



Gentle Etude

"The poet, the lyric rhapsodist of Schumann's dreams and reveries."

So writes Lawrence Gilman in the N. Y. Herald Tribune of

HAROLD BAUER

and his

ALL SCHUMANN

program which was greeted in New York City as the most notable event of Mr. Bauer's long and distinguished career. It was, to quote another writer, I. Weil, N. Y. Eve. Journal,

"as absorbingly beautiful a performance of piano music as we have ever heard."

According to Olin Downes in the N. Y. Times it was

"the most impressive example of Mr. Bauer's art that he has offered to the public in recent seasons."

WOULD you like to read the full notices of this extraordinary recital, called by many the greatest piano concert ever given in New York? Here they are:

BAUER PLAYS SCHUMANN PROGRAM

Pianist Gives Performance of Rare Beauty

HAROLD BAUER'S afternoon at Aeolian Hall on Saturday was as absorbingly beautiful a performance of piano music as we believe we have ever listened to—and we have been listening to pianists not for two or three years but for twenty. He became the perfect medium through which the soul of Schumann sang its rich and wondrous song, for the afternoon had to do with nothing but that—an emotional monograph in tone. Mr. Bauer, as he gets older, plays more rarely than he used, which is a vast pity, for he is in so many ways the most generally satisfying pianist that the fastidious concertgoer can sit down before. That may sound like rather banal characterization or description of the superb thing he does at the piano, but it isn't. To satisfy thoroughly the discriminating and experienced person in the interpretation of piano music is something that very few pianists indeed can make shift to do. To achieve it requires a complete self-effacement on the part of the player, a mastery of technique that makes this merely a matter of the most unobtrusive means and never an end in itself and the transfusion of the intelligence and feeling of the pianist into the specific necessities and significance of the music before him. That viewed whole was the aspect of Mr. Bauer's art on Saturday. The pianist as we have said was occupied only with the music of Schumann—something more than half of the 'Kreisleriana,' the 'Papillons,' the toccata, the C major fantasia, and the 'Phantasiestücke,' as well as some of the smaller pieces. There was the utmost sympathy between him and what he was doing, and the music emerged from beneath his fingers clear and beautiful in its meaning and its emotional poesy."—*The New York Evening Journal*, Feb. 28, 1925.

HAROLD BAUER'S recital of piano music by Schumann yesterday afternoon in Aeolian Hall was one of the most impressive examples of his art that he has offered the public in recent seasons. The program reflected most of the important phases of Schumann's development as composer, from the early 'Papillons' to the 'Kreisleriana' and the great C major Fantasia. In no aspect of the music did Mr. Bauer fail his audience. He is the past master of Schumann's piano style. This is not the gift of every virtuoso, even in these days of technique run riot, days in which Schumann is an old hat and forgotten by a rising generation intent upon the Ravels and Stravinskys of the period. Schumann, nevertheless, composed for the piano in an inimitable and very personal manner. He stands apart even from his celebrated fellow-romantics, Liszt and Chopin, in the novelty and originality of his writing for the keyed instrument. And he is still aloof from the herd. Many virtuosi play his notes; not many catch his accent and inflection, the wholly subjective tone of his musical speech. Nor do they feel his color and reveal it as Mr. Bauer. He played Schumann yesterday as if he were improvising his own music and no other method of pianistic expression were comprehensible to him. With Schumann he was wistful, confiding, impulsive or nobly prophetic, and always a poet. The pianist differentiated strikingly between the Schumann of different periods. The naive, charming, yet rather callow confessions of the 'Papillons' found with him an appropriately frank, gay or sentimental expression. With the 'Kreisleriana' pieces, of which, with excellent judgment only five were played, he wove another spell. The music is almost too intimate for the concert room, but Mr. Bauer succeeded in taking his audience into his own and the composer's confidence. He established the necessary atmosphere and projected Schumann's thought. Other compositions were the Romance in B flat minor, one of the less played but wholly characteristic works of the composer; the D major Novelette, the Toccata, and for a final group the 'Fantasiestücke,' Op. 12. The

Toccata, with its glint and shimmer and its fabric of brilliant counterpoint, was given a performance at once virile and poetic. The climax of the afternoon was the playing of the Fantasia. This interpretation touched the heights and depths of music and accomplished this within as perfectly proportioned a scheme of dynamics as ever we heard. It was profoundly Schumann, but Schumann relieved of what Nietzsche speaks and Wagner termed 'the imposture of the grand manner.' Most pianists performing the passionate Fantasia think it necessary to lay on and spare not and present the first two movements or the greater part of them in the old 'formidable' way. Mr. Bauer often employed the emphasis of understatement. His opening theme was not a tumultuous fortissimo appeal, but a lyrical plaint which seemed so characteristic in its expression that we wondered why others had played the passage in a different way. The grand manner was left for the march piled one on another as the processional went thundering onward. The finale became at once the most subdued and absorbing movement of the three; a golden haze of tone, in which melodies floated and murmured, until the long-delayed cadence into the tonic key. The color of the last chords was notable; the sound resembled that of a rich full brass choir, and this, in view of what had preceded, seemed the one and inevitable sonority. It is a pity, in a way, that even great artists are heard before they have reached Mr. Bauer's stage of self-expression. But audiences are seldom so particular. Would Mr. Bauer be less liked today by a public that has taken rather long to appreciate him if his playing had less depth and proportion by twenty years than it had on this occasion? Yesterday at least, an eager public crowded the hall to hear him and were deeply impressed by what he had to say."—Olin Downes, *New York Times*, Feb. 28, 1925.

THE conjunction of Schumann and Mr. Bauer is always a happy one, for this pianist is particularly well endowed to give voice to the serene poetic eloquence of the great romanticist's best music. Mr. Bauer's keen sense of color and lyric song was granted a fertile field for display. The lyric tenderness, the fanciful humor, the sturdy qualities of fine sentiments and emotions inherent in this program were brought out with masterly skill. The recital was a delightful one, the program of a composer interpreted by an artist particularly sympathetic with his attitude and ideas."—*New York Sun*, Feb. 28, 1925.

MR. BAUER is not only somewhat of a specialist in the music of Schumann but he is one of those rare pianists who are specially equipped by the Muses to play Schumann with insight, fidelity and eloquence. Schumann must not be sentimentalized—that is fatal to him; he bears sentimentalizing less well than any composer one knows of. Yet poetic glamour and tenderness and nuance must be present in the conceptions of the interpreter or Schumann is betrayed. Above all, he must be played with an intimacy of feeling, a sincerity and integrity of attitude that are not native to every virtuoso. But they are native to Mr. Bauer and yesterday he displayed them persuasively. He played with his usual beauty and taste in tone-color and in the sensitive adjustment of part to part. He was the poet, the lyric rhapsodist of Schumann's dreams and reveries. An audience that appeared to fill every seat in the hall listened to Mr. Bauer with rapt attention and applauded him to the echo."—Lawrence Gilman, *New York Herald Tribune*, Feb. 28, 1925.

Harold Bauer's Schumann program ought to be heard by every college, musical club and musical conservatory next year!

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