

supports a mostly independent clarinet line. The central section is distinguished by a move away from A minor and falling arpeggio figures in the clarinet. The return to the first section is nearly literal until the final harmonic shift to A major.

Piano and clarinet share the melody in the blithe second piece, an intermezzo marked "Lebhaft, leicht" (Lively, light). The busy central section, itself cast in two parts, is marked by a sudden change to F major. The return of the first section soon goes astray, leading to an elegant coda.

The third piece, "Rasch und mit Feuer" (Fast and with fire) begins forte and with a sense of urgency. Triplet rhythms again dominate the piano part, while the clarinet plays its most animated melody yet. The central section provides the least harmonic contrast of all, moving unobtrusively from the opening A major to A minor. Schumann writes an extended coda to confirm both the mood and key of the piece and the entire set.

Though originally intended for the clarinet, Schumann directed that the solo part could be also performed on violin or cello.

The Fünf Stücke im Volkston (Five Pieces in the Popular Style) were written by Schumann in 1849, the same year he composed the Three Romances for oboe and piano, Op. 94, and Fantasiestücke, for clarinet and piano, Op. 73. These three collections have much in common: not only did Schumann allow for substitutions for the lead instrument in all of them, but none are difficult to perform, being designed primarily for amateur musicians of good caliber. In addition, all the various pieces are tuneful and almost completely devoid of any conflict. If there is one word to best describe the character of the Volkston pieces, it might be mellow. All are melodically appealing and exude a tranquility throughout. The middle three may be slightly more appealing, with number three being especially lovely in its rich Romanticism, both in the cello and piano writing. The second has a pastoral sweetness, while the fourth starts off in a most lively and joyous mood, then yields to a mesmerizing melody. All these pieces are worthwhile, with Schumann's deft imagination never failing to enchant. These pieces were first published in 1851.



Pierre Fournier

*Schubert
Arpeggione Sonata*

*Mendelssohn
Variations Concertantes*

*Schumann
Fantasiestücke
5 Stücke Im Volkston*

Dorel Handman, piano

Schubert composed the "Arpeggione" Sonata in November 1824 shortly after returning from Zseliz, where he had spent his second summer (the first one being in 1818) teaching music to the Count of Esterházy's two daughters. The three-movement Sonata must be altered somewhat if it is to be played on cello or viola: the arpeggione possessed six strings, tuned to the same pitches as a guitar's, and the resulting extended range can cause problems when the piece is transcribed; in most editions, certain portions of the piece are transposed up or down an octave from their original position to avoid the extreme registers. However, Schubert by and large avoided the kind of idiosyncratic arpeggiations that earned the original instrument its nickname, focusing instead on the same focused lyricism that drives a traditional sonata for string instrument and piano; in this way, the work readily adapts to modern performance.

The opening Allegro moderato is built around a wistful melody whose fame is such that many who have never heard or heard of the "Arpeggione" Sonata will find that they recognize the tune. A second theme proceeds in gentle gusts of sixteenth notes; the arpeggione could not play fast notes with much volume at all, and so the Sonata's quicker portions are almost always marked piano or pianissimo.

The Adagio is a rich but introverted musing on an almost hymn-like subject. Schubert places great emphasis on the Neapolitan chord -- a harmony also used to great effect in the opening movement -- during the movement's closing measures, weakening the power of the final cadence and thus inviting the soloist to improvise a brief transition into the final, multi-sectioned Allegretto.

While Felix Mendelssohn's devotion to his sister Fanny is well known, the composer's relationship with his youngest sibling, Paul, is rather more obscure. After all, while elder brother and sister both secured their positions in music history as gifted composers and performers, Paul maintained his musicianship only as a hobby, and pursued banking as a vocation. He was deeply devoted to Felix, however, and, after the composer's death, looked after his brother's family and worked to preserve his musical legacy. Felix showed his devotion in kind, as well, dedicating to his brother a pair of works for Paul's chosen

instrument, the cello: the Sonata in B flat, Op. 45 (1838), and the work to be considered here, the Variations concertantes for cello and piano in D major, Op. 17.

Mendelssohn composed the Variations concertantes in early 1829, and saw the work's premiere in the summer of that year. If one is meant to surmise Paul's musical personality and aptitude on the cello through Felix's piece, one must assume he was a musician of respectable technical skill and even greater wit and aplomb. Throughout the concertante theme and the eight subsequent variations, the composer conveys a sense of elegant lyricism combined with clever textural and thematic interplay between the cello and piano.

The theme itself presents an arching line, leaping upward and then falling in stepwise fashion, that serves as the basis for a series of characteristically clear-cut phrases. As is his custom, Mendelssohn avoids structural tension or formal deviation in favor of more subtle invention, as in the transfer of attention between cello and piano. The two share the melodic spotlight in the opening theme, then, as the cello assumes the lead in the first variation, the piano provides an accompaniment that gradually shifts from nimble staccato arpeggios to more lush textures. The piano's virtuosic prominence in the second variation sets up the cello's sudden pyrotechnics in the third; halfway through, though, the cello's aerobic agility suddenly turns isometric, settling on a slyly extended trill underneath a gentle piano passage. The frenetic keyboard work of the fourth variation contrasts the quirky regality of the fifth, with its dotted rhythms and pizzicato cello. The sixth variation's gentle inertia leads to the chromatic, minor-mode turbulence of the seventh, which in turn renders all the more dramatic the final variation's extended thematic closure and understated ending.

Schumann's the three Phantasiestücke, Op. 73 (1849) While each of the three pieces conveys a different mood, together they form a harmonically unified whole: the first begins in A minor and ends in A major, while the second and third are in A major. Further, at the end of each of the first two pieces, Schumann directs the performers to proceed to the next piece attacca, clearly demonstrating that the three pieces were conceived as a unified whole.

The first of the pieces, a song without words marked "Zart und mit Ausdruck" (Delicately and with expression), maintains a constant triplet-rhythm accompaniment in the piano, which

Schubert Arpeggione A-moll, D.821

Mendelssohn Variations Concertantes Op.17

Schumann Fantasiestucke Op.73 & 5 Stucke Im Volkston Op.102

Cello – Pierre Fournier Piano – Dorel Handman

Schubert Arpeggione A-moll, D.821

1. Allegro Moderato 7:34
2. Adagio (attacca) 3:59
3. Allegretto 8:13
4. Mendelssohn Variations Concertantes Op.17 9:44

Schumann Fantasiestucke Op.73

5. Zart Und Mit Ausdruck 2:59
6. Lebhaft, Leicht 3:24
7. Rasch Und Mit Feuer 4:22

Schumann 5 Stucke Im Volkston Op.102

8. Mit Humor 2:54
9. Langsam 3:33
10. Nicht Schnell 3:48
11. Nicht Zu Rasch 2:00
12. Stark Und Markiert 2:52

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