

EMMANUEL MUSE



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Russell Sherman Performs Piano Works for Schumann Chamber Series

Take three piano masterpieces: *Arabesque*, Op. 18, *Kreisleriana*, Op. 16, and *Fantasie*, Op. 17. Robert Schumann created them in 1838-39, during a period of enforced separation from his future wife, Clara Wieck, whose father Friedrich Wieck had been piano teacher to them both and opposed their marriage. Seized with anguish and despair, Schumann turned to composition with intense fire and maverick inspiration.

Russell Sherman, eminent pianist and perennial favorite of Emmanuel Music audiences, will perform these profoundly poetic pieces in recital on Sunday, October 26, at 4 p.m. He describes them as “the most direct and pure essence of Schumann. They are so ‘open-book’ and auto-biographical.”

Sherman’s highly anticipated performance begins the fifth and final year of Emmanuel Music’s survey of Schumann chamber works. The concert venue is Emmanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston, just one block from the Arlington Street MBTA stop and a short walk across Boston Public Gardens to the Boston Common Garage.

As with other Emmanuel Music Series over the years, the Schumann Series represents the artistic inspiration of Craig Smith, Emmanuel Music founder. Sherman taught Smith while the latter was a graduate student at New England Conservatory some 38 years ago. They collaborated many times with Emmanuel Music until Smith’s death in 2007.



Russell Sherman

According to Sherman, his upcoming Sunday recital selections “are engraved in the keyboard repertoire and inhabited by a tremendous span of saints and demons. In them, Schumann stretches far beyond the accepted classical boundaries of his time, as exemplified by the work of his friend Mendelssohn. Schumann wrote these free and wild pieces during what was perhaps the most innovative and adventurous time in his composing life.”

Sunday's concert begins with *Arabesque*. "It is its own bouquet," says Sherman. "It reminds me of a group of Indian musicians that engages the audience merely by tuning up instruments and creating appropriate atmosphere."

Schumann dedicated *Kreisleriana* to his fellow pianist Chopin. These pieces were intended to suggest a musical parallel to the adventures of Kappellmeister Kreisler, a fictional and eccentric character from the writings of E.T. A. Hoffmann. But he also manages to insert the spirit of Clara into a few movements. At the time, she had gone to Vienna with her father, where she was elevated to the rank of Imperial Concert Pianist and met Franz Liszt, who was also a strong supporter of Schumann.

The *Fantasie* was originally intended as an homage to Beethoven. "In the first movement, Schumann smoothly weaves a quotation from a Beethoven song cycle into the coda. He came to feel that the first movement was the most perfect and authentic, and it was hard to live up to its promise in the rest of the work. But he finally achieved that standard successfully. He had written it for Clara and dedicated it to Liszt, who performed it in Leipzig on February 20, 1840," Sherman explains.



For the second Schumann concert of the 2008-09 season, Sunday, November 2 at 4 p.m. in Emmanuel Church, Emmanuel Music artists will bring their individual gifts to three chamber pieces – *Sechs Gesänge*, Op. 107, *Quartet in A minor*, Op. 41, and *Dauidsbündlertänze*, Op.6. Musicians include Krista River, mezzo-soprano; Brett Hodgdon and Randall Hodgkinson, piano; Heidi Braun-Hill and Rose Drucker, violin; Kate Vincent, viola; and David Russell, cello.



Leslie Amper & Randall Hodgkinson

In all, there will be four Schumann recitals during Emmanuel Music's 2008-09 season. All are under the overall direction of John Harbison, Acting Artist Director, and Michael Beattie, Associate Conductor.

For more detailed information and to order tickets, call Emmanuel Music at 617.536.3356 or visit the secure website at emmanuelmusic.org.

-Ann Carlson

*Emmanuel Music is the Ensemble-in-Residence at Emmanuel Church.
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