The Songs of Robert Schumann -

ANN MURRAY · FELICITY LOTT · GRAHAM JOHNSON
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In our own day and age children’s music has become something of a commonplace. Most contemporary composers are more than willing to write for younger people; unless they are particularly inventive their work will cover ground already well trodden by their predecessors. It is difficult to believe that it was only in the last decades of the nineteenth century that music for, and about, children began to be taken seriously by mainstream British composers. At that time it was slowly becoming permissible for children of upper- and middle-class families in this country to study music seriously – seriously enough, that is, to entertain ambitions of a performing career. Everyone learned the piano, and piano music written for children became the vogue. The influence of German was paramount here, as it was in most areas of Victorian cultural life. Clara Schumann’s frequent British tours as a virtuoso pianist burnished her late husband’s reputation not only as a great composer, but as a wise and loving father to well-taught musical children. Schumann’s work in the genre of piano music for the young was an example to countless other composers. He had also written children’s songs (the *raison d’être* of this disc) but these were slower to find a niche in the British market, probably because of the language barrier.

Nevertheless, English composers soon began writing children’s songs of their own. In 1885 Robert Louis Stevenson published *A Child’s Garden of Verses*, poems which were set by Stanford in 1892. Women composers such as Liza Lehmann (a friend of Clara Schumann’s) showed a particular affinity to this genre. As youngsters’ own musical tastes and abilities were taken more seriously, vocal music for children ceased to be a backwater dominated by mediocre composers and lacklustre pedagogues. This corner of children’s music eventually caught up with the long-established traditions of children’s literature and became eminently commercial. In 1915 even Edward Elgar made a valiant, if rather stilted, effort to catch children’s attention with *The Starlight Express*. Later in the century Kodály, Bartók and Britten (among many others) created an important body of music for children that combined tuition and musical enlightenment with red-blooded *joie de vivre*. When Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* was published in 1862, it was noted (often with great disapproval) that it was a children’s story free from moralizing – the book was meant to entertain children rather than ‘do them good’. A century later Benjamin Britten played a similar role to Carroll in musical terms: he freed young singers from the classroom and Sunday school, and cast them in leading operatic roles.

In order to appreciate the changes in attitude over the last three hundred years one has to remember that ‘children’s music’ in the eighteenth century meant the travelling circus of the prodigy Mozart (or his astonishing English contemporary, William Crotch); the parading of these prematurely
bewigged manikins represented the exploitation of childhood, surely, rather than its celebration. In the eighteenth century children were treated as miniature versions of grown-ups, and child musicians were judged by their accomplishments in the adult world. The shifts of perception between Mozart’s time and that of Britten were gradual, and the musicians and poets of Germany (which was a centre of well-organized middle-class family life) played a significant part in establishing this new genre. The first half of the nineteenth century was a time of transition and exploration in this field, and no one was more important in encouraging children to colonize their own musical world than Robert Schumann.

It is a measure of Schumann’s success in writing for, and about, children that many budding young pianists have first encountered his music as a personal discovery, a perfect fit for their youthful talents. After playing my first Schumann piece (admittedly one of the easier ones) I felt that I had embarked on a relationship with someone who was mysterious yet somehow accessible, one of those rare adults who assumes that a child is capable of serious thought. Schumann’s *Kinderszenen* (‘Scenes of Childhood’) ends with *Der Dichter spricht* (‘The poet speaks’); the title implies what I believe to be true – that Schumann can make his music suggest the contours of human speech. The sound of the composer’s own spoken voice is lost to us of course, but I fancy that it runs as a hidden thread through much of his piano-writing. As a young teenager I was unable to analyse this newly discovered intimacy, but he was already my Schumann; his music contained a secret message that I was convinced I could find, if only I looked hard enough (aided by a German dictionary!). With his wonderful musical titles, gobbledygook in secret code, it was Schumann who persuaded me to learn his language. What youngster could fail to be mesmerized by the titles from *Kinderszenen*, or a word like ‘Faschingsschwank’? Who could not thrill to the discovery that, for the initiates, ‘Wien’ is Vienna where Schumann’s ‘Carnival Jest Op 26’ took place? I took my first tentative steps into his world of poetry and allusion because it felt as though I had somehow been invited by him to do so. I daresay countless others have had similar experiences of this composer’s ability to encourage his admirers with a kindly posthumous presence.
In this way, a decade before I discovered an aptitude for working with the human voice in the lieder repertoire, it was Schumann’s piano music (and later Debussy’s) that introduced me to the notion of poetry-in-music where word and tone were somehow interchangeable. For any musical child, sensitive to literature, the revelation of this symbiosis is quietly overwhelming – an entirely different experience from the excitement of encountering the formidable Beethoven. When first meeting this colossus a child enters an entirely adult world in which it seems, if only at first, that words, especially murmured words, are neither spoken nor heard (see the commentary on the piano piece *Fremder Mann* – pages 37–8).

It is not that other great composers have been impervious to the young; children have always been with us, and it would be churlish to deny that since time immemorial certain musicians have been able to communicate with, and delight, their younger friends. In 1812 Beethoven wrote a movement of a piano trio, with scrupulously marked fingerings, for the young Maximiliane Brentano (nine years later she was the dedicatee of his Sonata Op 109); Schubert wrote a piano duet – *Kindermarsch* – for his young friend Faust Pachler of Graz to play with his mother. But these passing encounters with the children of friends could be no substitute for the actual experience of fatherhood where children are at home every day of the week. If we agree to leave Mozart in his separate century, Schumann was one of the very few of the great lieder composers to have a family of his own (admirers of Richard Strauss will have to admit that, as the father of an only son, he is no match for Schumann, the family man, with a brood of six surviving children). Schumann’s music mirrors his roles of passionate suitor, adoring husband and devoted father with transparent autobiographical honesty. The first two of these incarnations, with all their attendant joys and pains, are very familiar to those who have played the more celebrated piano pieces, or sung the famous lieder of the composer’s marriage year, 1840. The songs and piano pieces on this disc, however, show us Schumann in the third role; he is here in his late-thirties, and a sense of responsibility and nurture have been added to his emotional range. Indeed one would have to go back to J S Bach’s notebook for his Anna Magdalena to encounter pieces so lovingly written for family consumption; implicit in the music is the patient understanding that music must be fun and touching, or both, to engage the attention of a beginner.

We must first consider a set of piano pieces, already mentioned above, which makes no appearance on this disc. Schumann had written his *Kinderszenen* Op 15 in 1838 when his own children were only a gleam in his eye; but he already understood what might be called ‘the poetry of childhood’. He was quick to see the link between miniature people and musical miniatures, and how the whimsical fragment (which was his speciality) was ideally suited to the kaleidoscopic nature of children’s experience. It is clear that the composer was man enough to draw from his own childhood experiences – he was obviously on good terms with the child in his own nature. One is reminded of
the stories about how he enjoyed dressing up as a ghost playfully to spook the much younger Wieck children, including Clara, when he was already in his early twenties (the genesis of Hasche-Mann and Fürchtenmachen from the Kinderszenen). Though easier to play than, say, Kreisleriana, these scenes of childhood are by no means pieces to be played by children. They are all musically demanding (the sophisticated simplicity of Träumerei is a test for any adult pianist) and sometimes technically tricky as well. They have, of course, survived effortlessly in the concert hall.

The years between 1838 and 1848 were, to say the least, full of remarkable musical activity with Schumann concentrating on lied, symphonic music and chamber music in turn. He had long experienced the joys of fatherhood (his son Ludwig, his fifth child, was born in January 1848) but, in coping with the death, at sixteen months, of his son Emil in 1847 – albeit in an epoch when infant mortality was not unusual – he had also experienced the pain of being a parent. The Kinderszenen had painted the child’s world from the standpoint of a delighted and interested (although perhaps not involved) adult. Ten years later, in the Klavieralbum für die Jugend, Op 68 (from which fifteen items appear on this disc), Schumann looks at the world through the eyes of his own children. The work is hardly, if ever, heard complete on the concert platform. The pieces are shorter and less complex, but there are forty-three of them as opposed to the thirteen in Op 15. This set of miniatures shows a completely different attitude to the genre: children have been thrilled to play these pieces (‘The merry peasant’ being the most famous example), but these trifles have been welcomed less enthusiastically by professional pianists who require greater challenges for their appearances on the concert platform. A good many of the pieces are suited to the compass of smaller hands – specifically those of Schumann’s eldest daughter Marie. Some of them have purely musical titles (Melodie, Thema, Kleine Fuge) but the narrative ideas which animate much of this music indicate an undiminished ability to enter into the spirit of childhood: Schumann continues to play ‘games’ with that sense of wonder that marks him out from most other composers. This is as true of his children’s songs as it is of his children’s piano music. It is this sense of warmth and reality that differentiates his music from the infinitely more didactic collections of vocal collections for children by such eighteenth-century German composers as Hiller, Burmann and Reichardt.

The original title of the published piano pieces of Op 68 was Clavierstücke für die Jugend. The title of Klavieralbum für die Jugend was a publisher’s idea, a secondary title that soon became the name by which the collection was generally known. During its inception the collection went through a number of different forms in Schumann’s mind: it had started off as a birthday present for Marie Schumann (who turned seven on 1 September 1848); the composer had decided to write pieces for his daughter because he thought that the music usually given to children to play was of poor
quality. Schumann later had the idea of publishing ‘A Christmas album for children who like to play the piano’. This idea came too late for the publisher’s deadlines for the seasonal market, but it is surely the reason why the collection ends with a *Sylvesterlied*, a song for New Year’s Eve.

The *Klavieralbum für die Jugend*, Op 68, was clearly the inspiration for a follow-up, the *Liederalbum für die Jugend*, Op 79, the cycle recorded here. These twenty-nine songs and duets, composed in 1849, were only conceived because the *43 Clavierstücke* had already seen the light of day, and had received a rapturous welcome from the public. ‘It has been selling’, wrote Schumann to his friend Franz Brendel, ‘like few or no other works of recent times.’ The sets were written within a year of each other, and from the same, uniquely Schumannian, creative impulse. There are many parallels between the two works, and a number of shared themes which obviously attracted the composer. For example, there are orphan girls in both sets (in the same tonality); there are pieces entitled *Mignon* in Op 68 and Op 79; there are May songs in each of the works, as well as pieces on Christmas themes. Apart from these similarities the collections delight us in the same way – they offer a profusion of delightful miniatures where the composer, like an artist making a succession of thumbnail sketches, amazes us with his ability to create atmosphere using the most modest musical means.

‘Modest’ is a key word here. In the songs Schumann is indubitably influenced by the two volumes of *Kinderlieder* published by the poet Hoffmann von Fallersleben (settings by various composers of his own children’s poems) in 1843 and 1845. In these collections the accompaniments are kept extremely simple. Indeed, this children’s music has the appearance of folk song arrangements, a hitherto ignored musicological genre which was beginning to be of importance to German scholars at this time. Simplicity is the order of the day, and in all of Schumann’s output there are no accompaniments as bare as many of those from Op 79. This is not to say that these lieder are easy to sing – far from it – but the settings mostly steer clear of preludes and postludes, and the pianist’s role is somewhat suppressed in favour of a nursery-like directness and economy. It is true that the composer is more expressive in the piano-writing as the set progresses – the tone becomes more serious and profound, and two poems by Goethe, no less, are introduced at the end of the work – as if we have worked our way from the lowliest class in the school to the highest. This mirrors the progress from easier to more difficult in the arrangement of the Op 68 piano pieces: the sub-heading of the first section (Nos 1–19) is ‘Für Kleinere’ (‘For the smaller ones’); the second half (Nos 20–43) is subtitled ‘Für Erwachsenere’ (‘For the more grown-up’).

The almost self-conscious simplicity of the piano-writing is problematic when the Op 79 songs are presented as a complete set in performance – a rare occurrence in any case. There is no evidence that Schumann ever intended this vocal anthology to be *heard* as a whole, any more than he
expected the Op 68 piano pieces all to be performed at one sitting; instead these were anthologies from which a young pianist or singer might select something suitable of an evening for a domestic performance in front of their parents. The parents too were likely to have performed the music for their children. As part of the Hyperion Schumann Edition it is clear that there must be a complete recorded performance of the songs of Op 79 – the songs are too united in scale and style to be presented in any other way. But one cannot pretend that this is as straightforward a proposition as presenting a Dichterliebe, Frauenliebe und -leben or Liederkreis, all cycles which were designed to be performed, in their entirety, by grown-ups on the concert platform.

The Liederalbum für die Jugend is not long enough for a complete concert, neither is it short enough to be performed before the interval as half a concert; these twenty-nine songs, under sixty minutes of music, make an awkward three-quarters of an evening’s entertainment (or CD). The music inhabits a world of its own to such an extent that it is all but impossible to tack on a further twenty minutes of unrelated songs on disc, or in the concert hall. This would detract from the very special atmosphere – the world of a child’s imagination – built up over the evening. Therefore I have planned a performing version of the Op 79 cycle for this disc which retains the order of the songs as Schumann published them but interpolates, here and there, solo piano pieces from Op 68. The inclusion of some of this closely related piano music not only unites some of the themes shared by both opus numbers (allowing us to hear these songs and piano pieces side by side), but it also provides a variety of speed and mood missing from parts of Op 79. It must be admitted that (possibly in deference to its youthful performers) the Liederalbum für die Jugend contains rather too many songs in andante tempo, and rather too few piano introductions and postludes. The aggregate impression made by this collection can be samey, notwithstanding its inarguable delicacy and charm: no sooner has one song ended on a vocal cadence than the next strikes up with scarcely a moment of intervening pianistic preparation. Even with a pair of singers tackling Op 79 together (this casting makes sense because of a number of duets in the set) there is a certain lack of respite in these conjunctions – in most of the lieder repertoire singers are given breathing-space while the piano provides the contrasts and commentaries which allow the vocal music to shine in the best light.

I have chosen fifteen short piano pieces from Op 68 and threaded them between the songs in a sequence carefully planned in terms of theme, mood and tonality, avoiding placing piano music between those songs in Op 79 where the composer seems to have envisaged a segue. On this disc the songs of Op 79, taken as a set, are framed by a prologue (an unaccompanied duet written by Schumann to a verse by his daughter Marie) and an epilogue (a setting of Hoffmann von Fallersleben which did not find its way into Op 79, but which rounds off the recital in an appropriate manner – ‘to bed, comrade!’). The result is a sequence of music which is the right shape and length to be performed in the concert hall, and one which permits us a rounded, if not
complete, survey of this extraordinary composer’s response to images of childhood. Taken together the two albums for the young (the whole of Op 79, and about a third of Op 68) enrich each other; they also reinforce our awareness of Schumann’s affinity, more pronounced that in any other composer of his time, to the mind and imagination of the musical child.

In this case, however, the musical child is more likely to have been a pianist rather than a singer. It is a feature of the *Liederalbum für die Jugend* that Schumann mixes two kinds of song: those which were the fruits of his own artistic expression (fully-fledged lieder such as *Sonntag*, *Der Sandmann*, *Mignon* which might have been found in one of his other opus numbers) and those which are character studies – songs in which Schumann distances his adult self from the subject in hand and writes songs which might be sung by, or on behalf of, children (*Frühlingsbotschaft*, *Weihnachtslied* etc). The set seems divided thus between songs for an adult to sing, and songs for children to sing. But even this, given the nature of vocal training, and the time it takes a singer to mature, is unrealistic. The fact is that none of the Op 79 songs are truly suitable for children’s performance in public, whereas many, if not all, of the piano pieces of Op 68 might be performed brilliantly by a gifted child pianist. Vocal development is slower than for all other musical disciplines; simplicity on the printed page may be a guarantee of easy pianism, but it is equally a guarantee of challenging vocalism. The more economical and simple the vocal line, the greater the breath control and legato it requires – seldom the strengths of young singers. Schumann seems not quite to have appreciated that for an inexperienced singer a quick and voluble song is much easier to perform than a slow and sustained one; he erroneously equates pianistic accessibility with vocal ease.

It is perhaps for this reason that the *Klavieralbum für die Jugend* had many more imitators than the album of songs – from a sheerly commercial point of view there were more young pianists looking for this kind of music to perform than there were singers. They had a better chance of success in performance; after all, concert halls are full of teenage pianists while there is a complete lack of professional solo singers who are under twenty. Schumann himself realized that if he was to continue writing music for young people it should be in the form of piano music, not songs. In December 1849 he wrote *Zwölf Klavierstücke*, Op 85, a set of piano duets ‘for small and big children’. In Düsseldorf in 1853 he composed *Drei Klaviersonaten* ‘für die Jugend’ Op 118. Each of these three sonatas is in four short movements and dedicated to one of his piano-playing daughters: the first for Julie ‘the sweet and charming’; the second for Elise ‘the light-hearted artist-in-life’; the third for Marie ‘mature at a young age and forthright’. A further work for piano duet – ‘six easy dance pieces’ published under the title *Kinderball*, Op 130 – completes the list of Schumann’s music for the young.
Here is a list of some of the piano works for, or about, children that were published in the wake of Schumann’s resounding success in the field. Apart from Niels Gade, who was Danish, these are all German composers:

Theodor Kullak (1818–1882): *Kinderleben, kleine Stücke für das Pianoforte* (1850)
Julius Rietz (1812–1877): *Zwölf Kinderstücke* (1856)
Niels Gade (1817–1890): *Der Kinder Christabend* (1860)
Carl Julius Eschmann (1835–1913): *Musikalisches Jugendbrevier* (1865) and *Bilder aus der Jugendzeit* (1878)
Stephen Heller (1813–1888): *Notenbuch für Klein und Groß* (1874)
Ferdinand Hiller (1811–1885): *Jugenderinnerungen* and *Acht leichte Clavierstücke*
Carl Reinecke (1824–1910): *Aus der Jugendzeit, Notenbuch für kleine Leute* and *Musikalischer Kindergarten*
Theodor Kirchner (1823–1903): *Aus der Jugendzeit* (1899)

This list could go on and on – and the same applies to children’s music from other countries. In French music one can only mention here a few famous names: Georges Bizet (*Jeux d’enfants* for piano duet, 1871), Gabriel Fauré (*Dolly*, also for piano duet, 1894), Claude Debussy (*Children’s Corner*, 1908) and Gabriel Grovlez (*L’almanach aux images*, 1911). All of these are clearly influenced by Schumann’s pioneering work.

In Russia, works by Tchaikovsky, Gretchaninov, Kabalevsky, and more recently Sofiya Gubaydulina have been written on children’s themes. None of these seems conceivable without Schumann’s example. Indeed, Tchaikovsky penned a Russian translation of Schumann’s *Musikalische Haus- und Lebens-Regeln* (‘Musical House- and Life-Rules’ – usually translated simply as ‘Advice to Young Musicians’); these were sixty-eight aphorisms which had originally been published as a four-paged appendix to the *Klavieralbum für die Jugend*. A selection of Schumann’s pearls of wisdom is printed in this booklet at the end of this commentary.

There is a strange footnote to the success of the *Klavieralbum für die Jugend*. In 1860 a volume of songs was published by a musician named Johann Hermann, a pseudonym for Johann Hermann Budy. The publisher was Schuberth of Hamburg, who had originally issued the *Klavieralbum*, and who was well-known as a sharp businessman (from this same house came arrangements of Schumann’s *Klavieralbum* for violin and piano, cello and piano, flute and piano, and viola and piano). This new collection was entitled *Neues Lieder-Album für die Jugend. 27 Lieder für eine Stimme … für grosse und kleine Kinder componirt von Robert Schumann*. This was a volume of solo vocal arrangements of a selection of Schumann’s piano pieces. Excerpts from the *Davidsbündlertänze* and *Symphonische Etüden* appear with texts especially adapted to their
melodies. No fewer than eighteen pieces from the *Klavieralbum für die Jugend* appear in this totally spurious volume of songs ‘by Schumann’. Completely new titles are furnished for these pieces (the public was deliberately led to think that these were genuine Schumann lieder, newly discovered in his *Nachlass*). Some of the poets are well known, such as Julius Mosen, Robert Reinick and Ludwig Bechstein. The piano piece *Mignon* (track 43) is somehow made to fit one of Goethe’s Mignon lyrics.

This entire publication was a travesty, and it must have irritated Clara Schumann and Brahms, keepers of the composer’s flame – and copyright, such as it was. Nevertheless, it proves that Schumann’s contemporaries regarded the Op 68 piano pieces as essentially vocal in character, and musically interchangeable with the songs from Op 79. This reinforces the earlier point that in much of Schumann’s piano music he seems to be speaking, or singing, to us. The combination of the two works, as in this recording, would not have seemed at all strange to Schumann’s contemporaries – after all, his early death meant that his music was a precious commodity in short supply. They seemed to believe that any arrangement of Schumann, in any shape or form, was justified by the public’s enthusiasm for his work.

**SCHUMANN AND THE REVOLUTION OF 1849**

Schumann’s reasons for undertaking the *Liederalbum für die Jugend* were partly commercial – he was keen to compose a vocal follow-up to the Op 68 piano pieces. But his determination to remain anchored in the world of children’s music is more complicated than it might seem: the composition of this work represented something of an escape, a retreat from the realities of life which included the worsening political situation everywhere in Europe since 1848, and in particular the revolution in Dresden which broke out on 3 May 1849. At this time the composer was already half-way though the composition of the *Liederalbum*. Terrified of conscription, or worse, he fled the city by rail with his family on 5 May and looked for refuge in various suburbs before he and Clara settled on Kreischa, a peaceful and beautiful little town south-east of Dresden. The actual danger could not have been great (no one was actually pursuing the Schumanns) and this flight from Dresden was organized with little expertise – one imagines Clara, rather than Robert, struggling with all the logistics. He completed the duet *Frühlingslied* on the evening of their arrival in Kreischa. Clara wrote to a friend: ‘Just when everyone thought he’d be breaking out into the most terrifying battle symphonies, there he is writing these dear peaceful little songs.’ She also noted her surprise that ‘horrors of the outside world’ should ‘awaken his inner poetical feelings in such a contrary way’. On 8 May the diary entry notes ‘terrible news’ on the political front, but also shows us that the song *Die wandelnde Glocke* had been composed. On 10 May the Schumanns travelled back for the day to Dresden where there were still all the signs of a ‘terrible revolution’. By 13 May the
Liederalbum was completed with the composition of Goethe’s Mignon. Some time later Schumann wrote of this lied to his publisher Hermann HärTEL: ‘I wrote the song under a certain amount of tension, and surrounded by noise-making children in Kreischa.’

Schumann was, in political terms, an armchair liberal. Like so many civilized men, and so many creative artists, he declined to join the fight; but he was glad it was being fought by others. Unlike Wagner, who raged at the barricades (and who had to flee Dresden for Switzerland on a false passport when the Prussians gained control), Schumann side-stepped any direct involvement with the revolution when it came to his own doorstep. He preferred to give moral support at a distance; he had written Three Freedom Songs for men’s chorus in April 1848, and in June 1849 he wrote his Four Marches for piano, Op 76, in a mood of the greatest fervour. But support for the ideals of the republicans remained theoretical rather than practical. Perhaps his choice of Hoffmann von Fallersleben (renowned for his outspoken liberal ideals) for so many of the texts in his Op 79 was something of a covert act of sympathy. Schumann might have regarded his support of Hoffmann in this way as a kind of subversion – supporting the ideals of the left, without actually endangering himself and his family. These poems were of course inoffensive in political terms, but it is clear that Hoffmann was ‘one of us’ in Schumann’s mind, and not only because of his poetical gifts. The rather bellicose Uhland poem might well have been chosen for political reasons, and Wilhelm Tell, from which the two Schiller settings were chosen, is the story of a famous revolutionary. Ulrich Mahler has pointed out that nine of the twenty-nine songs in Op 79 are songs about spring (a number of them by Hoffman von Fallersleben), and that spring is a metaphor for revolution, particularly in the Vormärz period. The thawing of the ice-age of oppression is symbolized by the arrival of a new season and new hope. ‘Springtime of nations’ was an entry in Schumann’s own diary when he noted the dawning revolutionary mood of March 1848. It is certainly true that the idea of spring plays a surprisingly large part in the set in thematic terms.

The final key to the composer’s attitude to how far he may have permitted himself to become politically involved seems to lie in his choice of text for the penultimate song in Op 79. In selecting the watchman Lynceus Schumann chooses to side with someone who looks at the world and finds it beautiful, no matter what. This is the song of an observer, rather than a doer; in fact, Lynceus’s plight, like Schumann’s in this instance, is that he can only observe, he cannot become involved with any direct action. The only help he can give lies in the use of his powerful eyes. The words in Faust directly following this lyric, the description of the destruction of the home of Philemon and Baucis, seem to condemn the same kind of revolutionary upheaval which Schumann had seen in Dresden (see commentary on pages 62–64 of this booklet).
Schumann’s withdrawal into a childlike universe of his own making was fruitful enough as far as the composition of Op 79 was concerned, but it was surely an ominous omen of his tendency to turn his back on reality. Schumann’s deteriorating ability to deal with the problems of the real world in a decisive manner is possibly an early sign of the illness that would lead to his complete mental breakdown and eventual death.

THE POETS OF SCHUMANN’S LIEDERALBUM FÜR DIE JUGEND

When he was first planning this work Schumann wrote a letter to his publisher: ‘I have selected poems appropriate to childhood from the best poets and arranged them in order of difficulty.’ In fact the arrangement was not nearly as easy as that, and went through various versions. In these Schumann was wearing his teacher’s hat: the logic of pedagogical progress, more than musical cohesion, seems to have been his chief consideration. As discussed above, Dresden was in the middle of a revolutionary upheaval. It is therefore no surprise that he selected so many poems in the set (ten in all, over a third of the total number) from the work of a famous revolutionary poet, August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874), who was among other things an expert, not to say a pioneer, in children’s literature. Hoffmann’s life had been devoted to political causes and political poetry, landing him in severe trouble with the Prussian authorities. As I have already pointed out, Schumann shared Hoffmann’s left-wing sympathies. The poet’s controversial and forthrightly held views made for an unsettled and itinerant life; he was widely travelled and astonishingly prolific.

It was Hoffmann himself (together with his collaborator Ernst Richter) who had approached Schumann at the end of 1843 asking him to contribute a setting to their Fünfzig neue Kinderlieder. Mendelssohn had already been enlisted to the cause (he provided the duet Maiglöckchen und die Blümelein) as had Nicolai, Reissiger and Spohr. For this anthology Schumann was asked to set Hoffmann’s Soldatenlied, which he did. (This unjustly neglected little song, which belongs to no set or opus number, closes this disc.) Schumann’s acquaintance with Hoffmann by letter clearly made him look at the poet’s writing with new enthusiasm; he almost certainly re-read volumes of poetry that had already been published. The complexity of Hoffmann’s publishing history, and his different editions of poetry, are a continuing source of headaches to the bibliophile. There are four editions of Gedichte, each different from the other. The Gedichte of 1843 and 1853 are sources of Brahms songs. Schumann probably knew the first two collections:
Gedichte (1834): This contains Frühlingslied, Frühlings Ankunft, and the text for another Hoffmann setting, Mein Garten, not included on this disc.

Gedichte (1837): This contains Der Abendstern, Frühlingsbotschaft and Sonntag. It also contains the text for Brahms’s song Von ewiger Liebe (‘Dunkel, wie dunkel in Wald und in Feld’) which has been mis-attributed to Josef Wenzig for over a century.

For the probable sources of Hoffmann’s contribution to the Liederalbum we have to turn to his two books of children’s song published in landscape format ‘with both original and well-known tunes’. His Fünfzig Kinderlieder (1843) includes: No 2 Frühlingsbotschaft, here set to a Lower Austrian folk melody; No 28 Der Abendstern, set to a folk melody; No 31 Sonntag set by F Jacob; No 39 König Frühling (Schumann changed the title to Frühlingslied set to an old French air; and No 41 Wie gut bin ich dir! (Schumann changed the title to Schmetterling) set to a Silesian tune.

In the Fünfzig neue Kinderlieder (1845) are No 1 Hinaus ins Freie set to a Silesian folk melody; No 4 Frühlings Ankunft set by A Marr; No 15 Frühlingsbewillkommnung (Schumann changes the title to Frühlingsgruss) set as a Silesian folk melody; No 40 Vom Schlaraffenland set to a Silesian melody; and No 45 Die Waise set to a folk melody. Some of these poems are to be found nowhere else in Hoffmann’s published lyrics which suggests that Schumann availed himself of the complimentary copy of the music (including his own freshly printed song Soldatenlied as No 22) which was presumably sent to him in 1845.

There was clearly an old-fashioned side to Schumann which believed that a musical work intended for the education of German children should contain a certain number of ‘great’ German poems with something of a patriotic tone of voice. The composer clearly found an anthology to help him in his search. This was Liederbuch des deutschen Volkes (‘Song Book of the German People’), which was edited by Karl von Hase and published in 1843. This is the source of no fewer than seven songs in Op 79. Among these are the two poems by Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805), one of Schubert’s (and Germany’s) greatest poets, but a stranger to Schumann (at least as a song composer) until 1849. Schumann composed the famous ballad Der Handschuh (‘The Glove’) in that year, as well as the two songs from the play Wilhelm Tell recorded here. These are two set-pieces for young people: the shepherd who sings Des Sennen Abschied, and the feisty boy, William Tell’s son, who sings Des Buben Schützenlied.

Another poem taken from Hase’s anthology is Spinneliend which is quoted in the musical edition as a ‘fliegendes Blatt’ (a ‘flying leaf’, thus a
poem whose source is not precisely known). Its heading in the *Liederbuch des deutschen Volkes* is *Volkslied, aus dem Knaben Wunderhorn. Mailied*, *Die Schwalben* and *Kinderwacht* are all further such ‘fliegende Blätter’ taken from the same Hase anthology. Thank to recent scholarship, some of these ‘flying leaves’ have come to rest after a hundred and fifty years. Schumann would never have known that the anthologized *Mailied* is by **Christian Adolf Overbeck of Lübeck** (1755–1821). Research has also revealed that *Kinderwacht* was the work of **Melchior von Diepenbrock** (1798–1853), a theologian, and later a cardinal. *Die Schwalben* was penned by a poetess named **Auguste von Pattberg** (1769–1850), but the lyric became absorbed, like so many others, into the famous Arnim-Brentano anthology, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*. This three-volume collection achieved its greatest fame much later in the century in connection with Gustav Mahler’s songs. Schumann took two poems for Op 79 directly from this source, *Käuzlein* (originally spelled ‘Keuzlein’) and *Marienwürmchen*. Despite its inclusion in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (where the heading is ‘Mündlich’, implying a word-of-mouth source) the poet of *Marienwürmchen* is now thought to have been **Caroline Rudophi** (1754–1811).

Schumann took one more of his Op 79 songs, *Der Sandmann*, from an anthology for children. This was the newly published *Alte und neue Kinderlieder, Fabeln, Sprüche und Räthsel* (‘Old and new Children’s songs, Fables, Sayings and Puzzles’, 1849) by Georg Scherer (its frontispiece is printed on the back of this booklet). This became one of the most famous of all children’s books in German publishing history, and its illustrations by a wide range of artists added a lustre entirely missing from earlier works of the kind, for example the Hase anthology. The poet of *Der Sandmann*, acknowledged in tiny print in an index at the back of the book, was **Hermann Kletke** (1813–1886). He was born in Breslau but spent time in Vienna (where he befriended Lenau) and Berlin (where he became the editor of the *Vossische Zeitung*). Kletke was famous in his time as a collector of fairy tales and fables.

For the two settings of **Emanuel Geibel** (1815–1884) – *Zigeunerliedchen I* and *II*, and *Spansiche Liebeslieder*, Op 138 – Schumann turned to the source of two works for vocal ensemble that he also composed in 1849: the *Spanisches Liederspiel*, Op 74, and the *Spanische Liebeslieder*, Op 138. The texts for these songs are to be found in Geibel’s *Volklieder und Romanzen der Spanier* (1843). In this book there is a section (LII) entitled *Zigeunerliedchen* – ‘Little Gypsy songs’. This consists of thirty quatrains, each separated by a short line. Geibel explains that his source for these rather wayward strophes was the British authority on gypsy life, George Borrow (1803–1881). Geibel allows Borrow to explain the poems in a footnote: ‘The Gypsy poetry consists of quartets or rather couplets, but two lines being discernible, and those generally imperfect, the vowels alone agreeing in sound. The thought, anecdote, or adventure described is seldom carried on beyond one stanza in which
everything is expressed which the poet wishes to impart … which style of composition is by no means favourable to a long and connected series of thought.’

Perhaps Schumann was unable to understand Borrow’s point, quoted by Geibel in the original English. As a result, the first of Schumann’s Zigeunerliedchen (the third, fourth and fifth of the printed quatrains) makes strange reading. We attempt to make a story of these three verses, as did the composer. This is more or less possible, but we are confused by the change of narrator (a shift from the third to the first person) between verses 1 and 2. It is likely that the poet never intended any of these verses to be run into each other. The second of Schumann’s two Zigeunerliedchen is even more of a mystery. The first strophe (‘Jeden Morgen, in der Frühe’) is the eighth of these gnomic Zigeunerliedchen. It is repeated as the song’s third verse. But the source of the second verse remains unknown. Perhaps it is an addition by Schumann himself. There is a short biography of Geibel printed in the commentary booklet for Volume 6 of the Hyperion Schumann Edition (CDJ33106).

There are no fewer than five distinguished literary figures who are represented in Op 79 by a single song: Uhland, Mörike, Rückert, Hebbel and Andersen. In these choices we can see Schumann’s desire to add a range of literary distinction to his vocal enterprise. Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862) of Tübingen was the embodiment of German Romanticism and one of the greatest of the German poets. Yet Schubert set only one of his poems (the famous Frühlingsglaube) and so did Schumann — the simple and strophic Des Knaben Berglied. Brahms set Uhland four times (including the famous Der Schmied) but it was left to Richard Strauss in his ten Uhland songs to explore a side of this poet ignored by other composers.

Uhland’s friend and fellow Swabian Eduard Mörike (1804–1875) was still biding his time to await the composer of his destiny — an immortal link with Hugo Wolf and his 53 Mörike settings which he did not live long enough to experience for himself. Schumann had almost certainly discovered this delightful poet in 1838, the year his poems were published, but the songs Die Soldatenbraut and Das verlassene Mägdlein date from
1847. The song on this disc, Er ist’s, was composed in 1849 alongside all the other Op 79 songs. Schumann’s boast to his publisher that he had sought out the ‘best’ poets is made immeasurably more credible by the inclusion of Mörike in this anthology.

Fortunately Schumann could not resist the temptation to include his beloved Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866) in this collection, even if it was only for the single bloom of Schneeglöckchen. Here was a writer, poet of married life and conjugal devotion, who had been the composer’s spiritual companion (they never met) since 1840 and the heady days of the composition of Myrten. The song cycle from Rückert’s Liebesfrühling, Op 37, is to be found in the Volume 4 of the Hyperion Schubert Edition where there is also a biography of this poet. As thoroughly as Schumann knew his Rückert, the vast number of verses written by this poet ensured a surprise at every turn. It is likely that this was yet another of the poems Schumann encountered for the first time in Leopold Hase’s Liederbuch des deutschen Volkes.

Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863) was more famous as a playwright than a poet. Schumann envisaged him as librettist for his opera Genoveva, but those plans came to nothing. The most substantial Hebbel works by Schumann are two melodramas for actor’s voice and piano (Schön Hedwig and Ballade vom Haidenknaben) which will appear in a later volume of the Hyperion Schumann Edition, as will the writer’s biography. Das Glück is one of Schumann’s most delightful duets, taken from the 1842 edition of Hebbel’s poems, the first of his two collections. It is a paradox that this most light-hearted of pieces should come from the pen of perhaps the most self-consciously serious of all the composer’s collaborators.

In 1840 Schumann had set almost an entire song cycle (Op 40) to the poetry of Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875). These four translations by Adalbert von Chamisso from the original Danish provided one of his most unusual and penetrating vocal works. Andersen was better known as a fabulist than as a poet, but Schumann must have acquired the complete edition of his works that was issued in German translation in 1847. In this Gesammelte Schrifte, volumes 26, 27 and 28 are given over to Andersen’s poems. In the first of these there is a long verse-poem entitled Der Weihnachtsabend – ‘Christmas Night’. Several characters are included in this little drama – the names of the children are Waldemar, Jonna and Louise. Before the story becomes complicated by spirits dancing out of their graves (there is
always a dark edge to Andersen’s work) the words of Weihnachtslied are spoken in chorus by ‘poor children on the street’. The piece is thus related to the theme of orphans which seems to have haunted this composer’s conscience.

Schumann knew that the best testimony to the poetic qualities of his song collection would be the inclusion of three settings of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832). He wrote to his friend Emanuel Klitzsch: ‘At the end comes Mignon, on the threshold of a more complex emotional life.’ In 1849, the centenary year of the poet’s birth, it was virtually impossible to avoid this colossus – and, to be fair, by 1849 (the year of the Scenes from Faust, and of the nine songs from Wilhelm Meister) Schumann had little fear of setting Goethe’s words to music. One has the distinct impression, however, that he had been exceedingly diffident about Goethe in earlier years. The inclusion of a few poems from the West-östlicher Divan in the Myrten of 1840 does little to convince us that he is at ease with Schubert’s great collaborator. Nevertheless, Schumann eventually became a fine and important Goethe composer; with so many poems to choose from he deliberately limits his possibilities by seeking out two children’s poems from the master’s work, one male and one female. Die wandelnde Glocke is a merry fable to frighten a naughty boy – though not too seriously. Mignon, the haunting character from Wilhelm Meister, is a visionary adolescent girl: here she sings the famous lyric which describes her longing to return to Italy, her homeland. Both of these poems are to be found in the first volume of the Goethe edition owned by Schumann, the famous Ausgabe letzter Hand (1827–1832), the last edition of his work supervised by the great man himself. The enthusiasm with which this Wilhelm Meister song was greeted by the fastidious singer Livia Frege must have encouraged Schumann to press ahead with further Mignon settings, and songs for the Harper as well. These were composed in June 1849 and published as Op 98a. (Schumann’s Mignon has the unique distinction of appearing in two opus numbers – as the last of Op 79, and the first of Op 98a.)

A much more unusual choice is that of the poem for the penultimate song, a setting from the second part of Faust entitled Lied Lynceus des Türmers. This is to be found in Volume 41 of the comprehensive Goethe edition in Schumann’s possession. Carl Loewe had published a beautiful setting of this text in 1834, and it is this perhaps which inspired Schumann to do the same, although he was busily involved with studying Faust for reasons of his own (see commentary below). This is far from a child’s poem; indeed it is the work of an old man, Goethe himself, who is coming to the end of his long and fruitful life, and who is grateful for everything he has seen. As the cycle is drawing to its close, Schumann inserts an aria for a great old sage. The idea of a young person performing a song like this seems directly contrary to its entire spirit, but this is a poem to which a child may listen with wonder.
PROLOGUE

Marie Schumann (1841–1929)

1 Liedchen von Marie und Papa
Song from Marie and daddy
WoO 26 No 3; composed 13 September 1852; sung by Felicity Lott and Ann Murray

Gern mach ich Dir heute
I’d like to give you

Eine kleine Freude,
A little joy,

Doch wirst Du wohl zufrieden sein,
I guess you’ll be pleased,

Bring ich Dir nur ein Verselein!
If I write you a little poem!

Dir immer versüssen Dein Leben
I shall always try

Wird ewig sein mein Streben,
To sweeten your life,

Dir ein dankbar Herz zu weihen
I shall never forget

Wird niemals vergessen sein!
To be grateful!

This disc begins by introducing the performers: first the two singers (track 1), and then the pianist (track 2), before they all combine in the first song of the Liederalbum für die Jugend (track 3).

In his household book for 12 September, Schumann notes: ‘The little birthday poem of the children and my music.’ This was performed the following day in honour of Clara Schumann’s thirty-third birthday. According to the song’s title, the poem was by Marie, the Schumanns’ eldest child. The two-part writing has the light touch of a master, the authentic Schumann – particularly in the second half of the tiny piece. This is a charming glimpse, however brief, into the domestic life of the Schumann family where there was always a reason to make music.

2 * *

Op 68 No 21 (Klaveralbum für die Jugend)

The three little stars of the title are a mystery; there are three pieces scattered through Op 68 which bear this inscription, all of them particularly tender and heartfelt. Alfred Dörffel, the work’s first critic, regarded this triangle of asterisks as expressive of the mute and instinctive compassion of children – ‘a purity of spirit
which, when encountering pain for the first time, allows the sound of words to melt into silent sadness, something only music can express’. Not for the first time we hear the composer’s voice in tones rather than words.

But words are also implicit here, and they speak of a tender offering, enshrined in solemn ceremony. The melody is derived from the trio in the second act of Beethoven’s *Fidelio* (‘Euch werde Lohn in bessern Welten’) when Florestan, believing he is about to die, receives bread and wine from Leonore’s hands. Schumann’s piece is written in a radiant C major, the tonality of purity. It is interesting that the other Beethoven melody (from the song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*) which appears in Schumann’s piano Fantaisie, and in *Siüßer Freund* from *Frauenliebe und -leben*, is also transposed into this unblemished key. In a postlude (eventually cut from the final version of the *Klavieralbum*) Schumann weaves this fragment of *Fidelio* melody as if it were a duet between soprano and tenor – a dialogue between right hand and left, Leonore and Florestan. The closing bars of the extant version are still worthy of a postlude for one of Schumann’s lieder. The reference to a ‘better world’, referred to in the Beethoven trio, leads us to the beginning of Op 79 and a description of the distant evening star.

**LIEDERALBUM FÜR DIE JUGEND Op 79**

August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

### 3 Der Abendstern

**The evening star**

Op 79 No 1; sung by Ann Murray (verses 1 and 3) and Felicity Lott (verses 2 and 4)

- Du lieblicher Stern, You lovely star,
- Du leuchtest so fern, You shine from afar,
- Doch hab ich dich dennoch Yet I love you dearly
- Von Herzen so gern. With all my heart.

- Wie lieb ich doch dich How fervently
- So herzinniglich! I love you!
- Dein funkelndes Äuglein Your twinkling eye
- Blickt immer auf mich. Watches over me always.

- So blick ich nach dir, So I look at you,
- Sei’s dort oder hier: Wherever you are:
- Dein freundliches Äuglein Your friendly eye
- Steht immer vor mir. Is always before me.
Wie nickst du mir zu  How you beckon to me,
In fröhlicher Ruh! Happy and at peace!
O liebliches Sternlein, O lovely little star,
O wär ich wie du! I wish I were like you.

Throughout this cycle we are reminded of Schumann’s study of Bach whose memorable chorales had such an influence on his fellow Leipziger. Like his great forbear, Schumann can always conjure something memorable in terms of melody with the simplest musical means. Here the tune is harmonized in a circle of descending fifths (in the original key: A–D, then C sharp–F sharp–B–E and back to A). Thus the star, or at least its beneficent light, falls gently towards earth. The song is closely related to another song of starlight – the much more sophisticated Mein schöner Stern written less than two months later.

4 Kleine Studie
Op 68 No 14 (Klavieralbum für die Jugend)

There is something seraphic in this rippling music which once again, in a way already very old-fashioned for 1848, suggests Bach – this time the composer of the First Prelude from the ‘48’. The whole piece is an exercise in evenness of touch and control of dynamics. The pianist’s fingers fly ethereally through the staves while fragments of hidden melody are pricked out in the upper fingers of the right hand.

August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

5 Schmetterling
Op 79 No 2; sung by Ann Murray

O Schmetterling sprich, O butterfly, say,
Was fliehest du mich? Why fly from me?
Warum doch so eilig, Why hurry so,
Jetzt fern und dann nah! First far and then near?

Jetzt fern und dann nah, First far and then near,
Jetzt hier und dann da. – First here and then there,
Ich will dich nicht haschen, I don’t want to catch you,
Ich tu dir kein Leid. I’ll do you no harm.

Ich tu dir kein Leid: I’ll do you no harm,
O bleib allezeit! Oh stay forever,
Und wär ich ein Blümchen, And if I were a flower,
So spräch ich zu dir. I’d say to you,
So sprach ich zu dir:
Komm, komm doch zu mir!
Ich schenk dir mein Herzchen,
Wie gut bin ich dir!

I’d say to you:
Come, come here to me!
I’ll give you my heart,
I love you so!

The idea of flight is continued in a masterful little miniature where the size of the butterfly is mirrored exactly in the scale of the music. This is all about flitting as much as flying, and in this scherzo we can see the child’s eye delightedly follow the insect’s fitful visits and dalliances. The tiny hunting horn motifs remind us that the little insect is a Don Juan programmed to seduce the flowers. (Schubert in his Schelgel setting Der Schmetterling acknowledges a similar roguishness.) The way the voice bounces off the piano, and vice-versa, denotes perfect reciprocity: every movement of the butterfly is mirrored by a complementary reaction from the flowers in the garden – the laws of nature translated into musical metaphor.

August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

Frühlingsbotschaft
Op 79 No 3; sung by Felicity Lott

Kuckuck, Kuckuck ruft aus dem Wald:
Cuckoo, cuckoo calls from the wood:

Lasset uns singen, lasset uns springen,
Let us sing,
Lasset uns singen und springen!
Let us dance!

Frühling wird es nun bald!
Spring will soon be here.

Kuckuck, Kuckuck läßt nicht sein Schrein:
Cuckoo, cuckoo does not cease calling:

Komm in die Felder, Wiesen und Wälder!
The meadows and woods!

Komm in die Felder und Wälder!

Frühling, stelle dich ein!
Spring, don’t be long in coming!

Kuckuck, Kuckuck, trefflicher Held!
Cuckoo, cuckoo, gallant hero!

Was du gesungen, ist dir gelungen,
Your refrain
Ist dir gelungen, gelungen:
Was not in vain:

Winter räumet das Feld.
Winter is on the run.

This is another nature portrait, and it is only slightly less delightful than its predecessor because the staccato-voiced cuckoo (with more hunting-horn motifs) is a rather less poetic creature than the hovering butterfly. The political aspects of Hoffmann’s verse are clear in the third strophe: spring is as much a hero as a freedom-fighter; winter is the pre-revolutionary ‘age of discontent’, and the lyric proposes its immediate evacuation. The questioning suspense introduced into the music at ‘Frühling wird es nun bald!’ seems impatient for an affirmative answer. What we have taken to be the horn fanfares of nature are also perhaps the bugle calls of regime change.
Frühlingsgruss
Op 79 No 4; sung by Ann Murray

Spring greeting

A thousand greetings to you,
Sweetest, sweetest Spring!
Welcome to our valley here,
Sweetest, sweetest Spring!
Sweetest Spring, wherever you be,
We salute you joyously with singing and rejoicing.

You come, and all the world’s happy,
Sweetest, sweetest Spring!
Meadow, forest and field rejoice,
Sweetest, sweetest Spring!
Jubilation everywhere:
Lark and nightingale greet you.

A thousand greetings to you,
Sweetest, sweetest Spring!
O stay a long time in our valley,
Sweetest, sweetest Spring!
Enter into every heart,
Let everyone rejoice with us!

This is another spring song but it is in a new and rather more solemn genre – at least as far as this set of songs is concerned. This melody, deeply felt and also rather ceremonial, is in the manner of the Studentlied, a type of earnest drinking song that one might imagine being sung in Heidelberg by Eichendorff and his comrades. (The world of Romberg’s The Student Prince comes to mind.) The four-part writing of the accompaniment suggests how the melody might have been harmonized for men’s chorus. All in all, this is a deeply Teutonic creation, slightly ponderous but noble and nostalgic, radiant in a mournful manner as even happy songs of this very German type can be. Spring is so beautiful and so short-lived that even a song in its praise is tinged with the sadness of its passing.
Vom Schlaraffenland  
Cloud-cuckoo land
Op 79 No 5; sung by Felicity Lott (verses 1 and 3) and Ann Murray (verses 2 and 4)

Kommt, wir wollen uns begeben  
Come, let’s now set out
Jetzo ins Schlaraffenland!  
For cloud-cuckoo land!
Seht, da ist ein lustig Leben  
Look, life’s merry there
Und das Trauern unbekannt.  
And sorrow’s unknown.
Seht, da läßt sich billig leben  
Look, you can live cheaply there,
Und umsonst recht lustig sein.  
And be happy for nothing at all:
Milch und Honig fließt in Bächen,  
Milk and honey flow in streams,
Aus den Felsen quillt der Wein.  
The waterfalls are wine.
Und von Kuchen, Butterwecken  
And the boughs are weighed down
Sind die Zweige voll und schwer;  
With cakes and buttered buns;
Feigen wachsen in den Hecken,  
Figs grow in the hedgerows,
Ananas im Busch umher.  
Pineapples in every copse.
Keiner darf sich mühn und bücken,  
No one there must work or slave,
Alles stellt von selbst sich ein.  
Everything happens of its own accord.
O wie ist es zum Entzücken!  
O how delightful it is!
Ei, wer möchte dort nicht sein!  
Who wouldn’t wish to live there!

Musical sophistication takes a back seat here in order to avoid a conflict of interest with a slew of words. There is social satire here in plenty from the poet as he mocks the aspirations of greedy...
bourgeois society, spoiled children who want to have their cake and eat it. Schumann seems not to have seen the inherent sarcasm in the words – in any case musical irony is the province of very few composers, and Schumann was not one of them. Instead he sees the poem as an opportunity to make a jolly little song, skilfully put together in its way, light on melody but definitely heavy in textual calories.

9 Ländliches Lied  
Song of the land  
Op 68 No 20 (Klavieralbum für die Jugend)

This is another deeply German creation. Its simple chorale-like melody, underpinned by a real breadth of feeling, seems to have come from the soil of the Fatherland and the simple folk who wield the plough to make it fertile. We are reminded that Schumann worked on the very brink of the period when folk song became the passion of serious composers – as was definitely the case with Brahms. Eugenie Schumann, youngest daughter of Robert and Clara, had an interpretative idea of the piece which must have come directly from her mother: ‘It is clear that in Ländliches Lied only one girl sings at first [bars 1–8], then the chorus of boys and girls joins in [bars 9–16]. A girl intones the second section [bars 17–25] and at the repeat of the first theme one of the boys blows a simple descant on his recorder.’ There is something serious and devotional about this music despite the more light-hearted middle section. The part-writing is similar to that found in the introduction to the next song, Sonntag. In that piece, also thanks to Schumann’s music, we never doubt that Hoffmann’s text is describing a Sunday deep in the country.

August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

10 Sonntag  
Sunday  
Op 79 No 6; sung by Felicity Lott

Der Sonntag ist gekommen,  
Sunday has come,  
Ein Sträußchen auf dem Hut;  
A posy in his hat,  
Sein Aug ist mild und heiter,  
His eyes are smiling and gentle,  
Er meint’s mit allen gut.  
He’s friendly to everyone.

Er steigt auf die Berge,  
He climbs the mountains,  
Er wandelt durch das Tal,  
He walks through the valley,  
Er ladt zum Gebete  
Inviting everyone  
Die Menschen allzumal.  
To say their prayers.

Und wie in schönen Kleidern  
And just as young and old are dressed  
Nun pranget jung und alt,  
In their Sunday best,  
Hat er für sie geschmückt  
He has beautified for them  
Die Flur und auch den Wald.  
The meadows and the woods.
Und wie er allen Freude
Und Frieden bringt und Ruh,
So ruf auch du nun jedem
„Gott grüß dich“ freundlich zu.

And just as he brings joy
And peace and rest to everyone,
So you should say a friendly ‘God bless!’
To everyone you meet.

The culmination of this sub-section of six settings by Hoffmann von Fallersleben is a little masterpiece, the most developed of the songs so far. How Brahms must have loved this music written by the only man he really acknowledged as his master – there is enough here to have lasted that composer a lifetime in terms of influence (cf. his own Sonntag in the same key of F major, and also his song Komm bald). It is the unconscious connection with folk song which provides the earthiness and sanity of the music: it is anchored in a quiet religious confidence, without being heavy or sanctimonious. The key words are ‘mild und heiter’; all is toleration and expansive enjoyment of the here and now. The poem suggests that Sunday is an actual person: we hear his quietly meandering progress throughout the piece in wafting quavers, as if he were a kind of ‘Musensohn’ travelling through the country and gently inspiring his parishioners.

In this mood Schumann might even be called an honorary Englishman for this is also a depiction of the Victorian country Sunday par excellence. In the introduction we fancy we can hear the organist at work with his devout, but rather stiff, fingers. There is no unseemly hurry in this world which glows with the sunlit calm of a summer’s day in the 1840s. The topography suggested by Hoffmann seems similar to that of Kreischa, the beautiful valley town in which the Schumanns found shelter in the May days of the Dresden revolution.

### Reiterstück

Rider piece

Op 68 No 23 (Klavieralbum für die Jugend)

This is a virtuoso description of something that is almost cinematic in its detail – long shot, followed by close-up, then long shot again. The music depicts a rider, or a group of riders. In these ominous rumblings we hear first the approach, and then the departure, of one or more horsemen. These are men on a mission and we detect a certain grim menace in their determination. It is a scenario which is easily understandable by young pianists who have yet to grapple with more emotional musical issues. The music begins with the thundering of hooves far in the distance, pianissimo. In bars 6 to 7 there is a crescendo. Bars 9 to 16 are fortissimo; we sense that the horses are almost on top of us here as they gallop past. The remainder of the piece – marked ‘Nach und nach schwächer’ (‘gradually weaker’) and then ‘Immer schwächer’ (‘always weaker’) – is an extended exercise in cavalry retreat.

For more than half of the piece the music becomes less dense, and less animated. Eventually the tremor of semiquavers gives way to quavers and dotted-crotchet chords in the bass clef. The riders
who, only seconds before, had been pounding through the staves, seem to dematerialize before our very ears. Schumann had always been interested in making music dissolve like a ‘drift of foam’ – the ‘eitel Schaum’ which closes the Dichterliebe setting Aus alten Märchen. This is another brilliant example of a musical hairpin, evaporation, a depiction of the Doppler effect long before fast cars and ambulances.

Emanuel Geibel (1815–1884)

**Zigeunerliedchen I**

Op 79 No 7; sung by Ann Murray

Unter die Soldaten
Ist ein Zigeunerbub’ gegangen,
Mit dem Handgeld ging er durch,
Und morgen muß er hangen.

Holten mich aus meinem Kerker,
Setzten auf den Esel mich,
Geißelten mir meine Schultern,
Daß das Blut floß auf den Weg.

Holten mich aus meinem Kerker,
Stießen mich ins Weite fort,
Griff ich rasch nach meiner Büchse,
Tat auf sie den ersten Schuß.

Gypsy song I

A gypsy lad
Joined the soldiers,
He embezzled the bounty
And tomorrow must hang.

They took me from my cell,
They set me on a donkey,
They scourged my shoulders
Till blood ran on the road.

They took me from my cell,
They made me run for my life,
I swiftly drew my gun,
Fired at them the first shot.

Schumann could not resist a pair of Spanish stylizations for his children’s song book. A month or so earlier he had completed a sparkling set of Geibel settings (the Spanisches Liederspiel) and he was obviously still in the mood to explore Spain’s musical resonances. The galloping steed of Reiterstück is here replaced by a donkey; as a means of escape it is a close relative of the mountain pony used for his get-away by Der Contrabandiste, a song which is appended to the Spanisches Liederspiel. Most German children had never seen anyone Spanish, but in this case the words ‘Spanish’ and ‘gypsy’ are more or less interchangeable. Gypsies, home-grown ones, were known throughout Germany – for a child from a middle-class family they no doubt represented something both frightening and thrilling, a mixture of the criminally forbidden and the brilliantly exotic. It is significant that Geibel’s poem refers to imprisonment and imminent execution – certainly the most
violent imagery in the entire song book, and an unpleasant prophecy of the Nazi atrocities against
the gypsies. The good news is that the condemned man has the wit (and cheek) to escape his fate.
Schumann’s dance-like setting, with its touches of vocal melisma, has plenty of spirit with an
irresistible suggestion of (unmarked) accelerando in the piano’s ritornelli. The provenance of the
unusual poem has already been discussed in the commentary on the cycle’s poets.

Emanuel Geibel (1815–1884)

Gypsy song II

Zigeunerliedchen II
Op 79 No 8; sung by Ann Murray

Jeden Morgen, in der Frühe,
Wenn mich weckt das Tageslicht,
Mit dem Wasser meiner Augen
Wasch’ ich dann mein Angesicht.

Wo die Berge hoch sich türmen
An dem Saum des Himmels dort,
Aus dem Haus, dem schönen Garten,
Trugen sie bei Nacht mich fort.

Jeden Morgen, in der Frühe,
Wenn mich weckt das Tageslicht,
Mit dem Wasser meiner Augen
Wasch’ ich dann mein Angesicht.

This is a touching plaint, one of the most perfect pages in the Liederalbum für die Jugend. As in
Melancholie (from the Spanisches Liederspiel) the relatively untravelled composer suggests with
uncanny accuracy the doleful intensity of a Mediterranean culture in emotional extremis. The first
(and last) strophes of the poem are original Geibel, even if borrowed from Borrow (see
commentary on the poets above). The middle strophe, however, could well be original Schumann.
Eric Sams, with his usual perspicacity, observes that, with the addition of this verse, this little song
is none other than a Hispanic version of the story of Mignon with memories of her beautiful house
and garden – a mixture of ‘Kennst du das Land?’ and ‘Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt’. The spread
chords of the accompaniment bring to mind the baleful musical personality of the harper in
Wilhelm Meister. The most admirable thing is that Schumann seems to be able to write his own
folk music and convince us that it comes from a genuinely Spanish, or gypsy, source.
Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862)

**Des Knaben Berglied**
Op 79 No 9; sung by Felicity Lott

Ich bin vom Berg der Hirtenknab,  
Seh auf die Schlösser all herab.  
Die Sonne strahlt am ersten hier,  
Am längsten weilet sie bei mir,  
Ich bin der Knab’ vom Berge!  
Vom Berg der Hirtenknab!

Der Berg, der ist mein Eigentum,  
Da ziehn die Stürme rings herum,  
Und heulen sie von Nord und Süd,  
So überschallt sie doch mein Lied.  
Ich bin der Knab’ vom Berge!  
Vom Berg der Hirtenknab!

Sind Blitz und Donner unter mir,  
So steh’ ich hoch im Blauen hier;  
Ich kenne sie und rufe zu:  
Laßt meines Vaters Haus in Ruh!  
Ich bin der Knab’ vom Berge!  
Vom Berg der Hirtenknab!

Und wann die Sturmglock’ einst erschallt,  
Manch Feuer auf den Bergen wallt,  
Dann steig’ ich nieder, tret’ ins Glied  
Und schwing’ mein Schwert und sing’ mein Lied:  
Ich bin der Knab’ vom Berge!  
Vom Berg der Hirtenknab!

For the first time in the work we hear something that might be interpreted as a call to arms. The fanfare of the piano’s introduction suggests someone brave and able to fight for his rights. This music is a strange mixture of grown-up militant determination and boyish charm – the echo effects (including the use of wide intervals) owe something to the picture-postcard whimsy of Schubert’s *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*. The third verse in particular suggests a boy hero, a pin-up and role-model for other youngsters in times of war. Schumann may have been sympathetic to the left, but he remained a patriot who believed that one of a parent’s responsibilities was to foster national
loyalties. One is reminded of young men conscripted to defend their country and die before their time – whether the British boy soldiers who lied about their age in World War I, or the Hitler Jugend commanded to fight the Russians entering Berlin. It seems clear that this vignette, lacking any great musical distinction, would not have appeared in this collection if the stirring political events of 1849 had not taken place.

May, dear May

Op 68 No 13 (Klavieralbum für die Jugend)

This, rather more than other items in the Klavieralbum, is a fully worked-out, fully fledged, piano piece in the manner of a Mendelssohn Song without Words, and in the Mendelssohnian key of E major. This is perfect Schumann however, brilliantly conceived – all derived, with the greatest compositional economy, from the dancing little motif announced in the piece’s opening two bars. The secret of the music’s particular enchantment is that it is light and bright – as childlike as a spring day. This deftness and sparkle is achieved by the work’s tessitura – the majority of the piece is written with both hands in the treble clef and the left hand only rarely descends to the lower regions of the pianoforte. The fastidiously marked articulation (copious use of staccato and mezzo staccato in the piano-writing) also places spring in the music’s step. The use of imitation between the hands is handled with great skill, and the subtle chromaticism of the harmonic twists and turns does not disturb the deliberate mood of artless naivety. All in all, this is a piece which sounds a good deal more simple than it turns out to be – it is as natural as a flowering bloom in the garden which owes its growth to the lavish care of an astute gardener.

Christian Overbeck (1755–1821)

May song

Op 79 No 10; sung by Felicity Lott and Ann Murray

Komm lieber Mai und mache
Die Bäume wieder grün
Und lasst uns an dem Bache
Die kleinen Veilchen blüh’n.
Wie möchten wir so gerne
Ein Blümchen wieder seh’n
Und in die frische Ferne,
Ins grüne Freie gehn!

Come, sweet May, and turn
The trees green again,
And make the little violets
Bloom for us by the brook!
How we should love to see
A little violet again,
And journey into fresh open spaces
And go into the green outdoors!
Komm’ mach’ es bald gelinder,                      Come, make the weather milder soon
Daß alles wieder blüht,                            That all things may bloom again!
Dann wird das Flehn der Kinder                    Then the children’s pleading
Ein lautes Jubellied.                               Will turn to loud rejoicing.
O komm und bring vor allem                         O come, and above all bring us
Uns viele Rosen mit,                                Many roses with you,
Bring auch viel Nachtigallen                       Bring many nightingales as well
Und schöne Kuckucks mit.                           And lovely cuckoos too!

It is curious that the handful of duets in the *Liederalbum für die Jugend* have often not been taken seriously as part of the complete work. Eric Sams chose not to comment on them in his book on the Schumann songs, and the composer himself considered hiving them off into a separate section for a later edition. In fact they are an essential ingredient of the work’s vitality, and their original placement in the sequence provides much needed variety of texture. This piece is firmly grounded in G major with excursions into the dominant and, in slightly quirkier style, the subdominant. The thirds and sixths between the voices betoken comfortable rural village celebrations. If it were not for some unusual phrase-lengths we might believe we were at Figaro’s wedding festivities (at ‘Und lasst uns an dem Bache’ there are six bars of melody where the eighteenth-century ear would have expected the symmetry of eight). The music of the second page has triplets in $\frac{3}{8}$ being expanded into duplets, a time-dislocation which was to become a mannerism of Schumann’s late style. The V–VI–I of the final cadence is also unusual and slightly awkward. This is Mozart à la *Pulcinella*, with Schumann playing the role of Stravinsky *avant la lettre*.

**Volksliedchen**                                      Folk song

Op 68 No 9 (*Klavieralbum für die Jugend*)

The music is in three parts. The first section is marked ‘In klagender Ton’ (‘mournfully’). The middle section is marked ‘Lustig’ (‘happily’) – a complete change of mood without an alteration of the pulse – and the piece ends with a recapitulation of the opening section. Once again the inspiration is rural, which is hardly surprising with this title, and once again Schumann succeeds in finding music of the outdoors which seems to breathe the spirit of his native land. The following piece in the set is the famous *Fröhlicher Landmann* – translated by the Victorians as ‘The merry peasant’ – and Schumann has prepared this dignified lament as a contrast to that jovial outburst of bonhomie. The right-hand melody seems suitable for an oboe (it might be the sound of a shepherd piping to his flock) and the left hand’s spread chords are harp-like. The middle section in D major is in fact a variation on the main D minor melody, a Schubertian device, as in the song *Im*
**Frühling.** As in other pieces in both albums for the young, we feel Schumann being drawn into a folk-song style. And why should he bother to go into the fields with a song-gatherer’s notebook when his imagination can provide something as haunting, and seemingly authentic, as this?

from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

**Käuzlein**

Op 79 No 11; sung by Ann Murray

Ich armes Käuzlein kleine,  
Wo soll ich fliegen aus,  
Bei Nacht so gar alleine,  
Bringt mir so manchen Graus  
Das macht der Eulen Ungestalt  
Ihr Trauern manigfalt.  
Ich armes Käuzlein.

Ich wills Gefieder schwingen,  
Gen Holz in grünen Wald,  
Die Vöglein hören singen,  
In mancherlei Gestalt.  
Vor allen lieb’ ich Nachtigall,  
Vor allen liebt’ mich Nachtigall.  
Ich armes Käuzlein.

Die Kinder unten glauben,  
Ich deute Böses an,  
Sie wollen mich vertreiben  
Das ich nicht schreien kann:  
Wenn ich war deute tut’s mir leid,  
Und was ich schrei’ ist keine Freud’,  
Ich armes Käuzlein.

Mein Ast ist mir entwichen,  
Darauf ich ruhen soll’,  
Sein Blättlein all’ verblichen,  
Frau Nachtigall geholt:  
Das schafft der Eulen falsche Tück,  
Die störet all mein Glück,  
Ich armes Käuzlein.

**Little owl**

Poor little owl that I am,  
Where shall I fly,  
Being so alone at night  
Makes me so afraid:  
That’s because of that monster owl,  
The cause of my great grief,  
Poor little owl that I am!

I’ll fly off  
To another green wood,  
To hear all kinds  
Of little birds sing.  
I love the nightingale best of all,  
The nightingale loves me best of all,  
Poor little owl that I am!

The children down there  
Believe I bring bad luck,  
They want to drive me away,  
So as not to hear me hoot:  
I’m sorry if I’m an ill-omen,  
And if my hooting brings no joy,  
Poor little owl that I am!

The branch has withered  
Where I’d planned to nest,  
All its little leaves have faded,  
And Mistress Nightingale has gone:  
That’s because of that treacherous owl,  
It ruins all my happiness,  
Poor little owl that I am!

The instillation in children of a love of animals, and compassion for vulnerable living things, is surely an important parental duty. Here Schumann chooses a poem for his own children which
should go to the heart of every child. In the bestiary of the lied (and I have devised a number of animal programmes over the years) this unpretentious little song has a very special place – apart from the Schubert Schlegel settings it is unusual for a bird or animal to narrate a song in the first person. The little owl is a victim of bullying by the older owls; the taunting of the children in the third strophe is meant to show the cost of thoughtless human cruelty. The vocal line trailing down the stave is a descent into pathos, the little owl’s failure of nerve and confidence. The staccato which pervades the music is bird-speak, or rather bird-squeak and squawk, while the occasional appearance of semiquavers in the accompaniment betokens the twitching of ruffled feathers. At first one thinks of this as a humorous song – and it does have a certain Disney-like ‘cuteness’ a century before anthropomorphic cartoon sentimentality – but it is impossible for Schumann, and thus his listeners, entirely to mock the plight of the unfortunate owl. The key is A minor which means that by association the composer has cast this little creature as an orphan (cf. *Armes Waisenkind* and *Die Waise* on this disc). The addition of the little refrain ‘Ich armes Käuzlein’ at the end of each verse is Schumann’s own literary touch, reminiscent of Mozart’s addition to Goethe’s poem (‘das arme Veilchen’) in a song about another victim in nature – a violet crushed under the foot of a shepherdess.

**Erster Verlust**
Op 68 No 16 (*Klavieralbum für die Jugend*)

The avian theme of *Käuzlein* continues, rather unexpectedly, in this piano piece. The lieder lover will immediately think of the famous Goethe love poem (‘Ach, wer bringt die schönen Tage’), and the equally famous Schubert setting, when encountering this title. Ludwig Richter, the illustrator of the wonderfully drawn frontispiece for the *Klavieralbum* obviously interpreted ‘first loss’ on a different level, and this was certainly after discussion with the composer himself. Richter’s illustration shows that the child’s first loss is the death of a pet: his drawing (see left) shows the face of a devastated little girl contemplating the upturned body of a bird, an open cage in the background. This goes back to an incident in the Schumann household – on 5 January 1848 – when the composer fed a bone-marrow dumpling to his daughter’s pet finch. The bird seemed to enjoy its meal but paid with its life. One can imagine how mortified Schumann himself must have been by his mistake. The upbeat and descending phrase at the beginning of this piece seems reminiscent of *Käuzlein*; ‘Nicht schnell’ is the marking of both pieces, and both are in the minor key. The plight of the little bird is melodically entwined with the tearful reaction of its owner – little girl and little
bird seem both to belong to a similar world of injured innocence. And there is another voice to be heard, that of Schumann himself: in the second half of the song the lament of the opening is taken up by the left hand in the tenor register of the piano. This is surely Papa himself soothing his child’s grief, and adding his own voice of sorrow. Marie Schumann wrote a song entitled Nänie inspired by this incident: it is a setting of Ludwig Bechstein’s Vögleins Begräbnis – ‘The little bird’s burial’. Schumann père also set it for women’s chorus and piano as Op 114 No 1. The poem was found in the Scherer anthology of 1849 in which Der Sandmann was discovered.

August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

**20 Hinaus ins Freie**
Op 79 No 12; sung by Felicity Lott

Wie blüht es im Tale,
Wie grün’s auf den Höhn!
Und wie ist es doch im Freien,
Im Freien so schön!
Es laden der Frühling,
Der Frühling uns ein,
Nach der Weidenflöte sollen
Wir springen zum Reihn.

Es laden der Frühling,
Der Frühling uns ein,
Nach der Weidenflöte sollen
Wir springen zum Reihn.

Wer wollte nicht tanzen
Dem Frühling zu Lieb’,
Der den schlimmen, langen Winter
Uns endlich vertrieb?

Wer wollte nicht tanzen
Dem Frühling zu Lieb’,
Der den schlimmen, langen Winter
Uns endlich vertrieb?

So kommet, so kommet
Ins Freie hinaus!
Wann die Abendglocke läutet,
Geht’s wieder nach Haus!

**Out into the open air**

How the valley’s blooming,
How the hills are turning green!
How lovely it is
Out in the open air!
Spring invites us,
Spring bids us
To dance to the sound
Of the willow flute.
Spring invites us,
Spring bids us
To dance to the sound
Of the willow flute.
Who wouldn’t dance
In honour of spring,
Who finally banished
The long wicked winter?

Who wouldn’t dance
In honour of spring,
Who finally banished
The long wicked winter?
So come out, come out
Into the open air!
When the evening bell rings,
We’ll go back home!

This is another earthy ditty, a quasi folk song from the land, one which has its roots in the German traditions of serious walking, stick in hand. Schumann had written in this vein in the Wanderlied
and *Wanderung* of 1840, both settings of Justinus Kerner which require the kind of energy only known to the youthful. This is the exhilaration born of healthy exercise. The singer seems to embrace nature with the widest gaze, a breadth of vision reflected by the impressive span of the roaming vocal line which seems unabashed in its exploratory zeal. All this makes for an attractive, if slightly four-square song. In order to spin out the words to better advantage Schumann repeats lines from previous strophes to make the beginnings of new musical verses – a familiar device in his songs of this period. The dactylic rhythm of the accompaniment powers the music forward; but this is no flighty aria. Instead we have something of a stomp to make the ground shake. The political metaphors are obvious: this appetite for a new spring is a hidden manifesto for revolutionaries.

Hermann Kletke (1813–1886)

**Der Sandmann**

Op 79 No 13; sung by Ann Murray

Zwei feine Stieflein hab ich an
Mit wunderweichen Söhlchen dran,
Ein Säcklein hab ich hintenauf!
Husch! tripp! ich rasch die Trepp hinauf.
Und wenn ich in die Stube tret,
Die Kinder beten ihr Gebet:
Von meinem Sand zwei Körnelein
Streu ich auf ihre Äugelein,
Da schlafen sie die ganze Nacht
In Gottes und der Englein Wacht.

Von meinem Sand zwei Körnelein
Streut’ ich auf ihre Äugelein:
Den frommen Kindern soll gar schön
Ought to have happy dreams.
Nun risch und rasch mit Sack und Stab
Quick as a flash with sack and wand
Nur wieder jetzt die Trepp hinab.
I steal downstairs again.
Ich kann nicht länger müßig stehn,
I can’t afford to linger longer,
Muß heut noch zu gar vielen gehn.
There are many more to visit tonight;
Da nickt ihr schon und lacht im Traum,
They’re nodding and smiling in their dreams,
Und öffnete doch mein Säcklein kaum.
Yet I hardly opened my sack at all.

Schumann pours all his genius for atmosphere and colour into this justly famous miniature. The hovering semiquavers in the right hand of the accompaniment describe the weaving of spells, as ethereal as the dancing beams of light traced by a sparkler in a child’s hand. Beneath this
hypnotizing murmur, in the left hand, is the staccato footfall of the sandman himself who is perfectly illustrated by Graf von Pocci in Georg Scherer’s anthology *Alte und neue Kinderlieder*. Schumann first saw the poem together with this illustration, and his music clearly owes much to it. In nightcap and felt booties the sandman carefully walks along the tightrope of a flower tendril. His concentration and his determination to accomplish his balancing act in the most surreptitious manner possible are clearly to be heard in these meticulously placed staccato left-hand chords. The music is full of these illustrative felicities: the rather mischievous ascent of the stairs at ‘tripp! ich rasch die Trepp hinauf’; the two bars of the sweetest childlike devotion describing the children at their prayers, a musical entreaty directed heavenward in pious semiquavers; the matching pianistic gestures, each a sprinkling of magical musical dust, for the two grains of sand dispensed one after the other. And then we feel the soporific effect of the manikin’s ministrations: the music slows down as sleepy crotchets and minims replace active semiquavers. The sandman watches with some satisfaction as the children quietly nod off. The postlude with which the song finally winds down is like a tender benediction: in the closing bars, as the children fall into ever deeper sleep, the music seems to tuck itself into bed. Perhaps only a father who knew the quiet joy of looking into the nursery and seeing all his little ones safely asleep could have written music where fairy-tale delight is mixed with such tender concern.

The image of the sandman who brings sleep to children is famous throughout the world. Among the first pieces of music I can remember was the Chorette’s worldwide hit from 1954: ‘Mister Sandman / Send me a dream / Send me a dream / Of peaches and cream.’ I was too young at the time to realize that the requested vision of loveliness had nothing to do with pudding. The dreams of Schumann’s children were equally innocent.

**Fremder Mann**

Op 68 No 29 (*Klavieralbum für die Jugend*)

For every one of the sandman’s beautiful dreams there is a corresponding nightmare. Schumann has chosen a very general title to describe the intrusion of something frightening into a child’s life. This man is not dangerous through guile or maliciousness, he is straightforwardly gruff and unfriendly. He does not like children very much, and the little ones are temporarily cowed into
silence. It is as if Beethoven himself has stumbled into the nursery, and not at all in a good mood. This gives Schumann an excuse to write a Beethovenian scherzo – the nearest thing in the *Klavieralbum für die Jugend* to a fully developed piano sonata movement. The key is D minor which is crucially Beethovenian; the final bars of the piece are certainly reminiscent of the peremptory and gestural dotted rhythms of the scherzo of the Ninth Symphony. As a foil to the emphatic march there is a recurring middle section of oscillating semiquavers. These denote the fear and trembling of the youngsters – perhaps something to do with the awe in which all young German musicians were brought up to regard this colossus among composers. Despite the fact that this is blustery and potentially frightening music, there is something about it which assures the listener that the children are never remotely in any real danger. They are of an age when it amuses them to make a drama out of everyday domestic events. Perhaps their father has had a visitor who seems crotchety at a distance. Their baleful response is the theatre of the nursery, one of the many games of make-believe that enliven children’s existences, and nurture the imaginative faculties of future artists.

from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, possibly by Caroline Rudophi (1754–1811)

### Marienwürmchen

Op 79 No 14; sung by Felicity Lott

Marienwürmchen, setze dich  
Auf meine Hand, auf meine Hand,  
Ich tu’ dir nichts zuleide.  
Es soll dir nichts zuleid geschehn,  
Will nur deine bunte Flügel sehn,  
Bunte Flügel meine Freude.

Marienwürmchen, fliege weg,  
Dein Häuschen brennt, die Kinder schrein  
So sehre, wie so sehre.  
Die böse Spinne spinnt sie ein,  
Marienwürmchen, flieg hinein,  
Deine Kinder schreien sehre.

Marienwürmchen, fliege hin  
Zu Nachbars Kind, zu Nachbars Kind,  
Sie tun dir nichts zuleide.  
Es soll dir da kein Leid geschehn,  
Sie wollen deine bunten Flügel sehn,  
Und grüß sie alle beide.

### Ladybird

Ladybird, come and settle  
On my hand, on my hand,  
I shall do you no harm,  
No harm will come of you,  
I just want to see your bright wings,  
Bright wings are my joy!

Ladybird, fly away home,  
Your house is on fire, the children are crying  
So sorely, so very sorely,  
The wicked spider’s spinning them in,  
Ladybird, fly away home,  
You children are crying sorely.

Ladybird, fly off  
To the children next door, next door,  
They will do you no harm,  
No harm will come of you there,  
They want to see your bright wings,  
And remember me to both of them.
This is another poem about compassion and the natural world; it sets an example for children who might otherwise be thoughtlessly cruel to insects, or who might be frightened of them. As in Schubert’s Mayrhofer setting Nachtwiolen (a hymn to a fragile flower) we are touched by a great composer taking such an infinite amount of trouble with such a tiny part of creation. But Schumann is truly engaged with this little garden drama, and he writes one of the songs of Op 79 which has had many an independent outing in recitals. It is the combination of moods which is remarkable here: the child is excited to be holding this little visitor in her hand (and we can hear this in the slightly restless chromatic inflections); yet, at the same time, she knows that in order to keep the ladybird from flying away immediately it is essential to adopt a soothing tone of voice (with cosy repetitions, as if talking to a child) so as not to alarm her temporary guest. At ‘Will nur deine bunte Flügel seh’ we hear, in a rush of semiquavers up the stave, the creature’s ability to take wing (and the child’s delight in that idea too). The three-bar postlude to each verse depicts youthful pleasure in such a powerful way that, in hearing these prancing semiquavers, we can almost see the smiling face of a little person enraptured with her new responsibility for another living thing.

From the musical point of view this is an entirely strophic song in three verses. In the first the child asks the insect to sit on her hand, but it is clear that she wants to see its wings (‘bunte Flügel’) in action. Accordingly, the next two verses are devoted to encouraging the ladybird to fly away. Two different inducements are invented for this – and in the first there is a touch of cruelty, mental if not physical, which can also be typical of children. It is just as well that the insect is unable to understand the somewhat gruesome scenario of burning houses, crying children and evil spiders with which she is encouraged to fly away. It is soon clear that the story does not have its intended effect. In the third strophe the narrator’s better nature establishes itself: here there is simply the proposition of a flying visit to the child next door, and sweet assurances that all be well. We are never informed as to whether this does the trick. The postlude of the third verse suggests that the visit is over: the child has been delighted long enough. In the final staccato chord we might imagine the ladybird, having refused to fly as bidden, shaken off the hand with the flick of a tiny finger. The attention-span of even the best-behaved children can be somewhat limited.

Johannes Brahms made an arrangement of the same poem to a traditional tune. He published this as No 13 of his Volks-Kinderlieder (1857), dedicated to the children of Robert and Clara Schumann.

24 Armes Waisenkind Poor orphan child
Op 68 No 6 (Klavieralbum für die Jugend)

The ladybird’s children are threatened by the spider’s evil machinations; with their mother captive in a child’s hands, they would have been equally likely to have become orphaned. Schumann was
acutely aware of the poignancy of this unfortunate status, part of his concern for every kind of vulnerable being; he understands, only too well, the fear of every child that they will be abandoned by their parents. The orphanage was a large institution in every nineteenth-century German town; the orphans, who regularly processed through the streets to encourage financial contributions from the community, were an ever-present reminder to ordinary children of their own good luck. Parents seldom failed to remind offspring of the thin thread of fate which kept them safe in the parental home, and which could be broken at any time. Mothers often died in childbirth and a whole family of children could find themselves institutionalized. The incidence of illness and epidemics of every kind could change a family’s fortune overnight. Robert lost his father as a teenager, and it was only Clara Schumann’s determination to resume her playing career after Robert’s early death that spared her children the shame of having to rely on the charity of others.

On Sunday 28/16 April 1844, during their Russian tour (note the conflict of two calendars) the Schumanns visited a large Moscow orphanage. Clara gave a concert there, and afterwards the couple were shown around what seems to have been an exceptionally well-run establishment – the standards of cleanliness and care described in detail in Clara’s diary seem superior to the reputations of such institutions in Russia today. Many of the babies were illegitimate and brought to the orphanage by their mothers. The children were baptized on arrival: ‘The mothers need give neither their names, nor say anything else. They are asked nothing, only what the name of the child is, and what religion it is. While we were there two children were brought in, numbers 2359 and 2360 in this year alone. At least 20 children arrive every day!’

The key is A minor, a tonality we have already visited for the music of the tormented little owl who is very much a loner. Schumann’s musical response is extraordinarily close to that of Fremder Mann; in fact Armes Waisenkind is a slowed-down version of almost the same music – albeit transposed into another key. There is a similar ascending phrase, and a second phrase that caps and answers the first. The implication of these matching melodies is clear: Schumann associates being an orphan with fear and uncertainty. To be without one’s parents to protect you is to give yourself up to the control of the ‘Fremder Mann’, the stranger who will come to take you away from your home – like being sold into slavery in many a fairy tale. The fate of Hansel and Gretel, abandoned in a wood, also comes to mind. In this shuffling, slow-motion march we hear the music of the broken spirit. The mood is one of tentative supplication and passive acceptance. The eyes are downcast, and the circumstances humiliatingly humble. At a time when there was no state aid for orphanages, and no social services, the orphans relied on institutionalized begging for their survival.
August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

Die Waise
Op 79 No 15; sung by Ann Murray

The orphan girl

Spring comes again
And everything rejoices.
I look downcast,
It has not come for me.

What am I, poor child, to make
Of spring’s splendour and radiance?
For if I twine flowers,
It will be for a funeral wreath.

Ah! there is no hand to guide me
Back to a father’s house,
And no mother to hold out
Her arms towards me.

O Heaven, give me back
What your love once gave –
If I look down at the earth,
Their grave is all I see.

The song of an orphan continues the mood of the piano piece; these are works with similar titles in the same key of A minor, and they deal with exactly the same subject. An eight-bar phrase is repeated four times for each of the poet’s strophes – something which suggests impoverishment in every sense, particularly if the performer fails to characterize this song. It is clear that this is the plaint of a someone young and hungry: like the music for the abandoned little owl in Käuzlein (another A minor song), the vocal phrases fall in deferential and crestfallen manner. Like Dickens, almost exactly his contemporary, Schumann was entranced by human goodness and bravery enshrined in small and vulnerable female form. (Schumann would have loved Little Dorritt, a novel which was in mid-serialization in England when the composer died.) Schumann’s portraits of abandoned girls – women down on their luck – begins with the Myrten songs in 1840 (the Burns settings) and continues with Das verlassene Mägdlein (1847) and the Elisabeth Kulmann settings of 1851. Even the last song-cycle about the luckless Mary Stuart, another orphan cast on life’s unfriendly waters, is a continuation of this theme.
Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863)

Das Glück
Op 79 No 16; sung by Felicity Lott and Ann Murray

Vöglein vom Zweig
Gaukelt hernieder;
Lustig sogleich
Schwingt es sich wieder.

Jetzt dir so nah,
Jetzt sich versteckend;
Abermals da,
Scherzend und neckend.

Tastest du zu,
Bist du betrogen,
Spottend im Nu
Ist es entflogen.

Still! Bis zur Hand
Wird’s dir noch hüpfen,
Bist du gewandt,
Kann’s nicht entschlüpfen.

Ist’s denn so schwer
Das zu erwarten?
Schau’ um dich her:
Blühender Garten!

Ei, du verzagst?
Lass’ es gewähren,
Bis du’s erjagst,
Kannst du’s entbehren.

Wird’s doch auch dann
Wenig nur bringen,
Aber es kann
Süßestes bringen.

Fortune

The bird on the bough
Flits down from his perch;
He’s back in a trice,
Fluttering his wings.

Now he’s so near,
Now he’s in hiding,
Then back once again,
Joking and teasing.

Try to catch him
And you are deceived,
Mocking, he’s vanished
And gone in a flash.

Shh! There he hops
Onto your hand,
Now if you’re quick,
He won’t get away.

Is it so hard
To exercise patience?
Just look around you:
A garden in bloom!

What, are you timid?
Just let things be,
Until you catch him,
You can do without him.

He’ll not bring much
Even then,
But he can
Bring great sweetness.

In all the lieder duet repertoire there is nothing to equal this enchanting aerial *scherzino* for its lightness of touch and texture. All three performers take part in a game of tag: in the first verse the interplay of the two voices is umpired by the pianist who, in imitating the soprano’s line, is a bridge to the mezzo’s imitative phrases. As the song progresses the singers are chasing each
other at one bar’s distance, rather than two. There is counterpoint here, not only between the three musical lines, but also between the words which are pitted against each other, masses of consonants articulated at speed that sound like the twitterings of birds high in the branches. In his duet writing Schumann seems to delight in this type of verbal clash between the voices, even when it makes the text less than intelligible for those without a printed version of the poem.

The marking is ‘Sehr schnell’ in $\frac{3}{4}$, not as mad-cap a pace as a marking of $\frac{6}{8}$ might demand. These birds flit lightly, casually, from branch to branch, and the staccato accompaniment seems to encourage the singers to hop with ever-defter daring. In the final strophe of the song they land eventually on the expanded note values given to the word ‘Süßestes’ – the long-awaited and sweetest reward, whatever that may be. The music does not sound at all like Bach, yet perhaps only someone who, like Schumann, had studied Bach would be capable of producing this whirring *moto perpetuo* where every aspect of the music seems to have developed from mathematical certainties.

The real mastery is in the dovetailing of the parts. German carpenters use a word for ‘dovetailing’ (‘Schwalbenschwanzverbindung’) which uses the metaphor of swallows’ tails, rather than doves’ tails. This mercurial music is certainly more swallow-like (*cf. Die Schwalben* $\frac{6}{4}$); there is nothing here that might recall the complacent cooing of doves or pigeons. Whatever the species of bird, this miniature piece of chamber-music-in-an-aviary is a perfect piece of musical joinery, everything tongued and grooved in remarkable fashion. Yet the music is definitely not wooden in any degree – quite the reverse.

Hans Christian Andersen (1805–1875)

**Weihnachtslied**

Op 79 No 17; sung by Felicity Lott and Ann Murray

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Als das Christkind ward zur Welt gebracht,</td>
<td>When the Christ Child, who saved us from Hell,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Das uns von der Hölle gerettet,</td>
<td>Was brought into the world,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Da lag’s auf der Krippe bei finstrer Nacht,</td>
<td>He lay in his crib when the night was dark,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auf Stroh und Heu gebettet;</td>
<td>With straw and hay for bedding;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doch über der Hütte glänzte der Stern,</td>
<td>But the star was shining above the hut,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Und der Ochse küste den Fuss des Herrn.</td>
<td>And the ox kissed the feet of the Lord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halleluja, Kind Jesus!</td>
<td>Hallelujah, Child Jesus!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Once again we encounter Schumann in his old-fashioned chorale-writing mode. He seems to have been touched by the Andersen narrative poem in which poor children (orphans once again, a theme of his two albums for the young) sing this little song of devotion (with an *ad libitum* three-part chorus, made possible here for two singers by recording technology). The music is very effective in itself. The trouble is that the religious viewpoint does not come easily to Schumann and, unlike the work of his truly devout contemporaries Franz and Cornelius, it sounds forced. Perhaps his inclusion of this perfectly pleasant little piece in his *Liederalbum* mirrors the position of contemporary parents who want their children baptized for social, rather than religious, reasons. In his writings the composer speaks remarkably little about religion: there is no church music as such, and there are only three or so songs, all later Schumann, which have a remotely religious theme. But the fostering of religious devotion is a traditional theme of nineteenth-century educational works, and Schumann might have felt that a small dose of piety (however distant he felt from the subject in his own mind) was appropriate in a work like this aimed at the children of Germany.

**Knecht Ruprecht**

Op 68 No 12 (*Klavieralbum für die Jugend*)

‘Knecht Ruprecht’ is nowhere to be found in that most English of books, *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. He is a character peculiar to the Christmas tradition of German-speaking lands (where he is also variously known as ‘Pelznickel’ and ‘Bartel’). England imported the Christmas tree from this same tradition; perhaps there was something kindly about Prince Albert that drew the line about importing Knecht Ruprecht into England. Ruprecht, a familiar figure in German folklore since the seventeenth century, is a vassal of St Nikolaus; his function is to deal with children in a hands-on manner unbefitting his holy employer. Tradition has it that on the evening of 6 December (the feast of St Nikolaus) Ruprecht, always wrapped in fur and with a white beard, knocks on the door of children’s houses. (The role would often be played by working-class family acquaintances who would dress up for the occasion – this according to Thomas Mann in *Buddenbrooks.*) On Knecht Ruprecht’s left shoulder is a bag full of rewards for good children – apples and golden nuts (again, according to Mann). On his right shoulder he carries a cane, or birch, which he will use relentlessly once he has separated good children from bad. This
omniscient little man knows what every child has done, or said, during the preceding year, and this selection process struck terror into the hearts of generations of German schoolchildren who were fearful of the impending visit. (For this terror tactic to have been effective there must have been at least some parents who allowed their more spirited children to be beaten by a stranger dressed up in a ridiculous costume.) One concludes that the German attitude to the education of children, even in Schumann’s time, was more severe than in England. I can think of no English custom which has ever filled children with anxiety within the safety of their own homes.

In musical terms the piano piece is related to *Fremder Mann*, the unknown intruder into nursery life. Knecht Ruprecht’s reputation was only too well known to German children, and the musical portrait is more sinister, more like a gnome or pixie, than anything to be found in the more noble, if unfriendly, bearing of *Fremder Mann*. The piece is in A minor. Grotesque semiquavers rumble in the bass and culminate in a hammered phrase (two quavers and a crotchet) which represent Knecht Ruprecht’s knocking at the door. There is a great deal of bluster in this music – Ruprecht’s aggressive arrival, and the children’s shocked reactions. The piece’s middle section (in agitated F major semiquavers) depicts fear in the nursery. Eugenie Schumann, the composer’s youngest daughter, noted: ‘In the F major interlude I see the trembling children hiding themselves; and then the old man speaks to them in a kindly manner, empties his bags of presents, and then clatters down the stairs.’ This implies that, in the Schumann home at least, Knecht Ruprecht’s bark was more terrifying than his bite. In the end this piano music makes the same impression.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)

**Die wandelnde Glocke**

Op 79 No 18; sung by Ann Murray

Es war ein Kind, das wollte nie
Zur Kirche sich bequemen,
Und sonntags fand es stets ein Wie,
Den Weg ins Feld zu nehmen.

The walking bell

A child there was who never would
Agree to go to church,
And every Sunday would find a way
Of escaping to the fields.
Die Mutter sprach: die Glocke tönt,
Und so ist dir’s befohlen,
Und hast du dich nicht hingewöhnt,
Sie kommt und wird dich holen.

Das Kind, es denkt: die Glocke hängt
Da droben auf dem Stuhle.
Schon hat’s den Weg ins Feld gelenkt,
Als lief’ es aus der Schule.

Die Glocke, Glocke tönt nicht mehr,
Die Mutter hat gefackelt.
Doch welch ein Schrecken hinterher!
Die Glocke kommt gewackelt.

Sie wackelt schnell, man glaubt es kaum;
Das arme Kind im Schrecken,
Es läuft, es rennt, als wie im Traum;
Die Glocke wird es decken.

Doch nimmt es richtig seinen Husch
Und mit gewandter Schnelle,
Es eilt durch Anger, Feld und Busch
Zur Kirche und Kapelle.

Und jeden Sonn- und Feiertag
Gedenkt es an den Schaden,
Läuft durch den ersten Glockenschlag
Nicht in Person sich laden.

His mother said: the church bell’s ringing,
And so you are commanded,
And if you’ve not grown used to it,
The bell will come and fetch you.

The child thinks, the bell is hanging
Up there in the belfry.
And already he’s heading for the fields,
As though running out of school.

The bell, the bell no longer rings,
Mother was talking nonsense.
But what a fright behind the child,
The bell comes waddling after him.

It waddles fast, it’s beyond belief;
The poor child, in its terror,
Runs as though he’s in a dream;
The bell’s about to smother him.

But he runs in the right direction,
And with swift agility
Hurries across field and mead and bush
To the church and to the chapel.

And every Sun- and holiday
He remembers the misadventure,
Obeyes the first stroke of the bell,
Without waiting to be summoned.

We continue the theme of music meant for the instruction of naughty children – and hopefully their improvement. This little fable is the first appearance of Goethe in Schumann’s song-list since the West-östlicher Divan settings in Myrten, some nine years earlier. (However he had worked on the Scenes from Faust for voices and orchestra since 1844.) The composer has cleverly found a work by the great man for his Liederalbum which was designed for the edification of the young (he probably knew the merry Loewe setting which was published in 1832). Goethe’s poem dates from 1813. It is a reworking of an incident recounted to the poet by his son August who had made up the story of a walking bell to tease an earnest little boy of his acquaintance; August apparently used an open umbrella to illustrate the bell’s imminent advance on the child. Goethe heard this story from secretary Riemer and, years later, developed this anecdote from the past into a light-hearted gift for August (miserable at the time because he was away from home and on military duty against the French).
Neither poet nor composer cared very much whether the boy in this fable played truant from church, but it was the role of the educator to foster traditional church-going values in the young. These were seen as necessary to the building of character and conscience in the citizens of tomorrow. The instillation of obedient piety in children was seen as a ‘good thing’ for German society in general – even when it is done, as here, very much tongue in cheek. After all, asking a child to believe in a walking bell is stretching credulity beyond even the existence of Knecht Ruprecht and Santa Claus.

In any case, the story of a bell that walked is hardly conventionally religious – motivated, as it is, by entirely un-Christian superstition. Goethe uses the story to make a parody of his own ballad style, and Schumann sees the musical possibilities it offers. The tolling of a bell is heard in the song’s opening bars. At first the simplicity of the music seems typical of the more chorale-like items in the collection. When the bell ceases to ring and begins to waddle behind the boy, the composer’s imagination catches fire. Menacing octaves in the pianist’s left hand, and then triplets, intensify the panic of the chase. There have been exactly the same eight bars of music for the poem’s first three strophes. This music returns at the end. In between, however, the composer transposes the melody a fourth higher (at ‘Doch welch ein Schrecken hinterher!’) which depicts a heightened sense of anxiety underscored with touches of flailing chromaticism rare in this Liederalbum. There is even a moment in the piano-writing that suggests a timpani drum-roll. As is his wont, Schumann pushes the narration forward in terms of force and bite with markings (‘Nach und nach stärker’ and ‘Immer stärker’) which require the performers to up the ante in any way they can – there is no option but to sing and play louder and faster. Although an ‘a tempo’ is not marked as such, the performer must return after this hectic outburst to a slower (and exhausted tempo) to draw the moral of the tale.

Figurierter Choral
Op 68 No 42 (Klavieralbum für die Jugend)

The mood of this spacious and noble piece, one of the most effective in the entire collection, is that of the sound of bells resounding across the countryside. The piano-writing (minims singing in the pianist’s right hand) is reminiscent of the accompaniment to Die wandelnde Glocke.
There are two pieces in Schumann’s *Klavieralbum* which are not, strictly speaking, original pieces of music. These are the two chorale arrangements in the collection: No 4, entitled simply *Ein Choral* (an elementary piano piece written out in minims with a few passing notes in crotchets) and this one, the penultimate piece in the collection. These are Schumann’s arrangements of the same chorale, *Freue dich, o meine Seele*, which had been known to Lutherans since the early seventeenth century. By the middle of the nineteenth century the melody was famous throughout Europe. Inspired by a Calvinist church service, Franz Liszt quotes it in his *Psaume 42 de l’église à Genève* from *Album d’un voyageur* (1842), but the chorale fails to survive into that work’s next incarnation, the *Années de pèlerinage, Première Année* (1855).

Schumann has probably been reminded of the tune by the Liszt piano piece, but he might well have known it already in its original religious context. He makes no attempt, however, to keep to any historical style once he begins to harmonize the melody – in his hands it becomes pure Schumann, even in the very simple harmonization of *Ein Choral.* The *Figurierter Choral* has the F major melody harmonized at first in D minor, although the piece ends, most meltingly, in the major key. The melody and its supporting harmony stay in four parts throughout; but it is the addition of a fifth voice, a meandering counter-melody in the lower part of the treble stave, which gives the piece its character and its fantasy. It is this colouring of the original chorale by continually flowing quavers which gives rise to the term ‘figuriert’ or ‘figured’ – this improvisatory technique had been favoured by the Cantors of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig (where Bach himself was choirmaster and organist) since the eighteenth century. As someone who had lived in Leipzig for a long time (and heard countless performances in the Thomaskirche) Schumann knew the practice well; here he uses it in a modern way.

August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

**Frühlingslied**

Op 79 No 19; sung by Felicity Lott and Ann Murray

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>German</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schneeglöckchen klingen wieder,</td>
<td>Snowdrops sound their bells again,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schneeglöckchen bringen wieder</td>
<td>Snowdrops bring back again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uns heite Tag und Lieder.</td>
<td>Our happy days and songs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wie läuten sie so schön</td>
<td>How beautifully they peal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Im Tal und auf den Höhn:</td>
<td>In the valley and on the hills:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der König ziehet ein,</td>
<td>The king is marching in!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der König ist erschienen.</td>
<td>The king is here again,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ihr sollt ihm treulich dienen</td>
<td>You should serve him faithfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mit heitrem Blick und Mienen,</td>
<td>With cheerful gaze and countenance:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O laßt den König ein.</td>
<td>O let the king enter in!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Er kommt vom Sterngefilde, n
Und führt in seinem Schilde, n
Die Güte nur und Milde. n
Er trägt die Freud und Lust, n
Als Stern an seiner Brust, n
Ist gnädig jedermann, n
Den Herren und den Knechten, n
Den Guten und den Schlechten, n
Den Bösen und Gerechten, n
Sieht alle liebreich an. n
Ihr aber fragt und wißt es, n
Und wer’s auch weiß, vergiß es, n
Der König Frühling ist es. n
Entgegen ihm mit Sang, n
Mit Saitenspiel und Klang! n
Der König ziehet ein, n
Der König ist erschienen. n
Ihr sollt ihm treulich dienen n
Mit heitrem Blick und Mienen, n
O laßt den König ein!

He comes from the starry spheres,
And the only things he has in mind
Are gentleness and kindness;
The star on his breast
Is the star of happiness and joy;
He is gracious to everyone,
To gentlemen and servants,
To the good and the bad,
To the wicked and the just –
On all he turns a loving eye.
But you ask and you know,
And whoever knows forgets,
This monarch is the spring.
Go to him with song
And the playing of strings!
The king is marching in!
The king is here again,
You should serve him faithfully
With cheerful gaze and countenance:
O let the king enter in!

This little duet is among the least-known of Schumann’s many compositions for two voices. It begins in plaintive ambiguity (the first inversion of A minor depicts a world suspended in the midst of winter depression) but it soon progresses to something much bolder and more optimistic. The metaphor of ‘King Spring’ (the poem’s title in some editions of Hoffmann’s poetry) invokes the pomp and circumstance of flowers blowing miniature fanfares in prancing dotted rhythms. The dispirited semiquavers of the opening give way to much more energetic-sounding pianistic patterns. The way the words ‘Der König … ist erschienen’ are separated by rests and emphasized by accents is typical of the Schumann of this period. The postlude is very regal and festive. Unfortunately, in a strophic song this progression from dark to light happens three times which robs it of some of its surprises. The piano interlude which returns the song to A minor for the beginning of second and third strophes is hardly one of this composer’s most inspired inventions.

The political side of the poem is obvious. Only King Spring is a king worth revering – he, alone of all monarchs, deserves to be welcomed with enthusiasm, the only king worth serving. And as with all spring songs, the metaphor of the new season implies regime change and a new flowering of hope.
August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

**Frühlings Ankunft**  
Spring’s arrival

Op 79 No 20; sung by Felicity Lott

Nach diesen trüben Tagen,  
After these dull days  
Wie ist so hell das Feld!  
How bright the fields are!  
Zerrissne Wolken tragen  
Tattered clouds bear  
Die Trauer aus der Welt.  
The world’s sorrows away.

Und Keim und Knospe mühet  
And seeds and buds  
Sich an das Licht hervor,  
Struggle towards the light,  
Und manche Blume blühet  
And many a flower blossoms  
Zum Himmel still empor.  
In silence up to heaven.

Ja, auch so gar die Eichen  
Yes, even the oaks  
Und Reben werden grün!  
And vines turn green!  
O Herz, das sei dein Zeichen,  
O heart, let this be your sign:  
Werde froh und kühn!  
Be joyous and bold!

For the last of his Hoffmann von Fallersleben settings in Op 79 Schumann stays with the all-pervading theme of spring, but this time we find unexpectedly muted colours. It is as if the composer has been waylaid by the opening imagery of the words ‘Nach diesen trüben Tagen’ and remained there to ponder, trapped in thoughts of winter misery. The music (and the texture and layout of the accompaniment in particular) are eerily reminiscent of *Herbstlied* Op 43 No 2, a duet about autumn which Schumann composed to a text of August Mahlmann in 1840. Both pieces are headed with one of the composer’s frequently employed, yet supremely unhelpful, markings: ‘Nicht schnell’.

The composer also uses his ‘figurierter choral’ technique here: the piano-writing (as in *Herbstlied*) consists of a tune in crotchets and quavers pricked out by the fourth and fifth fingers of the right hand while the thumb, and the other two fingers of the same hand, are preoccupied with weaving a calm *moto perpetuo* of subsidiary semiquavers. These are no doubt meant to depict the endless workings of nature beneath the surface – the stirrings within the seed and the flowering of the bud. The actual effect however is more like water under the bridge; the effect is pleasant enough, but a reflective and pensive atmosphere is created which is rather at odds with what the words actually say, nay proclaim. It is in music like this that we can discern a depressive side to the composer’s nature; he seems to have composed this piece on a day when his spirits were down. Exactly the same verbal imagery on another day would have produced more exciting results. Perhaps
Schumann cannot help expressing his real feelings about the political tensions which surrounded him as he wrote this music; his hopes for a new season of sunny liberation were tempered by darker fears for the safety of his family.

Auguste von Pattberg (1769–1850)

**Die Schwalben**

Op 79 No 21; sung by Felicity Lott and Ann Murray

- Es fliegen zwei Schwalben ins Nachbar sein Haus,
- Sie fliegen bald hoch bald nieder;
- Aufs Jahr, da kommen sie wieder,
- Und suchen ihr voriges Haus.

- Sie gehen jetzt fort ins neue Land,
- Und ziehen jetzt eilig hinüber;
- Doch kommen sie wieder herüber,
- Das ist einem jeden bekannt.

- Und kommen sie wieder zu uns zurück,
- Der Bauer geht ihnen entgegen;
- Sie bringen ihm vielmal den Segen,
- Sie bringen ihm Wohlstand und Glück.

The chirping of a pair of swallows finds Schumann in his best bird-like form. This duet is only a miniature, but a delightful one. The two swallows (‘zwei Schwalben’) are the two voices of course, so what better poem could there be for a duet? The melody is ideal for this purpose – it is very simple, almost bird-brained in fact, but also rather catchy in its nursery-rhyme way. The vocal parts soar happily across the bar-lines in four-bar phrases while the flitting accompaniment, initially rocking between C major and A minor, is phrased one bar at a time. The fourth quaver of each bar is staccato, and this sudden little jolt perfectly conveys the compulsive, twitching movement of small birds.

The switch from A minor to F major (at ‘Aufs Jahr, da kommen sie wieder’) betokens a shift of locale for a middle section that is firmly anchored in F major for six bars – an apt musical metaphor for migration. At this point the text refers to the birds’ alternative abode, and their determined search for their former dwelling on their return; the piano-writing under ‘suchen und suchen’ (‘seeking and seeking’) becomes suddenly complicated by syncopations and a determined, and rather anxious, climbing of the stave. This is as near as these birds come to a crisis. When they succeed in finding this home of former happiness (‘ihr voriges Haus’) the modulation back into the C major of the opening is sudden and triumphant. In fact, this is so precipitous that the merry little
postlude (which alternates between dominant and tonic in the home key) does not seem like the home key at all. At the end of the song we are left as if suspended in mid-air; the piece just stops after three strophes as if we had suddenly freeze-framed these two swallows in mid-flight, on their way to somewhere else. The activities of nature carry on for all time, whether we are listening to them or not.

Melchior von Diepenbrock (1798–1853)

**Kinderwacht**

Op 79 No 22; sung by Ann Murray (verse 1) and Felicity Lott (verse 2)

Wenn fromme Kindlein schlafen gehn,  
An ihrem Bett zwei Englein stehn,  
Decken sie zu, decken sie auf,  
Haben ein liebendes Auge drauf.

Wenn aber auf die Kindlein stehn,  
Die beiden Engel schlafen gehn,  
Reicht nun nicht mehr der Englein Macht,  
Der liebe Gott hält selbst die Wacht.

When good children go to sleep,  
Two little angels stand by their beds,  
They tuck them in and tuck them up,  
And keep a loving eye on them.

But when the children get up,  
Both the angels go to sleep,  
If the angels' strength is now not enough,  
The good Lord himself keeps watch.

Another religious setting by Schumann – untypical in that he almost entirely avoids this in his grown-up lieder. Nevertheless, the result is an extremely beautiful little song. The two angels mentioned here are negligible in comparison with the team of fourteen guardian angels described in Humperdinck’s famous duet for Hansel and Gretel (in the opera of the same name) *Abends, will ich schlafen gehn*: two at the children’s head, two at their feet, two on their right, two on their left, two to cover them, two to wake them up, and two to show them the way to paradise. Nevertheless, these musical prayers have much in common: a rapt atmosphere spun out of the most slender musical resources; a distillation of innermost feelings of tenderness and reverence that derive their inspiration, as so much else in German music for children in the nineteenth century, from the beauties of the Lutheran chorale. But this is only part of the explanation. As in all the single-page lieder miracles from the time of Schubert on, almost always slow songs like this, we sense the triumph of feeling over technique, even when that technique is abundant. This concentrated, heartfelt state of mind is what the Germans call ‘Innigkeit’. When musical genius combines with the transparent goodness of a Schubert or a Schumann (or even a Humperdinck on his best form) a simple little piece like this weaves a shy but incomparable spell; it has no direct equivalent in music from any other country. This particular kind of radiance, the result of obedience and self-abnegation, a spiritual rather than merely a religious quality, is encountered much less frequently in the musical souls of other countries.
It seems obvious that the Schumann children, to whom this song would have been sung, were brought up to believe in their guardian angels. It was certainly considered important that children were brought up to believe in God. Schumann, like Goethe (neither were conventionally religious men), would have been shocked by a child who professed atheism. They would have been even more scandalized by that child’s parents for encouraging an unacceptably anarchic deviation from the norm. The questioning of conventional religion, in varying degrees of intensity, was commonplace, particularly among artists and intellectuals; but it was a matter of private conscience, and very much for grown-ups. Then as now, it was entirely normal, even if illogical, for parents who were non-believers themselves to allow their children a Christian upbringing. Few Germans of the time, or Englishmen for that matter, had the courage or inclination to do otherwise. Even the most freethinking parents realized that their children would have to be equipped with the means of going through the motions of a religious observant life, even if they later decided quietly to withdraw from what they considered to be a charade.

Despite the fact that there were substantial cultural differences between Germany’s Catholic and Protestant communities, the ramifications of baptism and observance were even more social than religious. Abraham Mendelssohn, the father of Felix and Fanny, ensured that his children were baptized as Protestants (the denomination prevalent in Berlin) because he was all too aware that they would have better prospects in German society as Christians, rather than as Jews. As it happened, the later popularity of Mendelssohn’s oratorios with the Protestant public in England was made immeasurably more secure than if their composer had been brought up a practising Catholic – Britain was not yet ready for Elgar’s *The Dream of Gerontius*. But this is to digress. The mood of *Kinderwacht* is Catholic (the author of its text was a cardinal), but its angelic sentiments would have appealed to the whole Christian community (and probably the Jewish too) in both Germany and England. And from Schumann’s point of view the mood of this music is as enchanting as any fairy tale.

Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805)

35 Des Sennen Abschied
Op 79 No 23; sung by Ann Murray

Ihr Matten, lebt wohl,
Ihr sonnigen Weiden!
Der Senne muß scheiden,
Der Sommer ist hin.

The alpine herdsman's farewell

Farewell, you meadows,
You sunny pastures!
The herdsman must leave you,
Summer is over.
Wir fahren zu Berg, wir kommen wieder,
Wenn der Kuckuck ruft, wenn erwachen die Lieder,
Wenn mit Blumen die Erde sich kleidet neu,
Wenn die Brünnlein fließen im lieblichen Mai.

Ihr Matten, lebt wohl,
Ihr sonnigen Weiden!
Der Senne muß scheiden,
Der Sommer ist hin.

We’ll return to the mountains, we’ll come again,
When the cuckoo calls, when songs awaken,
When the earth is freshly clothed with flowers,
When the brooklets are flowing in lovely May.

Farewell, you meadows,
You sunny pastures!
The herdsman must leave you,
Summer is over.

The song is certainly one of the most touching songs in the whole *Liederalbum*. Schumann has cast the ‘Senne’ (‘herdsman’) as a boy in his teens; in the absence of an alpine horn, the drone of his bagpipe dominates the bass stave of the accompaniment. Above this earthy manifestation of peasant music-making the right-hand piano-writing weaves an enchanting descant, complete with the ornamental mordents associated with the Dudelsack. This is very much an imagined essay in folk music, almost unique in Schumann’s music, and surprisingly authentic in feel. The composer is obviously aware of the tradition of the nostalgic *Ranz des vaches* sung by the cowherd as he counts and names his charges on their return from grazing on the mountain slopes. The C major pedal which runs through the first twenty bars of this music is hypnotic. The singer cannot tear himself away as he sadly makes his end-of-season farewell to his beloved mountains. It is only in the following spring that he will be able to return. When the boy sings of the glories of his ‘lieblicher Mai’ (‘lovely May’) for the second time Schumann breaks off the vocal line so that the word ‘Mai’ is not sung. What is the reason for this strangely truncated effect? Eric Sams suggests that a gust of wind on a high hill has blown the word away. Perhaps the singer is suddenly choked by emotion. May (that wonderful month, Heine’s ‘wunderschöner Monat’, as at the opening of *Dichterliebe*) is such an unutterably dear, and distant, prospect that he cannot even say (or sing) the magical word. The three bars of piano music which take over from the stifled voice are rooted to the spot and suggest the manly fighting back of tears.

This song, uniquely in this set, bemoans the happiness of past times, what Mörike, the poet of the next song in the *Liederalbum*, calls ‘alte unnennbare Tage’ – ‘dear old days beyond recall’ (in *Im Frühling*, the poem set so wonderfully by Hugo Wolf). Nostalgia is hardly a feeling with which the young are familiar, but Schumann ascribes this emotion to a young protagonist who, as a student of the seasons, has learned quickly about the sadness associated with the passing of time. Schumann’s piano-writing in this song is unlike almost everything else in his output. It prophesies the music of Edvard Grieg and his folk-song-inspired evocations of mountain and fjord. In this beautiful and rueful postlude Grieg would have recognized a kindred spirit. Clara Schumann accompanied Jenny Lind (the ‘Swedish nightingale’) in this song at a London concert in 1871.
Here we have yet another song of spring, but not quite the last in the set. Eric Sams compares the kindergarten solemnity of the earlier spring songs in Op 79 with the relative sophistication of Er ist’s – a song that he believes might be considered, in its obvious excitement, a girl’s first love song. It was certainly the composer’s intention, as his work progressed, to suggest the deepening stages of a child’s experiences … but surely not to that extent. Romantic love between man and woman falls outside the parameters of this song book, and Schumann seems to have made a conscious choice that it should have been excluded.

The composer clearly indicates that this nine-lined poem is divided into three sections (ABA). The first is marked ‘Innig’ and announces presentiments of spring, the first stirrings of the season. If the tempo is correct (and this song suffers from far too many performances which are prematurely fast) the gentle semiquavers of the vocal line depict the unfurling and fluttering of spring’s blue ribbon with delicious delicacy. Has spring really arrived, or not? Our hopes have been raised before, only to be dashed! The fragrances of ‘Süße, wohlbekannte Düfte’ are made to waft, gently undulating across the stave into the nostrils of someone who will weigh up all the evidence before coming to a definite conclusion. In writing gentle, rather hushed beginnings (a far cry from the joyous affirmations at the end) both Schumann and Wolf (in his more famous setting) imply cautious optimism rather than immediate conviction.

Until confirmation arrives everything is ‘on hold’, and we are made to hold our breath. This suspense is mirrored in the song’s middle section (B); violets are made to dream most effectively within a slower tempo (‘Etwas zurückhaltend’). Sweet little mordents in the piano-writing are like the gentle movements of a gardener’s fingers nurturing a seedling. Flowers have not quite dared to poke their heads above ground. A sudden change of register and a softening of tonality (a G7 chord with its distancing F natural) announce a new sound (so far we have only had the evidence of sight...
and smell). This is the antique harp which the poet imagines is played by spring, as if the season were personified by a Greek deity. Harp-like chords are lightly strummed for four bars, both the pianist’s hands governed by the treble clef. The crescendo during these is like the quickening of a pulse – Yes! Spring is here – and the top A on the word ‘Ja’ is like an exultant call from the crow’s nest of a ship on sighting land.

This is a cue for the important marking ‘Schneller’, the faster tempo that has to be reserved for the final section of the song, a modified version of A. At last we can cut loose and celebrate! This is no excuse for immediate whoops of joy (the composer specifically marks the vocal line piano) but the impetus of a newly energized accompaniment (the same music as the song’s opening, but in less diffident mood) carries all before. Like a ballet dancer lifted by the strength of her partner, the singer is elevated to another high A by the increasing volubility of the piano-writing. The preceding phrase has been within a crescendo, so this outburst now gathers considerable force. The singer’s wide-eyed excitement is reflected in the babble of repetitions (‘ja du bist’s! / Dich hab ich vernommen!’) which are dovetailed with a postlude for the piano that is derived from the middle section, and the music for dreaming violets. These are now triumphantly in flower, a gardener’s dream turned into a reality.

Schumann has been much criticized for cutting words from Mörike’s poem. The line ‘Horch, von fern, ein leiser Harfenton!’ (‘Listen, afar, the gentle sound of the harp’) is inexplicably shortened to ‘Horch, ein Harfenton!’ There seems no good reason for this; it was probably a decision taken on the spur of the moment because in metrical terms the shorter version fitted better with the tiny passage of excited quasi-recitative in the composer’s head at the time. Schumann could not know that nearly forty years later Hugo Wolf would compose the definitive setting of this poem, music that would fly around the world, propelled by the rustle of its exciting accompaniment, and its brilliant peroration, a bravura climax for the voice, and a dashing postlude for the piano. Wolf’s music brought a large number of new admirers to the poet Mörike, also in English-speaking countries. If this had not happened it is unlikely that Schumann’s mangling of the text would have been very much noticed. In any case, this is a fault that most listeners can readily forgive. With the possible exception of Mignon, this is the most performed of all the Op 79 songs on the concert platform of today. Er ist’s, fresh and vulnerable in equal measure, remains a song dear to those who love Schumann’s lieder.
from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

**Spinnelied**
Op 79 No 25; sung by Felicity Lott and Ann Murray

Spinn, spinn, Mägdlein, spinn!
So wachsen dir die Sinn;
Wachsen dir die gelben Haar,
Kommen dir die klugen Jahr!
Spinn, spinn, Mägdlein, spinn!

Sing, sing, Mägdlein, sing,
Und sei fein guter Ding;
Fang dein Spinnen lustig an,
Mach ein frommes End daran.
Sing, sing, Mägdlein, sing!

Lern, lern, Mägdlein, lern,
So hast du Glück und Stern;
Lerne bei dem Spinnen fort
Gottesfurcht und Gotteswort.
Lern, lern, Mägdlein, lern!

Lob, lob, Mägdlein, lob,
Dem Schöpfer halte Prob;
Daß dir Glaub und Hoffnung wachs
Wie dein Garn und wie dein Flachs.
Lob, lob, Mägdlein, lob!

Dank, dank, Mägdlein, dank,
Dem Herrn, daß du nicht krank,
Daß du kannst fein oft und viel
Treiben dieses Rockenspiel.
Dank, dank, Mägdlein, dank!

Wagner’s *Der fliegende Holländer* (‘The Flying Dutchman’) was first performed in Dresden in 1843. The Schumann family moved to that city in 1844, but it is likely that Schumann was acquainted with this controversial new score, although he never wrote about it. It would certainly have been difficult to avoid a hit like the spinning song (‘Summ und brumm’) in the second act of Wagner’s opera. Here Schumann makes his own tiny riposte, a spinning song of his own, for three voices rather than for an entire female chorus and an overwrought Senta. In short, this is a model of concise classical restraint in direct contrast to Wagnerian length and complexity.
Within its own modest limits this is a successful little trio, hardly ever performed in public because of its casting for three female voices. (Technology permits Ann Murray to sing both the second and third of these.) It should be noted that the composer does mark the second and third voice parts ad libitum, thus allowing for a solo performance, but the musical effect of this is not nearly as satisfying. The whirring accompaniment suggests the turning of the spinning wheel in as deft a manner as Schubert found for Goethe’s Gretchen. The accents on the third and sixth quavers of the bar depict the clacking of the foot-driven machinery. In the second half of the song the spinning motif is transferred to the piano’s left hand which enables the right hand to provide these pointed little interjections.

The inspiration of the anonymous text (printed in both Des Knaben Wunderhorn, and the Liederbuch des deutschen Volkes) is said to have been found in the biblical apocrypha – The Book of Tobias, Chapter II vs.19 – where Hanna, wife of the prophet, is renowned for her spinning.

**Jägerliedchen**  
Little hunting song  
Op 68 No 7 (Klavieralbum für die Jugend)

We leave the parlour and return into the open air. This was the concluding piece of Maries Geburtstagsalbum, the birthday book for his daughter which was the original inspiration for a longer Klavieralbum für die Jugend. This breezy collage of hunting horns and riders was one of the pieces that Eugenie Schumann commented on, remembering the words of her mother: ‘I see the whole hunt as if it were physically in front of me. The horns are blowing, the horses are prancing, everything rushes by.’ In bars 11 and 12, and then 15 and 16 (triplet figures in musical parentheses which seem to shake with alarm) Clara Schumann heard ‘the rustling of the game beaten out of the undergrowth’. Four bars from the end there is a displaced accent in the right hand; this was apparently supposed to suggest the squeaking of a badly played horn – a detail that flies by before it can be savoured as such.

Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805)

**Des Buben Schützenlied**  
The boy’s hunting song  
Op 79 No 26; sung by Ann Murray

This poem is sung by Walther, the son of Wilhelm Tell – the eponymous hero of Schiller’s play, at the beginning of Act III. While Hedwig, Wilhelm’s wife, concerns herself with household tasks, father and son are to be seen playing with a small crossbow. It is clear that the boy is learning to use the weapon. He sings while he practises under his father’s guidance:
Mit dem Pfeil, dem Bogen
Durch Gebirg und Tal
Kommt der Schütz gezogen
Früh am Morgenstrahl.
Wie im Reich der Lüfte
König ist der Weih, –
Durch Gebirg und Klüfte
Herrscht der Schütze frei.
Ihm gehört das Weite,
Was sein Pfeil erreicht,
Das ist seine Beute,
Was da kreucht und fleugt.

With the arrow, with the bow,
Through mountains and valleys
The archer goes his way
In the early light of dawn.
As in the breezes’ realm,
The kite is king,
So, over peak and gorge,
The archer holds sway.
The wide spaces belong to him,
Whatever his arrow hits,
That is his prey,
Be it bird or beast.

At the end of the original song the boy complains that his bow-string is broken. He asks his father to fix it for him, and Wilhelm refuses, saying that a real hunter does that for himself. Hedwig now expresses her disquiet that the boy is learning to shoot at a very early age; Tell replies that he who wants to be a master must begin to practise early. Here is the age-old conflict between a driven man of action and his wife who is trying to preserve the peace of the home in troubled times. Tell explains that it is in his nature to be a hunter, always chasing something in the mountain wilds; Hedwig roundly rebukes him for his insensitivity and thoughtlessness.

This is a musical companion-piece for the rather similar Uhland setting *Des Knaben Berglied*. Fanfare and dotted rhythms in both pieces symbolize youthful bravery and the determination of boys to play their roles as men, and as early as possible. Both songs would seem to come under the heading of ‘fostering patriotic feelings for the Fatherland’. The music is simple and completely strophic – the springing dotted rhythms could well describe a sure-footed mountain hunter leaping from rock to rock in pursuit of his prey. The words make clear that it is the freedom of this hunting life that is most relished by those who live it. The whole theme of *Wilhelm Tell* is, of course, that this freedom is threatened by the Austrians. Every German schoolchild would have known about the heroic son, Walther Tell, who stood calmly while his father was compelled to shoot an apple off his head. (Later in the play Wilhelm Tell kills Gessler, the villain who has devised this cruel game.)

The inclusion of two poems from this most radical of plays in Schumann’s *Liederalbum* tells us much about the political climate of 1849. Only a decade earlier Schiller’s old-fashioned idealism and trenchant left-wing beliefs might have seemed ‘old hat’; he could have been dismissed as a fighter for lost causes, a voice crying in the wilderness. Schiller, child of the Enlightenment, would have recognized Schumann’s Biedermeier world (had he lived long enough to experience it) as the old iron fist of absolute rule disguised in a new velvet glove of cosy domesticity. The same old
princes, foremost among them the Austrian chancellor Metternich, employed a cynical *Realpolitik*. They suspended the rule of law in order to suppress the ‘terrorists’ of the time – in those days a label pinned on the French and their so-called dangerous adherents, Germany’s left-wing students and intellectuals. Certainly Schiller was not considered relevant enough by Schumann to figure in any of the songs composed in his great lieder year of 1840. But in the time of the 1848–9 revolution, when Metternich and his ilk were finally supplanted, William Tell’s historical struggles against Switzerland’s oppressors in the early fourteenth century suddenly acquired a contemporary significance. On the manuscript of this song is Schumann’s laconic marking: ‘May 3rd, revolution in Dresden’.

40 Winterzeit I

Wintertime I

Op 68 No 38 (*Klavieralbum für die Jugend*)

Images of William Tell in the Swiss mountains suggest snow, and snow returns us to theme of winter. Here is a winter prelude to the exquisite Rückert song of the snowdrop that follows. This is one of the very last pieces in the *Klavieralbum* to be completed (September 1848), a few days before the composer sent off the manuscript to be engraved by the publishers. This is one of Schumann’s perfect little miniatures, music for a child to listen to, easy enough to be played by a child, but containing every grain of adult experience (and heartache) that the composer could possibly pour into his music. The piece is closely related to *Erster Verlust* 49, a variation on that piece’s falling sequences and musical sighs. In the second half of *Winterzeit* these falling fourths are counterbalanced by interjections answering the plaint (as if in reassurance) in the upper regions of the treble clef. This is part-writing where thematic fragments entwine like fingers clasped in prayer. Schumann seems always to have an uncanny ability to summon an atmosphere, and to hold us in the palm of his hand with the exquisite pacing of his harmonic progressions.

Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866)

41 Schneeglöckchen

Snowdrop

Op 79 No 27; sung by Felicity Lott

Der Schnee, der gestern noch in Flöckchen
Vom Himmel fiel, Hängt nun geronnen heut als Glöckchen
Am zarten Stiel. Schneeglöckchen läutet, was bedeutet’s
Im stillen Hain?

The snow that only yesterday fell in flakes
From the sky, Hangs now, frozen, as a little bell
From a delicate stem. A bell of snow rings in the silent wood,
What can it mean?
O komm geschwind! Im Haine läutet's
Den Frühling ein.
O kommt, ihr Blätter, Blüt’ und Blume,
Die ihr noch träumt,
All zu des Frühlings Heiligtume!
Kommt ungesäumt!

This is undoubtedly one of the masterpieces of a collection rich in vernal imagery. It is almost a spring song in that it describes the poet’s longing for the arrival of spring. It turns back the seasonal clock a few days on the other songs where spring has already arrived. (In movie parlance this is the prequel to Er ist’s.) Rückert’s text has inspired music which turns the clock back even further – to the freshness of Schumann’s 1840 lieder. The title has inspired the composer to find music to pay homage to the flowers’ bell-like shape. The ringing of snowbells, or snowdrops, is a sound that does not occur in nature, but it is dear to composers’ imaginations, particularly those who like to make musical puns out of verbal imagery (cf. Schubert’s chiming music for the most famous snowdrop in the lied, *Viola*).

The clarity of the piano music suggests a clear, bright day: high in the treble register the right hand’s little finger traces a counter-melody to the vocal line which emerges shyly underneath – protected, as it were, by a canopy of piano-writing. The mixture of sunlight and cold air is to be felt in the temperature of this music. The last traces of a light snowfall from the day before speckle the ground, but we fancy we now see flowers where there have only been granules of ice. (Rückert makes one thing turn into the other, as if the snowflakes have adopted the shape of flowers.) A succession of melting phrases depicts … melting. Gentle chromaticisms in the music’s inner voices soften the crystalline contours of frozen edges, the day warms with the music as the song progresses. These are the conditions for the emergence of snowdrops, flowers which are lured above ground by even a hint of a change of season.

The syncopations in the piano-writing throughout, little off-beat tugs at the sleeve, are a sign of entreaty and longing: ‘Let spring please come’, they seem to be saying; ‘oh spring, please come quickly!’ The snowdrop must beg for its life, only too aware of its doom if spring reneges on its promise and another storm arrives. The tiny little accompanying phrase which sets the seal on the song is the most miniature of postludes – a metaphor for evaporation, the disappearance of a twinkling drop of dew in a glint of sunlight – the highest note of the piece reserved for the very last.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)

**Lied Lynceus des Türmers**
Op 79 No 28; sung by Ann Murray

Zum Sehen geboren,
Zum Schauen bestellt,
Dem Turme geschworen
Gefällt mir die Welt.
Ich blick’ in die Ferne,
Ich seh’ in der Näh’
Den Mond und die Sterne,
Den Wald und das Reh.
So seh’ ich in allen
Die ewige Zier,
Und wie mir’s gefallen,
Gefall’ ich auch mir.
Ihr glücklichen Augen,
Was je ihr gesehn,
Es sei, was es wolle,
Es war doch so schön!

**Song of Lynceus the watchman**

I am born for seeing,
Employed to watch,
Sworn to the tower,
I delight in the world.
I see what is far,
I see what is near,
The moon and the stars,
The wood and the deer.
In all these I see
Eternal beauty,
And as it has pleased me,
I’m content with myself.
O happy eyes,
Whatever you have seen,
Let it be as it may,
How fair it has been!

In considering this song we are privileged to peep into Schumann’s workshop when he was conceiving one of his greatest works – the *Scenes from Faust* for vocal soloists, chorus and orchestra, begun in 1844 and completed in 1853. Undoubtedly we owe this setting to the composer’s intensive study of the second part of Goethe’s *Faust* in preparation for the *Scenes*. He must have considered setting the beautiful words of Lynceus as part of his larger orchestrally accompanied work (indeed, it is a pity he did not). The lyric printed above is to be found on pages 308–9 of Volume 41 of Goethe’s *Ausgabe letzter Hand* (Schumann’s source) while *Die grauen Weiber*, an extended and harrowing section of the *Scenes from Faust* (Part 2, No 5) is on page 312.

The fifth, and last, act of the second part of Goethe’s *Faust* begins with the enforced removal of that happy old couple Philemon and Baucis (characters from Ovid, the original Darby and Joan, and the subject of countless retellings of their story) from the estate of the aged, and increasingly self-centred, anti-hero. Faust asks Mephistopheles to get rid of them. This brings about a peremptory reversal of their idyllic apotheosis in mythology, which had been celebrated by numerous other poets and composers: their house is burned down, and they are murdered. Soon
after this Faust is visited by ‘Die grauen Weiber’ (‘the white-haired women’) and he is blinded by one of them, Care (Sorge); it is the beginning both of his downfall, and of one of Schumann’s most effective vocal pieces.

The scene with which we are concerned is before this: it is headed ‘Tiefe Nacht’ – ‘Deep Night’. The many-eyed Lynceus (a character who derives his name from the sharp-eyed steersman of the Argonauts who could distinguish objects at a distance of nine miles) sings from his watchtower. The lyric, the so-called *Türmerlied* (‘Watchtower song’) is one of Goethe’s most celebrated, a distillation of the poet’s love of life, and a hymn of gratitude for the beauties of the world. The radiance of the noble and wise poem printed opposite is immediately undermined by what follows: Lynceus’s description of the burning cottage of Philemon and Baucis:

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What a gruesome horror threatens
From the wood at this dark hour!
Ah! The hut, once damp and mossy,
Flames within it pave and lave it;
There’s a call for quick assistance,
No one is at hand to save it.
Ah, that decent aged couple,
Once so careful about fire,
Smothered now in smoke and cinders!
What an end! How strange! How dire!
```

No words could better express Schumann’s own horror at the revolution of 1849, and his fear at the prospect of the disintegration of the safe bourgeois life he needed to continue his work. The revolution in Dresden was all very well as a theoretical idea, but in the end he sided with the disquiet of Lynceus: Robert and Clara’s house needed as much protection from anarchy as the hut of Philemon and Baucis. If we consider these words, written by Goethe immediately *after* the poem which Schumann actually set to music in Op 79 No 28, we entirely understand his political position.

It would be useless to argue that Schumann provides the immortal words of Lynceus with a matching musical response. (It seems to me that Loewe in his Op 9 of 1834 does better.) No one could argue that in his *Scenes from Faust* Schumann does not frequently rise to the level of Goethe at his greatest, but here, in the context of his children’s songs, the composer seems over-concerned to continue to wear his teacher’s, or parent’s, hat. There is something didactic about this setting when it should be visionary. This B flat major song (its original key) in portentously dotted rhythm achieves a certain gravity and eloquence; it has a spacious, even lofty, sense of purpose. One does get the impression that everything is viewed from a high tower, something to do with the sparing use of root-position chords; the doubling of the vocal line by the accompaniment aptly suggests the
almost super-human concentration and perception of someone with exceptional vision. This is all
well and good, and the song is far from a bad one. In the end, however, one finds oneself agreeing
with Eric Sams who says that it sounds as if Lynceus, ‘in the great outdoors of B flat major …
were an elder son of Schiller’s William Tell’ (cf. Des Buben Schützenlied, also in B flat major).

Mignon
Op 68 No 35 (Klavieralbum für die Jugend)

Goethe’s Mignon was a character ineffably dear to Schumann. Her plight, however fictional, fitted
the patterns which immediately engaged his sympathy. She was an abandoned little girl, small in
build, hard done-by, loyal, passionate, resourceful and afflicted with a tragic destiny (she was the
child of an incestuous union). Her exploited status (in Wilhelm Meister, the eponymous hero
rescues her from being a rope-dancer in a circus) appealed to the composer’s left-leaning hatred
of injustice. In short, this highly strung Italian orphan was an ideal Schumannian icon, just as she
would have been a character on whom Dickens would have lavished his attention. It is no surprise
that after the success of ‘Kennst du das Land?’ (Op 79 No 29, see track below) Schumann went
on to compose three further Mignon songs as part of his Op 98a: ‘Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt’,
‘Heiss mich nicht reden’ and ‘So lasst mich scheinen’. He then decided that ‘Kennst du das Land?’
should reappear in another incarnation in a new opus, thus Op 98a No 1. But his devotion to this
character was not to end there; he was to follow Mignon’s destiny after her early death and to mark
her funeral with a work drawn from Goethe’s description of the obsequies: Requiem für Mignon,
is joined to the Wilhelm Meister settings of Op 98a. This work, Op 98b, is a piece for five solo
voices, chorus and orchestra. This places Schumann at the forefront of all other Mignon enthusiasts
among lied composers.

This little piano piece is yet another manifestation of Schumann’s loyalty, but it is unusual in that it
illustrates a part of Mignon’s story that is passed over in all other musical sources. The composer’s
original title for the piece was Tightrope-dancing girl. This changed to Mignon (dancing on the
tightrope). The final title dropped the reference to the young girl’s balancing act, but the exquisite
little illustration by Ludwig Richter (in one of the panels for the cover of the Klavieralbum, see
below) takes account of the composer’s original thoughts. Here she is depicted balancing on a
tightrope with the aid of a long stick. She also seems to be wearing angel’s wings. These may also
be something to do with her balance on the trapeze; but it is probably the conflation of two aspects
of her story. Towards the end of the novel Mignon chooses to wear angel’s wings for her last
appearance at the orphanage; this is in connection with the lyric ‘So lasst mich scheinen bis ich
werde’. Has Richter confused the two incidents and illustrated them as one?
The song settings associated with Mignon are to be found in the novel only after she has come under the protection of Wilhelm Meister. Once he has become her protector, her ‘Beschützer’, she sings ‘Kennst du das Land?’ to him. She then sings ‘Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt’ as a duet with the harper, that mysterious and neurotic man, also part of Wilhelm’s entourage, who turns out to be Mignon’s father. In this little piano piece we encounter Mignon long before she sings these lyrics, towards the beginning of the novel (Book Two, Chapter Four). She is performing in the acrobat’s troupe into which she has been sold in virtual slavery. Wilhelm feels an immediate sympathy for her, a deep fascination in fact, and he soon arranges to buy her out of her punitive contract for the sum of thirty thalers.

The music suggests concentration of the highest order. The sweetness of the little performer is evident in this E flat major prelude in which the outlines of a halting melody are sketched by upward stretches of the little finger of the right hand; these are as tentative as Mignon’s movements. The swaying of the tightrope as she attempts to keep her balance is evident from the billowing quavers of the right hand. The seemingly rather perverse fp markings on the fourth beat of each bar make sense only if we realize that Mignon needs to stop and steady herself before moving on to the next harmonic position. She is clearly no virtuoso or show-off in this difficult work, but she traverses the tightrope with a certain teetering grace. Schumann perfectly conveys the girl’s attempts at poise, her sweetness, and also the pathos of her situation: a person of her pride and sensibility suffers the deepest humiliation when she is exhibited in this fashion. Her ‘owner’ beats her and Wilhelm Meister comes to her rescue. This little piano piece, describing Mignon before Wilhelm knew her, is a prelude to all the famous songs which follow in the novel – settings of Schubert, Wolf, Liszt et alia. It is also a fitting prelude to Schumann’s own ‘Kennst du das Land?’.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832)

Mignon
Op 79 No 29; sung by Felicity Lott

Kennst du das Land, wo die Zitronen blühn,
Im dunkeln Laub die Gold-Orangen glühn,
Ein sanfter Wind vom blauen Himmel weht,
Die Myrte still und hoch der Lorbeer steht?
Kennst du es wohl?

    Dahin! dahin
Möcht’ ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn.

Es glänzt der Saal, es schimmert das Gemach,
Und Marmorbilder stehn und seh’n mich an:
Was hat man dir, du armes Kind, getan?
Kennst du es wohl?

    Dahin! dahin
Möcht’ ich mit dir, o mein Beschützer, ziehn.

Kennst du den Berg und seinen Wolkensteg?
Das Maultier sucht im Nebel seinen Weg;
In Höhlen wohnt der Drachen alte Brut;
Es stürzt der Fels und über ihn die Flut!
Kennst du ihn wohl?

    Dahin! dahin
Geht unser Weg! O Vater, laß uns ziehn!

Who can blame Schumann for saving this song until last? He clearly wanted to finish his Op 79 with a great poem, and 1849 was the Goethe centenary year. If he was attempting to trace a line of deepening maturity through the cycle, a child’s progress from light-hearted infancy to the responsibilities of adolescence, it makes (somewhat depressing) sense to give the last song to a character who is still young but prematurely aged by grief and care. Mignon was kidnapped from her home in Italy and she has had to grow up fast. She is hardly the best adjusted of children, and she is certainly no role model for a German girl – supposedly someone newly weaned from Schumann’s song book, and looking forward to married life and children of her own. Thankfully, as Schumann came to the end of Op 79, he ditched his educational responsibilities in favour of writing a work which drags us unashamedly out of the school room and into the world of unfettered adult emotion.
This world-famous lyric (set by Beethoven, Schubert, Wolf and Liszt, among many others) is a hymn to Italy. Non-German soil is a rarity in Op 79; the two Schiller settings are Swiss – and thus honorary German – and the two Zigeunerlieder might take place in Spain or England. In the first strophe Mignon remembers the orange and lemon trees native to a kinder climate; she longs for the warmth and fragrance of the South. She begs Wilhelm her ‘beloved’ to take her there. She had grown up in a Palladian villa which she describes for us in the second strophe: she remembers the glistening of vaulted marble rooms and antique statues in the park, their mouths open as if they were talking to her and asking her, ‘What have they done to you, poor child’. (This detail gives the lie to the idea that Mignon’s home life, even before her kidnap, had been a cosy idyll.) Again she asks Wilhelm, her ‘protector’, to take her back to this place. The third verse describes the frightening and difficult trek across the mountains between Italy and Germany. She has been kidnapped and she is being taken northwards. She can only remember the perilous mountain passes with the stumbling donkeys, sheer rock faces, cascading cataracts and imagined dragons. She begs Wilhelm, her ‘father’, to take her back to these – ‘Dahin! dahin’. (Perhaps she really does mean that she would like to return to this cauldron of danger, but it seems more likely that she wishes to return to her homeland as she describes it in the poem’s first verse.)

The piano’s prelude is the most developed in Op 79. These beseeching semiquavers are a portrait of Mignon herself as described by Goethe. In this music she looks longingly into the distance, and in vain; she gazes heavenward in hope and is then downcast in disappointment. She has the fiery temperament of an Italian, and the diffidence of a wounded child who has suffered much. This is all to be heard in these four bars which rise and fall chromatically, encompassing the contradictions of her character.

The first lines of the poem are set to a gently memorable tune; the piano’s semiquavers under ‘Zitronen blühn’ are tendrils of foliage along the trellis of the stave. As soon as a gentle wind steals into the poem the piano-writing quickens into wafting semiquaver triplets (Beethoven’s Mignon setting does likewise). At mention of the laurel, the triplets move into the pianist’s left hand with another descant of falling semiquavers in the right. Like a luxuriantly overgrown garden the texture of the music thickens and intensifies. The girl’s repetitive question (‘Do you know it?’) becomes more passionate and more rhetorical. These words (‘Kennst du es wohl?’) quickly take on an ecstatic urgency, and the word ‘Dahin!’ unleashes the floodgates of emotion (the music is now marked *forte*) in both voice and piano. The harmonization of this ‘Dahin!’ is always different; the second syllable of the word is coloured in different ways, always to imply ‘elsewhere, not here’.

The weakness of Schumann’s setting is that all three verses are sung to the same music. With the exception of an interrupted cadence which is the special feature of the link between the second and
third verses, all three strophes are introduced by the same prelude. The Op 79 song is simply marked ‘Langsam’ (slowly). When it was republished as Op 98a No 1 Schumann’s marking asks that it should be performed ‘with enhanced expression in the second and third verses’. This requirement is perhaps in the age-old tradition of the strophic song, but one cannot help feeling that in simply expecting his performers to become more intense with each verse, Schumann is abdicating some of his responsibilities as a composer. Wolf is in control of every note in his through-composed setting, and it is this which gives it the edge over Schumann’s.

The performers must do what they can, within the confines of the music, to depict the various images of the second and third verses: the icy stare of the statues with their hollow voices in the second, the might of nature in the third verse, as well as the menacing brood of dragons. At the words ‘vom blauen Himmel weht’ (first verse), ‘und sehn mich an’ (second verse) and ‘der Drachen alte Brut’ (third verse) there is the same ossia: the singer must choose here to stay on an E flat, or ascend to a high A. (I advise the former for the first two verses, the latter for the dragon of the final verse – this contributes to the gradual increasing of intensity the composer asks of his singer and pianist.)

The postlude is a tiny and vulnerable thing. A fragment of the Vorspiel is repeated (only the first five notes). And then the first four notes of the vocal line are heard pianissimo in the right hand. This is like a final question dying in the distance, a solitary signpost leading nowhere. Schumann himself wrote that we left Mignon ‘on the threshold of a more complex emotional life’. Mignon’s tragedy was that her life had been far too complex from the beginning and that she never finds any solutions to her problems. The way this work ends with a whispered little plea is surely the sign of a dying confidence that the composer felt in his own destiny. If this is the composer welcoming children to an adult world it is a muted reception. The Liederalbum für die Jugend comes to an end not with a bang but with a whimper.

* * *

**EPILOGUE**

**Lied Italienischer Marinari**  
Op 68 No 36 (*Klavieralbum für die Jugend*).

As an epilogue to this performance of Schumann’s Liederalbum some of Mignon’s merrier countrymen make an appearance. (As it happens this piece is published immediately after Mignon in the Klavieralbum.) The composer visited Italy in 1829 and came back with many happy memories of what he had experienced, including Guiditta Pasta singing in La Scala, Milan, with mesmerizing intensity (the music was by Rossini).
‘Kennst du das Land?’ ended with a tiny pianistic motif – a miniature signpost pointing in the direction of Italy. The piano piece begins with a musical gesture in return, as loud and confident as Mignon’s is mysterious and self-effacing. A pianissimo echo of this forte motif (a rising augmented fourth in dotted rhythm) implies a response from the distance. These identical motifs sound very like the gondoliers’ calls which were noted from life by Britten in Death in Venice (‘Aou! Stagando, aou!’) – the boatmen’s warnings to avoid collisions in Venice’s crowded canals. Schumann took a long gondola journey (‘far, far out to sea’, he wrote) on 5 October 1829; he confessed to seasickness.

If Venice is the inspiration for the piece’s opening three bars (‘Langsam’), the main part of this ‘lied’ (marked ‘Schnell’) is rather more Neapolitan; this is a hornpipe, a nautical tarantella. Here we have the energy and brilliance, the sheer musical cheek, for which Italy was famous. Hugo Wolf fell in love with the contemporary smash hit ‘Funiculi, funicula’; here Schumann, nearly fifty years earlier, writes something similar, a veritable étude in staccato thirds.

August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798–1874)

Soldatenlied  
A soldier’s song

WoO 6; composed in 1844 or earlier; sung by Ann Murray

Ein scheckiges Pferd,  
A dappled horse,
Ein blankes Gewehr  
A shining gun
Und ein hölzernes Schwert,  
And a wooden sword,
Was braucht man denn mehr?  
What else do you need?
Ich bin ein Soldat,  
I’m a soldier,
Man sieht’s mir wohl an,  
You can tell by looking,
Ich marschiere schon grad’,  
I march straight,
Halt’ Schritt wie ein Mann.  
Keeping step like a man.
Mit trotzigem Mut  
In defiant mood
Zieh’ morgens ich aus,  
I set out each morning,
Kehr’ freundlich und gut  
Return home at noon
Um Mittag nach Haus.  
Gentle and kind.
So wird exerziert  
We practise drill
Zum Abend noch spat,  
Until late in the evening,
Bis der Schlaf kommandiert:  
When sleep commands us:
Zu Bett, Kamerad!  
Comrade, to bed!

At last we come to the tiny little song which played an important part in turning Schumann’s thoughts towards composing the Liederalbum für die Jugend in the first place. ‘In the beginning
there was *Soldatenlied*, as a scholar has recently written about Schumann’s connection with the poet, the single most significant thing in the development of Op 79 (see commentary on the poets above).

In Hoffmann’s *Gedichte* of 1834 the poet’s son makes an appearance in a cycle of ten poems. The original heading of this one, the third, was ‘The way in which Sigismund played at being a soldier was sung as follows’. The references to ‘Mein Bub’ (‘my boy’) cast the proud father as observer. For the poem’s appearance in his *Fünfzig neue Kinderlieder* (to which Schumann was invited to contribute this song) Hoffmann puts the words directly in the mouth of the child. The music seems an ideal piece of children’s music; it is easy to sing and play, but it also has a remarkably catchy tune. The musical structure develops in such an inevitable way that the final punch line (‘Zu Bett, Kamerad!’) has the panache of a *coup de grâce*, albeit executed with a wooden sword. The curtain falls. Sleep the commander has spoken, and we must all go to bed.

Notes by GRAHAM JOHNSON © 2004
English translations © RICHARD STOKES

Recorded on 20–22 January 2004
Recording Engineer JULIAN MILLARD
Recording Producer MARK BROWN
Piano STEINWAY & SONS
Language Coach ANJA BOELKOW
Front Design TERRY SHANNON
Booklet Editor TIM PARRY
Executive Producer SIMON PERRY
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Front photograph by Malcolm Crowthers
SCHUMANN’S ADVICE TO YOUNG MUSICIANS

A collection of Schumann’s aphorisms entitled *Musikalische Haus- und Lebens-Regeln* (‘Musical House- and Life-Rules’) was first published as a supplement to the *Klavieralbum für die Jugend* Op 68. Here is a selection of them translated by the English composer Henry Hugo Pierson (1813–1873):

1. The cultivation of the Ear is of the greatest importance – Endeavour early to distinguish each tone and key. Find out the exact notes sounded by the bell, the glass, the cuckoo etc.

4. Play strictly in time! The playing of many a virtuoso resembles the walk of an intoxicated person. Do not take such as your model.

9. Endeavour to play easy pieces well and with elegance; that is better than to play difficult pieces badly.

11. It is not only necessary that you should be able to play your pieces on the instrument, but that you should also be able to hum the air without the piano. Strengthen your imagination so that you may not only retain the melody of a composition, but even the harmony which belongs to it.

12. Endeavour, even with a poor voice, to sing at first sight without the aid of the instrument; by these means your ear for music will constantly improve: but in case you are endowed with a good voice, do not hesitate a moment to cultivate it; considering it at the same time as the most valuable gift which heaven has granted you!

14. When you play, never mind who listens to you.

15. Play always as if in the presence of a master.

21. You should never play bad compositions, nor, unless compelled, listen to them.

22. Do not think velocity, or passage-playing, your highest aim. Try to produce such an impression with a piece of music as was intended by the composer; all further exertions are caricatures.

26. Do not be elated by the applause of the multitude; that of artists is of greater value.

29. Do not miss an opportunity of practising music in company with others; as for example in Duets, Trios, etc; this gives you a flowing and elevated style of playing and self-possession – Frequently accompany singers.

31. Love your peculiar instrument, but be not vain enough to consider it the greatest and only one. Remember that there are others as fine as yours. Remember also that singers exist, and that numbers, both in chorus and in orchestra, produce the most sublime music; therefore do not overrate any solo.

33. Frequently play the fugues of good masters, above all those of J. Seb. Bach. Let his “Well-tempered Clavichord” be your daily bread. By these means you will certainly become proficient.

35. Relieve the severity of your musical studies by reading poetry. Take many a walk in the fields and woods!

36. From vocalists you may learn much, but do not believe all they say.
37 Remember there are more people in the world than yourself. Be modest! You have not yet invented nor thought anything which others have not thought or invented before. And should you really have done so, consider it a gift of heaven which you are to share with others.

38 You will be readily cured of vanity or presumption by studying the history of music, and by hearing the masterpieces which have been produced at different periods.

42 Frequently sing in choruses, especially the middle parts, this will help to make you a real musician.

49 Do not neglect to attend good operas.

50 Highly esteem the Old, but take also an interest in the New. Be not prejudiced against names unknown to you.

53 Melody is the battle-cry of amateurs, and certainly music without melody is nothing. Understand, however, what these persons mean by it; a simple, flowing and pleasing rhythmical tune; this is enough to satisfy them. There are, however, others of a different sort, and whenever you open Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, or any real master, their melodies meet you in a thousand different shapes. I trust you will soon be tired of the inferior melodies, especially those out of the new Italian operas; and of all vulgar sorts.

58 Look deeply into life, and study it as diligently as the other arts and sciences.

60 By means of industry and perseverance you will rise higher and higher.

62 Without enthusiasm nothing great can be effected in art.

63 The object of art is not to produce riches. Become a great artist, and all other desirable accessories will fall to your lot.

67 There is no end of learning.
**FELICITY LOTT**

Felicity Lott was born and educated in Cheltenham, studied French at Royal Holloway College, of which she is now an Honorary Fellow, and singing at the Royal Academy of Music, of which she is a Fellow. Her operatic repertoire ranges from Handel to Stravinsky, but she has built up her formidable international reputation as an interpreter of the great roles of Mozart and Strauss, which she has sung at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, the Glyndebourne Festival, in Paris at the Opera Bastille, Opéra Comique, Châtelet and Palais Garnier, at the Metropolitan Opera, New York and at the Munich and Vienna State Operas.

She has sung with the Berlin and Vienna Philharmonic and Chicago Symphony Orchestras under Solti, the Munich Philharmonic under Mehta, the London Philharmonic under Haitink, Welser-Möst and Masur, the Concertgebouworkest under Masur, the Boston Symphony under Previn, the New York Philharmonic under Previn and Masur, the BBC Symphony Orchestra with Sir Andrew Davis in London, Sydney and New York and the Cleveland Orchestra under Welser-Möst in Cleveland and Carnegie Hall.

A founder member of The Songmakers’ Almanac, Felicity has appeared on the major recital platforms of the world and has a particularly close association with Wigmore Hall in London. She was made a CBE in the 1990 New Year Honours and in 1996 was created a Dame Commander of the British Empire. In February 2003 she was awarded the title of Bayerische Kammersängerin. She has also been awarded the titles Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and Chevalier de l’Ordre National de la Légion d’Honneur by the French Government.

**ANN MURRAY**

Ann Murray was born in Dublin and studied with Frederick Cox at the Royal Manchester College of Music. She has close links with both English National Opera, for whom she has sung Handel’s Xerxes and Ariodante and Donizetti’s Maria Stuarda, and with the Royal Opera, Covent Garden, where her roles have included Cherubino, Dorabella, Despina, Idamantes, Sifare, the Composer, Octavian, Rosina, Amaltea, Ruggiero and Giulio Cesare.
She has appeared with the world’s great orchestras and conductors and in the major concert halls and has been a regular guest at the BBC Proms. Her discography reflects not only her broad concert and recital repertoire but also her great operatic roles. Her operatic engagements have taken her to major opera houses throughout Europe, and to Chicago and the Metropolitan Opera, New York.

Ann Murray is an Honorary Doctor of Music at the National University of Ireland, a Kammersängerin of the Bavarian State Opera and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music. In the 2002 Golden Jubilee Queen’s Birthday Honours she was appointed an honorary Dame Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire.

*  *  *

The partnership of Felicity Lott and Ann Murray goes back to the mid-seventies, when they first appeared together with The Songmakers’ Almanac. They have been a celebrated Marschallin and Octavian in Richard Strauss’s Der Rosenkavalier at the Munich Festival, Vienna State Opera and the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and made a memorable joint appearance at the Last Night of the Proms in 1996. Since first presenting their duet programmes with Graham Johnson at Wigmore Hall, London, in 1991, they have appeared together all over the United Kingdom, including London (Wigmore Hall, Barbican and the City of London Festival), Glasgow, Newcastle, Birmingham and Manchester. Their European engagements together include appearances in Dresden, Hamburg, Düsseldorf, Cologne, Dortmund, Leipzig, Braunschweig, Bremen, Baden-Baden, Brussels, Amsterdam, Geneva, Strasbourg, Lyon, Merignac, Metz, Barcelona, Madrid, Lisbon, Venice, at La Scala in Milan, the Konzerthaus and Deutsche Staatsoper in Berlin and the Châtelet and Bastille in Paris. They have also given duet recitals in the United States, including Philadelphia and New York, at Alice Tully Hall. Their festival appearances include Brighton, Aldeburgh, Schleswig-Holstein, Schwetzingen, Munich, Schwarzenberg and Salzburg. They have also recorded two duet recitals for EMI Classics.
After arriving in Britain from his native Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Graham Johnson studied at London’s Royal Academy of Music and subsequently with the late Geoffrey Parsons. In 1972 he was official accompanist at Peter Pears’s first masterclasses at The Maltings, Snape, and thereafter worked regularly with the great tenor. In 1975 he was invited by Walter Legge to accompany Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. In 1976 he formed The Songmakers’ Almanac to further the cause of neglected areas of piano-accompanied vocal music and to place the staple repertoire of song in new and challenging contexts. This endeavour was much supported by the late Gerald Moore, whose guiding influence in Johnson’s career was of crucial importance.

Apart from devising and accompanying over 150 Songmakers’ recitals, Graham Johnson has presented a number of summer recital cycles for London’s South Bank and Wigmore Hall, as well as a seven-part cycle of Goethe settings for the Alte Oper, Frankfurt. He has written and presented programmes for both BBC Radio and Television on the songs of Schubert, Poulenc, Liszt and Shostakovich. He is Professor of Accompaniment at London’s Guildhall School of Music, and a Fellow of that School as well as of the Royal Academy of Music. He has recently been appointed an honorary member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music. He has given masterclasses as far afield as Finland, New Zealand, and the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, California. He has also taught at the Juilliard School in New York and Bloomington, Indiana.

Graham’s recording of the entire Schubert lieder for Hyperion attracted critical acclaim, including the Gramophone Solo Vocal Award in both 1989 (for his disc with Dame Janet Baker) and 1996 (for Die schöne Müllerin with Ian Bostridge). His project to record the entire lieder of Schumann for Hyperion is now well under way. The first disc in the series, with Christine Schäfer, won the 1997 Gramophone Solo Vocal Award. He is also the guiding spirit behind Hyperion’s ongoing French Song Edition, and the author, with Richard Stokes, of A French Song Companion (OUP).

Graham Johnson was awarded an OBE in Her Majesty the Queen’s Birthday Honours list in 1994. In 2002 he was made a Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French ministry of culture.
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