986 he was Music Director at the Teatro Regio di Parma, where he devoted most of his time to Verdi operas and Chief Conductor of the Orchestra Sinfonica „Arturo Toscanini“.

From 1986 to 1990 he was Chief Conductor and Musical Director of the Koninklijk Filharmonisch Orkest van Vlaanderen in Antwerp, which achieved an international reputation during this period and toured in Germany, Italy, Great Britain and France. Günter Neuhold was General Music Director at the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe from 1989 to 1995. In Karlsruhe he performed a Richard-Strauss-Zyklus and the „Ring des Nibelungen“.

From 1995 to 2002 he was General Music Director and Artistic Director at the Theater der Freien Hansestadt Bremen. From 2008 to 2014 he was Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Orquesta Sinfonica de Bilbao. From 2018/19 he is Principal Guest Conductor of the Hungarian National Symphony Orchestra Szeged.

Beside his permanent engagements he conducted the following orchestras: Wiener Philharmoniker, Wiener Symphoniker, Staatskapelle Dresden, Philharmonia Orch., Orchestre National de France, WDR Köln, mdr Leipzig, NDR Hamburg und Hannover, SWF Baden Baden, SDR Stuttgart, RSO Berlin, Gürzenich-Köln, HNPO Budapest, ORF, RAI, Orch. Sinf. Naz. Torino, Maggio Musicale Fiorentino et al.

He has conducted operas at the Wiener Staatsoper, Scala Milano, Opernhaus Zürich, Staatsoper Dresden, Nationaltheater München, Berliner Staatsoper, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Komische Oper Berlin, Oper Leipzig, State Opera Budapest, Teatro Real Madrid, Opéra Monte Carlo, Chatelet, Opera National de Paris, Teatro Colon et al.



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