music. In the D Major Quartet the influence of Brahms and Dvořák is particularly evident. The opening of unison and octaves in the first movement is played with a transparence by the Aron Quartet that is indicative of the clarity to follow throughout the entire work. Schoenberg's attempt to make all parts of this work thematically significant, a feature for which he is particularly indebted to Brahms, is conveyed faithfully in this recording. As with their recording of the later op. 7 Quartet, here the Aron Quartet convey clearly the overall structure of the work. Where this music differs is that it does not have the rhythmic-metric complexity of op. 7, with its phrase structure being of a four-square nature. Motivic and harmonic sophistication are its outstanding features, delivered with a suitable grace in this recording. To my ears the sound-world here is somewhat more romantic than that in the later quartets in this set.

Preiser Records get full marks for their attention to detail in the production of this set. The attractive packaging has as its cover a reproduction of Kandinsky's *Impression III (Concert)*, a work that was itself inspired by Schoenberg's Quartets opp. 7 and 10. The sleeve notes (written by various authors for the Arnold Schoenberg Centre) are quite extensive and informative. And the presence of Schoenberg's own voice on the set gives it the polish it requires. The performances themselves have much to offer, but I wonder whether the spoken commentaries by Schoenberg might not have been left with the Kolisch Quartet where they truly belong, and where they are presented with a transcription in the sleeve notes and Schoenberg's album notes. As a set, however, the Kolisch Quartet recordings remain superior, with the exception of the grating surface noise, to my mind not an impassable flaw. If you are averse to this historical sound, I highly recommend the Aron Quartet's Schoenberg set. For all those who treasure their Kolisch Quartet recordings, the Aron Quartet provide a worthy complement, but not an alternative.

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Schumann

Symphony No. 2 in C major op. 61
Symphony No. 4 in D minor op. 120

Orchestre des Champs Elysées
Philippe Herreweghe *cond*

Harmonia mundi (Musique d'abord) HMA1951848 (66 minutes: DDD)
Notes and translations included.

Schumann experienced, of course, the same anxieties about composing symphonies that afflicted all the Romantic composers. At the time of his so-called 'orchestral year' in 1841 the available models might have seemed both few and daunting ones. Beethoven naturally exerted a force that could be as paralysing as it was inspiring. Schubert was known only from the 'Great' C major Symphony, in the resuscitation of which Schumann had played a crucial

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800002421 Published online by Cambridge University Press

role. Mendelssohn had published only one symphony and that the juvenile one in C minor (Schumann knew neither the 'Reformation' nor the 'Italian' Symphony; the 'Scottish' was not yet composed, and when it did come, Schumann mistakenly thought that it was the Italian one). In the 1830s Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique*, *Harold en Italie* and *Roméo et Juliette* had all appeared, however, and Spohr had begun to explore cyclic and programmatic symphonies. Yet to compose on the model of the programmatic or vocal symphony must have confronted a composer with as much of the anxiety of influence even as to pursue the Classic Viennese tradition beyond Beethoven.

Schumann's response to this situation in his Symphony in D minor, composed in 1841 and revised in 1851, turned out to be a remarkable one, a work cyclic in an even more thoroughgoing manner than the motivically unified C minor Symphony by Beethoven or the symphonies of Berlioz with their *idées fixes*. By letting each movement lead directly into the next and making the finale a reinterpretive recapitulation of the first movement, Schumann's 'Symphonische Phantasie', as he called it on the manuscript of the revised version, anticipated works such as Liszt's *Faust Symphony* or Saint-Saëns's 'Organ' Symphony. At the same time, by eschewing a programme, Schumann located his work in the realm of the 'pure' symphonic tradition rather than the literary world of the Mendelssohnian concert overture, the Berliozian programme symphony, and his own cycles of piano pieces and songs. This experiment in symphonic plot, integrating the dramatic actions of individual movements into a single continuous and overarching action, rather than, say, merely interlocking them by motivic references, and yet without the provision of a verbal programme, challenges the listener to follow events with unaccustomed sustained musical attention.

In 1845–46, writing the more expansive C major Symphony, Schumann extended the challenge beyond that of following a dramatic plot, so that it now forced the listener to recognize a narrative voice. The movements in this work do not run together continuously as in the D minor, but the result is no less organic. Here, in addition to the development of the music through recurring, unifying motives, and beyond its shaping as a progression through struggle from shadow to light, the symphony reaches out beyond its own boundaries.[1] Again, however, this does not depend on literary references; instead, it relies on musical or, perhaps more accurately, music-historical ones. Yet it does not attempt, like Spohr's Symphony No. 6, the 'Historische Symphonie im Styl und Geschmack vier verschiedener Zeitabschnitte', to imitate (or satirize) earlier styles. Instead, from the opening of the first movement to the coda of the finale, one hears citations (if not actual quotations) of Bach, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The reference to Bach turns up in the second trio of the second movement (outwardly a Mendelssohnian 'elfin scherzo'), where his name is spelled out in musical letters (several times, beginning with the first violins in bar 230) in a passage that incorporates a chorale-prelude texture over a running bass line. The quotation from Haydn is unmistakable in the fanfare motive from the introduction to his Symphony no. 104 that also opens Schumann's symphony and returns in the second and fourth movements. The Mozart

[1] Anthony Newcomb, 'Once More "Between Absolute and Program Music": Schumann's Second Symphony', *19th-Century Music* 7/3 (3 Apr. 1984): 233–50, provides a substantial and helpful essay on this work.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800002421 Published online by Cambridge University Press

reference comes in the middle of the Adagio, which evokes the Lied for the Two Armed Men in *Die Zauberflöte*. Beethoven is cited by the well-known allusion to the final song in *An die ferne Geliebte* that substitutes for a recapitulation in the symphony's finale, and by a quotation from the Ninth Symphony at 'Alle Menschen werden Brüder'. The effect is to claim for the composer (that is, the composer's persona in this work) a place in the Austro-German canonical tradition, as well as to suggest an interpretation of the symphony as a sort of initiatory ordeal by which the composer seeks admission into the circle of enlightened musicians.[2]

With the present recording Philippe Herreweghe and the Orchestre des Champs Elysées offer a welcome addition to the growing catalogue of available nineteenth-century orchestral works on period instruments. Like some other such efforts, this one might be faulted for adopting a slightly 'classicizing' approach to interpretation, risking little in expressive, 'Romantic' flexibility of tempo or imaginative dynamic freedom. Nevertheless, it brings off effectively the dramatic plots of both symphonies. The C major achieves a compelling rhythmic momentum, even in its Adagio, that makes it truly electric, and its dynamics cover a wider range and accomplish sharper contrast than those in its companion. In the D minor Florestan probably would have found the rhythm in the first movement just a bit too stolid and mechanical, and the solo violin arabesques of the second movement lack the Eusebian dreaminess that one might hope for there. On the whole, however, both performances serve the music very well.

The period instruments in this recording sound extremely fine. The strings possess a particularly velvety tone, though they can also manage plenty of 'bite' in the aggressive passages in the outer movements and scherzos. The winds sound clear and precise. Most remarkable are the horns, which can be rivetingly brassy in fanfare figures but also produce an elegant piano. I have never heard the two little grace-note horn figures in bars 170–1 of the first movement of the Symphony in C so clearly as here, a delightful moment.

Criticism of Schumann's orchestral writing long complained of the muddiness of his scoring, but that never seems a problem here. Obviously, performers may no longer solve this problem merely by rescoring the music, as they once did. In this recording the listener will easily distinguish two alternative choices. In some cases Herreweghe seems to have decided to bring out sharply the leading part in the texture and let the subsidiary instruments fade into the background, an option that keeps the focus clear but sacrifices inner parts. In the development of the first movement of the D minor Symphony, for example, at bars 177ff, the cellos' billowing wave in triplets, which should act as counterpart to the trombone phrases in slow notes, almost disappears. This problem also occurs at moments in the Adagio of the C major Symphony. Elsewhere, though, and characteristically in the outer movements of the C major, he employs a more successful approach, making each part play soloistically, so that every line emerges and none becomes lost. This produces a transparent sound in which every detail stands out brilliantly.

[2] This interpretation was developed in my paper 'Once More on Schumann's C-Major Symphony: Narrative and Allusion, Self-identification and Self-realization', at the 13th International Conference on Nineteenth-Century Music, held at Durham University, 6–9 July 2004. At this writing it is in preparation for publication.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800002421 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The notes for this recording are attributed to Roman Hinke and Remy Stricker. At two and a half pages for both symphonies together, they are pretty minimal. The music and the performance deserved something more substantial.

This is a welcome recording, with much to recommend it, and the dissatisfactions that one can find with it do not in the slightest stand in the way of an enlightening and pleasurable hearing. I look forward to listening to it many times, and to sharing it with the students in my lectures.

Douglass Seaton
The Florida State University

Tchaikovsky

Piano Concerto No. 1 in B♭ minor op. 23
Piano Concerto No. 3 in E♭ major op. 75
Andante and Finale op. 79 (orch. Sergey Taneyev)

Konstantin Scherbakov *pf*
Russian Philharmonic Orchestra
Dmitry Yablonsky *cond*

Naxos 8.557257 (69 minutes: DDD)
Notes in English and German.

This is a CD of much interest. Curiously, while the musical richness of the three (or should we say two?) pieces, as designated on this CD, diminishes as work succeeds work (indeed, almost as each track succeeds track), the scholarly interest for those not already familiar with the last two works (or should we say one?) on the last three tracks may still rise if they have little or no prior acquaintance with them. And surely the last three tracks are really only three-quarters of another work? And whose work are the last two tracks anyway?

Explanations needed? Let us start at the end. In April 1891 Tchaikovsky embarked on a four-week tour of the USA, and it was evidently on the return voyage to Europe that he began to sketch a sixth symphony in E♭. This draft was completed in November, and two-thirds of the first movement were scored. But reviewing it a month later, Tchaikovsky experienced disenchantment, and abandoned the piece. However, in 1893 he reincarnated it as a piano concerto, completing and scoring the intended first movement in July, but deciding, because of its length (despite the fact that it is considerably shorter than the First Piano Concerto's first movement), to leave it as a one-movement concert piece. Then three months on, and only weeks before his sudden death, he showed it to the composer and pianist, Sergei Taneyev, his former pupil and now a close friend, and the one man to whom Tchaikovsky would turn for criticism of his own compositions. Taneyev was blunt, especially finding the concerto's element of virtuosity underplayed. Nevertheless, Tchaikovsky still retained faith in what he was doing, and set about converting the slow movement and finale of the abortive E♭ symphony into the remaining two concerto movements. The completed first movement would be published in 1894, but it

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