



The Romantic Soul

Through the direct juxtaposition of works by Robert and Clara Schumann, Judith Jáuregui traces their intimate artistic connection – a trusted companionship of reciprocal inspiration

Robert and Clara Schumann had to fight hard for their love. Yet despite the resistance and hurdles that initially stood in their way, their marriage blossomed into a private and artistic partnership of equals, characterised by mutual inspiration. For her new album *The Romantic Soul* (Die romantische Seele) for ARS Produktion, Spanish pianist Judith Jáuregui has compiled four works that reflect the Schumanns' intimate collaboration as both composers and performers. The album, recorded in Super Audio (SA) quality, will be released on June 5, 2020. A digital version will be available one week after the initial release.



ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)
PIANO CONCERTO IN A MINOR, OP. 54 (1841/45)
[1] ALLEGRO AFFETTUOSO
[2] INTERMEZZO: ANDANTE GRAZIOSO
[3] ALLEGRO VIVACE
[4] QUASI VARIAZIONI. ANDANTINO DE CLARA WIECK 3RD MOVEMENT OF PIANO SONATA NO. 3 IN F MINOR, OP. 14 (1836/1853) IN THE 2ND VERSION OF THE SONATA (REVISED 1853)

CLARA WIECK-SCHUMANN (1819-1896)
[5] VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY ROBERT SCHUMANN, OP. 20 (1853/54)
THEME. RATHER SLOWLY – VARIATIONS I-VII

ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)
[6] ARABESQUE C MAJOR, OP. 18 (1839)

JUDITH JÁUREGUI (PIANO) // ORQUESTRA SIMFÓNICA CAMERA MUSICAE
TOMÀS GRAU (CONDUCTOR) ([1]-[3])

ARS PRODUKTION // ARS38300 // 1 SA-CD // RELEASE IN GERMANY: JUNE 5, 2020 (DIGITAL JUNE 12, 2020)

Judith Jáuregui's first musical love was Robert Schumann. His *Album for the Young* accompanied her throughout her initial years of piano study and she has felt a deep connection to the tonal and emotional world of both Robert and Clara Schumann ever since.

"It is impossible to imagine Robert without Clara, just as it is impossible to imagine Clara without Robert. It is for this reason that I wanted to bring their music together and reflect their trusting communion with a selection of works that were born of mutual inspiration. Their lives and work are a true embodiment of "the romantic soul" [...]"

Robert Schumann's *Piano Concerto in A minor*, Op. 54 acts as the anchor point of the album. Before recording the concerto, a tour with the Orquestra Simfònica Camera Musicae and conductor Tomàs Grau enabled Judith Jáuregui to develop a shared language of understanding for the piece with the ensemble. The piece is widely regarded as a prototype of Romantic piano concertos, although it was not intended as such by its composer. In 1841 Robert Schumann wrote a *Fantasy* for piano and orchestra dedicated to the brilliant pianist Clara Schumann, née Wieck, who, only months before, had become his bride. Schumann's single-movement composition,

however, did not resonate with his contemporaries. It was not until 1845, when the composer added two further movements to the work, that the *Fantasy* was presented to the world. The resulting piano concerto dedicated to Clara Schumann is unique in its excellent symphonic character, inherent constructive density and of course, its brilliant solo part. The latter was never meant by the Schumanns to be a display of superficial virtuosity. Instead, it is masterfully used as a medium to display the virtuosity of emotions, sensibility, and poetry; never a mere effect or end in itself.

A special declaration of affection towards his beloved Clara, the third movement of Schumann's *Piano Sonata No. 3 in F minor*, often referred to by the composer himself as a "Concert sans orchestre", was specifically selected for the album by Judith Jáuregui. In "Quasi variazioni. Andantino de Clara Wieck", Schumann skilfully builds a fantastic musical scene around a previously unpublished theme of Clara's. The sonata is a singular "cry from the heart" of the composer towards his beloved wife and it is not until the movement of variations that the listener is exposed to its true thematic centrepiece.

In her own *Variations on a Theme by Robert Schumann*, Op. 20, Clara Schumann uses a theme from the first of her husband's five *Bunte Blätter*, Op. 99. Just a few days after Clara completed the work, she gifted a fair copy to Robert accompanied by the words: "For my dearest Husband on the 8th of June 1853, yet another weak attempt by his old Clara." In actual fact her attempt was far from weak. Johannes Brahms, for example, displayed great excitement and enthusiasm for the composition upon encountering the work for the first time. The variations on a theme of her husband's *Bunte Blätter*, Op. 99, was one of her final and arguably most important works.

The predominantly minor keys of the first works are elevated by the lightness of the final piece on Judith Jáuregui's album: *Arabesque in C major*, Op. 18, a piece that dates back to Schumann's sojourn in Vienna in the late 1830s. In a letter to his future wife Clara in 1838, the young composer recalls working on the artful yet catchy piece, which he had given the working title of "Guirlande" at the time. The title seemed particularly fitting, given that the nature of their very relationship resembled the decorative ornaments. Like two garlands, Clara and Robert's lives were intertwined, both artistically and personally. They overcame familial and professional hurdles, their symbiotic bond growing stronger and stronger, to be damaged only by the impending decay of Robert Schumann's psychological health. Yet even this unfortunate turn of events in the lives of the Schumanns did not stop their mutually inspired works, so rich in sound and artistic merit, from being handed down for posterity.

Judith Jáuregui was born in San Sebastián to a family that boasts a rich combination of Basque, French and Mexican heritage. Following her debut recital at the age of eleven she began her musical education in Spain, completing her studies at the Richard-Strauss Konservatorium in Munich. Since 2012, in addition to her career as an internationally acclaimed soloist and chamber musician in Europe, Asia and South America, she regularly records CD albums. Her debut album was, precisely, dedicated to Robert Schumann, and *The Romantic Soul* is now her sixth. This album, alongside her noteworthy live recording of "Pour le tombeau de Claude Debussy", marks the second time that the artist has recorded for the label ARS Produktion.

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