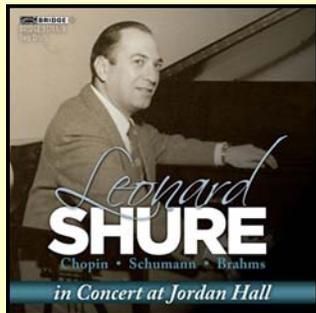


## Phil's Classical Reviews

Audio Video Club of Atlanta

2012

September, 2012

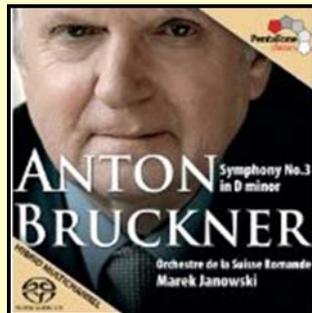


Leonard Shure in concert at Jordan Hall  
Chopin / Brahms / Schumann  
Bridge Records (2-CDs)

The late Leonard Shure (1910-1995), renowned as both pianist and teacher, shows abundant evidence of why his reputation was justified in live recordings taken from 1977-1979 recitals in Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory near the end of his long tenure there. In thrice-familiar works by Chopin, Brahms, and Schumann, he shows a powerful personality that remains continually engaged with the music all the way to the end. In the process, he discovers poetic insights where lesser artists might have contented themselves with reveling in the purple patches, or, as Richard M. Dyer observes in his wonderful booklet annotation, letting their technique take over on automatic pilot, "rolling at high speed along the well-engineered, smoothly blacktopped turnpike that tradition has built."

That Shure was never content to do thus is reflected most clearly in his performance of Chopin's Piano Sonata No. 2 in B-flat minor, the "Funeral March." Shure's ability to see life steady and see it whole allows him to divine the dramatic progression in a work whose cohesion has escaped so many observers, beginning with his own contemporaries, of whom Schumann's suggestion that Chopin had "simply bound together four of his most unruly children," was typical. In the episode that temporarily suspends the relentless progress of the famed "Funeral March" movement, Shure deliberately plays as softly and in as hushed a manner as I have ever heard it, but in the interest of poetic truth, never mere showmanship. We feel we are privy to the unfulfilled dreams, the lost loves or the elusive happiness of a person's life. The mood of bittersweet nostalgia or tender consolation, as the case may be, is so strong it continues to exert its influence even when the funeral march itself resumes. Nor does Shure take the strange whirlwind Finale, which has been likened to "wind whistling over forgotten graves" at its face value, but continues to explore the fragmentary shards that strive hopelessly to coalesce into patterns of melody amid the turbulence.

That Shure was able to give so much attention to nuance, texture and tone color in a work of music was a



Bruckner: Symphony No. 3 in D minor  
Marek Janowski, Suisse Romande Orchestra  
PentaTone (Hybrid SACD)

I don't think I've ever heard a better performance on record of Anton Bruckner's Third Symphony than this account by the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande under Marek Janowski. If you'll bear with me a minute, I think I can tell you why.

The Third was Bruckner's "breakthrough" symphony, the one in which he first realized his mature style. He dedicated it to no less a figure than Richard Wagner, and he was buoyed by the latter's gracious acceptance of it: "You are bestowing upon me an exceptionally great pleasure." Undaunted by failure on its 1877 Vienna premiere, he came out with a considerably trimmed and revised final version in 1889. That is the one almost always heard today, and is used in the present recording. While there seems to little enthusiasm in the musical world for reverting to the original version, there are a few problems with this so-called "Nowak Edition," particularly in the finale where Bruckner and his collaborator trimmed some 250 bars in order to get the work within suitable performance limits (53:20 in the present performance).

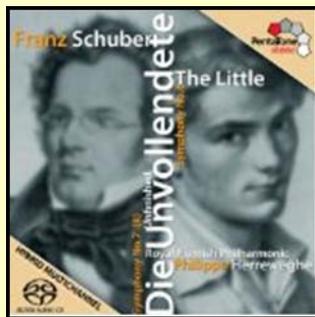
That is no problem for Marek Janowski. His inspired leadership makes clear the relationships between the three thematic groups in the finale, and he presents Bruckner's design with such beautiful clarity that one scarcely notices the fact that Bruckner has cut the recapitulation to the bone, so that much of the function it normally serves is shifted to the coda. A little unorthodox by classical standards, perhaps, but one is led (by this performance, at least) to exclaim "how refreshing," rather than "how odd" that the composer should break with the usual by-the-numbers approach.

Janowski's approach is evident from the opening movement, where his treatment of Bruckner's three large-scale thematic groups is invested with such insight that we sense an intelligent design where other, less well-conceived interpretations merely create the impression of moments of heightened intensity (not to say "bombast"), interspersed with small oases of lyricism. But no, the composer is not just idly noodling along, and

function of his careful voicing and pedaling, and most of all his unwavering attention to its rhythmic pulse. Rhythm is first, and then the fine gradations follow. His occupation with voicing is most evident in Ballade No. 1 of Chopin, enabling him to realize the speaking tone in this work. He does not lose track of the onward momentum that drives it where lesser observers have treated its kaleidoscope of incidents as merely episodic. As a result, he compels our attention throughout its ten-minute length all the way to its final, chilling climax.

The two Chopin Preludes are studies in contrast: the compelling No. 24 in D minor that can scare the fool out of you if you aren't prepared for it, and the gentle, sunlit No. 23 in F major. And Shure does a terrific job with Brahms' Phantasien, Op. 116, revealing the character-contrasts between the three rambunctious Capriccios and the four Intermezzi, whose tender sensibility he captures as memorably as I've ever heard anyone do it.

The absolute clarity and proportion that informed Shure's performances, is perhaps most evident in the work on this program that needs it the most: Schumann's magnificently sprawling Fantasy in C major. Schumann himself contributed to the impression of formlessness by entitling the three movements of his original version "Ruins," "Triumphal Arch," and "Constellations." He tightened things up when he revised the work, though its loose sonata-form continues to elude observers. Shure makes the connections more evident with his strong left hand, so that figures in the accompaniment are revealed as germinal seeds of the great and noble ideas we will hear later, and the work builds through a series of climaxes rather than unrelated episodes. The finale, "Constellations" in Schumann's original conception, is rendered here as a monument of sublime poetic beauty.



Schubert: Symphonies Nos. 6, 8, "Unfinished"  
Philippe Herreweghe, Royal Flemish Philharmonic  
PentaTone (Hybrid SACD)

Strong performances by a substantial-sounding Royal Flemish Philharmonic under Philippe Herreweghe give us the opportunity to hear Franz Schubert's struggle to develop a mature symphonic style versus the real thing. First, a note about the numbering. No. "7" in B minor, heard last on the program, is really Schubert's well-known "Unfinished" Symphony, which is customarily listed (though not here) as No. 8. The confusion developed because the actual Symphony No. 7 in E

as the soundscape crystallizes into recognizable forms under Janowski's baton, we sense the excitement of music building to a very impressive climax. This is a richly scored symphony, adding four horns, three trumpets, and three trombones to the usual complement of woodwinds, but there is never any fuzziness of texture or intention here. Additionally, the dark, rich sound of the Suisse Romande strings has just the right textural substance for the music.

The Adagio is usually the time for repose and reflection in a symphony. Bruckner achieves this in the innermost part of the central section, where the listener may choose to explore his own personal associations. The shy lights and low lights provided by the woodwinds, particularly the flutes, make this the most intimately lyrical moment of all. The Scherzo seems somewhat belligerent and rough, an impression softened by the Austrian folk dance (a Ländler), heard over pizzicati in the basses, that comes across here as pure enchantment.

The finale is another large-scale design rendered with ideal clarity in Janowski's interpretation. Again, there are three thematic groups, one a propulsive melody, another an ascending chorale, and the third a wave-like theme in unison that plunges down two octaves. Janowski keeps all of this in due proportion as the movement builds to its climax, followed by a stunning coda in which the brass intone a theme so bright (and sooo very D major) that there is no doubt in our minds that this is indeed the end.



Weber: Concertos for Clarinet, Bassoon, Horn  
Alexander Janiczek, Scottish Chamber Orchestra  
Linn Records (Hybrid SACD)

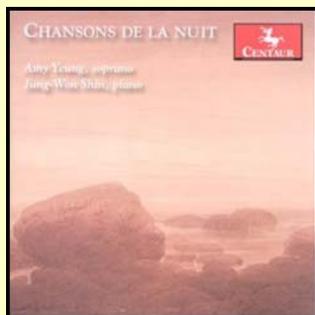
It is one of the dismal facts of musical life that the great majority of the thousands of operas written over the past 400 years have never been revived since their premieres and repose in musty archives today, leaving not so much as a single aria, duet, or chorus in the standard repertoire. While it is true that Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), credited as the father of German romantic opera, has been performed more than most, at least in German-speaking countries, much of his fame today resides in other genres. Some prime examples are his concertos for various woodwind instruments, in which he showed a real affinity and made pathbreaking strides.

We have four of these works showcased here in fine performances by superb wind soloists of the Scottish

major sketched by Schubert but never completely scored and subject to numerous modern-day completions, is usually considered unworthy to include in the Schubert canon. Also, no fewer than ten fragments from the years between the Sixth and the “Unfinished” have had their advocates from time to time. The consensus is that Schubert’s legitimate symphonies are as follows: Numbers 1 through 6, plus 8 (the “Unfinished”) and 9 (the “Great C Major”) with no “Seventh Symphony.”

The reason for so many symphonic fragments is not hard to guess once we have heard Herreweghe’s scrupulously honest if unsparing interpretation of Symphony No. 6, known as the “Little C major.” Schubert had lost his way trying to develop his own style as a symphonist. Basically, he was using classical symphony form, but attempting to fill it with sub-symphonic, Rossini-esque material that lacked the real substance to which one might apply the contrapuntal muscle of a post-Beethoven symphony. We hear it in incongruous juxtapositions of innocently nonchalant melody and bombast in both the opening movement and the Andante, a scherzo that is undercut by an unusually archaic, and even clumsy, trio section that was unworthy of Schubert, and a finale that goes at far greater length than the material deserves

There are no such reservations about the B-minor symphony, here given a stirring interpretation by Herreweghe and the Royal Flemish. Right from the mysterious, quietly ominous opening with cellos and double basses sounding the depths and restless murmurings by the other strings, we know we are in the presence of symphonic greatness. Schubert’s gravitas is such that, when we at last come to the expansive “Song of Love” theme for the cellos and basses that many listeners superficially associate with this symphony, we are startled but not really shocked to hear it torn apart by a violent orchestral outburst. Dark versus light, lyric versus tragic, the opening is a study in stark contrasts. The Andante tries to provide a measure of solace for the issues raised by the opening, but to little avail as a tranquil clarinet melody is followed by chaos and dark shadows. Philosophically, there is no answer to the problem of pain, only ultimate resignation.



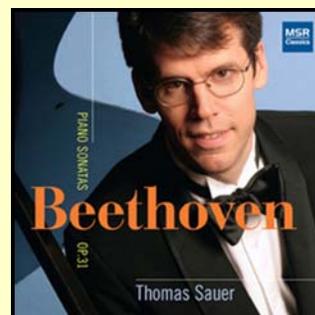
“Chansons de la Nuit”  
Amy Yeung, soprano; Jung-Won Shin, piano  
Centaur Records

“Chansons de la Nuit” features the radiant voice of Hong

Chamber Orchestra under Alexander Janiczek. First, Maximiliano Martin performs Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F minor, Op. 73. It is a typical Weberian synthesis of bombast and sublimity: The Allegro, with its stormy outbursts from the orchestra and its sorrowful second theme, sounds like nothing so much as an operatic overture (a genre in which Weber was a past-master). The finale, a venturesome Allegretto in the form of a rondo, provides lots of opportunity for the clarinet to misbehave itself. In between, we have a sublimely beautiful Adagio in which the clarinet floats effortlessly in an aria over rocking chords in the strings, and then engages in a dark-hued chorale with the brass. Martin is heard again in the Concertino in C minor / E-flat major, Op. 26, in fiery, vibrant, and darkly emphatic guises in the course of a single-movement work whose three clearly defined sections are played without a break but are thoughtfully listed here as separate tracks for the benefit of the home listener.

Peter Whelan is equally impressive as soloist in the Bassoon Concerto in F major, Op. 75, a work that shows off a different character of the instrument in each of its three movements: the operatic hero marching in after a portentous introduction of eight tympani strokes in the Allegro, the tender lover in the glowing lyricism of the Andante, and the clown prince in the rapid-fire Rondo/Allegro, where it gets to display both extremes of its considerable range.

Further proof of why contemporary wind musicians loved Weber to death is found in the Concertino for Horn in E minor, Op. 45, with Alec Frank-Gemmill taking the honors. The Andante opens with an ominous-sounding Adagio passage in unison E’s and B’s for full orchestra while the soloist is required to produce multiphonics, sounding two notes simultaneously by humming while playing (shades of the eerie “Wolf Glen” scene from *Der Freischütz!*) The slow movement contrasts a simple horn melody with increasingly difficult variations and a lively second section with cascading arpeggios. The finale is a stomping *Polacca* that is really a litmus test for a virtuoso hornist. Frank-Gemmill passes it with colors!



Beethoven: Piano Sonatas Nos. 16-18  
Thomas Sauer, piano  
MSR Classics

From the evidence of this album, taking into account both his recorded performances and his enlightening booklet

Kong-born soprano Amy Yeung, assisted on piano by South Korea native Jung-Won Shin, in an art song recital with an irresistible concept: songs, chiefly love lyrics, celebrating the enchantment of the night. Both of these ladies are currently faculty members, at University of Tennessee-Martin and Delta State (MS), respectively. That artists of oriental origin should score distinguished marks in the German, French and Russian song traditions only serves to point up one of the most hopeful signs for western classical music in recent decades: namely the fact that it has become worldwide in its appeal. And it has happened quite recently, as music history goes, while many of us weren't paying attention!

The German *lieder* include songs by Felix Mendelssohn and Richard Strauss. There are three by the former, including *Bei der Wiege* (By the Cradle), and *Neube Liebe* (New Love). The latter, to a text by Heinrich Heine, who often brought out the best in Mendelssohn, has a really striking supernatural setting in which the queen of the fairies, beckoning to the poet, leaves him with the disturbing thought: "did she foretell my new love ... or was it my death?" The selection of four of the best songs by Strauss include *Die Nacht* (Night), *Ständchen* (Serenade), *Ich wollt ein Sträußlein binden* (I would have made you a bouquet), and the incomparable *Cäcilie* (Cecilia), a song of operatic beauty that engages all the expressive resources of Yeung's voice and Shin's equal partnership to realize its floating lyricism.

Three French songs by Fauré and five by Debussy extol the mysterious, and sometimes envious, power of the night, intoxicating the senses of lovers with languorous ecstasy even as it threatens to extinguish with shadows all the enchanted beauty that the silver moonlight has revealed. My favorite here is a song of Alfred Bachelet (1864-1944), *Chère nuit* (Beloved night): "My happiness is re-born under your wings, o night, more beautiful than are any days."

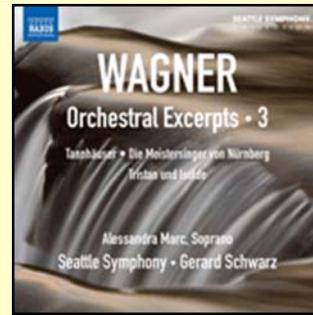
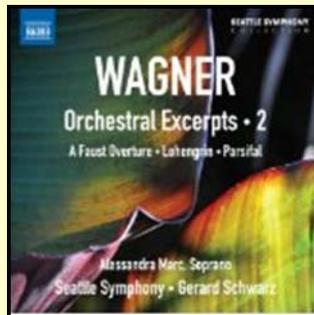
Five Russian songs by Sergei Rachmaninoff conclude the program in style. Most deal with love, the nearness of God, and the beauty of the night. The exception is *Otryvok iz A Miusse* (Excerpt from Musset) which recounts a midnight encounter with heartsick loneliness and desolation. "Do not sing, my beauty" is of particular interest for the orientalism evoked by the Georgian setting of Pushkin's poem. Here, Yeung rises to a peak of ecstasy at the emotional climax, and Shin carries the deep mood of the song on beyond the final bars of the vocal text.

notes, Thomas Sauer would seem to be very much a thinking man's pianist. Considering that the subject is Beethoven, that is not a bad thing to be.

Armed with one of the truest legatos I've ever heard on record, Sauer wastes no time clearing up some misconceptions about the three Opus 31 Sonatas, Nos. 16-18 in the Beethoven canon. Beginning with the Sonata in G major, he uses his supple yet authoritative left hand to demonstrate how Beethoven's deliberately out-of-synch hands not only create a humorous "hurry up and wait" impression when the dogged chords in the left hand are contrasted with scampering downhill octaves in the right, but, together with a downbeat and a syncopated leap to the second subject, constitute the basic subject matter of the movement. The fragile and songlike lyricism of the slow movement, *Adagio grazioso*, is revealed as something considerable above the glass chandelier pianistics of so many of Beethoven's contemporaries. Sauer takes the final allegretto with all the buoyant good feeling it deserves, recapturing the hands-apart humor of the opening movement.

Does Sauer score his most striking interpretation in the Sonata in D minor (No. 17), often called, on slender authority, "The Tempest," or does it just seem that way because this is the one of the set that is best-known to me? There is certainly a whirlwind of passionate utterance, clipped by a severe ending, in the final Allegretto, though the equally engaging drama in the opening movement, marked Largo / Allegro is more that of mysterious hesitations, descents and cadences. Here, and in the Adagio, Sauer invests the music with a mood of aristocratic restraint, playing as softly and slowly as I have ever heard this slow movement.

The Sonata in E-flat major, last of the set of three, opens with more of Beethoven's unique touches, including a chordal rhythm of short-short-short-long note values that surprisingly provides the motivic seed for much of the movement. There is no slow movement, just a tasteful pair of inner movements in moderate time, Allegro and Minuet, that Sauer takes exactly as written to give them their due proportions. The finale, marked *Presto con fuoco* (with fire), breathes a mood of spirited celebration and vivacity. Some observers hear hunting calls in this music, others a Tarantella; without taking sides, Sauer allows us to imagine both.



Wagner: Orchestral Excerpts, Vols. 1, 2, 3  
Gerard Schwarz, Seattle Symphony Orchestra (Naxos)

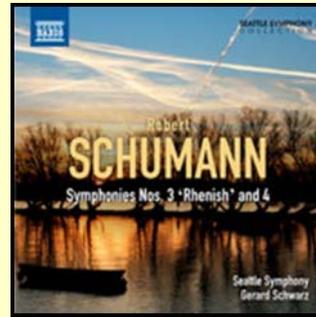
"When I first heard *Parsifal* at Bayreuth I was fifteen," Max Reger recalled in his later years. "I cried for two weeks and then became a musician." Another contemporary said of Richard Wagner: "He is a pig, but I cannot bear to conduct anyone else's music." "How did the composer rate himself? "I write music with an exclamation point!"

Well, you get the idea. From his own day up to ours, people have loved or hated Richard Wagner (1813-1883), but few have been able to resist the pull of his luminously scored, emotionally compelling music. As the musical world gets set to commemorate the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, I can't think of a better way to do it than with this trio of excellent recordings from the Seattle Symphony Collection. Originally recorded by Gerard Schwarz and the Symphony in the Seattle Opera House on various dates between 1986 and 1992 and released by what is now Delos International, they benefitted from top-notch sonic support by producers Bejun Mehta, Joanna Nickrenz, and Adam Stern, plus a team of engineers led by John Eargle. Wagner recording has seldom had it this good. In its day, the program of "Ring" excerpts in Vol. 1 was praised by *Gramophone* for its "radiant sensuousness," though "sensual radiance" might have been even more to the point. In the present Naxos reissues, they sound better than ever.

Volume 1 consists of the *Flying Dutchman* Overture and a selection from the Ring tetralogy. The overture is as storm-tossed and lyrical as we could wish, illuminated at just the right moments by those famous horn calls that summon the protagonist to resume his wandering for all eternity. Entrance of the Gods into Valhalla from *Das Rheingold* is probably the low point of interest here: stately, measured and dignified almost to the point of stasis. Things pick up, in human interest as well as drama, in the two highlights from *Die Walküre*, Wotan's moving Farewell to his daughter Brünnhilde and Magic Fire Music, in which he surrounds her with a circle of living fire, condemning her to perpetual sleep until the moment she is awakened by the most intrepid of heroes. (If you're a real Wagnerite, *you know who* that is – and it ain't Elmer Fudd!) Forest Murmurs from Act II of *Siegfried* is as persuasive as we are likely to hear this well-loved Wagner favorite, thanks to the transparency of sound from the SSO string section and some truly lovely commentary in the way of bird-calls by the various woodwinds. The luminosity continues with the four deeply atmospheric excerpts from *Götterdämmerung* (Twilight of the Gods): Dawn, Siegfried's Rhine Journey, Siegfried's Death, and Funeral March, as the music moves from near-impressionism to frothy romance, and at last stark tragedy.

In Volume 2 we have the unjustly neglected Faust Overture, the work of an ardent young romantic, plus excerpts from Wagner's ultimate continuous stream-of-music dramas *Lohengrin* and *Parsifal*. In the former, besides the enchantment of the Preludes to Acts I and III, we have "Elsa's Dream," with its vocal superbly rendered in all its longing and spiritual beauty by the great German-American soprano Alessandra Marc. (Why she never returned to record the Immolation Scene from *Götterdämmerung* with Schwarz is a mystery to me: it would have been great!) The famous Good Friday Spell from *Parsifal* achieves moments of transcendence and religious exaltation without descending to sticky piety under Schwarz' tasteful direction. And the dark, layered sound of the Seattle Symphony strings serves the various moods of mystery and desolation in Preludes from acts I and III very well.

Finally, in Volume 3 the dark, rich color and tonal palette of the Seattle Symphony finds its best showcase in the music from *Tristan und Isolde*. The purely orchestral excerpts, consisting of the Preludes to acts I and III, show the results of Wagner's advanced chromaticism, often in the form of a visible darkness that enhances the doom-laden mood of the music. Alessandra Marc is on hand again in these 1992 performances recorded at the Seattle Opera house by Adam Stern and John Eargle, first in a knowing account of Brangäne's Warning, then in a superlative rendering of Isolde's famous *Liebestod* (Love in death) in which her voice dips and soars seamlessly through the various emotions experienced by the heroine. Earlier in the program, we have Schwarz guiding the orchestra through well-loved highlights from *Tannhäuser* (the glowing Overture and the exciting Venusberg Music) and *Die Meistersinger* (Act III Introduction, a light-hearted and more-than-welcome Dance of the Apprentices, and finally the stirring March of the Meistersingers). As they are throughout the 3-CD set, the sonics are first-rate.



Schumann: Symphonies Nos. 1, "Spring," 2 / Symphonies Nos. 3, "Rhenish," 4  
Gerard Schwarz, Seattle Symphony Orchestra (Naxos)

Robert Schumann's four symphonies have had a somewhat lackluster history in the concert hall and on recordings, leading some maestros to the belief that "you don't get to be famous conducting Schumann." That prejudice is based on the assumption that Schumann should have stuck to writing piano music and art-songs, and that he only ventured into the symphonic realm at the urging of his wife Clara that he would never otherwise gain full recognition as a composer. In particular, we hear a lot of nonsense over the years concerning the composer's "thick" orchestrations, although substantial orchestral scoring that included considerable doubling of parts was the rule in his day, and nobody ever thinks of giggling such luminaries as Berlioz and Mendelssohn on the same grounds.

It all comes down to a thoughtful analysis of Schumann's scores. Here, the patient, thoroughgoing study of these symphonies by Gerard Schwarz and his ability to inspire the members of the Seattle Symphony with his vision pays off handsomely in really luminous performances. That the Schumann symphonies, in spite of critics' canards, have maintained a place in the standard repertoire for more than a century and a half is no mistake. As Schwarz shows us, there is a wealth of great symphonic writing, not just great melodies, in all these scores. Schwarz' command of the irresistible onward movement unique to each symphony, plus his grasp of their vibrant rhythms, gives him the clear edge over most Schumann interpreters. There's something else that comes into play in Schumann's symphonies: his careful study of J.S. Bach, a composer who was rediscovered, admired (*and* egregiously misunderstood) by so many of his 19<sup>th</sup> century contemporaries. In the 1840's Schumann alone grasped Bach's contrapuntal technique, a lesson he was to wear lightly, but very effectively, in his treatment of contrasting themes, rhythms, and textures.

Volume 1 contains Symphonies 1 and 2. The First, the well-loved "Spring" Symphony, makes a stunning impact right from the moment when the slow, quiet introduction is succeeded by a sensational fanfare in the horns and trumpets that Schumann described as "a summons to life," and which, incidentally, provides the germ from which many of the themes in the ensuing movements will spring. The deeply romantic Larghetto beautifully characterized in this performance, is followed by a rather frenetic Scherzo in the nature of a minuet (but scarcely danceable) and an ebullient finale that recaptures the mood of the opening movement and in which we hear again the three ascending notes from its stirring fanfare.

Symphony No. 2 in C major, Op. 61, though completed following a period in which the composer needed to be hospitalized for depression, is uncommonly affirmative in tone, thanks to the prominent use it makes of a brass chorale in the opening movement (shades of Bach!), casting its spell on the succeeding Scherzo so strongly that it seems in retrospect like a chorale prelude (a quintessentially Bachian genre). The slow movement, *Adagio espressivo*, has a truly beautiful, if melancholy, melody, which was what Schumann was probably referring to when he said the Second reminded him of "dark days." Its function soon becomes apparent, at least under Schwarz' inspired leadership, as a prelude to the life-affirming finale, *Allegro molto vivace*, in which we hear that haunting melody in a more positive-sounding guise, buoyed enormously by the triumphant finale from the opening movement. Schwarz does a great job pacing a work that is more tightly constructed and onward-moving than we might have first surmised. Its predominant mood seems so religiously inspired, Schumann might well have subtitled it '*Lobgesang*' (Song of Praise), had Felix Mendelssohn not already pre-empted the name for his own Second Symphony.

Volume 2 contains the Third and Fourth Symphonies. The Third, the so-called "Rhenish," is, unusually, in five movements. Because of its structure and its freely flowing melodies, it may seem deceptively loose-limbed and discursive. But, as Schwarz shows us, the internal links are definitely present and, together with an irresistibly flowing movement characteristic of a work celebrating the beauties of the Rhineland, make the "Rhenish" a very satisfying work from the listener's perspective. The relaxed nature of the lyricism in the Scherzo movement suggests a Rhine excursion, something every visitor has to take in. Melodic inventiveness in the middle movement, *Nicht schnell* (not fast) is countered by the restrained beauty of the succeeding movement, said to have been inspired by a solemn ceremony Schumann witnessed in the Cologne Cathedral. It, in turn, is followed by an ebullient finale that recalls the

high spirits of the opening movement and uses a transformed version of the ecclesiastical melody from the fourth.

The Fourth Symphony is unusually concise, its economy being further emphasized by the fact that all four movements are taken without a break. There is also some indication of cyclic form here, with thematic connections unifying the work. That is especially true of the lovely vernal melody played by the violin in the slow movement, *Romanze*, which recurs in slightly different form in both Trio sections of the following Scherzo. It sounds particularly lovely here, as befits one of Schumann's most expressive melodies. The recurrence in the finale of a robust chordal melody from the opening movement provides a further unifying element, and a fugato passage in the development shows other evidence that Schumann's Bach studies were not in vain. This is a lighter, more transparent account of the Fourth Symphony than I've been used to hearing, and it plays very well in the present recording.

One minor discordant note in passing: the timing for the individual tracks is messed up. This is most evident in the Fourth Symphony, where the actual timings for Tracks 1 and 2 are 12:02 and 3:48, respectively, and not 6:53 and 6:58 as listed on the endsheet. That is of little importance to the home listener, but it may be critical to a radio commentator who needs to watch the clock.