

remarkable pianist Clara Wieck Schumann, premiered the result, a complete concerto, in Leipzig on New Year's Day, 1846.

The shifting moods that characterize so much of Schumann's music are clearly evident in the Piano Concerto. Still, as in the composer's contemporaneous works noted above, and despite the interval between the composition of the Concerto's first movement and the remaining two, inter-movement unity is one of the work's primary concerns. There is a quasi-symphonic character to the Concerto, in distinct contrast to the then-prevailing view of the concerto as primarily a vehicle for virtuosic display, exemplified by the concertante works of Franz Liszt and Nicolò Paganini. Indeed, Liszt showed little enthusiasm for Schumann's Concerto and tweaked the composer (who had earlier written a "Concerto Without Orchestra") by referring to it as a "concerto without piano."

Though the work's technical demands are not inconsiderable, they are almost wholly subservient to thematic interest and structural clarity. The Concerto opens with a downward-surgingly, darkly martial introductory gesture. The first theme, marked by a high-minded dignity, becomes the prime source of melodic material, spawning closely related themes that alternately brood and, in the major mode, provide respite from the sober atmosphere. The development caroms from one mood to the next in almost dizzying fashion, all the while exploring the ambiguities of the themes' various components. Schumann cannily uses the lengthy cadenza as a battleground for further emotional conflict before ending the movement with a decisive return of the lofty first subject.

The second movement, Intermezzo: Andantino grazioso, amply displays Schumann's immanent melodic sense within a spectrum ranging from genial to poetic to lushly yearning. The Allegro vivace finale commences without pause via an affirmative major-key return of the first movement's main theme. In various episodes, Schumann makes striking use of the finale's joyful, upward-leaping theme, as when it becomes the subject of a fugato. Metric and rhythmic ambiguities abound, coloring the dance-like spirit, and the prevailing mood is one of unfettered optimism that ultimately swells to exuberant triumph.



Schumann Violin Concerto In D Minor

Henryk Szeryng, violin Antal Dorati - London Symphony Orchestra



Schumann Piano Concerto In A Minor

Byron Janis, piano Stanislaw Skrowaczewski - Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra

On September 21, 1853, Schumann entered into his daily record: "Have begun a piece for violin." On October 1, he noted that the "Concerto for Violin is finished," and by the third of the same month the piece was completely orchestrated. This record represents the last truly productive and happy time for the composer. He wished to have the Violin Concerto performed in Düsseldorf, but gave up his conducting post there, making such a concert nearly impossible. A concert tour and his production of music criticism made the planning of a performance a matter of secondary importance. Finally, the onset of his mental illness eliminated all hope of his programming the concerto, the saga of which continued long after the composer's death.

Shortly after completing the Violin Concerto, Schumann sent the piece to Joseph Joachim (1831-1907), asking if there were any passages that were "unplayable." Joachim, the concerto's intended recipient, was initially supportive of Schumann's efforts, but shortly after Schumann's death in 1856 he expressed his displeasure with "dreadful passages for the violin" to Clara Schumann. To this, Clara reacted by asking Joachim to re-write the last movement, which he never did. When Joachim finally did give a private performance of the concerto, in 1858 in Leipzig, Brahms found it so unsatisfactory that he elected not to include it in the Complete Edition of Schumann's Works, which he was then editing. Clara, Brahms, and Joachim decided the work should never be published.

Many years later, Joachim's son sold the manuscript of the concerto to the Prussian State Library, stipulating that the piece not be performed before the one-hundredth anniversary of Schumann's death. In 1937, Georg Schünemann found the manuscript, edited and published it despite the protests of Schumann's daughter, Eugenie. The concerto was first performed in Berlin by Georg Kulenkampff on November 26, 1937, and again on February 16, 1938, in London by Jelly D'Aranyi, Joachim's great-niece. Since its publication, critics' evaluations of the concerto have varied; most find the piece inferior.

In contrast to Schumann's other concertos, that for violin features a first movement built on the double exposition principal we find in Viennese Classical-era concertos. However, Schumann

does not use the ritornello material as did his predecessors; he presents the secondary theme in a new key -- the relative major (F major) -- instead of reserving the modulation for the solo exposition as in most of the Viennese models. Thus, from the very beginning of the work we hear Schumann's "relaxed" approach to sonata form, in which tonal conflict is no longer of primary concern. When the solo part finally appears, it is with the first theme, without introductory flourishes and on the dominant. The developmental central section is not a "working out" (in a Beethovenian sense) but a transformation of thematic material, the repetitiveness of which Joachim found disturbing. The high point of the recapitulation is the return of the secondary subject in the solo part, which includes its own accompaniment of running sixteenth notes.

The brief second movement, in B flat major, features a beautiful theme that is similar to one Schumann (over a year later) thought was dictated to him in the asylum; Brahms would later write a set of variations on this theme. In the concerto, when Schumann recapitulates this theme, it is a third lower and in the minor mode, lending it greater poignancy. The Finale is a polonaise with a vivacious opening that drives to a bright close on D major. As a unifying device, Schumann accompanies the second subject with a variation of the opening measures of the second movement.

Robert Schumann followed up his remarkable "year of song" (1840) with another compositional annus mirabilis. 1841 saw the creation of the composer's first works for orchestra, including the Symphony No. 1, Op. 38, the Symphony No. 4, Op. 120 (substantially revised and published a decade later), and the Overture, Scherzo and Finale, Op. 52. In each of these works, thematic unity among movements is of central importance, an idea widely explored in the Romantic period in guises ranging from the *idée fixe* of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* (1830) to the leitmotives of Wagner's music dramas.

Schumann's other major work from 1841 is the *Fantaisie* in A minor for piano and orchestra. Though the *Fantaisie* as such has ultimately disappeared from the repertoire, it is only because it evolved into the first movement of the composer's Piano Concerto in A minor, completed in 1845. In this year Schumann appended two movements to the revised *Fantaisie*; the composer's wife, the

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Violin Concerto

1 In Kräftigem, Nicht Zu Schellem Tempo 13:45

2 Langsam 5:32

3 Lebhaft, Doch Nicht Schnell 9:28

Piano Concerto

4 Allegro Allettuoso 14:34

5 Intermezzo-Andantino Grazioso 4:30

6 Allegro Vivace 10:42

Violin Concerto Recorded by Mercury 1964

Engineer - Robert Eberenz Producer - Harold Lawrence

Piano Concerto Recorded by Mercury 1964 Directed By [Musical Director] - Harold Lawrence

Engineer [Associate Engineer] - Robert Eberenz

Engineer [Chief Engineer], Technician [Technical Supervisor] - C. R. Fine



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