

The background of the entire cover is a painting depicting three figures in silhouette, sitting on a dark, rocky outcrop. They are looking out over a vast body of water towards a bright, low sun on the horizon, creating a warm, orange and yellow glow. The figures appear to be a man and two women, dressed in 19th-century style clothing. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

audite

ROBERT SCHUMANN

Complete Symphonic Works

VOL. III

OREN SHEVLIN

WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln

HEINZ HOLLIGER

WDR

• THE COLOGNE
BROADCASTS

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Cello Concerto in A minor, Op. 129	23:59
I. <i>Nicht zu schnell</i>	11:51
II. <i>Langsam</i>	4:08
III. <i>Sehr lebhaft</i>	8:00

Symphony No. 4 in D minor, Op. 120 (revised version 1851)	28:56
I. <i>Ziemlich langsam. Lebhaft</i>	10:25
II. <i>Romanze. Ziemlich langsam</i>	3:57
III. <i>Scherzo. Lebhaft</i>	6:45
IV. <i>Langsam. Lebhaft</i>	7:49

OREN SHEVLIN
WDR Sinfonieorchester Köln
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Remembering, Narrating

On 2 September 1848 Robert Schumann composed a piece for piano and called it *Erinnerung* [recollection], inserting the subtitle “4. November 1847”. This date was the day of Felix Mendelssohn’s death. His first “Song without words”, the prototype of poetic Romantic piano pieces, makes an appearance in Schumann’s small memorial work. Two years later, Schumann and his family moved to Düsseldorf: he had been appointed music director of the city where Mendelssohn had worked just over one and a half decades previously. On Thursday, 24 October 1850 Schumann conducted his first programme. This included Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto in G minor, Op. 25, with Schumann’s wife Clara as soloist. On that day he noted in his diary: “Finished the cello concerto.” He had worked on this piece, which was to appear in print in 1854 as his opus 129, for exactly two weeks. During these fourteen days, he had also studied Mendelssohn’s score and Clara had practiced the solo part.

Schumann’s Cello Concerto contains many recollections of Mendelssohn. It opens with three wind chords similar to those in the overtures to *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *Ruy Blas*. Immediately after that, the solo instrument makes an appearance over a lilting string accompaniment in the manner of Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto in E minor. The three movements merge into one another, as is also the case in Mendelssohn’s Piano Concerto in G minor. The first theme, introduced by the soloist, almost becomes an “idée fixe” for the entire work: it dominates the first movement, reappears in the transition to the last movement and then emerges in the middle of the finale. Across various transformational stages, it comes very close to the principal theme of Mendelssohn’s *Scottish* Symphony which Schumann had reviewed extensively in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*.

The theme of musical reminiscences goes further: before the beginning of the finale, the main themes of the previous

movements are recalled in the same way as Beethoven had done in his Ninth Symphony. Schumann also referred to his own works: in the transition from the first to the second movement he quotes a song-like motif from his Piano Sonata in G minor, Op. 22, the lyrical secondary idea from the last movement. As in the Piano Concerto, the soloist looks for, and finds, dialogue partners from the orchestra; in the slow movement, this is his “alter ego”, the principal cello from the ensemble, as well as his counterpart in the woodwind section, the bassoon. Schumann continues this linguistic approach to communication: formally defining passages are constructed as recitatives, as instrumental *Sprechgesang*. The composer seeks out the proximity to literature, and to the art of narration and lyrical stylisation, and not only in his songs, but also in his instrumental works, in their form as well as their diction.

The vicinity to poetry is nothing new in Schumann: from the beginning, this formed a crucial component of his musical thinking. “The aesthetics of one art are

the same in another: only the material is different”. Schumann noted this maxim no later than 1834, at the age of twenty-four, and he followed it in his ideal of musical poetry and in the many literary references permeating his piano oeuvre ever since his *Papillons* Op. 2. The new element in 1850 is Schumann’s wealth of experience, both as a composer and as a performer, which he can utilise for his open aesthetics; new, particularly, are his partly encouraging, partly sobering and disappointing experiences with his dramatic works, notably his *Scenes from Goethe’s Faust* which he produced in several bursts, and his opera *Genoveva*, based on the eponymous play by Friedrich Hebbel.

An example of these moments of theatrical consciousness is the transformation which the work’s three opening chords undergo during the course of the concerto. In the first instance, they herald special occurrences: the opening main theme, then the first entry of the full orchestra leading into the secondary theme, then the transformed reappear-

ance of the opening section, and finally, immediately before the quote from the piano sonata, the transition into the second movement. After the beginning of the finale, however, they become a component of the theme: they no longer refer to something else, but morph into the main issue themselves. Finally, the musical structure features discreet traces of sublimated theatrical thinking. In the cello concerto, not only the soloist appears as a protagonist, but, in a metaphorical sense, also the theme with which the soloist is introduced. It undergoes metamorphoses, impacts on its environment – the orchestra – at the same time reacting to it. The work focuses on interaction rather than confrontation between the individual and the collective. The stylisation of dramatic situations and developments, the differentiation of musical communication (melody, declamation and gesture) and the interlocking of the three movements far exceed what Schumann had achieved five years previously in his piano concerto which has the same layout of key struc-

ture – with one single exception: there, the finale lunges out of the slow intermezzo with a breakthrough to A major; here, the major tonality comes during the course of the finale, and when it does, it is not so much a breakthrough but a process which one can identify by its result rather than by its spectacular beginning.

The move to Düsseldorf marked a new era for Schumann: not only did the forty-year-old, for the first time in his life, take on a salaried leading role of a civic music institution, but the year 1850 also represented a caesura in his career as a composer. Until then, he had tackled all principal musical genres in a methodical approach. The years between 1840 and 1850 are generally labelled by the genres that he placed on centre stage: the song year of 1840 was followed by the symphony year (1841) and the chamber music year (1842); 1843 and 1844 were dedicated to the oratorio, in 1844 he studied the *Art of Fugue*, whilst he completed the piano concerto in its final three-movement form in 1845, and 1846/47 were





mostly reserved for his opera project. In 1850 he had completed his exploration of musical genres. Schumann had reached a new level of reflection in his work; he examined his musical language and its poetic basis, he extended his intellectual inventory to include fundamental questions of aesthetics: the relationship between immediacy and stylisation, direct and indirect speech in music and – again – the question of reciprocal permeability in musical genres.

The second version of the D minor Symphony

Schumann's period of review and reflection in Düsseldorf also included revising his D minor Symphony which was the second "valid" one to be composed in 1841. At and after its première it had not met with the anticipated level of recognition. That was mostly due to the circumstances of the concert at the Leipzig Gewandhaus on 6 December 1841 – the occasion at which it was performed for the first time. It was dominated by

another sensation: both Clara Schumann and Franz Liszt appeared in it, together and individually – "she, the consummate mistress, with him, who bears the name 'King of the Piano'", the *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung* enthused. This eclipsed everything else, including novelties written by Schumann, even though the same reviewer praisingly commented on the symphony that he was left "undecided whether the powerful invention or the mastery of instrumentation, particularly in the *Romanze* and the *Scherzo*, should be admired more". Nonetheless, the response from the press remained meagre; the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, which Schumann himself had founded in 1834 and which he had published as chief editor for ten years, printed only a short notice, whereas reviews of other works were markedly more extensive; Schumann did not want to be accused of self-publicity. Both Leipzig music publishers, Breitkopf und Härtel and C.F. Peters, decided not to publish the work for economic reasons, so it was to remain in the drawer

for a decade before Schumann again took it up in December 1851 in order to write out a new score. In the process, he heavily revised the work.

He did not touch the basic structure, retaining the one movement format which nonetheless contains all four customary movement types of a symphony. However, he shifted the accents in the relationship between tradition and innovation by way of seemingly minor adjustments: he extended the transition into the finale and, before its beginning, inserted a "tension fermata" – by halting the proceedings for a moment, it heralds the appearance of something new, accentuating the structure rather than the continual flow of the work. This corresponds to another decision: in keeping with tradition, Schumann repeats the first section, which presents the themes, in the outer movements. In his first version, he had dispensed with this structural principle. The fact that he generally prescribed slower tempi matches a consistent tendency of his in the 1850s; in the

symphony this also results in the urging quasi-narrative impetus being restrained and thus the revolutionary aspect of the through-composed concept being moderated.

Listening to both versions, the changes in instrumentation, particularly in the outer movements, immediately become apparent. It is probably fair to assume that the reason for these was not just a change in Schumann's sound ideals. Johannes Brahms made a pertinent comment with regard to this. He preferred the first version, concurring with Schumann's dictum of 1834: "The first conception is always the best and most natural. The mind errs, emotions do not." (The composer who, at one point, had wanted to become a poet, put these words into the mouth of Meister Raro who, as a member of the imaginary *Davidsbund*, arbitrated between the contrasting temperaments of Florestan and Eusebius as a wise and experienced authority.) When it came to publishing the D minor Symphony as part of the complete edition,

Brahms wrote to Clara Schumann – who was championing the revised version – in December 1889: “I find it enchanting how the lovely work immediately appeared in charming, appropriate garb. Why did Schumann later drape it so heavily? His bad Düsseldorf orchestra may have duped him into doing that.” In his instrumentation, Schumann took into account the sound and possibilities of the orchestras he knew and with whom he worked.¹ The Düsseldorf ensemble was not exclusively made up of professionals but also of good amateurs; it seems likely that he sometimes gave an important line to several instruments as a safety measure. Brahms’ comment, however, cannot be the sole explanation for the “thicker” instrumentation, not least because, in his revision, Schumann made some passages more transparent. It also does not explain why the composer clarifies thematic references at certain points,

and deleted them at others. The finale, for instance, was placed directly after an advanced developmental stage of the first movement, as though it was picking up a thread dropped earlier. In the revision, he included the soaring motif in this context, with which he opened the fast main section of the first movement following the slow introduction. With this, he emphasised the structural symphonic element, the new approach in contrast to the succeeding continuation.

Comparing the two versions, one might feel like Eusebius in the fictional dialogue of the three *Davidsbündler*, noted down by Schumann in 1834: “Two variants can often be of the same value.” They were written at different times. The original composition was written during the *Vormärz* (i.e. the period leading up to the March Revolution of 1848 in the states of the German Confederation); the manner in which literary techniques are exploited for musical means is pioneering. In 1851, however, the aspirations of the March Revolution of 1848 had been

quashed and scattered; life had moved on to an era of whitewashed restoration. With his concept of a work whose movements run into one another, forming a dramatic or narrative continuum, Schumann came very close to Liszt’s ideal of the symphonic poem. However, in contrast to the latter, Schumann rejected a clarifying programme in words as this would constrain the music and its perception. In 1841 Liszt’s tone poems were dreams of the future, for they did not yet exist. In 1851 his advocates declared them to be the music of the future. Schumann, who held Liszt in high esteem (a feeling that was reciprocated by the other composer), feared that a decision for programme music might lead to an aesthetic short circuit between the arts. The fact that, in his revision, he discreetly reinforced the traditional aspects of the genre, was also a reaction to the New German School who, at this point, set the tone in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* which Schumann had founded. However, once he had found the concept – i.e. the

literarisation of musical form – he did not deem it obsolete, as is proved by the composition of his cello concerto which he completed around one year before the revision of the D minor Symphony. The references to Mendelssohn in this work also show that Schumann re-interpreted the larger-scale, multi-part forms such as the concerto and the symphony as “narrations without words”, as it were, regarding them as bigger siblings of the “songs without words”. According to Schumann, neither genre required explanatory literary programmes to elucidate the poetic and dramatic content.

Habakuk Traber
Translation: Viola Scheffel

¹ For further information on this topic please see booklet of audite 97.678, Vol. 2 of the WDR Sinfonieorchester’s complete Schumann recording.



OREN SHEVLIN

Oren Shevlin was born in 1969 in Oldham, England. He studied at Chethams School of Music and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester and completed his studies at the Guildhall School of Music, London, and at the Hochschule für Musik, Cologne, graduating both times with the highest honours. His teachers were Raphael Sommer, Boris Pergamenschikow and Frans Helmerson.

Oren Shevlin won 2nd Prize at the International Paulo Cello Competition in Helsinki in 1996 as well as at the Rostropovich Cello Competition in Paris with the 2nd Grand Prix in 2001. With his duo partner, Mariko Ashikawa, he was also a prize-winner at the ARD International Competition Munich in the category Cello-Piano Duo in 1992.

Oren Shevlin has been principal cellist of the WDR Sinfonieorchester since 1998. In addition to giving numerous solo performances with the WDR Sinfonieorchester he has also performed as a soloist with orchestras such as the Finnish Radio Symphony, Helsinki Philharmonic, Kölner Kammerorchester, Deutsche Kammerakademie Neuss, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre National de France and the Gürzenich-Orchester Köln. As a soloist Oren Shevlin has collaborated with numerous conductors including Sir André Previn, Eliahu Inbal, Peter Rundel, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Christoph Eschenbach, Emilio Pomarico and Oliver Knussen. He has appeared several times at the Wigmore Hall in London.

Being also an enthusiastic chamber musician Oren Shevlin regularly performs with his piano trio, the Shevlin Trio. Moreover his chamber music partners have included artists such as Pinchas Zukerman, Fazil Say, Renaud Capucon, Christian Gerhaher, and the Auryrn quartet. Oren Shevlin is a founding member of the “Kammermusik für Köln” chamber concert series.

He plays a Matteo Goffriller (1730) and a very rare John Frederick Lott cello (1850) – on which the present recording of the Schumann Cello Concerto was made.

WDR SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA COLOGNE

The WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne was formed in 1947 as part of the then North West German Radio (NWDR) and nowadays belongs to the West German Radio (WDR). Principal conductors were Christoph von Dohnányi, Zdenek Macal, Hiroshi Wakasugi, Gary Bertini, Hans Vonk and Semyon Bychkov. Celebrated guest

conductors such as Fritz Busch, Erich Kleiber, Otto Klemperer, Karl Böhm, Herbert von Karajan, Günter Wand, Sir Georg Solti, Sir André Previn, Lorin Maazel, Claudio Abbado and Zubin Mehta have performed with the orchestra. The WDR Symphony Orchestra tours regularly in all European countries, in North and South America and in Asia. Since the season 2010/2011 Jukka-Pekka Saraste is the Chief Conductor of the orchestra.



HEINZ HOLLIGER

Heinz Holliger is one of the most versatile and extraordinary musical personalities of our time. He was born in Langenthal, Switzerland, and studied in Bern, Paris and Basel (oboe with Emile Cassagnaud and Pierre Pierlot, piano with Sava Savoff and Yvonne Lefébure and composition with Sándor Veress and Pierre Boulez).

After taking first prizes in the international competitions in Geneva and Munich, Mr. Holliger began an incomparable international career that has taken him to the great musical centres on five continents. Exploring both composition and performance, he has extended the technical possibilities of his instrument while deeply committing himself to contemporary music. Some of the most important composers of the present day have dedicated works to Mr. Holliger.

As a conductor, Heinz Holliger has worked for many years with leading orchestras and ensembles worldwide. The artist's many honours and prizes include the Composer's Prize of the Swiss Musician's Association, the City of Copenhagen's Léonie Sonning Prize for Music, the Art Prize of the City of Basel, the Ernst von Siemens Music Prize, the City of Frankfurt's Music Prize, the Abbiati Prize at the Venice Biennale, an honorary doctorate from the University of Zürich, a Zürich Festival Prize and the Rheingau Music Prize, as well as awards for recordings; the Diapason d'Or, the Midem Classical Award, the Edison Award, the Grand Prix du Disque, among others.

Heinz Holliger is in high demand as a composer. His opera on Robert Walser's "Schneewittchen" at the Zürich Opera House received great international acclaim. Other major works are the Scardanelli Cycle and the Violin Concerto.

