

The traditional German romantic composer **Schumann** has become one of my all-time favorites. Most well-informed audience members know the relationship between the Schumanns and Brahms and hold Brahms as one of the most esteemed composers of all time, but many forget Schumann's strong influence on music and literature at the time. In my opinion, similar to the relationship between Beethoven and Schubert, Schumann is often overlooked by Brahms-lovers, of which I am one. Like Schubert, Schumann grew up in a literary home and was coerced by his father to study law as Schubert studied education. However, Schumann found support in his musical development as a pianist from his future wife's father and eventually grew to combine both his passions of music and literature. Like Debussy, Schumann was influenced by nationalist writers of the time, most importantly Goethe. His early compositions like "Pampallions" for orchestra or "Kinderzsehen" meaning Children's scenes, were the first examples of program music.

This first movement entitled "Mit leidenschaftlichem Ausdruck," meaning "with passionate expression," and consists of a soft but almost nervous main theme with quick waves of activity in the piano. Moments of "zurückhaltend" meaning "holding back" give way to retuning to the theme, allowing a more intense repeat of the melody. Then sforzandos and frequent forte-pianos give a feeling of impulsiveness, as if an uncontrollable energy must quickly be released. The agitated excitement within the theme results in sections of a more aggressive character with strong arpeggios in the violin accompanied by chords, and to me begins to present Schumann's different personalities.

A man plagued by schizophrenia, Schumann did have a sensitive side. In the second movement the sections between his personalities, Eusebius and Florestein, become more apparent. The dreamily and somewhat naive melody one could associate with Eusebius is three times interrupted by short phrases of quick and short notes with nervous trills and seemingly agitated accents on beat 2. In this rondo-like form, only Schumann could harmoniously pair his two halves with moments of reflective sadness and gravity.

After the loss of muscle function enough to play the piano in his right hand, by the 1840's he became obsessed with death understanding it is inevitable for us all, and eventually tried to commit suicide in 1853. Written five years before his death, the final movement reflects the disintegrating state of his mind. Labeled lively and in the piano "nicht gebunden," or "not bound," continuous chromatic fast notes passed between the piano and violin are interwoven with sudden sections of melodic fragments. The slow first bars from the first movement are interjected right before the coda as if to recall a final time of peace before the big finish of chords in minor.

After hearing Paganini perform in 1830's Frankfurt Schumann writes "my whole life has become a struggle between poetry and prose, or call it music and law." Schumann's early essays beauty in music which eventually lead to his founding of the first form of music criticism. His New Journal of Music or Neue Zeitschrift für Musik from Leipzig where he wrote about his favorite composers like Chopin and Mozart, have been very inspirational for me. I hope to demonstrate Schumann's fight within this sonata because currently I have not found a performance that quite does the sonata justice.