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CLASSICS

Wanderer Fantasy

Joseph James
"Wanderer Fantasy" after Schubert
"Fantasie" after Schumann

English Chamber Orchestra
Orlando Jopling, conductor

Members of the Schubert Ensemble

WANDERER FANTASY

Joseph James: "Wanderer Fantasy" after Schubert; "Fantasie" after Schumann

Wanderer Fantasy in C after Franz Schubert (D. 760)

- | | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo | [6.00] |
| 2. Adagio | [7.02] |
| 3. Presto | [4.35] |
| 4. Allegro | [3.41] |

Fantasie in F after Robert Schumann (op. 17)

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 5. Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen | [12.03] |
| 6. Maßig. Durchaus energisch | [7.54] |
| 7. Langsam getragen. Durchweg leise zu halten | [11.48] |
| Total | [53.24] |

ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA (LEADER: STEPHANIE GONLEY)
ORLANDO JOPLING, CONDUCTOR
MEMBERS OF THE SCHUBERT ENSEMBLE
SIMON BLENDIS, VIOLIN; DOUGLAS PATERSON, VIOLA; JANE SALMON, CELLO
STEVE WILLIAMS, BASS [TRACKS 1-4], PETER BUCKOKE, BASS [TRACKS 5-7]

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'Fantasy' is a musical term that goes back beyond the Baroque to the Renaissance period, and it always implies a liberation of the artistic imagination from fixed forms. In German, *Fantasieren* is also the word for improvisation, but in the Romantic period a work titled *Fantasie* indicated that it was in some sense a self-portrait, an evocation of the creative process. The story-teller and musician E. T. A. Hoffmann, who wrote with such insight about Mozart and Beethoven, and who created the archetype of Romantic musician in his fictional *Kapellmeister* Johannes Kreisler, gave one of his earliest collections the title *Fantasy pieces in the manner of Callot* (1815), referring to the drawings and engravings of the Baroque artist Jacques Callot: 'Couldn't a poet or writer, to whom the figures of ordinary life appear in his inner romantic world of imagination, and who represents them in the glimmering light with which they are surrounded there, as though in a strange, wondrous finery, at least use this master as his excuse and say: I wanted to work in the manner of Callot.'

The musical forms of the early nineteenth century are deeply indebted to the Baroque, with their use of counterpoint and harmonic progression freed from the confined elegance of classicism, and the two *Fantasies* recorded here are also portraits of the artist. Schubert's *Wanderer Fantasy* in C,

composed in late 1822, is a development of ideas from a song he had written six years earlier. That was one of many settings he made of poems on this theme – the stranger who, driven by some inner force, finds himself in an alien country without friends, consumed by a longing to find his homeland and hear his own language. The 'mountains' from which he comes suggest both a boundary that cannot be recrossed and a place of spirituality that represents his artistic calling, but his search is in vain; at the end of the song as he sighs 'where?', the spirits whisper back to him, 'There, where you are not, is happiness.' Schubert's *Fantasy* follows the song closely, developing and improvising upon each of its four parts, transforming a brief *Lied* into a fully fledged quasi-sonata. Both start with a strongly marked rhythmic pattern – triplets in the song that become the dactylic phrase of the *Fantasy* – and the recitative of the song is translated into an improvisatory movement in which melodic fragments are repeatedly interrupted by the impetuous rhythms of the opening. The simple vocal arioso of the second stanza of the song forms the basis of the Adagio section of the *Fantasy*, appearing, with excursions from the minor key to the major, some dozen times in different guises with two stormy episodes and much underlying rhythmic and textural variation.

A new musical figure introduces the wanderer's thoughts of his beloved homeland, paralleled in the *Fantasie* by a lively transformation of the opening phrase of the work into a dotted rhythm, which engenders the thematic material of what is essentially a scherzo with a meditative trio. The final stanza of the song repeats two lines from the first one, the wanderer's sigh 'where?', while in the *Fantasie* the rhythmic figure of the beginning of the work returns to be developed contrapuntally in a short finale.

What is so remarkable about the metamorphosis of *Lied* into *Fantasie* is not the borrowing of the haunting melody that accompanies the words 'The sun here seems to me so cold, the blossom shrivels, life is old', but the expansion of the work into another medium that still retains the ideas and emotions of Schmidt von Lübeck's poem. Schubert wrote in his diary, 'The works I create come from my understanding of music and my pain! Those brought about by pain alone seem to please the world least.'

Robert Schumann's *Fantasie* in F (op. 17), composed in 1836, has even more directly personal associations, although it was originally planned as a fund-raiser for Liszt's scheme to erect a monument to Beethoven in Bonn. It was written,

along with many of his most passionate piano works (three sonatas, and the *Kreisleriana* and *Nachtstücke* with their references to Hoffmann), during a period when he feared he would never be allowed to be united with Clara Wieck, and it is the most direct declaration of his love for her. Schumann, having decided in 1830 to devote himself to music, lodged in the house in Leipzig of the charismatic piano teacher Friedrich Wieck, who was grooming his ten-year-old daughter Clara to become a great virtuoso. The composer was the leader of a group, the *Davidsbündler*, who wanted to combat philistinism in music, and had founded the influential *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, where he developed the double personality he had devised for himself: Eusebius, the melancholy dreamer, and Florestan, the impulsive and passionate enthusiast.

In April 1836 it dawned on him that he had fallen in love with Clara, still only fifteen, and from this point her father did everything possible to keep them apart. Schumann channelled his feelings into his compositions, frequently taking alternating roles as Florestan and Eusebius. Throughout the *Fantasie* it always seems clear which of the characters is his mouthpiece. The impetuous opening introduces the principal thematic material of the whole composition, which is based on music

Clara had herself written, and the contrasting episodes draw the sequence of notes out into long melodies and also transform it into fragmented rhythmic interruptions. Unlike Schubert, with his seemingly effortless melodic gift, Schumann found the invention of thematic material a great struggle, and he would often start with the notes given by a word or a name (as in the "ABEGG" variations) or phrases from another composer's work. But then this material would be subjected to every kind of musical fragmentation and manipulation to be integrated into his composition. The overall unity this gives to the diverse melodic and rhythmic patterns in Schumann's music might be compared to the intense individuality of the composer himself with all his changing moods and shifts of personality.

The first movement contains repeated fiery episodes between passages of calm; at one point the harmony builds up from the bass as in a Baroque organ toccata, leading after interruptions of melody and recitative to a passage that resembles a chorale. Following a curtailed recapitulation, the toccata motif returns to usher in the meditative conclusion to the movement, with its final yearning cadences. The second movement uses off-beat accents to emphasize the energy of the marching pulse, while contrasting

episodes introduce a more playful skipping rhythm, and a breathless coda brings back the off-beat accents to generate a furious pace. Much of the final movement belongs to Eusebius, with extended meditations and a long spun-out melody in waltz time (lifted by the 2 against 3 cross-rhythms Schumann favoured so much) that builds up to a twice repeated declaration, which seems to sum up the composer's sentiments towards his beloved. Finally the thematic material goes through a series of modulations that are resolved in the same aching cadences that concluded the first movement.

Originally Schumann gave titles to the individual movements of the work (first also titled a Grand Sonata), which refer to the monument for Beethoven – 'Ruins', 'Trophies' and 'Palms', the last two of which he changed to 'Triumphal Arch' and 'Constellation' – but when it was published in 1839 it was as a *Fantasie*, with a dedication to Liszt and an epigraph from Friedrich Schlegel that was undoubtedly meant for Clara: 'Through all the tones there sounds / in Earth's many-coloured dream / a soft drawn-out tone / for the one who listens in secret.' She wrote Robert that she was 'ill with rapture' after receiving the music from him, and she never performed the work until after his death.

In Joseph James's versions, which never depart from the originals, the two *Fantasies* nevertheless take on a somewhat different character. The personal, self-referential character of the solo piano music is given a more general significance in the dialogue between the soloists and the main body of musicians, as well as in the lyrical interplay between the individual players. However, the sense of free improvisation remains: frequently the sound of the soloists matches the characteristic sonorities of the chamber music of both Schubert and Schumann, but the transcriptions, especially when the pianistic passagework is faithfully translated into string arabesques over the body of orchestral sound, also give the works an unmistakably contemporary sound, so that the listener's sense of familiarity is overlaid with an awareness of hearing extraordinary new music for the first time.

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BIOGRAPHIES

ENGLISH CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The English Chamber Orchestra, formed in 1960, enjoys an international reputation as one of the world's most celebrated ensembles. The Orchestra undertakes a busy annual schedule of concert appearances, which include its prestigious London series. Overseas touring fills approximately three months of the schedule each year and since its first foreign tour the ECO has performed in almost 500 cities across the globe. The orchestra's worldwide reputation is enhanced by its recordings of over 1,000 works and includes numerous award-winning discs as well as those of historic interest. The ECO has worked with all the major record companies alongside the world's greatest international artists; recent soloists include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Maxim Vengerov, Emanuel Ax, Hilary Hahn, Sarah Chang and Radu Lupu, amongst many others. The Orchestra is fortunate to have the highly individual Finnish musician Ralf Gothóni as Principal Conductor and Roy

Goodman as Principal Guest Conductor. The ECO continues to pursue a busy schedule of UK work and up to 14 foreign tours each season, including its unique annual Mediterranean Music Cruise featuring a host of illustrious guest artists.

www.englishchamberorchestra.co.uk

ORLANDO JOPLING

The young conductor Orlando Jopling has recently made his debut with the English Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players and Sinfonia Viva. His recent concert performances have included Elgar symphonies, lesser-known Johann Strauss, Stravinsky, Prokofiev and Walton, and a wide range of the classical repertoire, as well as several first performances of works by leading living composers. He has developed a reputation for his Rossini and *bel canto* interpretation, and has also unearthed a little-known Vivaldi opera of which he gave the modern world premiere.

He has built up Stanley Hall Opera into an established annual festival with an enviable reputation, and has also conducted operas for Savoy Opera, Carl Rosa, Independent Opera in London and the summer festival in Vienna. Orlando studied with Sir Colin Davis, George Hurst and Colin Metters at the Royal Academy in London. He has since assisted Sir Colin Davis with his chamber orchestral versions of all the late Beethoven Quartets, and André Previn on *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

THE SCHUBERT ENSEMBLE

The **Schubert Ensemble** has established itself over 24 years as one of the world's leading exponents of music for piano and strings. Familiar to audiences from Los Angeles to Tokyo, the Ensemble has been hailed for its dedication and commitment to both traditional and contemporary repertoire. It has recorded over 20 critically acclaimed CDs and has over 80 new commissions to its name. Its 25th Anniversary season in 2007-8 will see tours to South Africa, Canada and the USA, as well as appearances at many of Europe's leading venues. In 1998 the group was awarded the prestigious Royal Philharmonic Award for best chamber group.

Simon Blendis (violin). Since joining the Schubert Ensemble in 1995, Simon Blendis has developed an international career as a chamber musician, orchestral leader and soloist. Alongside his work in the Ensemble, he regularly guest leads orchestras such as the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the English Chamber Orchestra and the London Sinfonietta, as well as the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa in Japan. As a soloist he has appeared at festivals throughout the UK, had new pieces written for him by, amongst others, Tansy

Davies, Stuart Macrae, John Woolrich and jazz legend Dave Brubeck, and has recorded Vivaldi's Four Seasons for the Warner Japan label.

Douglas Paterson (viola) joined the Chamber Orchestra of Europe in 1987 and was principal viola there until 1994. He joined the Schubert Ensemble in 1990 with whom he has recorded much of the repertoire for piano and strings. He has also performed as soloist and chamber musician at festivals in Berlin, Vienna, Lockenhaus, Davos and Edinburgh, and recently toured the USA, Japan and Europe performing piano quartets with Alfred Brendel. He studied Geography, Agriculture and Political Theory at London, Reading and Cambridge universities.

Jane Salmon (cello). Jane Salmon's career as a chamber musician and as a recital soloist has taken her to more than 40 countries across the world and has involved her in more than 45 CD recordings, broadcasts for radio and television, festivals and performances in many leading venues. As a recitalist she has premiered solo works on BBC Radio 3 and in concerts on London's South Bank and Wigmore Hall. Recital tours have

included two visits to India where she gave solo performances to large audiences in Madras, Bangalore and Calcutta. Although the Schubert Ensemble has been her principal commitment for over twenty years, Jane has been a member of the Endymion Ensemble since its formation in 1979 and is a regular guest principal with the English Chamber Orchestra.

Peter Buckoke (double bass) is a founder member of The Schubert Ensemble and is a professor of Double Bass and Alexander Technique at the Royal College of Music in London as well as being visiting professor of 'bass at the Birmingham Conservatoire. As a chamber musician and soloist, he has played with numerous string quartets including Albern, Allegri, Arditti, Chilingirian and Dante, and is the man and 'bass player in the cabaret duo 'A Man A Woman And A Double Bass'. He has given recitals around the world, most recently in China where his concert was broadcast on Chinese TV.

Stephen Williams (double bass) was appointed principal bassist with the English Chamber Orchestra in 1987. Stephen has performed in over

thirty countries and has appeared and recorded as soloist with the ECO. He is also a keen chamber musician and is a regular member of the ECO Ensemble and the Gaudier Ensemble. A frequent guest artist with many other eminent ensembles, he has recently performed with the Schubert Ensemble, the Maggini Quartet, Haffner Winds and Quatuor Parisii. He plays on a bass by Gaspar da Salo made in the 1580s.

The music of **Joseph James** is the fruit of a long-standing collaboration between Stanley Joseph Seeger and Francis James Brown. Both are composers in their own right, having first met in Florence in the early 1950s whilst studying with Luigi Dallapiccola. Other recorded works by Joseph James are the film score for the *Priest of Love*, a film biography of D.H. Lawrence directed by Christopher Miles, and *Sketches from the Scarlet Letter*, their opera based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel. Joseph James's *Requiem after J.S. Bach* received its first performance in 1997, and a more recent work (2001) is the *Piano Concerto after P.I. Tchaikovsky*, based on the Russian composer's *Souvenir de Florence* and a movement from his Op. 80 Piano Sonata.

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