

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Jörg Widmann, *clarinet*

Tabea Zimmermann, *viola*

Dénes Várjon, *piano*

Tuesday, March 31 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM (Selection of Program Notes)

Fairy Tales, Op. 132

Robert Schumann

Born: June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, Kingdom of Saxony

Died: July 29, 1856, in Bonn, Prussia

Composed: 1853

Duration: 14 minutes

Unlike the earlier Märchenbilder (Fairy Pictures), in which individual pieces evoke specific associations, the Märchenerzählungen (Fairy Tales) have no direct reference to any narrative or underlying program. The work was composed October 9-11, 1853, not long before Schumann's final mental breakdown and suicide attempt. Nevertheless, the music is concise and light-hearted, the four movements linked by a recurring motive. It is one of Schumann's most organically conceived works. Schumann originally wrote the piece for clarinet, viola, and piano, but the first edition, published in 1854 by Breitkopf & Härtel, offers a choice of violin or clarinet.

Fantasy Pieces, Op. 73

Robert Schumann

Composed: 1849

Duration: 11 minutes

The three Phantasiestücke, Op. 73 (1849) contain moments of real interest. While each of the three pieces conveys a different mood, together they form a harmonically unified whole: the first begins in A minor and ends in A major, while the second and third are in A major. Further, at the end of each of the first two pieces, Schumann directs the performers to proceed to the next piece attacca, clearly demonstrating that the three pieces were conceived as a unified whole.

Fairy Tale Pictures, Op. 113

Robert Schumann

Composed: 1851

Duration: 15 minutes

Robert Schumann's little-known Märchenbilder (Fairytale Pictures) for viola and piano were composed during March of 1851, during his brief and relatively unhappy tenure as conductor at Düsseldorf. Chronologically, these four fantasy pieces occupy the space between the two sonatas for violin and piano, though they can hardly be said to inhabit the same emotionally conflicted world. Instead, they draw the listener into that same glistening world of fantasy and childlike imagination that, many years earlier, drew from him some of the most beloved piano music in the repertory. However, 20 years of further experience and the first signs of approaching madness grant to these seemingly simple portraits an almost desperate sense of escapism lacking in the earlier piano works.

Trio in E-flat Major, K. 498, Kegelstatt

Ludwig van Beethoven

Born: December 16, 1770, in Bonn, Electorate of Cologne

Died: March 26, 1827, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1786

Duration: 21 Minutes

This trio was written under circumstances that, if popular tradition is to be believed, seem highly improbable. Nevertheless, it is widely held that Mozart composed the Trio in E flat for clarinet, viola, and piano, K. 498 while participating in a game of skittles; this would account for its nickname, the "Kegelstatt" Trio ("Kegelstatt" = "Skittle Alley"). The score is dated August 5, 1786, and the work is, by any reckoning, extremely dense and cerebral, and hardly the outcome of any frivolous diversion.