NAXOS
SEATTLE SYMPHONY
COLLECTION
PFITZNER
Symphony in C major
SCHUMANN
Konzertstück for Four Horns
MENDELSSOHN • BRAHMS • WEBERN
Seattle Symphony • Gerard Schwarz

Robert
SCHUMANN
(1810-1856)

Konzertstück for Four Horns and Orchestra, Op. 86 18:24

1 Lebhaft 7:22
2 Romanze: Ziemlich langsam 5:13
3 Sehr lebhaft 5:49

Robert Bonnevie, Horn · Mark Robbins, Horn
David C. Knapp, Horn · Scott Wilson, Horn

Felix
MENDELSSOHN
(1809-1847)

4 Die Heimkehr aus der Fremde – Liederspiel, Op. 89: Overture 7:12

Robert
SCHUMANN

Two Etudes Symphoniques, Op. 13 (orch. Tchaikovsky) 8:10

5 No. 11 Adagio 1:54
6 No. 12 Allegro brillante 6:15

Johannes
BRAHMS
(1833-1897)

Hungarian Dances (orch. Albert Parlow, 1824-1888) 12:59

7 No. 5 in G minor 2:56
8 No. 6 in D major 3:53
9 No. 11 in D minor 3:20
10 No. 16 in F minor 2:49

Anton
WEBERN
(1883-1945)

11 Langsamer Satz (arr. Gerard Schwarz) 13:43

Hans
PFITZNER
(1869-1949)

Symphony in C major, Op. 46 17:19

12 Allegro moderato – 7:21
13 Sehr langsam (Adagio) – 4:03
14 Presto 5:55

Seattle Symphony · Gerard Schwarz

Recorded at Seattle Opera House, Seattle, WA, on 23rd March, 1989 (tracks 1-3); on 19th May, 1991 (track 4); between September 1988 and February 1992 (tracks 5-6); in December 1996 (tracks 7-10); on 17th April, 1992, and 8th and 9th February, 1993 (track 11); and in April 1996 (tracks 12-14)

Publishers: Carl Fischer (track 11); Kalmus reprint of Schott (tracks 12-14)

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) • Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)
Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) • Anton Webern (1883-1945) • Hans Pfitzner (1869-1949)

For German composers of the nineteenth century, the sound of the horn evoked a sense of magic, heroism or fantasy closely aligned with the Romantic spirit of their time. Robert Schumann used the horn prominently in a number of works. The most substantial is his *Konzertstück for Four Horns and Orchestra*, composed in 1849. This work is essentially a concerto with four soloists, and Schumann cast it in the traditional concerto format of three movements in a fast-slow-fast pattern.

Schumann sounds a heroic note at the start of the piece. Here a pair of introductory chords prompts a thrilling fanfare for the horn quartet. An orchestral echo of the fanfare leads to a broad theme that proves the source from which much of the first movement flows. In contrast to the intrepid character of this opening movement, the ensuing *Romanze* brings music that is introspective and, for the most part, somber in tone. Schumann lightens the movement's complexion only during a central episode, where the orchestra introduces a lyrical melody. Finally, several trumpet fanfares lift the music out of tonal shadows and propel it directly into the finale. The horn quartet and orchestra proceed to course through a succession of thematic ideas, including a recollection of the major-key melody heard during the middle of the preceding movement.

During the early part of his career, Schumann found a champion in Felix Mendelssohn, the most important German musician of the late 1830s and early 1840s. Mendelssohn was, during much of this time, the music director of the celebrated Gewandhaus Orchestra of Leipzig, and with that ensemble he conducted the première performances of Schumann's first two symphonies and *Piano Concerto*. It is doubtful that Schumann would have developed as a composer of orchestral music quite as he did without Mendelssohn's encouragement and support.

Mendelssohn was the scion of a remarkable family, one in which the arts were highly valued. His father, a prosperous banker, made his spacious house in Berlin a center for intellectual and artistic activity, and it was his silver wedding anniversary, in 1829, that occasioned the overture presented on this recording. This event was celebrated with festivities that included the performance of a play with music, produced by the celebrants' four children and various friends. Titled *Die Heimkehr aus der Fremde*, (literally *The Homecoming from Abroad,* but usually translated as *Son and Stranger*), this operetta began with an overture by Felix.

Mendelssohn's *Overture* observes the classical German overture structure of an introduction in moderate tempo followed by a faster main body of music. The first portion of the piece establishes a lilting theme with a somewhat sentimental, folkloric sound. The ensuing *Allegro* brings a succession of well-contrasted melodies, and Mendelssohn concludes the work with an abbreviated reprise of its initial theme.

Schumann's *Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13*, underwent a protracted genesis. The composer began writing this work in 1834 as a set of piano études on a single theme. Before finishing it, he set the work aside for two years, returning to it only in September 1836, at which time he reported composing études "with great energy and excitement." Schumann published the music in 1837 as "*Etudes of Orchestral Character for the Piano*" but revised it in 1852. Even this did not realize the music in its definitive form. In 1873 Johannes Brahms edited an expanded version of the work that included five variations not published in earlier versions.

The title *Symphonic Etudes* indicates something of the fullness of sonority Schumann brought to this music. In view of this, it is hardly surprising that a number of musicians would venture orchestral transcriptions of at least parts of the work. The most famous to have done so was Piotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky, who greatly admired Schumann's music generally. In 1864 Tchaikovsky arranged two of the études for orchestra: a brief *Adagio* (No. 11) and an *Allegro brillante* (No. 12). The Russian composer was, at this time, still a student at the Conservatory in St Petersburg, yet his scoring of these pieces foretells the skilled orchestral composer he would become.

Just as Mendelssohn championed Schumann and his music at a formative stage of the latter's career, so Schumann heralded Johannes Brahms. The two composers met in 1853. Brahms was just twenty and a fledgling musician; Schumann, 23 years his senior, was well established as a composer and an influential music critic. Schumann used this latter position to proclaim Brahms's genius in a famous article in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, a periodical he had founded and edited.

Over the years, Brahms developed a strong attraction to the gypsy music of Hungary. He evoked this folk-music in several of his compositions, notably his *Zigeunerlieder* (Gypsy Songs), *Op. 103*, and the finale of his *Violin Concerto*. But Brahms' most forthright rendition of the gypsy style came with the 21 *Hungarian Dances* he published between 1869 and 1880. The composer scored these pieces for piano duet and transcribed three of them for orchestra. The others have been orchestrated by various musicians, including Albert Parlow, whose arrangements of four *Hungarian Dances* appear on this recording.

Hungarian Dance No. 5 in G minor is the most widely familiar of these pieces, thanks to its famous initial melody. The ensuing dance, *No. 6 in D major*, also is well known. Here, as in the preceding number, abrupt shifts in tempo and texture mimic the improvisational freedom that Hungary's gypsy musicians have traditionally brought to their performances. *Hungarian Dance No. 11 in D minor* strikes a wistful note; *No. 16 in F minor* begins in a similar vein, but two lively episodes impart a joyous quality, and this prevails at the close.

Anton Webern might, on casual consideration, seem out of place on a recording devoted to musical expressions of German Romanticism. Webern is best known for the austere, abstract compositions of his maturity, works whose brittle textures, atonality and compressed scale proved a major influence on musical thinking in the wake of World War II. Yet Webern came of age in the twilight glow of German Romanticism, and his earliest compositions are closer in style to Wagner, Mahler and Richard Strauss than to the mid-twentieth-century avant garde that claimed him as its prophet. Among those early works is his *Langsammer Satz*.

Webern wrote this "slow movement," as its title describes it, in June 1905, scoring it for string quartet. The music's lush harmonies and expressive melodic lines convey a Romantic ardor that attains quite ecstatic heights in the closing section. Those qualities fairly demand a richer palette of instrumental colors than strings alone provide, a demand satisfied in the orchestration by Gerard Schwarz heard here.

Hans Pfitzner was a contemporary of Richard Strauss, and like that composer he represents the final phase of German Romanticism in music. Although praised by Mahler and Thomas Mann, Pfitzner's music has largely fallen into obscurity. Only his opera *Palestrina* still receives occasional performances.

Pfitzner composed three symphonies, the last being his *Opus 46*. This work dates from 1940 and bears the subtitle "*An die Freunde*" ("To My Friends"). It unfolds as a single movement divided into three sections. The opening measures provide another instance of the Romantic association of the horn with heroic utterance, as this instrument announces a proud theme that quickly is taken up by trumpets. Strings and clarinets shortly introduce a richly harmonized second subject. A third idea, in buoyant rhythms, then sounds in the woodwinds. Pfitzner uses all three themes in an imaginative development fantasy. After this, the pace of events slows for the symphony's central section, where ardent singing by the English horn sets events in motion. A strong chord with cymbal accent launches the finale, an energetic affair that includes a climactic reprise of the theme that opened the symphony.

Paul Schiavo

Robert Bonnevie

Photo: Larey McDaniel

A native of Seattle, Robert Bonnevie (1934-2012) graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where he studied with Mason Jones, former Principal Horn of The Philadelphia Orchestra. Bonnevie was a hornist with the Seattle Symphony, the U.S. Army Band in Washington, D.C., and the New Orleans Philharmonic. He served as Professor of Brass Instruments at the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music and was a member of the Soni Ventorum Wind Quartet. His other engagements included the Marlboro Festival, the Hong Kong Philharmonic and the Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra. He retired from the Symphony in 2000, having been an Orchestra member since 1967.

Mark Robbins

Photo: Yuen Lui

Seattle Symphony Associate Principal Horn Mark Robbins has been a member of the Orchestra since 1981. In addition he performs as Principal Horn with Seattle Opera, and is a member of the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, a summer orchestra in upstate New York. A featured soloist with the Seattle and Chautauqua symphonies on a number of occasions, Robbins has performed often with the Seattle Chamber Players and on the Seattle Symphony's Chamber series. Robbins was formerly a member of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra, and has performed at the Spoleto, Tanglewood and Olympic Music festivals. Robbins is also an active teacher and has appeared as a featured soloist and given master classes at horn symposiums, and is a coach for the Seattle Youth Symphony.

David C. Knapp

Photo: Steve Meltzer

David C. Knapp began playing with the Seattle Symphony in 1981, became an official member in 1984 and left the Orchestra in 1999. He was a regular performer in the Symphony's Chamber series, and was also a soloist in the Orchestra's Mainly Mozart series. Before coming to Seattle, Knapp was Principal Horn with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and the Orchestra of the Curtis Institute of Music, where he earned a Bachelor of Music degree. His teachers included Sol Schoenback, Mason Jones, A. Kendall Betts and Glenn Dodson.

Scott Wilson

Photo: Yuen Lui

Born in Brookline, Massachusetts, and raised in Seattle, Scott Wilson joined the Seattle Symphony in 1971, retired from active playing in 2007, and is the Orchestra's Assistant Personnel Manager. He served as first horn with the Seattle Youth Symphony and studied under Robert DeCou. He later attended the University of Puget Sound and the Vienna Conservatory, where his teacher was Franz Koch. Wilson has performed at the New College Chamber Music Festival, the Grand Teton Music Festival, as well as with Chamber Music Northwest. He is a founding member of the Northwest Brass Quintet.

Seattle Symphony

The Seattle Symphony, founded in 1903, has gained international prominence with more than 140 recordings, twelve GRAMMY® nominations, two Emmys and numerous other awards. Gerard Schwarz led the Orchestra from 1985 to 2011, and is now Conductor Laureate. The Seattle Symphony is internationally recognized for its innovative programming and extensive recording history. The Orchestra performs in one of the world's finest concert venues – the acoustically superb Benaroya Hall – in downtown Seattle. Under the leadership of Music Director Ludovic Morlot since September 2011, the Symphony is heard live from September through July by more than 315,000 people. For more information on the Seattle Symphony, visit www.seattlesymphony.org.

Gerard Schwarz

Photo: Ben VanHouten

Gerard Schwarz serves as Music Director of the Eastern Music Festival and Conductor Laureate of the Seattle Symphony. A renowned interpreter of nineteenth-century German, Austrian and Russian repertoire in addition to contemporary American composers, Schwarz recently completed his final season as music director of the Seattle Symphony after an acclaimed 26 years. His previous positions as Music Director include New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the New York Chamber Symphony. As a guest conductor he has worked with many of the world's finest orchestras and opera companies. His discography of over 350 releases showcases his collaborations with the Seattle Symphony, the Berlin Radio Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and L'Orchestre National de France, among others. His pioneering recordings of American symphonists Diamond, Hanson, Hovhaness, Piston and William Schuman have received high critical praise, as have his cycles of works by Brahms, Mahler, Rimsky-Korsakov, Robert Schumann, Shostakovich, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky and Wagner. Schwarz has received hundreds of honours and accolades including two Emmy Awards, 13 GRAMMY® nominations, six ASCAP Awards and numerous *Stereo Review* and *Ovation Awards*. He holds the Ditson Conductor's Award from Columbia University, was the first American named Conductor of the Year by *Musical America* and has received numerous honorary doctorates. The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences gave Schwarz its first "IMPACT" lifetime achievement award.

The musical expression of German Romanticism is the theme of this disc. The trajectory of Schumann's *Konzertstück, Op. 86,* written for four horns and orchestra, goes from heroism to introspection. Two of his *Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13*, were orchestrated by no less a figure than Tchaikovsky, while Albert Parlow orchestrated four of Brahms' most exciting *Hungarian Dances*. Mendelsssohn's *Overture* to his Ballad Opera *Die Heimkehr aus der Fremde* (Song and Stranger) embodies classical virtues. Anton Webern's *Langsamer Satz* for string quartet has been vibrantly orchestrated by Gerard Schwarz. Hans Pfitzner, one of the last representatives of the movement, is represented by his concise, melodic *Symphony in C major*.

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All tracks previously released on Delos International, except for the Pfitzner *Symphony*
A detailed track list and recording details can be found on pages 2 and 3 of the booklet.
Executive Producer: Amelia S. Haygood (tracks 1-3, 5-6, 11)
Producer: Adam Stern • Engineers: John M. Eargle (tracks 1-4, 7-11); Al Swanson (tracks 5-6, 12-14)
Associate Engineer: Al Swanson (tracks 1-3, 11) • Assistant Engineer: Matthew Lutthans (track 11)
Editors: Stephen Basili; Cho Yiu Wong; Ramiro Belgardt (tracks 1-3, 5-6)
Booklet notes: Paul Schiavo • Cover photograph by Candice Cusack (iStockphoto.com)