

A scenic view of a lake with mountains in the background and trees in the foreground. The water is dark blue with many bright, shimmering reflections of sunlight. The sky is a pale blue with some light clouds. In the foreground, there are green leaves and branches of trees, some of which are slightly out of focus. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and natural.

Alicja Fiderkiewicz

plays piano music by

Schumann

Celebrity Recital
given at the
Seventh Chetham's
International Summer School
*and **Festival for Pianists***
August 22nd, 2007

Alicja Fiderkiewicz

a "live" celebrity recital performed at the
Seventh Chetham's International Summer School and Festival for Pianists
given in the
Whiteley Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester
on Wednesday, August 22nd, 2007

❏ **Robert Schumann (1810-1856)**

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| [1] Humoreske in B flat major, Op. 20 (1839) | 26:06 |
| [2] Romance in F sharp major, Op. 28, No. 2 (1839)* | 3:26 |
| * played as an encore at the recital | |

Sonata No. 1 in F sharp minor, Op. 11 (1832-5)

- | | |
|--|-------|
| [3] <i>Introduzione – Allegro vivace</i> | 9:24 |
| [4] <i>Aria</i> | 3:08 |
| [5] <i>Scherzo e intermezzo</i> | 4:54 |
| [6] <i>Finale</i> | 10:58 |

Total time:	58:04
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This recording was made “Live” at a public performance. Whilst the latest digital recording technology has been used to capture the effect and atmosphere of the occasion, some compromises have had to be made to accommodate certain constraints on microphone placements. In addition, the listener may be aware of the presence of some ambient noise, as well as that from the audience itself.

Programme Notes

Robert Alexander Schumann was born on June 8th, 1810 in Zwickau, a small town in Saxony, into a family that was reasonably well off. His father, August, was a successful bookseller, author and publisher, so was able to support his youngest son's interest in the piano, begun at the age of 7 years.

When August died in 1826, Robert received an inheritance, the capital of which was held in trust with the income payable on condition he went to university. Thus, in 1828, Robert went to the University of Leipzig to read law.

Agnes Carus, whom he had often accompanied on the piano at her uncle's house in Zwickau, had moved to Leipzig with her husband. Robert was able to renew his music-making with her but, more importantly, began to take piano lessons from Friedrich Wieck where he met Wieck's nine-year-old daughter, Clara, whom Wieck was training to be a concert pianist. For Robert, law was now supplanted by pianism, with writing a close second. As time progressed, he fell passionately in love with Clara and his early piano works composed from 1836 onwards were inspired by his feelings for her. Despite Wieck's vehement opposition, in 1837 they committed themselves to marry. They overcame all of the problems thrown in their way, and the ceremony finally took place the day before Clara's 21st birthday, September 12th, 1840⁽¹⁾.

Although this period in their lives had been traumatic, it was also a period of great inspiration with Schumann obviously so much more at home in the miniature than in extended sonata arguments. The *Humoreske* (1839) has formulaic similarities to *Kriesleriana* (1838) and the pieces in *Humoreske*, unified by their extremes ("laughing and weeping") are colourful and imaginative. No new 'territory' is explored, but they are full of energy and depth, full of ideas and never sound tiresome. Basically *Humoreske* comprises five main sections which can be regarded as 11 pieces of varying moods according to their tempo markings in all each lasting for three minutes or

fewer. The introduction is reminiscent of the more sedate moods of the 'Piano concerto in A minor'. A five-note figure invigorates the next two sections and the succeeding ones offer contrasts that fit well with the "laughing and weeping" description. The fourth section is a scherzo of great colour, and the fifth closes with brilliant triumphant music. It may not be *Kriesleriana*, but it is in the same spirit of this work, whilst retaining a distinct personality of its own⁽²⁾. It is played here continuously. There is no doubt that Schumann was an inspired romantic genius with a consequent musical character that was unlike any other. In 1831, he had created two imaginary characters, Florestan, for his impetuous self, and Eusebius, for his contemplative side. He was to use them for dialogues about life and music.

His instrument was the piano, and he is most famous for the relatively early works that show his "compressed genius". Among these are the three *Romances* (1839), the date reflecting that period towards the end of the still unmarried Schumann's legendary first decade of keyboard writing. 'Romance' was a title used with no strict formal application – composers use(d) it as they fancy(ied). Generally, it implies a specially personal or tender quality. These *Romances* contain his heart's yearning for his beloved Clara – young masterpieces of his early and middle twenties. About the 1st Piano Sonata, Ian Christians writes⁽¹⁾ : 'The passionate and inspired 'Sonata No. 1 in F sharp minor, Op. 11 (1832-35)', sums up these traits of Schumann's character in these early years. Announced as "*Sonata for pianoforte, dedicated to Clara from Florestan and Eusebius*", it has an ardent introduction leading into a fast syncopated melody that gives way to a song-like second subject. The aria that follows (*senza passione, ma espressivo*) is gorgeous, intimate music. The *scherzo ed intermezzo* takes us back to *Carnaval*, and is an exceptionally rich third movement. The *finale* is a phantasmagorical experience, with themes, ideas and brilliance cascading over the listener'.

References

- ⁽¹⁾ Christians, I., *Discovering Classical Music 4, Schumann*, DCM Publications, London, p.49 et seq., 2000.

- (2) All Music Guide.
<http://www.answers.com/topic/humoreske-for-piano-in-b-flat-major-op-20?cat=entertainment>

Bibliography

Kennedy, M., *The Oxford Dictionary of Music (revised edition)*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp737 & 787, 1997.

Internet sources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Schumann
http://w3.rz-berlin.mpg.de/cmp/schumann_r.html

Profile: Alicja Fiderkiewicz

"Alicja Fiderkiewicz ... a pianist of rare quality ... she plays with the kind of old-fashioned simplicity associated with the playing of her two great compatriots – Mieczyslaw Horszowski and Artur Rubinstein ... " – Piano Magazine

"...masterly and beautiful music making ..." – Daily Telegraph

"... gave a performance of Grieg's Concerto in which she showed a masculine strength of attack and a feminine delicacy in the lyrical passages ..." – Daily Telegraph

"... Hindemith's 3rd Sonata was the performance of the afternoon ..." – Financial Times reporting a Wigmore Hall recital

Born in Warsaw, Poland, the young Alicja Fiderkiewicz's outstanding musical talent was recognised at the tender age of three by her elder sister's piano teacher, who, upon hearing her play immediately spotted Alicja's tremendous potential. She saw in Alicja a passion for music, and recognised her perfect pitch and astonishing sense of rhythm, whereupon Alicja began studying the piano in earnest and entered Karol

Szymanowski's School of Music in Warsaw at the age of seven, attending the classes of Professor Krystyna Bocianowska. Two years later, on Alicja's father being posted to Russia as the Moscow Polish Embassy's Naval Attaché, Alicja was accepted into the Central School of Music attached to the Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatoire. She was taught by Professor Tatjana Kestner, who was herself a pupil of Alexander Goldenweisser. Tatjana Kestner taught a number of prominent Russian pianists, including Andrey Gavriliw and Tatjana Shebanowa among others.

During her years in Moscow, Alicja played in front of Emil Gilels, Sviatoslav Richter, and participated in Bach masterclasses with Tatjana Nikolayeva. In addition to her diligent musical studies, Alicja found time to give recitals at the Moscow Conservatoire, as well as to perform in many parts of Russia and the Ukraine.

Upon returning to her native Poland, Alicja continued her musical education in Karol Szymanowski's Lyceum of Music under the expert guidance of Professor Wanda Losakiewicz and, notably, Professor Zbigniew Drzewiecki, who taught so many outstanding Polish and overseas Chopin Competition Prize-winners. During the subsequent four years in Warsaw, Alicja won the Polish National Bach and Beethoven Competitions. She won the Chopin Scholarship four years in succession, the success of which gave her a number of engagements throughout Poland, including the birthplace of Chopin in Zelazowa Wola, plus the famous Royal Lazienki Park and Ostrogski Palace in Warsaw. Having graduated from Warsaw with Distinction and being awarded the prestigious gold medal, Alicja decided to leave her native country and continue her studies abroad. Despite being offered a place in the Julliard School of Music in New York, she chose instead to study under Professor Ryszard Bakst at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, England. Alicja admired his performances immensely, especially Chopin's *Mazurkas*.

Within three months of entering the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), Alicja was offered a scholarship for the rest of her five years' undergraduate and post-

graduate period.

Professor Bakst, himself a student of Professor Heinrich Neihaus in Moscow and a prize-winner of the Chopin International Piano Competition, was to have vast influence on Alicja's further development especially that of developing her sound, which has been described by some critics in her Chopin recital CD as, "a sound of exquisite beauty".

During her studies at the RNCM, Alicja won a number of college awards and concerto competitions. She participated in various masterclasses, including performing Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* for Professor Vlado Perlemutter and represented her college in many concert venues throughout the UK. She graduated with Distinction in both performance and teaching.

Alicja has appeared with number of major orchestras, including the Hallé, Da Camera, Manchester Camerata, La Scala in Milan, Warsaw National Philharmonic, Polish Radio & TV Orchestra, and many others. She has also given recitals for BBC Radio 3 and BBC TV.

Alicja has participated in International Competitions, becoming a winner and Prize winner of Dudley International Piano Competition and Premio Dino Ciani in Milan, where her performances were given high praise by Martha Argerich and Fou Ts'ong. Additionally, she was awarded the Calouste Gulbenkian Music Fellowship.

Alicja has performed widely throughout Great Britain in major venues, including a number of Wigmore Hall recitals, St. John's, Smith Square, St-Martin-in-the-Fields in London, Glasgow, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh, as well as performing internationally in Israel, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Cyprus, Poland, Russia, Japan and Ukraine.

For a number of years, Alicja took some time-out from stage and regular performances, but continued her work as a member of the keyboard department at

Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. Since returning to the stage, Alicja's performances in Japan, Cyprus, Spain and the UK have been received with great acclaim. She is a frequent faculty member and performer at the International Summer School of Music at Chetham's in Manchester, where she exercises considerable teaching skills.

She gives a number of masterclasses in England and internationally, for example in Japan, Cyprus and Spain.

Moreover, Alicja records for Divine Art Recordings Group, with whom she has released four highly acclaimed CDs.

Charitable performances and commitments to worthwhile causes form part of Miss Fiderkiewicz's career, notably Macmillan Cancer Relief, Macmillan Nurses, Cancer Research, The Heart Foundation, Eden Animal Refuge, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, Save The Children: Japan Tsunami Relief, and in addition, raising funds to support various churches and historical buildings in the UK, Spain and Poland.

Miss Fiderkiewicz is represented by HH Promotions London Ltd:
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Acknowledgement

The music on this CD was recorded during the Seventh Chetham's International Summer School and Festival for Pianists, 2007, in the Whiteley Hall, Chetham's School of Music, Manchester, by kind permission of the Director of Music.

Reviews of recitals

"... quite delightful and was well worthy of the several curtain calls she received at the end of her performance. Listening to her, one could well appreciate why she is already gaining an international reputation.

Her programme reflected her international background, not the least Poland. The first half consisted entirely of Schubert's 'Sonata in B flat major, D.960'. The second part consisted of four shorter pieces. The 'Sonata, Opus 1' by Berg and, to conclude, three of Chopin's works: two Nocturnes and the 'Fantasie in F minor, Opus 49'.

The whole recital was performed by a pianist engrossed in her music."

Inverness Courier

"... masterly and beautiful music making".

Daily Telegraph

"Pianist Alicja Fiderkiewicz gave a superb recital...demonstrating all this brilliant musician's wide range of musical sympathy and expressive power."

Manchester Evening News

"...the quality of imagination is given to a rare few (pianists). It was evident throughout the whole of Miss Fiderkiewicz's recital ... (to each work played) she brought her own individuality and intensity of expression."

Liverpool Daily Post

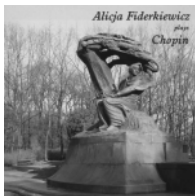
"... Ravel's Le Tombeau de Couperin was a tour de force of subtle colouring and flexible – yet disciplined – rhythm."

Daily Telegraph

"Her flair for communication showed throughout Mozart's Concerto K467, in the tonal beauty of the slow movement, and even more in her imaginative shaping of passage work in the outer ones."

Guardian

ALICJA FIDERKIEWICZ ON DIVERSIONS



Alicja Fiderkiewicz plays Chopin
Diversions ddv 24129

"Free-spirited to the last, she leaves a fashionably nonchalant or disengaged Chopin to others..." – Gramophone

"In short she is a perceptive if sometimes willful guide to the music and has constructed a balanced recital. Fiderkiewicz proves her credentials with this recital." – MusicWeb



Alicja Fiderkiewicz plays piano music by Franck, Chopin and Hindemith
Diversions ddv 24159

"... an outstanding release ... a pianist of rare quality ... give memorable accounts of this music. Personal but never idiosyncratic, direct but never prosaic, eloquent but never remotely sentimental ..." – Piano



Alicja Fiderkiewicz plays piano music by Szymanowski and Chopin
Diversions ddv 24160

"Alicja Fiederkiewicz is an outstanding pianist ... In full command of technique, she is able to project vivid interpretations especially in music from her own Country, Poland. (Here are) lovely poetic interpretations ... a delightfully, well-contrasted recital." – MusicWeb

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Front cover:

The head of Lake Coniston,
the Lake District, Cumbria, UK

Left:

The house in the centre of the photograph
is No. 7a in the attractive curving lane
Schönlaterngasse (Pretty Lantern Lane),
Vienna.

A replica of the wrought-iron lantern –
from which the street is named – can be
seen clamped to No. 6. The original is now
in the Historical Museum of the
City of Vienna.

Robert Schumann lived here
from 1838 to 1839, the period in which
he was infatuated by Clara Wieck.
Here, he wrote two pieces featured in
this recital.

Piano prepared by Peter Lyons
Recording, Editing and Production: Jim Pattison
Recording Assistant: Joyce Pattison