

THE

Aldbrough

CONNECTION

Robert and Clara at home

with a visit from Johannes



WALTER HALL
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1999
2:30 p.m.

Robert and Clara at home

with a visit from Johannes

LAURA WHALEN, soprano

ELIZABETH TURNBULL, mezzo

COLIN AINSWORTH, tenor

DANIEL LICHTI, baritone

STEPHEN RALLS & BRUCE UBUKATA, piano



The courtship and marriage of Robert Schumann and Clara Wieck is one of the best-documented love stories of the nineteenth century, and is particularly important in the history of music by reason of its union of a great composer and a great performer. Friedrich Wieck, Clara's father, having raised his favourite daughter with a view to her being the greatest pianist in the world, was violently opposed to the match. He did all in his power to prevent the marriage, so that Robert and Clara had to resort to the courts in order to achieve their purpose. Meanwhile the two were prevented from seeing one another, to the great benefit of musical posterity — Schumann, hitherto a composer of piano music, was seized with a powerful lyrical impulse which caused him to produce an almost incredible 105 songs over a period of seven months including five of the world's greatest song-cycles.

The songs were sent to Clara as soon as they were composed and contain all kinds of messages, some overt and some hidden from all eyes but hers (and ours, after the event). Code phrases abound — *Mit Myrthen und Rosen* is riddled with different version of the name CLARA spelled out in musical notation (Schumann used a system of encoding those letters, like L and R which do not appear in the scale). The poem of this song speaks of 'the pale letters' which will 'look up and whisper to you' — literally, the letters of her name. In other songs, Schumann uses (musically) the word EHE — marriage (in German notation, EBE). The code phrases combine with both text and sub-text of the poems to create a complex web of meaning and emotion.

Friedrich Wieck eventually relaxed his hostility and became reconciled with his daughter and son-in-law. But his worst fears about the marriage proved well-founded. Clara's concert career did virtually end as a result of her marriage, and Robert's always precarious psychological state gradually worsened until a catastrophic depression overtook him in February, 1854. He attempted suicide by throwing himself into the Rhine, was rescued but was immediately taken to an asylum, in Edenich, where he died two years later. At the time, the doctors attributed his breakdown to overwork; recent researchers, however, tend to believe that Schumann very probably contracted syphilis in his youth, which culminated in mental collapse.

On the doctors' recommendation, Clara did not visit her husband until two days before his death. She was sustained during this period by the youthful Johannes Brahms, who organised her household during the darkest days and put her on the road to a resumption of her concert career. Their friendship has always been the cause of much speculation, even to the extent of a

pamphlet published in 1926 entitled *Johannes Brahms, the father of Felix Schumann* (Clara's youngest son). The rumours contained therein seem with foundation. What is certain is that Clara became like a second mother to Brahms, and her death in 1896 was followed only a few months later by his own.



Characters in the letters and diaries:

Clara Schumann, <i>née</i> Wieck	Laura Whalen
Robert Schumann	Daniel Lichti
Marie Schumann, their eldest daughter	Elizabeth Turnbull
Ruppert Becker, concert-master of the Düsseldorf orchestra	Colin Ainsworth
Johannes Brahms	Stephen Ralls
Narrator, and an American journalist	Bruce Ubukata



Our sincere thanks to:

Eric Hood for sponsoring Laura Whalen
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Since this programme is planned as a narrative sequence, and since many of the items are of brief duration, we would suggest that you reserve your applause for the end of each half of the concert.

PROLOGUE: CLARA

Quartet: *So wahr die Sonne scheint* (*Rückert*) (Op. 101/8)

Robert Schumann (1810-56)

Truly as the sun shines, truly as the cloud weeps, truly as the flame flashes, truly as spring blossoms; as truly I felt embracing you: you love me, as I you, you I love, as you me.

The sun may cease to shine, the cloud may weep no more, the flame may flash and die, the spring: blossom no more! Let us embrace and feel thus forever: you love me, as I you, you I love, as you me.

Er ist gekommen (*Rückert*) (Op. 12/2)

Clara Schumann (1819-96)

He came in storm and rain, my anxious heart beat against his; how could I have known, that his path should unite itself with mine?

He came in storm and rain, he boldly stole my heart. Did he steal mine? Did I steal his? Both came together.

He came in storm and rain, now has come the blessing of spring. My love travels abroad, I watch with cheer, for he remains mine, on any road.

COURTSHIP

Mit Myrthen und Rosen (Heine) (Op. 24/9) Schumann

With myrtle and roses, sweet and fair, fragrant cypress and foil of gold, would I decorate this book like a coffin and in it put my songs.

Would I might put my love in it too! On love's grave grows the flower of peace, there it blossoms, there is plucked; it will bloom for me only above my grave.

Here now are the songs which once, wild as a stream of lava pouring from Etna, burst from the depths of my soul, showering down many glittering sparks.

Mute now they lie, and as if dead, rigid now, cold and pallid as the mist, but the old glow shall revive them anew, if love's spirit one day be poised above them.

And in my heart the thought speaks loud — that one day the spirit of love will indeed revive; this book one day will fall into your hands, my sweet love, in a distant land.

Then shall song's magic spell break free, the pallid letters gaze at you, gaze imploringly at your fair eyes, whisper with melancholy and breath of love.

Der Nussbaum (Mosen) (Op. 25/3) Schumann

The walnut tree: Green before the house a walnut stands, spreading, fragrant, airy, its leafy branches.

Many lovely blossoms it bears; gentle winds visit them with loving embrace.

Paired together, they whisper, gracefully inclining delicate heads to kiss.

They whisper of a maiden who night and day pondered, ah, and knew not what.

They whisper — who can understand so soft a song? — of a husband-to-be, of next year.

The maiden listens, the tree rustles; yearning, hoping, she sinks, smiling, into sleep and dreams.

Ständchen (Reinick) (Op. 36/2) Schumann

Serenade: Come to me in the silent night; my love, why delay? The sun has long been down, the world's eyes are closed; only love is awake.

My love, why delay? Already the stars are bright, the moon is in her place; but they move so fast, you must hasten too.

Only love is awake, calling for you everywhere; hear the nightingale, hear the sound of my voice, and come to me, my love, in the silent night.

Duet: Unterm Fenster (Robert Burns, trans. W. Gerhard) (Op. 34/3) Schumann

Beneath the window: Who is at my bedroom door? — It's me! — Go away, what do you want here! — Something sweet! — You've come in the dark, like a thief. — Then catch me! — Do you like me just a little? — With all my heart!

What if I opened my door, as you ask! — Open it! — But sleep and rest would be forgotten! — Let them be! — Are you like a dove in the dove-cot? — With its mate! — You'd coo until dawn? — Very likely!

No, I'll never let you in. — Please do! — You'd want to come every day. — I'd love to! — You're cheeky and presumptuous. — But may I? — Well, just don't tell anyone! — Of course not!

Mondnacht (Eichendorff) (Op.39/5) Schumann
Moonlit Night: It was as though the sky had softly kissed the earth so that she, in a gleam of blossom, had now to dream of him.
The breeze ran through the fields, the ears of corn gently swayed, the woods rustled faintly, the night was so starry and clear.
And my soul spread wide its wings, flew over the silent land, as if it were flying home.

Schöne Fremde (Eichendorff) (Op. 39/6) Schumann
Beautiful foreign land: The tree-tops murmur and shiver, as though at this hour the half-sunken walls were paced by gods of old.
Here, beyond the myrtles, in secretly darkening splendour, what do you murmur to me as in a dream, fantastic night?
The stars all sparkle upon me with glowing and loving gaze, the distance, rapturous, speaks as of great happiness to come.

MARRIAGE

Geburtstagsmarsch (Birthday March)(Op. 85/1) Schumann
 Robert and Clara were married on September 12th, 1840; the day before her twenty-first birthday.

Spanische Liebeslieder (Spanish, trans. Geibel) (Op. 138) Schumann
 'I believe' he told his publisher optimistically, 'that these will be the songs which will become my best known.' Now they are very seldom heard. But, with the piano-duet scoring, they gave Brahms the idea for his *Liebeslieder Walzer*.

Spanish Lovesongs

PART 1

1. *Prelude (in Bolero tempo)*
2. *Soprano: Deep in my heart I bear my grief, unseen to outward view. I hide my dear grief well away from the world; it belongs to the inmost soul alone. As sparks of fire lie hidden in flint, so I bear my grief deep within.*
3. *Tenor: What a sweet girl she is; how beautiful and charming! Tell me, you bold seaman, whose home is the sea, whether the ship and its sails, whether the stars can be as beautiful.*

What a sweet girl she is; how beautiful and charming! Tell me, you proud knight in shining armour, whether your charger and his harness, whether your battles can be as beautiful.

What a sweet girl she is; how beautiful and charming! Tell me, you shepherd boy watching over your sheep, whether your lambs, whether the meadows, whether the mountains can be as beautiful.

4. *Soprano/mezzo: Cover me with flowers, I die of love; lest the breeze carry away the sweet fragrance, cover me. Jasmine and white lilies will deck my grave. I die, and if you ask, 'What of?' I say, 'Of the sweet torments of love.'*

Please turn page quietly

5. *Baritone: Billowing river Ebro, with your banks all in flower, all you green meadows, you shades of the woodlands, ask my beloved as she rests among you whether in her happiness she thinks of me.*

And you dewy pearls embroidering the green grass with bright colours in the light of dawn, ask my beloved, when she breathes the cool morning air, whether in her happiness she thinks of me.

You leafy poplars, you shining paths where my barefoot girl goes walking, when she meets you ask her, ask her whether in her happiness she thinks of me.

You swarming birds that greet the dawn with your fluted singing, ask my beloved, the flower of these shores, whether in her happiness she thinks of me.

PART 2

6. *Intermezzo: National Dance*
7. *Tenor: Alas, how angry she is! She walks the hills with her flocks; as beautiful as the flowers but as angry as the sea.*
8. *Mezzo: High, high are the mountains and steep are their paths; the water spurts from the springs and trickles down through the undergrowth. Oh mother, dear mother, it was there, there in the mountains with their proud peaks, that my dearest friend went one morning, I called him back with word and sign, I waved with all my might; but for reply there was only the water spurting from the springs and trickling down through the undergrowth.*
9. *Tenor/baritone: She has blue eyes that none can resist. They banish tranquillity, well-being and conscious memory, overcoming with their playful gleam. None can escape their trap, everyone desires to remain day and night within their radiance.*
10. *Quartet: Darkness in light, blindness of sight, death in life, tormented joy, happiness in misfortune, sad laughter, merry weeping, sweet poison, kind anguish, peace and war in one heart: this can only be love, with its joy bought through pain.*



INTERMISSION

during which tea will be served in the Torel Room

with the kind assistance of students
of the Opera Division, Faculty of Music



AT HOME IN DÜSSELDORF

Duet: Herbstlied (Mahlmann) (Op. 43/2)

Schumann

Autumn song: The leaves fall from the trees, the delicate Summer leaves. Life with its dreams fall in ashes and dust. The little birds which sang in the forest are now silent! My love has gone away, no birds will sing.

Love will surely rush in again in the new year, and everything will reappear which now has died. Winter, you will be welcome, with your clean new garments. You take away the jewels from Autumn in safekeeping for Spring.

Quartet: Bei Schenkung eines Flügels

words and music by Schumann

On the gift of a grand piano: Surrounded by orange-blossom and myrtles stands a fine piano, surely the gift of my beloved. The flowers will fade; but our art will always enrich our souls. May we bear all suffering and joy together.

Frühlingsnacht (Eichendorff) (Op.39/12)

Schumann

Spring night: Above the garden across the sky I heard the birds of passage wing, a sign that spring is in the air, that blossom time is come.

I could shout for joy, could weep, I feel it cannot be true. Old wonders reappear, with the gleaming moon.

And the moon and the stars say it, and the wood, dreaming, murmurs it, and the nightingales sing it: she is your, she is your!

Mein schöner Stern! (Rückert) (Op. 101/4)

Schumann

My lovely star! I implore you not to let your serene radiance be dimmed by the dark clouds in me, rather help my darkness to shine with your light.

My lovely star! I beseech you not to sink down to earth because you see me here; rather lift me up to heaven, my lovely star, where you already are!

Heimkehr (Uhland) (Op. 7/6)

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

The journey home: O break not, footbridge, you shake so very much, O fall not, rocks on the cliff, you seem so threateningly heavy. World, do not end, and sky, do not fall, until I may be with my beloved!

DARKNESS

Zwielicht (Eichendorff) (Op. 39/10)

Schumann

Twilight: Dusk makes to spread its wings, the trees stir awesomely, clouds come like heavy dreams — what means this dusk and dread?

If you have a fawn you favour, let her not graze alone; hunters range the forest bugling, voices float here and there.

If on earth you have a friend, do not trust him at this hour; friendly both in look and speech, in seeming peace he schemes for war.

What today, goes down weary, rises new-born in the morning. Much goes astray in the night — be wary, watchful, wide-awake!

Im Walde (Eichendorff) (Op. 39/11) Schumann

In the forest: Across the hill a wedding went, I heard birds singing, then — a flash of riders, a sounding horn, a merry hunt! And before I knew, all had died away, night covers everything around; only from the hills — a forest murmur, and deep in my heart — a shudder.

Theme in E flat major Schumann

Gebet (attrib. Mary Queen of Scots) (Op. 135/5) Schumann

Prayer: O Lord God, I put my trust in Thee! O beloved Jesus, rescue me in my harsh prison, in dire affliction I long for Thee; lamenting I cry to Thee, despairing in the dust. Hearken, I implore Thee, and rescue me!

Finale — Molto moderato, alla marcia

(Variations on a theme of Robert Schumann. Op. 23)

Johannes Brahms (1833-97)

Schumann wrote a few variations on his 'Schubert' theme; Brahms, several years later, took up the theme and wrote a complete set of his own as an act of homage.

EPILOGUE: JOHANNES

Quartet: Der Gang zum Liebchen (Slavonic folksong) (Op. 31/3)

Brahms

On the way to my sweetheart: The moon shines down, and I'm off to see my sweetheart again — how is she, I wonder? Alas, she is weeping and wailing that she'll never see me again!

The moon has gone down and I hurry on eagerly, so that no one can take my sweetheart away. Oh doves, coo to me, and breezes, whisper to me that no one is taking my sweetheart away!

Duet: Es rauschet das Wasser (Goethe) (Op. 28/3)

Brahms

The water rushes and will not stay still; the stars pass merrily in the sky, the clouds advance lustily in the sky, and so Love rushes and wanders here and there.

The water rushes, the clouds dissolve; yet the stars remain in their motion. And so also with Love, they say truly: it sways and stirs but never changes.

Quartet: Zum Schluss (Goethe) (Neue Liebeslieder, Op. 65)

Brahms

Conclusion: Enough, now, ye Muses! You strive in vain to show how joy and sorrow alternate in loving hearts. You cannot completely heal the wounds inflicted by Love; only you can soothe them.

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There are three concerts remaining in this Sunday Series: *A Nordic Serenade* on January 30, with **Carla Huhtanen** and **Mark Pedrotti**, *Madame Bizet* on March 12, with **Nathalie Paulin**, **Brett Polegato**, **Diana Leblanc** and **Diego Matamoros**, and *Toronto: a musical century* on April 30, with **Monica Whicher**, **Norine Burgess** and **Michael Colvin**. Single tickets may be purchased by calling (416) 686-5795. If you would like to become a subscriber, please also contact this number, and your ticket purchase for today's concert will be credited towards the price of your subscription.

There are also three concerts upcoming in our Recital Series, at the Glenn Gould Studio. On Monday, February 7 we will feature soprano **Monica Whicher** and mezzo soprano **Susan Platts** in songs and duets including Britten's *A Charm of Lullabies* and *On This Island*. On Friday, February 25 Canadian baritone **Nathan Berg** will make his Toronto Recital début, and on May 24 we present our *2nd annual Greta Kraus Schubertiad*, with artists to include mezzo soprano **Catherine Robbin**, **Mark Fewer**, violin and **Peter Longworth**, piano. For times and ticket prices, please see our brochure or call the Glenn Gould Studio at (416) 205-5555.

On Wednesday, December 1 we present the second of our Young Artists Recitals, with soprano **Katerina Tchoubar** and mezzo soprano **Michèle Bogdanowicz** in music by Berlioz, Rossini and Tchaikovsky. For tickets, call (416) 978-3744.

Full details of these concerts are included in our brochure available at the desk in the lobby, or call our Box Office at (416) 686-5795.

Box office revenues cover only a portion of our operating budget; grants, corporate funding and individual donations are needed for the balance. Audience members are asked to consider joining one of our supporting categories: **Benefactor** (\$1000 or more), **Champion** (\$500 or more), **Patron** (\$100 or more) and **Friend** (\$50 or more). Donations may be made by cheque or VISA, and may be made in instalments, if you prefer. You will receive information on our activities, and all donations will be acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes. Other donations and suggestions for corporate sponsorship will be gratefully received, and donors may also act as

sponsors for an entire concert, an artist, a special commission, or the intermission tea! Your support is vital in helping to ensure the continuation of these concerts.



We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following individuals and corporations in presenting today's concert:

- Eric Hood
- Che Anne Loewen
- Hugh McLean
- Margaret Mail
- John Lawson
- The Ontario Arts Council and The City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council
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Aldeburgh is the small town on the east coast of England where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. Artistic directors Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata have visited and worked there for many summers, as has a large number of the singers appearing with The Aldeburgh Connection.

Laura Whalen is a recent graduate of the University of Toronto's Opera Division, where she sang Blanche in *Dialogues des Carmélites*, Polly in Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, Sandrina in *La finta giardiniera*, Adele in *Die Fledermaus*, Atalanta in *Xerxes* and Fido in *Paul Bunyan*. Last summer at Aldeburgh saw her as Despina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, and she appeared as Ann Everett in the Canadian Children's Opera Chorus production of *Julius Caesar Jones*. Upcoming engagements include Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with l'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, Fauré's *Requiem* with the Toronto Symphony and a Puccini night with the Toronto Philharmonia. She appeared only yesterday with the National Arts Centre Orchestra at the 1999 Governor-General's Awards for the Performing Arts, to be broadcast by CBC on December 27th.

Elizabeth Turnbull is noted for both mezzo and contralto roles in opera and concert. She appeared with Christoph Eschenbach at the 1997 Ravinia Festival in Brahms's *Songs for piano, alto and viola*, and with pianist David Owen Norris in a programme of rare Schubert *Lieder*. She has been heard as soloist with major symphony orchestras and choirs across Canada, and will sing *Messiah* at the National Arts Centre and Avery Fisher Hall in New York, Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* with the Vancouver Symphony, along with appearances at the Guelph Spring Festival, in New Music Concerts, and in a concert with Richard Margison with the Esprit Orchestra. The opera stage has seen her as Mercedes in *Carmen* and Third Lady in *Zauberflöte* with Dallas Opera, Irene in *Tamerlano* at the Aldeburgh Festival, as well as in major roles in *Eugene Onegin* in Calgary, *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Edmonton and Regina,

Lakmé and *Luisa Miller* for Opera in Concert, Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah* with Vancouver Opera, and as the Old Prioress in the Opera Division's production of *Dialogues des Carmélites* last March.

Colin Ainsworth is currently studying at the University of Toronto, where he will soon be heard in the role of Lysander in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and will appear later in the season in *La rondine*. He has sung Borsa in *Rigoletto* with Orchestra London, *Messiah* in Kitchener, *Mikado* in Toronto, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Bell Arte Singers, a recital at the Guelph Spring Festival, and his debut appearance with Opera Atelier was in the lead role of John in Handel's *Resurrection*. In 1997 he appeared as Tamino in a production of *The Magic Flute* in Germany and the Czech Republic, and in Jacques Ibert's *Angelique*, Leonard Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*, and Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* with the University of Western Ontario Opera Theater. Future engagements include Mozart's *Mass in C Minor* with the Kingston Symphony and Lully's *Persée* with Opera Atelier.

Daniel Lichti is one of Canada's most distinguished oratorio and concert singers, appearing regularly with major symphonic, choral and concert organizations throughout Europe, the US, Canada and South America. Recent engagements have included Haydn's *Creation* at the Elora Festival under Bramwell Tovey and Handel's *L'Allegro* under Bernard Labadie, appearances with Tafelmusik and the Bethlehem Bach Choir, Handel's *Messiah* in Calgary and *Dixit Dominus* with the Vancouver Cantata Singers, Fauré's *Requiem* in Japan and Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* with the Québec Symphony. He sang *Winterreise* at Washington's National Gallery of Art and for Festival Canada in Ottawa, in Salt Lake City and at Wilfred Laurier University where he is Associate Professor of Voice. This year's schedule takes him to San Francisco for *Messiah* with the Philharmonia Baroque, and to the Bethlehem Bach Festival. He will sing Bach's *St Matthew Passion* and Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* in Kitchener Waterloo, Brahms's *Deutsches Requiem* in Calgary, Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* in Vancouver, and he will tour with mezzo Catherine Robbin in a concert, *Songs of Venus and Mars*.



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