

SUMMER PIANO FESTIVAL SCHUMANN: THE COMPLETE PIANO WORKS IV

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE, 10AM
DUKE'S HALL

10AM A WILD PIANISM

11AM INTERLUDES, NARRATIVES

2.30PM INSPIRATIONS

3.30PM THE YOUNG ONES

4.45PM EPILOGUE



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Curated by Joanna MacGregor, this year's Summer Piano Festival completes its three-year project of Robert Schumann's complete works for solo piano, all performed by Academy pianists – over 17 hours of the greatest and most original piano music ever composed.

Our last edition includes much-loved masterpieces - Faschingsschwank aus Wien and Novelletten – as well as overlooked gems and unearthed virtuosic works, barely recorded, and even more rarely performed. We uncover Schumann's joy in Paganini's Caprices, homages to other composers, four-hand Bach-inspired canons and his piano sonatas for children. We hope you enjoy this final day of Schumann's piano music.

Robert Schumann (1810-56)

10AM A WILD PIANISM

Allegro in B minor, Op 8
Etudes after Paganini Caprices, Op 3
Six Concert Études after Paganini
Caprices, Op 10

Introduced by Joanna MacGregor,
Dame Myra Hess Chair of Piano

PROGRAMME NOTES

Allegro in B minor, Op 8 (9')

Joshua Lau piano

An elegant and dramatically charged early work, Schumann's Allegro in B Minor Op 8 was composed in 1831, when he was 21 years old. It was dedicated to Ernestine von Fricken, a student of Friedrich Wieck, and to whom

he was briefly engaged. Intended to serve as the first movement of a sonata, we know the other movements were at least sketched: but they are forever lost. Its brilliance is reminiscent of Hummel, one of Schumann's influences, as well as Paganini, who had just appeared with his devilish playing in Leipzig. The serious motto theme of B-C#-F# unites the entire movement, appearing in the bass, or the top line melody, or middle-voice accompaniment figures, a token of Schumann's obsessive study of counterpoint as well as scores by Beethoven and Schubert. The movement is divided into three intense sections - Allegro, Adagio and Finale - and comes to a volatile and virtuosic conclusion.

Etudes after Paganini Caprices, Op 3 (13')

No 1 in A minor after Caprice No 5

No 2 in E after Caprice No 9 'The Hunt'

No 3 in C after Caprice No 11

No 4 in B flat after Caprice No 13

No 5 in E flat after Caprice No 19

No 6 in G minor after Caprice No 16

Edward Harris-Brown piano

Composed in 1832, these faithful renditions of Paganini's Caprices for solo violin are fun to listen to, and very demanding to play. Intended for pedagogical study, they're rarely performed live; Schumann joined his colleagues Brahms and Liszt in his fascination with Paganini, and many of these studies will sound very familiar. As a transcriber/arranger Schumann was still a poet and an artist; he's trying out many techniques and textures that will appear in his Études Symphoniques Op 13 two years later.

Six Concert Etudes after Paganini Caprices, Op 10 (23')

No 1 in A flat after Caprice No 14

No 2 in G minor after Caprice No 6

No 3 in G minor after Caprice No 10

No 4 in C minor after Caprice No 4

No 5 in B minor after Caprice No 2

No 6 in E minor after Caprice No 3

Chuyu Wang piano

In 1833 Schumann produced a second set of Paganini Etudes Op 10; this time he was less faithful to the original violin writing, setting out to project the essence of Paganini in pianistic language. This set was definitely intended for performance. Schumann's own programme notes provide the best guide: *'By labelling this work 'de concert,' I intend to distinguish between these etudes and those I had arranged earlier; the brilliance of these new ones makes them suitable for public performance. In No 2 I have chosen a different accompaniment, because I felt the tremolo of the original would prove tiring to both the performer and the listener. I regard this piece as especially tender and beautiful. As I composed No 4, I had the Funeral March from Beethoven's Eroica Symphony in my mind – as the listener may surmise. In No 5 I left out expression marks deliberately, so that students may search on their own for the heights and depths in this piece. No 6 is a piece that may not be recognized immediately by persons who have played the violin caprices; played skilfully as a piano work, it shows harmonic flow. These etudes are of the greatest difficulty throughout, each of them in a different way. Even those with the eyes and fingers of lightning-swiftness will hardly be able to execute them properly at first sight!'*

BIOGRAPHIES

Joshua Lau

A graduate of School of the Arts in Singapore and student of the Young Artist Programme at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Joshua Lau is a first-year undergraduate studying with Ian Fountain. He is the proud recipient of the David Marshall Scholarship for Young Artist, the IBCP Excellence Award, and the School of Arts/Ngee Ann Kongsi Outstanding Young Artist Award. He has won many accolades including the Grand Prize for the 5th Steinway South-East Asia Pacific Regional Youth Piano Competition, which saw him representing Singapore to perform at the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg, Germany.

Edward Harris-Brown

Edward Harris-Brown is a pianist and composer from Shrewsbury. He is a second-year undergraduate studying with Professor Joanna MacGregor. He appears as a soloist, duo partner, chamber musician and jazz pianist in recitals across the country, and has had his compositions performed at venues in Shrewsbury, York, Manchester, Oxford and London. Previously Edward studied at Chetham's School of Music under Murray McLachlan, winning all the internal piano and composition prizes. He reached the televised rounds of BBC Young Musician and was awarded the First Prize at the EPTA UK competition, First Prize at Abingdon and Worthing Concerto Competitions. Recent highlights include a nationwide recital tour and writing incidental music for a Covent Garden production of Macbeth;

he will be directing his own chamber music festival next month.

Chuyu Wang

Chuyu Wang is a first-year undergraduate studying under Professor Joanna MacGregor. She arrived in London from the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou; as well as performing as a pianist, from 2019-22 Chuyu served as Principal Flute of the Guangzhou Youth Symphony Orchestra Junior Symphony and the Associate Principal Flute of the Guangzhou Youth Symphony Orchestra. She gave her first solo piano recital at the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou aged ten; at eleven she performed at Carnegie Hall in New York, and at thirteen played all 27 Chopin études in Xinghai. Chuyu has given over thirty solo recitals across major cities in China including Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, and Zhanjiang, and has also appeared as soloist with the Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra and the Guangzhou Youth Symphony Orchestra, touring Hangzhou, Suzhou, Tianjin and Fuzhou. Chuyu has appeared at the Tianjin Juilliard Piano Festival and at Juilliard Summer Music in New York, and last summer performed with the City of London Sinfonia. She will be performing Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No 2 in China this summer.

11AM INTERLUDES, NARRATIVES

Intermezzi, Op 4
8 Noveletten, Op 21

PROGRAMME NOTES

Intermezzi, Op 4 (20')

Allegro quasi maestoso

Presto a capriccio

Allegro marcato

Allegro semplice

Allegro moderato

Allegro

Arthur Kokerai piano

The original title of these pieces (1832) was 'Phantastiques.' The word 'intermezzo' – literally meaning 'interlude' – was mainly used by Brahms, in his later piano cycles. Schumann saw them as '*extended Papillons*': creative, exciting and unexpected. The movements – with the exception of the fourth – fall into the tripartite form of the Bohemian impromptu, with contrasting central '*alternativo*' sections. The da capo sections are all written out, with unpredictable transformations, decorations and re-imaginings. The subtexts and spicy quotations are autobiographical. In the second Intermezzo, Gretchen's song from Goethe's *Faust* – '*Meine Ruh' ist hin*' (My peace is gone) is quoted; in the fourth we hear recycled fragments of Schumann's song *Hirtenknabe* (The Shepherd Boy), plus fragments of a rejected *Papillon* and a Piano Quartet in C minor. Schumann confided to his diary that the fifth Intermezzo was '*opera without text – but my whole heart is in thee, dear fifth Intermezzo, that was born with such unutterable love*'. No 6 uses the famous ABEGG theme from Op 1 and another discarded

Papillon. The six Intermezzi are in the keys of A major, E minor, A minor, C major, D minor and B minor. With movements two to five run as *attacca*, the impression is of a long central unit framed by two shorter ones.

8 Novelletten, Op 21 (40')

I Markirt und kräftig (marcato and strong)
II Ausserst rasch und mit Bravour (extremely fast and with spirit)

Peter May piano

III Leicht und mit Humor (light and with humour)
IV Ballmässig. Sehr munter (in the style of a Ball; wide awake)

Asher Allen piano

V Rauschend und festlich (euphoric and festive)

Lily Petrova piano

VI Sehr lebhaft mit vielem Humor (very lively with a lot of humour)
VII Äusserst rasch (extremely fast)
VIII Sehr lebhaft (very lively)

Kaiwen Jin piano

In 1838 Schumann wrote to Clara Wieck: *'I have composed an awful amount of music for you in the last three weeks: humorous pieces, Egmont stories, family scenes with fathers, a wedding...and have called the whole thing Novelletten.'* 'Novelletten' was named for another pianist, Clara Novello, whom Schumann admired. The *Novelletten* are the largest and least known of Schumann's major piano cycles; it's rare to hear all eight complete.

After a march-like opening full of dynamic and harmonic contrasts, a virtuoso second movement - highly regarded by Liszt - takes the stage. The third *Novellette* is humorous, and in the original manuscript Schumann (presumably ironically) placed a quotation from the opening witches' scene from *Macbeth*. No 4 is marked *Ballmässig* (in the manner of a Ball), and is a waltz; the Ball description might also be applied to the very difficult No 5, an angular polonaise with varied sections. No 6 takes us from key to key at a sparkling tempo: this magnificent scherzo presents eight themes over a very short time. Octaves dominate the equally rapid seventh *Novellette*, then comes the extensive and carefully constructed eighth movement (usually played on its own). The last *Novellette* represents the wedding which Schumann mentioned in his letter to Clara. All eight movements are constructed as rondos, and a nocturne composed by Clara is quoted several times: this melody, descending stepwise, is most vivid in the second trio of the last *Novellette*, where it is marked *'a voice from afar.'*

BIOGRAPHIES

Arthur Kokerai

Arthur Kokerai is a second-year undergraduate of Russian/Zimbabwean heritage, studying with Professor Joanna MacGregor. Arthur began his training at Moscow's renowned Gnessin School of Music, and he has performed in major Russian venues including the Moscow Conservatory and Zaryadye Concert Hall; he also won the Bronze Medal at the XI International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians. Arthur is a very active composer as well as a

soloist. Last year he composed a major piano quintet and 60-minute violin concerto. He will be performing piano concertos by Beethoven and Britten this autumn, having recently performed Rachmaninov Piano Concerto No 3, as well as numerous recitals. Arthur and his family now live in Armenia.

Peter May

Peter May is a solo pianist and chamber musician, currently studying as a second-year undergraduate with Colin Stone. Peter began learning the piano when he was six years old, and from the age of eight he studied with Sebastian Stanley. Peter has performed in renowned venues such as Steinway Hall and Southwark Cathedral, and St Albans Cathedral, where he performed Mozart's Double Piano Concerto in E-flat major. He has recently participated in masterclasses with Christoph Eschenbach, Steven Osborne, Vitaly Pisarenko and Pascal Rogé.

Asher Allen

Asher Allen is a first-year undergraduate pianist and composer, studying with Professor Joanna MacGregor. A multiple prizewinner, Asher was born in the North-West and studied at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester before coming to the Academy. Asher performed onstage at Sadler's Wells last month with the acclaimed interdisciplinary dance company Bullyache, and will be touring to Berlin next week. Asher is also a passionate chamber musician.

Lily Petrova

Prize-winning pianist Lily Petrova is a first-year postgraduate pianist studying with Professor Joanna MacGregor. She has performed at leading venues including a debut recital at Wigmore Hall earlier this year, the Southbank Centre, Cadogan Hall, St Martin-in-the-Fields, Steinway Hall and Bulgaria Hall. A frequent performer at the Bulgarian Cultural Institute, she was invited to perform at the welcoming ceremony for the Bulgarian Cultural Minister. Upcoming highlights of the 2026/27 season include performances at the Farley Festival and Petworth Festival, musician in residence with the 'precept.concept.perception' programme in Slovenia, and a recording project at Abbey Road Studios. Internationally, she has performed across Europe and Canada, most recently completing the Fuse residency at the Banff Centre in Canada, where she collaborated with artists including actor John de Lancie, conductor Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser and members of the Australian Chamber Orchestra. Lily's artistic practice extends beyond the traditional recital format, integrating music with film and visual media, with a particular focus on contemporary repertoire. Alongside her performing career, Lily is Director of the Maria Vraka Music Academy in London, where she has led significant growth; she is co-founder and trustee of the Maria Vraka Foundation, established in 2025 to support accessible music education and emerging artists.

Kaiwen Jin

Pianist Kaiwen Jin is in the second year of his bachelor's degree at the Academy, studying with Christopher Elton. Before entering the Academy, Kaiwen studied under the guidance of Associate Professor Hong Huang at the Shanghai

Conservatory of Music. He won the Third Prize in the Youth International Piano Competition hosted by the Music Middle School affiliated with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and has been invited to perform at prestigious venues across Zhejiang and Shanghai including Cadillac Shanghai Concert Hall and He Luting Concert Hall.

2.30PM INSPIRATIONS

Variations on a Nocturne by Chopin
Kanon 'an Alexis' H/WoO 4
Impromptus on a Theme by Clara Wieck, Op 5
6 Studien in kanonischer Form, Op 56
Etudes in Variation Form on a Theme by Beethoven WoO 31

PROGRAMME NOTES

Variations on a Nocturne by Chopin (4')
Kanon 'an Alexis' H/WoO 4 (1')

Andra Băcilă piano

This is a concert devoted to Schumann's deep loves, and homages, as a musician. He demonstrated a remarkable sensitivity in his approach to Chopin's pianistic world in the *Carnaval*, Op 9, and wrote passionately about Chopin's music. His lovely, brief variations on a theme by Chopin have been hitherto ignored. Based on the main theme from Chopin's well-known *G Minor Nocturne*, Op 15, No 3, Schumann's undated variation fragment is believed to have been composed towards 1834, which would make it almost contemporaneous with the *Carnaval*. Schumann's *Chopin Variations* have survived in two manuscripts; although short, it packs an enormous amount of drama and tenderness into a few minutes. The tiny 'To Alexis' canon is both scholarly and romantic, as Schumann amuses himself embellishing the simple counterpoint.

Impromptus on a Theme by Clara Wieck, Op 5 (15')

Bass and theme Ziemlich langsam (rather slow)

Variation 1

Variation 2 Lebhafter (vivacious)

Variation 3 Sehr präcis (very precise)

Variation 4 Ziemlich langsam (rather slow)

Variation 5 Lebhaft (animated)

Variation 6 Schnell (fast)

Variation 7 Tempo des Themas

Variation 8 Mit grosser Kraft (with great strength)

Variation 9

Variation 10 Lebhaft (animated)

Yiqiao Ou piano

Schumann composed the *Impromptus* Op 5 as a birthday gift for Clara's father in the summer of 1833; he had then been Friedrich Wieck's pupil – and a guest in his home – for nearly three years. The work originally comprised a *Poco lento* introduction (a kind of 'Big Ben' bassline), a statement of the theme (a *Romance* of Clara's, written when she was thirteen) and a set of twelve variations; it was published under the title *Impromptus on a Romance of Clara Wieck*. Seventeen years later Schumann revised the work and swapped the word 'romance' for 'theme.' For the 1850 revision he replaced the third variation with a newly composed one, substantially altered the eighth variation, and discarded the eleventh without replacing it at all. It is the 1850 version that is performed now. Schumann had tried to make the variations more 'playable,' but they still contain his usual quirky challenges of leaps, dotted rhythms, and textures that have to be gently unravelled. The final variation, a quasi fugue, combines Big Ben and Clara's *Romance* themes in a typically fearless way.

6 Studien in kanonischer Form, Op 56 (16')

I Nicht zu schnell (not too fast)

II Mit innigem Ausdruck (with deep, intimate expression)

III Andantino – etwas schneller

IV Innig (intimate, heartfelt)

V Nicht zu schnell

VI Adagio

Andra Băcilă and Joanna MacGregor piano

Schumann moved to Düsseldorf in 1850, becoming the town's Director of Music and Symphonic Concerts – an office from which he had to retire in 1853 after the first serious signs of mental illness, leading to a suicide attempt. Schumann was sent to the mental hospital in Eendenich, near Bonn, visited by Clara and his friends Brahms and Joachim, until his death on 29 July 1856. His deep admiration for Bach had led him to embark on a detailed study of counterpoint for the last ten years of his life; perhaps he found this close canonic, contrapuntal work psychologically stabilising. His studies, and his encounter with a Pedalflügel (a piano with a pedalboard) inspired him to compose his Six Studies Op 56. As the pedal piano is obsolete, these are normally played on the organ; luckily Bizet made a transcription for four hands in 1870 – a genre much favoured by Schumann. His Six Studies Op 56 (1845) were subtitled '*Six Pieces in the Form of a Canon*' and were dedicated to his teacher and friend J.G. Kuntzsch, organist of Zwickau. Written in strictly canonic form, after the first Bachian invention (*Nicht zu schnell*) they reveal a wide range of romantic and melodic styles. After Bizet, Debussy rearranged these canonic studies for two pianos in 1891.

Etudes in Variation Form on a Theme by Beethoven WoO 31 (14')

Tomos Boyles piano

There are at least three different versions of this piece, originally written in 1833, and once again it explores the idea of variations *and* studies, drawing on Czerny, Hummel and Liszt. It's perfectly possible to splice and intersect different variations, part of the fun of this piece; the theme in question is the famous A minor second movement of Symphony No 7, although Schumann cheekily tosses in other Beethoven quotations, most noticeably Symphony No 9. Another very rare 'live' performance, pianists have – in recordings – most often linked these variations to Schumann's better-known *Études Symphoniques* Op 13.

BIOGRAPHIES

Andra Băcilă

Andra Băcilă is a pianist from Romania, completing her undergraduate degree this summer with Professor Joanna MacGregor. She made her solo debut at the Liszt Institute (Balassi Institute) in Paris in 2023; she has won numerous competitions including the Hungarian Music Festival and Future Stars International Piano Competition. She has performed as concerto soloist at the Athenaeum in Bucharest, and given recitals at the Goethe Institut in London, the multi-arts venue ARCUB, the Hungarian Liszt Institut and Romanian National Philharmonic in Brasov. Andra is an avid chamber music partner, recently invited by the Czech Philharmonic to perform at the Czech Embassy in the

presence of Semyon Bychkov, and organised a fundraising chamber concert for earthquake victims in Turkey and Syria in London. In addition to her performing career, Andra has developed a passion for silent films. Following the Improvisation to Film class in the Academy Piano Department, she has performed at the prestigious 'La Giornate del Cinema Muto' Festival in Pordenone, the Netherlands Silent Film Festival in Eindhoven, and the Kennington Bioscope in London.

Yiqiao Ou

Yiqiao is a second-year undergraduate studying with Professor Joanna MacGregor. She began her musical education in her hometown of Dalian, China, studying with Lu Wang. She continued her training in Shenyang with Professor Fang Zhang, and with Hong Zhang at the Middle School attached to Shenyang Conservatory of Music. In addition to her solo performances, Yiqiao frequently collaborates with chamber musicians, and has a keen interest in music theatre and working with singers. Yiqiao has had the opportunity to perform in masterclasses for several esteemed pianists, including Vitaly Pisarenko, Jeffrey Cohen and Pavlina Dokovska.

Joanna MacGregor

Described as '*a brilliant light in the music world*,' Joanna MacGregor CBE is one of the world's most innovative musicians, appearing as a concert pianist, curator and conductor. Joanna is Dame Myra Hess Chair of Piano at the Royal Academy of Music and runs two annual piano festivals for young musicians, as

well as a year-round series at the Wigmore Hall; she has been Artistic Director of Dartington International Summer School, Bath International Festival, and Deloitte Ignite at the Royal Opera House, and a curator for festivals around the world. As a solo pianist she has appeared with leading orchestras, performing in over eighty countries with eminent conductors including Pierre Boulez, Colin Davis, Simon Rattle and Michael Tilson Thomas. In 2026-7 she will tour Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, South America and China. In 2020 Joanna performed Beethoven's thirty-piano sonatas as part of Beethoven's 250th celebrations and gave an immersive series of Schubert's piano music in 2023. She has released over forty solo recordings - many of them on her own award-winning record label SoundCircus - ranging from Chopin and Piazzolla to Bach and John Cage. Joanna has commissioned and premiered many landmark works, and is a regular broadcaster on TV and radio, appearing many times at the BBC Proms. Her collaborative and composition projects encompass jazz, film, visual art, contemporary dance and electronica, and she is overseeing the music for forty-seven silent Sherlock Holmes films with the BFI. From 2015-2021 she chaired the Paul Hamlyn Composers Awards and has been a Booker Prize Judge. Joanna MacGregor has five Honorary Doctorates in music and is an Honorary Fellow of the Worshipful Company of Musicians, Oriel College Oxford and Murray Edwards Cambridge. A regular conductor, she is Music Director and CEO of Brighton Philharmonic conducting bold, innovative concerts as they enter their second century. Joanna is one of the

main judges on the 2026 BBC Musician of the Year, to be broadcast in October.

Tomos Boyles

The award-winning pianist Tomos Boyles is from Wales. After gaining the first prize of 2025 Dudley International Piano Competition, Tomos' performances include Prokofiev's Piano Concerto No 3 with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Making his recital debut at Wigmore Hall last year, Tomos was also selected as a Kirckman Concert Society artist for the 2026-27 season, which will see him play a recital at Kings Place London. This year he was awarded the Royal Academy's prestigious Bicentenary Scholarship, and his debut CD for Linn Records - featuring Beethoven's Op 111 and John Corigliano - will be released later this year. Tomos completed his undergraduate music degree at Oxford, and his Master's with Rustem Hayroudinoff. He currently studies with Professor Joanna MacGregor.

3.30PM THE YOUNG ONES

Four Marches, Op 76

3 Piano Sonatas for the Young, Op 118

PROGRAMME NOTES

Four Marches, Op 76 (13')

No 1 in E flat mit grosser energie

No 2 in G minor sehr kräftig (very strong)

No 3 in B flat sehr mässig (very moderate)

No 4 in E flat mit kraft und feuer (strength and fire)

Hayden Miller piano

Writing to Clara in 1838, Schumann declared: *'Anything that happens in the world affects me: politics, literature, people. I reflect about all these things in my own way, and seek to find an outlet in music.'* Eleven years later the Dresden uprising of 1849 was the inspiration for a group of marches for piano; Schumann wanted to print them under the title *1849*. Schumann's friends referred to them as the 'Barricade Marches.' No 3 bears the subtitle *Lager-Szene* (Scene in Camp) and is a delicately etched intermezzo between its stalwart companion-pieces.

Three Piano Sonatas for the Young, Op 118

Sonata No 1 in G (9')

Allegro. Lebhaft

Thema mit variationen. Ziemlich langsam

Puppen-Wiegenlied. Nicht schnell

Rondoletto. Munter

Kaiwen Jin piano

In 1853 Schumann composed three little sonatas to be played by children, each dedicated to one of his three eldest

daughters. The first was for Julie, who was nine years old; the second was for Elise, who was ten, and the third for Marie, who was twelve. Each of the sonatas is successively more demanding, and there are passages in the second and third which seem to be, like *Kinderszenen*, music about childhood but beyond the skills of twelve-year-olds. Each of these four-movement works is filled with charm, including affectionately titled movements recalling *Album for the Young*,

The first Sonata, the one for nine-year-old Julie, isn't quite a sonata. The first movement is a simple song; the second movement is a theme and five brief variations; the third, anticipating Debussy's *Children's Corner*, is a *Lullaby for a Doll*, and the last is a miniature rondo.

Sonata No 2 in D (11')

Allegro. Lebhaft

Canon. Lebhaft

Abenlied. Langsam

Kindergesellschaft. Sehr lebhaft

Phoebe Papandrea piano

With the Second Sonata we enter a more formal realm. The first movement is in sonata form (only one theme, however) and the second is a Canon. Next is a characteristic Evening Song (*Abendlied*), and at the end a lively Children's Party (*Kindergesellschaft*) which is no picnic for a young pianist: impressive if Clara Schumann's ten-year-old daughter flew through it.

Sonata No 3 in C (14')
Allegro. Im Marschtempo
Andante. Ausdrucksvoll
Zigeunertanz. Schnell
Traum eines Kindes. Sehr lebhaft

Erica Sou Sin U piano

The last Sonata in *Three Piano Sonatas for the Young* opens with a mature, tightly knit sonata movement, followed by a soulful slow movement. By way of a scherzo, the third movement is a vivacious Gypsy Dance, and the work concludes with an expansive rondo recalling the first movement.

BIOGRAPHIES

Hayden Miller

Hayden Miller is a third-year undergraduate pianist from Houston, Texas, and studies with Mei-Ting Sun. Previously he received a diploma in Piano Performance from the Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, where he studied with Piper Ward and Jennifer Hayghe. With repertoire ranging from Louis Couperin to Alexina Louie, he often travels beyond the canon of classical music, creating interdisciplinary experiences with visual artists, writers, actors, and dancers. An advocate for new music, Hayden's performances with the Academy Manson Ensemble have been praised as containing 'every nuance and every gradation of dynamic' (Matthew Johnson, *The Music Professor*). *Curves of Longing*, his debut recording of music by Stewart Lane, has received play on the BBC. Additionally, Hayden has performed at the Folkestone New Music

Festival alongside the RIOT Ensemble. In 2024, he participated in the first complete performance of György Kurtág's *Játékok* at the Royal Academy of Music, and appeared in the Tête-à-Tête Opera Festival. Composers he has worked with include Hans Abrahamsen, Augusta Read Thomas, and Anna Meredith.

Kaiwen Jin

Pianist Kaiwen Jin is in the second year of his bachelor's degree at the Academy, studying with Christopher Elton. Before entering the Academy, Kaiwen studied under the guidance of Associate Professor Hong Huang at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. He won the Third Prize in the Youth International Piano Competition hosted by the Music Middle School affiliated with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and has been invited to perform at prestigious venues across Zhejiang and Shanghai including Cadillac Shanghai Concert Hall and He Luting Concert Hall.

Phoebe Papandrea

Phoebe Papandrea is a first-year undergraduate pianist studying with William Fong. Previously at the Purcell School, Phoebe has performed at the Royal Festival Hall, Carnegie Hall, the Musikverein in Vienna and Salzburg Mozarteum. Recent International competition successes include First Prizes at WPTA Italy, IMF Paris, Livorno Junior and Pacific Stars LA. In the last year Phoebe has performed concertos by Rachmaninov, Beethoven, Chopin and Grieg, both in UK and Europe. She frequently performs at music festivals and academies worldwide, including

Piano Academy Eppan, Piano Loop Festival Croatia, Hanse Piano Festival Hannover, and the Piano Concerto Festival Florence. Phoebe is privileged to receive masterclass tuition from some of the world's leading pianists, including Maria João Pires, Arie Vardi, Pascal Rogé and Stephen Hough.

Erica Sou Sin U

Macao pianist Erica Sou Sin U is a third-year undergraduate pianist studying with Colin Stone. Before coming to London she attended the Junior Music Programme at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, studying with Eleanor Wong. Erica's successes include prizes at international piano competitions in Belgium, UK, United States, and Osaka, Japan; she has performed concerts throughout the UK, in Vienna, Macau, Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Shenzhen. As the winner of the Macao Young Musicians Concerto Category, she performed Mozart's Concerto K.467 with the Macao Orchestra and was invited to perform at the Macau-Shenzhen Economic and Cultural Promotion Founding Ceremony.

4.45PM EPILOGUE

Nachtstücke, Op 23
4 Klavierstücke, Op 32
Faschingschwank aus Wien, Op 26

PROGRAMME NOTES

Nachtstücke, Op 23 (16')
Trauerzug (Funeral procession)
Kuriose Gesellschaft (Strange company)
Nächtliches Gelage (Nocturnal revelries)
Rundgesang mit Solostimmen (Roundelay with solo voices)

Lin Xu-Zhang piano

Nachtstücke Op 23 (1839–40) originally had a far more sinister title: *Leichenfantasie* (Corpse Fantasy), possibly after Schiller. The dark genesis of these night-visions was traced by Schumann in lines to Clara: 'A presentiment haunted me from the 24th - 27th of March, while I was absorbed in my new composition. There's a passage in it that always kept coming back to me: somebody seemed to be sighing from the bottom of his heart...while I was composing I kept seeing funerals, coffins, and unhappy, despairing faces. When I had finished, I was trying to think of a title, and the only one that occurred to me was 'Corpse Fantasy.' Isn't that extraordinary? I was so moved by the music that tears came to my eyes: I didn't know why, and there seemed to be no reason for it. Then came a letter [on 30th March, telling him that Eduard, his older brother, was dying] and everything was at once explained.'

Various associative symbols permeate the movements: the dotted Beethoven and Chopin-inspired funeral rhythms of

the outer tableaux, and Liszt's *Wilde Jagd* influence in the scherzo.

4 Klavierstücke, Op 32 (13')

Scherzo

Gigue

Romanze

Fughette

Herman Med Cerisha piano

Klavierstücke Op 32 (1838–39) comes at the tail-end of the 'fantasy' period for Schumann, with songs, symphonies and chamber music to come. Dedicated to Amalie Rieffel (a Danish student of Schumann's) they form a kind of dotted-rhythm, staccato-dominant suite, bound by a common pedal-tone on D. A coquettish B flat major Scherzo is succeeded by a contrapuntal G minor fugue; then an ardently lyrical D minor third movement before a final G minor *Fughette*.

Schumann wrote in a letter to the critic Gustav Adolph Keferstein: *'The whole German Romantic School is far nearer to Bach in its music than Mozart ever was [...] I myself make a daily confession of my sins to that mighty one, and endeavour to purify and strengthen myself through him!'*

Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op 26 (21')

Allegro

Romanze

Scherzino

Intermezzo

Finale

Sejin Yoon piano

Schumann's second carnival piece, the *Faschingsschwank aus*

Wien (Carnival Scenes from Vienna, 1839), is of different order from his more familiar Op 9 *Carnaval* (1835). In this Viennese work, Schumann abandoned capricious miniatures in favour of a substantial five-movement form - although caprice still plays a major role. Schumann's exuberant Romanticism shines on every page of the score.

Schumann wrote the first four movements in Vienna, and the last one on his return to Leipzig. There are many codes and allusions: the word *Faschingsschwank* contains the letters ASCH-SCHA, which Schumann converted into melodic material. The first, rondo-like movement, an Allegro, has five contrasting sections, the ebullient first one reappearing several times as a refrain separating a series of beguiling and varied episodes. (It's been noticed this section is very similar to Schubert's *Valse Noble* Op 77 No 7.) In the fourth episode - after alluding to his own *Carnaval* - Schumann cheekily chides the Viennese, who at this period had outlawed anything French, by introducing a disguised version of the banned-in-Vienna *Marseillaise*; in the fifth section, he invokes the slow movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata Op 31, No 3, as a homage to one of his idols. A brief, *Romanze* is followed by a buoyant and breezy *Scherzino*, leading to the heart of the work: an impassioned *Intermezzo*, whose intensity is Schumann's longing for the absent Clara: a torrent of soaring, agitated emotion. On the heels of soulfulness, the energetic Finale returns to the spirit of the carnival. Schumann may have been extremely unhappy in Vienna on many levels, but the exhilaration of *Faschingsschwank aus*

Wien demonstrates that his inspired creative energy rose above, as ever, his personal circumstances.

BIOGRAPHIES

Lin Xu-Zhang

Australian-born Lin Xu-Zhang is a first-year postgraduate pianist studying with Professor Joanna MacGregor. He studied for two years at Sydney Conservatorium of Music before completing his undergraduate degree with first-class honours at the Academy. Lin's repertoire spans an enormous breadth, embracing figures as diverse as Dukas and Couperin, Sweelinck and Schoenberg, Mozart and Messiaen. Over this year Lin has undertaken an ambitious schedule of more than four dozen recitals of early keyboard music; highlights include an all-Byrd programme at Lincoln Cathedral, where the composer served as organist and master of choristers four centuries ago. A committed advocate of new music, he has premiered works by Gerard Brophy, Alex Pozniak and Katia Beaugerais.

Herman Med Cerisha

Herman Med Cerisha is a second-year undergraduate pianist studying with Florian Mitrea. Born in Putignano in the Bari region of Italy, Herman was admitted to the National College of Music George Enescu in Bucharest when he was eight years old. In 2020 he won a scholarship to study at The Purcell School and has enjoyed considerable success in international competitions, performing concertos in Kosovo, Bucharest and most recently Cadogan Hall in London. He has also been invited

to perform in prestigious venues including Wigmore Hall, the National Romanian Athenaeum and the Svetlanov Hall in Moscow.

Sejin Yoon

South Korean pianist Sejin Yoon began her studies abroad in the UK at the age of twelve, at Wells Music School, before coming to the Academy as an undergraduate. Sejin is currently in the first year of her Master's degree, studying with Ian Fountain. She is The Musicians' Company's Young Artist. Sejin won the 2026 Sterndale Bennett Prize, as well as the Historical Women Composers Prize established by Diana Ambache. During her undergraduate studies, Sejin was the guest soloist at the Cayman Arts Festival in April 2022, where she gave a recital and several masterclasses. The following November she was selected to participate in The Sir Elton John Global Exchange Programme, joining The Glenn Gould School of The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto for performances. Participating in prestigious festivals form an essential part of her journey as a pianist, fostering her interest in diverse approaches to classical music. Sejin also has had masterclasses with pianists such as Imogen Cooper, Vovka Ashkenazy, Steven Osborne, Yevgeny Sudbin, and Daejin Kim.

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