

May 17/17
NIGHT VISIONS

(NACHTSTÜCK)

Op. 23, No. 4.

ROBERT SCHUMANN



Saint Louis

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Berlin

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REVISED EDITION WITH FINGERING, PEDALING,
PHRASING AND INSTRUCTIVE ANNOTATIONS ON
INTERPRETATION AND METHOD OF STUDY

By **LEOPOLD GODOWSKY**

FORM AND STRUCTURE, AND HARMONIC ANALYSIS

By **EDGAR STILLMAN KELLEY**

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, GENERAL INFORMATION
AND GLOSSARY

By **EMERSON WHITHORNE**



NIGHT VISIONS, Op. 23, No. 4.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—ROBERT ALEXANDER SCHUMANN.

Born at Zwickau, Saxony, June 8, 1810.

Died at Endenich, near Bonn, July 29, 1856.

THE town-trumpeter of Zwickau was the first to initiate Robert Schumann into the esoteric rites of music. Zwickau was a small Saxon town and the municipal trumpeter was one of those musicians who ply their trade without imagination or great enthusiasm. After a few lessons with this worthy gentleman, Schumann was instructed in piano-playing by J. C. Kuntsch, the organist of the Marienkirche. Already at seven years of age he was attempting to express himself in music, but it was almost ten years later before he had an opportunity to acquire sufficient musical knowledge to enable him to compose with any great degree of facility.

In the meantime his father, who had been a bookseller and something of an author, had died and his mother had insisted upon his studying the law. He devoted himself to this branch of learning at Leipsic and later at Heidelberg, yet his whole interest and enthusiasm was for music, and, in 1830, with the assistance of Friedrich Wieck, the famous piano pedagogue, he was able to overcome his mother's aversion to music and return to Leipsic, where he studied the pianoforte with Wieck.

At this date his career as a composer actually commences, although he had written a few songs before his twenty-first year. His over-practice, with a finger-strengthening device of his own invention, made a pianistic career impossible for him, so he devoted himself entirely to composition and critical work. In 1834 he, with some friends, founded the "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik" in Leipsic, and for ten years he retained the editorship of this musical journal. The object of the journal was the establishment of an honest and capable criticism of worthy art, and incidentally, a discouragement of Philistinism in all its guises.

There grew up at this time an affection between Schumann and Clara Wieck, which was strongly opposed by Clara's father. Whether it was the difference in age—she was nine years Schumann's junior—or whether Wieck felt that the young composer's prospects were uncertain, it was nevertheless not his desire that Schumann should become his son-in-law. Finally the question was taken to court, resulting in a decree in Schumann's favor, and on September 12, 1840, he made Clara Wieck his wife. Her reputation as a pianist was already considerable, so that she was able as a propagandist to do great service for her husband.

As a teacher and conductor, Robert Schumann was equally unsuccessful; his temperament was essentially creative and his nervous disorders entirely unsuited him for an active career. Fortunately his father had left him a small income which was of great assistance in allowing him leisure for creative work. Undoubtedly he overtaxed himself, for he was subject to recurrent attacks of mental depression, finally causing him, in 1854, to attempt suicide by throwing himself into the Rhine. He was rescued and confined in a private asylum at Endenich, near Bonn, where he died two years later.

As a critic Schumann did much to assist Chopin, Berlioz, and most of all Brahms, while as a composer he firmly established himself in the history of musical art, not only as a writer of songs and pianoforte music, but also as a symphonic and choral composer as well as a writer of chamber-music.

POETIC IDEA: The "NIGHT VISIONS," of which the piece under consideration is the fourth and last, were written about 1838. This was one of Schumann's most prolific periods, for between the years 1836-1839 he wrote the larger portion of his piano works. The opening theme of this composition is undoubtedly one of the most simple and exquisite that he ever wrote. It is meditative and contemplative. Its outstanding quality is its clarified atmosphere and its idealistic mood.

A. 613-4

METHOD OF STUDY: The introductory measures must be given with a complete feeling for, and a foreshadowing of, the mood of the whole piece. Beginning with m. 2, all the chords must be played softly and harmoniously, the octaves in the bass being struck gently, and simultaneously with the lowest notes of the arpeggio-chords of the right hand. The upper voice of the right hand should be heard slightly above all the other parts. The rests between the arpeggio-chords should be neither too long nor too short—actual silence in all cases being not longer than a sixteenth rest. The chords should be rolled (arpeggiated) quickly. Prepare the chords by extending the hand and shaping the fingers to conform to the outline of the chords before playing them. If possible play measures 18, 19, 20 and 21 without rolling the chords. At m. 31 let the D natural sound out in the right hand to indicate the sudden change of mood. From m. 21 note the answering phrases in the right hand; this was an idiosyncrasy peculiar to Schumann.

The editor plays the following measures thus:

The image displays two musical excerpts, labeled 'a)' and 'b)', from a piano piece. Both excerpts are in 3/4 time and feature a treble and bass staff.
 Excerpt 'a)' shows a sequence of arpeggiated chords. The right hand plays chords with a 'roll' (arpeggio) indicated by a curved line and upward-pointing arrows. The left hand plays octaves and single notes. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5. A 'tre corde' (treble clef) marking is present.
 Excerpt 'b)' shows a similar sequence of arpeggiated chords. The right hand's arpeggios are more complex, involving sixteenth notes. The left hand continues with octaves and single notes. Fingerings and dynamics are also indicated.

PEDAGOGIC IDEA: Special emphasis is laid upon the value of a thorough comprehension of the form and harmony of the compositions under consideration. This not only widens the intellectual horizon of the student, but it enables him to appreciate many fine points of structure too often overlooked. Furthermore, it impels him to interpret the thought of the composer with a fidelity otherwise beyond his grasp. Finally, it gives him a logical method of memorizing and reading at sight.

FORM AND HARMONIC ANALYSIS: Key of F major. The three part song-form, with an episode or rudimentary trio, is here adopted.

Part I (m. 2—9). The forephrase closes in the dominant; the afterphrase is the same as the forephrase, closing in the tonic.

Part II. Irregular. Beginning in the dominant, the tenor takes the opening motive of part I, imitated in the soprano. Then, at m. 10 (last beat), a remarkable series of sequences begins, the motive in the soprano being imitated in the alto, filling out a phrase of four measures, closing on the third degree (A minor). With the last beat of m. 12, part I reappears. According to some theorists, the recurrence of the afterphrase of part I closing in the tonic, would complete part II; but this is not the case here. Hence we must regard part II as completed with the third beat of m. 13.

Part III (m. 14—21) consists of an exact repetition of part I, with the afterphrase enriched, the right hand playing an octave higher, and the left joining in the arpeggiated chords. It is evident that part I greatly outweighs part II, there being thus far 16 measures of the former and only 4 of the latter.

Episode. To compensate for this lack of balance, a fresh second part is apparently begun at m. 22. Even the same rhythmic figure employed in the left hand and imitated in the right hand as in m. 9—10, seems to promise a reappearance of part II, but we find at the outset quite a different material from that of part II. Note the *legato* imitative phrases. Furthermore, the key (F minor) at once precludes the possibility of inner connection, so we must regard this portion as a rudimentary trio such as one often finds in Chopin's Mazurkas. This consists of a single extended phrase of five measures (m. 22-26) repeated (m. 27-31). At this point a slightly enriched phase of the introduction (m. 1) appears and leads once more into the main theme.

Part III (varied m. 33—40). Notice how new interest is imparted to the after-phrase by the four-part treatment, the *legato* rendition and the movement in eighth-notes now in one voice and then in another.

Coda (last beat of m. 40 to m. 44). Observe the peculiar effect of the diminished seventh-chord in m. 41, and the chord of the augmented sixth and fifth in m. 42 (with the up-beats of the preceding measures), in connection with the tonic organ-point.

It was by means of the above mentioned structural irregularities—in which, however, the ultimate elements of form and symmetry were not absent—that Schumann attained some of his most characteristic effects. Observe especially the sonorous distribution of the harmonies in m. 1—20. Compare the treatment in this passage with the slow movement in Beethoven's Sonata Op. 2, No. 1; or, if convenient, see how the Schumann theme has been condensed into the well-known church tune. This manner of dispersing the tones of a chord was suggested by Weber, and carried to great perfection by Chopin, with such success as to influence all later composers.

NIGHT VISIONS

GLOSSARY.

NAMES

Schumann,	pronounced, <u>Shoo-män</u> .
Zwickau,	" <u>Tswī-kōw</u> .
Bonn,	" <u>Bón</u> .
Kuntsch,	" <u>Koontch</u> .
Marienkirche,	" <u>Mā-rē-ēn-kōr-chē</u> .
Wieck,	" <u>Vēk</u> .
Neue Zeitschrift für Musik,	" <u>Noi-ē Tsit-schrift für Moo-zēk</u> .

TERMS

arpeggio,	pronounced, <u>är-pēd-jē-ō</u> , - played in harp style.
lento,	" <u>lēn-tō</u> , - slowly.
ad libitum,	" <u>äd lib-i-tum</u> , - at will.
espr. (espressivo),	" <u>ēs-prēs-sēe-vō</u> , - expressively.
una corda,	" <u>oo-nā kōr-dä</u> , - one string, (soft pedal).
semplice,	" <u>sēm-plē-tshē</u> , - simply.
ritard. (ritardando),	" <u>rī-tār-dän-dō</u> , - retarding.
tre corde,	" <u>trā kōr-dē</u> , - three strings, (release soft pedal).
più,	" <u>pē-oo</u> , - more.
a tempo,	" <u>a tēm-pō</u> , - in time.
poco più mosso,	" <u>pō-kō pē-oo mōs-sō</u> , - a little more movement.
rall. (rallentando),	" <u>rāl-lēn-tän-dō</u> , - gradually more slowly.
adagio,	" <u>äh-däh-jō</u> , - slowly.

Grade III-B

Night Visions.

Revised and edited by Leopold Godowsky.

Robt. Schumann, Op. 23, No. 4.

Lento. *ad libitum.* **Semplice.** M.M. ♩ = 63-69

p espr. 1 2 3

una corda

4 5 6

7 8 9

mf 10 11 12 *ritard.*

tre corde

613-3

5 4 2 5 3 1 3 2 1 5

più p a tempo

13 14 15

una corda

16 17 18

mf

19 20 21

ritard.

poco più mosso. M. M. ♩ = 72 - 80

espr. p

22 23 24

b)

tre corde

25 26 27

rall.

Night Visions 2.

613-3

RECITATION QUESTIONS.

1. When and where was Schumann born?


Ans.

2. Give a short sketch of his life.

Ans.

3. What was the name of the musical journal which he edited?

Ans.

4. How should the chords, marked , be played?

Ans.

5. Where are the answering phrases?

Ans.

6. What is the general mood of the composition?

Ans.

7. Tell the key of the piece.

Ans.

8. Which voice should stand out in the dynamic scheme?

Ans.

9. In what measures do we find imitation?

Ans.

10. What formal irregularities are noticeable?

Ans.

11. Where does the coda begin?

Ans.

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