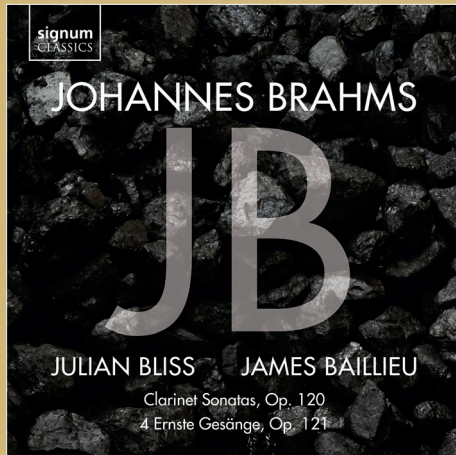


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"These are satisfying accounts...with a fine sense of musical partnership"
Gramophone Magazine

*"Bliss delivers the two sonatas with virtuoso mastery,
with a feeling for line in the slower passages that could hold its own
with any singer. Baillieu similarly excels throughout"*
BBC Music Magazine

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CLASSICS

CLARA & ROBERT
SCHUMANN

MUSIC FOR CLARINET & PIANO



JULIAN
BLISS

JAMES
BAILLIEU

Clara & Robert Schumann:
Music for Clarinet and Piano

Drei Romanzen, Op.94

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------|---------|
| 1 | No. 1, Nicht schnell | Robert Schumann | [03.25] |
| 2 | No. 2, Einfach, innig | Robert Schumann | [03.46] |
| 3 | No. 3, Nicht schnell | Robert Schumann | [04.34] |

- | | | | |
|---|--|----------------|---------|
| 4 | Sechs Lieder, Op.13: No.1, Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
<i>arr. Julian Bliss</i> | Clara Schumann | [02.22] |
|---|--|----------------|---------|

Fantasiestücke, Op. 73

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|---------|
| 5 | I. Zart und mit Ausdruck | Robert Schumann | [03.23] |
| 6 | II. Lebhaft leicht | Robert Schumann | [03.32] |
| 7 | III. Rasch und mit Feuer | Robert Schumann | [04.04] |

- | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|---------|
| 8 | Minnespiel Op.101: No. 4 Mein Schöner Stern!
<i>arr. Julian Bliss</i> | Robert Schumann | [02.52] |
|---|---|-----------------|---------|

- | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|---------|
| 9 | 12 Gedichte Op.35: No 10 Stille Tränen
<i>arr. Julian Bliss</i> | Robert Schumann | [03.47] |
|---|---|-----------------|---------|

3 Romances, Op. 22

- | | | | |
|----|---|----------------|---------|
| 10 | I. Andante Molto | Clara Schumann | [02.56] |
| 11 | II. Allegretto | Clara Schumann | [02.57] |
| 12 | III. Leidenschaftlich schnell
<i>arr. Julian Bliss</i> | Clara Schumann | [03.29] |

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|---------|
| 13 | Lieder und Gesänge Op.96: I. Nachtlied
<i>arr. Julian Bliss</i> | Robert Schumann | [02.25] |
|----|---|-----------------|---------|

- | | | | |
|----|--|-----------------|---------|
| 14 | Abendlied, Op. 85: No. 12
<i>arr. Julian Bliss</i> | Robert Schumann | [02.41] |
|----|--|-----------------|---------|

- | | | | |
|----|---|----------------|---------|
| 15 | 12 Gedichte aus 'Liebesfrühling', Op. 12:
2. Liebst du um Schönheit
<i>arr. Julian Bliss</i> | Clara Schumann | [02.08] |
|----|---|----------------|---------|

Adagio and Allegro Op.70

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|---------|
| 16 | I. Adagio | Robert Schumann | [03.40] |
| 17 | II. Allegro
<i>arr. Julian Bliss</i> | Robert Schumann | [04.22] |

Total timings: 56.26

JULIAN BLISS, *clarinet*
JAMES BAILLIEU, *piano*

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Schumann's 3 Romances, Opus 94 date from the end of 1849. Originally scored for oboe and piano, they are performed here on clarinet by Julian Bliss. All three are in ternary form, though the first, a wistful piece in A minor, has only a brief scherzando exchange before the opening phrase returns. The central piece in A major has "innig" (intimate, heartfelt) in the tempo indication – a quality often present in Schumann's music. Here the middle section is more agitated and passionate. The final piece in A minor begins with a questioning phrase which returns three more times. Again the middle section brings a contrast in mood.

From the group of six lieder published as Clara Schumann's Opus 13 (1840-3), the first is a setting of a poignant text by Heinrich Heine - Ich stand in dunklen Träumen - and is among her most eloquent songs. The verse begins "I stood in dark dreams and gazed at her portrait ..." and ends "I cannot believe that I have lost you!" The situation of temporary separation, causing the lover to stand in contemplation of the other's portrait, would have been familiar to Clara and Robert, who had experienced fierce opposition to their marriage from Clara's father. Clara ends this Heine setting with a short postlude for piano, a touching feature which Robert also favoured in many of his songs.

Schumann originally scored the Fantasiestücke Opus 73 for clarinet and piano while simultaneously providing alternative arrangements for violin or cello. The three pieces are melodically interrelated, creating a unity which is emphasised by their respective keys – 1) A minor moving into A major, 2) A major and 3) again A major. Sometimes Schumann composed at obsessive speed, the two days required for these pieces, in February 1849, being a prime example. Fantasy was an essential part of his musical personality and not restricted to those several compositions to which he gave that specific title – such as the set of eight Fantasiestücke for piano, Opus 12 and the Fantasy (or Phantasie) for violin and orchestra, Opus 131. The first piece of the Opus 73 group – in A minor and marked *Zart mit Ausdruck* (tender or delicate, with expression) - is gently melancholic, the piano's triplet figuration maintained almost throughout. Its middle section blossoms into arpeggio-like writing, with contrary motion between the instruments. Belatedly the minor key resolves

into A major. The more animated central piece has as its main theme a piano phrase from bar 3 of the opening movement. In the F major middle section the duo exchange phrases based on a little ascending figure. The final piece is urgent and impetuous, with a slightly calmer middle section. A substantial coda includes two increases of tempo and a recall of the opening phrase of the central movement, before crescendoing to the exuberant final bars.

Schumann's Minnespiel Opus 101 (1849) is a sequence of eight settings - four solo songs, two duets and two quartets, to verses by Friedrich Rückert. No 4 of the eight songs is *Mein schöner Stern!* Here Rückert's poignant words –

"My lovely star! I beg of you,

O do not let

Your serene radiance

Be dimmed by

Dark clouds in me"

- reflect Schumann's devotion to Clara but also his bouts of depression and early signs of mental illness. The expansive character of this song is established by the rising fifths in the first phrase and reinforced by the octaves in the piano's bass line – octave leaps as well as octave doubling.

Schumann's set of *Zwölf Gedichte* Opus 35 (1840) is known as the Kerner lieder because the poems are by Justinus Kerner. No 10 is *Stille tränen*. Here the "miraculously blue" sky follows a night in which the same sky had been "weeping down tear after tear", just as "in the silent night many a man weeps out his sorrow". The melody, above pervasive repeated-note crotchets, has a broadly sustained sweep requiring fine breath control, and a postlude in which Schumann liberates the piano, introducing a melodic line, more animated movement in the bass and a new turn figure.

Clara Schumann was not only one of the outstanding concert pianists of her day, but also a composer of more than fifty works, including a piano concerto, a piano sonata and nearly thirty songs. She wrote "I once believed that I possessed creative talent, but I have given up this desire; a woman

must not desire to compose – there has never yet been one able to do it. Should I expect to be the one?" This pragmatic, self-effacing acceptance reflects the competing demands upon her time: she gave birth to eight children and sustained a career as a travelling virtuoso, often playing her husband's compositions. She was also very influential in steering away from the fashionable preoccupation with virtuosity towards recital programmes of greater substance and seriousness. Clara's Three Romances, composed for the great violinist Joseph Joachim in 1853, begin with an expressive D flat major piece in 3/8 which intensifies (*animato*) as the piano part becomes increasingly florid. The second piece in G minor has a recurring feature of an octave leap and a light-hearted middle section in G major. The passionate final piece has an animated piano part of rippling arpeggios, later transformed into delightful staccato figuration.

From Schumann's *Lieder und Gesänge* Opus 96 (1850) the first song, *Nachtlied*, is a setting of Goethe, still, serene, dignified and unadorned. Bare on the page, this song is an amalgam of rapture and quiet majesty. Schumann's connection with Goethe's texts began tentatively when he was eighteen, but became a consistent preoccupation, culminating in the large-scale choral work *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* (1844-53).

Schumann's *Abendlied*, Opus 85 No 12 (dating from 1849) is the last of a sequence of Twelve Pieces for piano four-hands, "for small and large children". During a 4-5 year period Schumann composed four works for children: *The Song Album for the Young*, Opus 79, (April/May 1849) comprised twenty-nine songs; four months later he composed Opus 85, then in June 1853 he wrote *Three Piano Sonatas for children*, Opus 118. In September of that year he composed a set of six dances for four hands – the *Kinderball*, Opus 130. The Opus 85 children's pieces were technically well within the ability of Schumann's seven-year-old daughter Marie. Actually No 12, *Abendlied*, is written for three hands, the single hand playing the melody. All twelve pieces became popular in the nineteenth century, when domestic music-making flourished, but especially the final piece,

which exists in numerous arrangements. In 1861 Joseph Joachim adapted it for violin and orchestra, then around 1880 Busoni made an arrangement for clarinet and string quartet. Schumann's considerable amount of music for four hands, much of it very characterful, is among the most neglected areas of his large output.

Of Clara's 3 *Lieder* Opus 12, the second is a setting of Rückert's poem *Liebst du um Schönheit*. Rückert's *Liebesfrühling*, a cycle of several hundred poems, was a celebration of the delights of conjugal love. Having read these poems soon after their marriage, Robert wrote in a joint diary which he and Clara kept: "The idea of publishing a volume of songs together with Clara inspired me to set to work ... now Clara should also compose some songs from the *Liebesfrühling*." Ultimately Robert's nine songs and three of Clara's were chosen to be published together as Opus 37/12 (Opus 37 being Robert's.) The heartfelt message of Clara's *Liebst du um Schönheit* is that genuine love for love's sake transcends the seductive attractions of mere beauty or youth. A constant flow of quavers in the accompaniment underpins the eloquent simplicity of the melody.

Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro* Opus 70 dates from one week after he had composed his *Fantasiestücke* Opus 73. For him 1849 was a fruitful year, during which he composed about twenty important works. Schumann originally intended his Opus 70 for the new valve horn. In the dreamily romantic *Adagio* the frequency of intervals of a semitone contributes to a special emotional intensity, yet this is also among the most tender movements in all of Schumann's music. The radiant coda of the *Adagio* gives way to the *Allegro's* leaping, joyful main theme in 12/8. This breaks the spell cast by the foregoing music with the kind of extreme mood-change which came naturally to Schumann. Here he adopts rondo form, the second of the two episodes being in a slower tempo (*Etwas ruhiger* – somewhat calmer). In both episodes Schumann derives some of his material from the opening *Adagio*. A faster tempo is marked for the 9-bar coda. All the arrangements recorded here (other than Op. 94 and Op. 73) are by Julian Bliss.

JULIAN BLISS is one of the world's finest clarinetists, excelling as a concerto soloist, chamber musician, recitalist, jazz artist, and masterclass leader. He has inspired a generation of young players and introduced a substantial new audience to his instrument. Julian started playing the clarinet aged four and went on to study in the United States at the University of Indiana and in Germany under Sabine Meyer, turning professional aged just twelve.

In recital and chamber music he has played at most of the world's leading festivals and halls, including Australian Festival of Chamber Music, Gstaad, New York's Lincoln Center, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Verbier, and London's Wigmore Hall. As a soloist, he has appeared with a wide range of international orchestras, including the Auckland Philharmonia, BBC Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Chamber Orchestra of Paris, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Sao Paolo Symphony and the Queensland Symphony.

Excellent reviews, record of the week spots and media attention flow from his recording output. In 2023, Julian released the premiere recording of John Mackey's clarinet concerto 'Divine Mischief' alongside Morton Gould's 'Derivations' with Eric Wilson and the Baylor University Wind Ensemble. Other releases include Brahms Clarinet Sonatas with pianist James Baillieu, Mozart and Weber Quintets with the Carducci String Quartet; Schubert's Shepherd on the Rock with Ailish Tynan (soprano) and Christopher Glynn (piano); Steve Reich's New York Counterpoint; Mozart and Nielsen's Clarinet Concertos with the Royal Northern Sinfonia.

With the launch of Bliss Music in 2020, Julian's arrangements of a selection of pieces for clarinet and piano have been made available as sheet music. These include Rachmaninoff's Cello Sonata Op. 19, the third movement of which has been set as a Grade 6 piece on the new London College of Music clarinet syllabus. Julian is proud to be a Buffet-Crampon and Vandoren performing artist.



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Described by The Daily Telegraph as 'in a class of his own' **JAMES BAILLIEU** is one of the leading song and chamber music pianists of his generation. He has given solo and chamber recitals throughout the world and collaborates with a wide range of singers and instrumentalists including Benjamin Appl, Jamie Barton, Ian Bostridge, Allan Clayton, Annette Dasch, Lise Davidsen, the Elias and Heath Quartets, Dame Kiri te Kanawa, Adam Walker, and Pretty Yende. As a soloist, he has appeared with the Ulster Orchestra, English Chamber Orchestra, and the Wiener Kammerphonie.

Highlights of his 23/24 season include a recital tour with Lise Davidsen at venues including the Metropolitan Opera House, the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, the Wigmore Hall, and the Wiener Staatsoper. He performs at Fundación Juan March and in venues across Japan with Benjamin Appl, at the Festival du Périgord Pourpre and Festival van Vlaanderen with Véronique Gens, at the Concertgebouw with Jess Gillam, and at the Gran Teatre del Liceu and Salzburg Easter Festival with Lise Davidsen and Freddie de Tommaso. James returns to the Wigmore Hall for recitals with Louise Alder, Tara Erraught and Tim Mead.

James is a frequent guest at many of the world's most distinguished music centres including Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Vancouver Playhouse, Berlin Konzerthaus, Vienna Musikverein, the Barbican Centre, Wiener Konzerthaus, Bozar Brussels, Pierre Boulez Saal, Cologne Philharmonie, and the Laeiszhalle Hamburg. Festivals include Aix-en-Provence, Verbier, Schleswig-Holstein, Festpillene i Bergen, Edinburgh, Spitalfields, Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Bath, City of London and Brighton Festivals.

An innovative programmer, he has curated many song and chamber music festivals including series for the Brighton Festival, Wigmore Hall, BBC Radio 3, Verbier Festival, Bath International Festival, and Perth Concert Hall.



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Recorded 25th to 27th June 2023 at
Wyastone Recording Studio,
Wyastone Leys, Monmouth, NP25 3SR

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