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A pedagogical analysis of selected pieces from Albumblätter, Op. 124, by Robert Schumann

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A PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED PIECES
FROM *ALBUMBLÄTTER*, OP. 124, BY ROBERT SCHUMANN

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

by

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December 2007

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ABSTRACT

Robert Schumann composed numerous pieces that are accessible to the intermediate piano student. In addition to his well-known *Album für die Jugend*, Op. 68, certain pieces from the *Albumblätter*, Op. 124 also provide excellent pedagogical material. *Albumblätter* is one of the last collections published during the composer's life. The collection contains works written as early as 1832 and as late as 1845, spanning much of Schumann's creative lifetime. He discarded several of the compositions from earlier sets, such as *Carnaval* Op. 9 and *Kinderszenen* Op. 15. Others were composed for a projected collection, *XII Burle*, which Schumann later abandoned. He wrote the remaining selections to commemorate specific occasions in his life, or to reflect the influence of prominent composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, and Johann Sebastian Bach.

The purpose of this study is to provide an analysis for teaching and performing the selected pieces from the *Albumblätter*. Additionally, it will inform educators about the background and history of this little-known collection. Chapter One includes an introduction along with justification for the study. Chapter Two provides an historical overview of the *Albumblätter*. Chapter Three contains a thorough pedagogical analysis of the eleven selected pieces.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Robert Schumann composed numerous pieces that are accessible to the intermediate piano student. In addition to his well-known *Album für die Jugend*, Op. 68, certain pieces from the *Fantasiestücke*, Op. 12, *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15, and *Albumblätter*, Op. 124 also provide excellent pedagogical material. This paper will concentrate on selected pieces from the *Albumblätter* that are useful for teaching purposes.

Schumann's character pieces for piano are among his most influential works. He began writing sets of miniatures, such as the *Fantasiestücke* and the *Kinderszenen* early in his career, and later in life, he returned to this genre with the *Albumblätter*, as well as the *Waldscenen*, Op. 82, and *Bunte Blätter*, Op. 99.

In late December of 1850, Schumann began collecting piano pieces he had composed between the years 1832 to 1849 for a new album, which he intended to call *Spreu* (Chaff). Upon rejection of the proposed title by publisher F. W. Arnold, Schumann divided these works into two collections: *Bunte Blätter* (1852) and *Albumblätter* (1854).¹

The *Albumblätter* is a collection of twenty piano pieces composed during various periods in Schumann's life. The earliest of them dates from 1832, while the latest is from 1845. Many of the pieces are works Schumann discarded from earlier collections, such as *Carnaval*, Op. 9 and *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15. Other pieces from the *Albumblätter* commemorate specific occasions in his life, such as the births of his eldest daughters. Additionally, several of the pieces were inspired by Schumann's interest in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Franz Schubert.

¹John Daverio: "Schumann, Robert", *Grove Music Online* ed. L Macy (Accessed 5 January 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide some background information, as well as suggestions for teaching and performing selected pieces from the *Albumblätter*. It is hoped that teachers interested in presenting this literature to their students will find this document useful.

I selected this collection due to its stellar musical quality and student appeal. The complete Op. 124 is easily accessible in a number of editions. A reprint of the first edition is available through G. Henle Verlag², while Dover Publications, Inc.³ offers a copy of the Breitkopf & Härtel publication, edited by Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms.

Need for the Study

Robert Schumann is one of the most studied and discussed of the Romantic composers. His music for piano, in particular, is an important part of the repertoire, and artists frequently program and record his works. Even his pedagogical collection, *Album für die Jugend*, has been reprinted and recorded many times. Certainly the *Albumblätter* deserves study as a lesser-known work by a great composer. More importantly, the collection warrants examination due to the excellent teaching pieces found within. It provides a fresh alternative to the standard repertoire of Schumann, and deserves greater awareness for its high musical value.

²Robert Schumann, *Albumblätter, Opus 124* (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 1977).

³Robert Schumann, *Piano Music of Robert Schumann, Series III* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1980).

Several scholars and pedagogues have written about the *Albumblätter*, as confirmed by its mention in many source books, such as Albergo and Alexander's *Intermediate Piano Repertoire*⁴, Jane Magrath's *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*⁵, and Maurice Hinson's *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*⁶. A few pieces are included in pedagogical collections as well, such as *Encore! Book One* by Jane Magrath⁷ and *Robert Schumann: Introduction to His Piano Works* by Willard Palmer⁸.

Not only does the *Albumblätter* contain teaching pieces that are both appealing and accessible, it also provides interesting insights into Schumann's compositional output for the piano. Since the twenty works in the set span a period of thirteen years, there is much to learn about Schumann from studying this music.

Presently, no authoritative document discusses the *Albumblätter* at length. Authors mention it in most biographies and source books on the composer, but much of the material is superficial. Joan Chissell⁹, Carolyn Maxwell and William DeVan¹⁰ explore

⁴Cathy Albergo and Reid Alexander, *Intermediate Piano Repertoire: A Guide for Teaching*, 4th ed. (Mississauga, Ontario: Frederick Harris Music Co., 2000), 32.

⁵Jane Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co. Inc., 1995) 242-243.

⁶Maurice Hinson, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire*, 3d ed. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000), 712.

⁷Jane Magrath, ed., *Encore! Book One* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1990), 40.

⁸Robert Schumann, *Robert Schumann: Introduction to His Piano Works*, ed. Willard Palmer (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 2001), 30-33.

⁹Joan Chissell, *Schumann Piano Music* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972).

Schumann's piano music in their books, but none of these authors delve into the Op. 124 in depth. Thus, there is a need for a study covering the teaching and performing of these pieces.

Selection Criteria for Included Pieces

The selection criteria for this study focused on the main issues of accessibility and appeal for an intermediate-level piano student. When considering accessibility, the author took the technical and reading skills needed to perform the piece into consideration. According to the guidelines set forth in Jane Magrath's *The Pianist's Guide to Standard Teaching and Performance Literature*, no piece in this study exceeds the difficulty of level nine¹¹. A list of the excluded pieces and the reasoning behind their elimination from the study follows.

Leid ohne Ende, No. 8, contains rolled chords in both hands, which at times span the interval of a twelfth. Measures 9 and 10 are particularly difficult to perform smoothly. Additionally, the pedal technique needed to execute the changes of harmony is highly sophisticated. This piece also bears the title *Lied ohne Ende* (Endless Song) in certain editions.

Impromptu, No. 9, contains many rhythmic challenges due to the constant syncopation, which can cause a student to mistakenly interpret this piece's meter as 6/8, rather than 3/4. Furthermore, technical and reading challenges surface due to the numerous ties and slurs found throughout the selection.

¹⁰Carolyn Maxwell and William DeVan, eds. *Schumann Solo Piano Literature* (Boulder, CO: Maxwell Music Evaluation Books, 1984).

¹¹Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide*, 242-243.

Romanze, No. 11, has an accessible **A** section, but a challenging **B** section containing large leaps that are difficult to execute at the given tempo.

Burla, No. 12, possesses a great challenge in the right hand as it includes both the melody and accompaniment. At a *Presto* tempo, this is quite challenging considering the voicing and articulation of the alto voice.

Larghetto, No. 13, while playable, is unlikely to appeal to an intermediate student, as it resembles an interlude rather than a self-sufficient work.

Vision, No. 14, contains many technical challenges due to the grace notes that precede large leaps, as well as the continuously repeated notes and chords. Both elements are difficult to execute at the required tempo.

Botschaft, No. 18, is an appealing composition, but it requires a large hand, and is difficult to execute.

Phantasiestück, No. 19, contains overlapping hands, a variety of articulations, and numerous accidentals. All three elements combined pose a great reading challenge for an intermediate student.

Canon, No. 20, contains large chords with intervals up to a thirteenth that are challenging to play. Additionally, Schumann appears to have written this piece for either pedal-piano or organ.

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF *ALBUMBLÄTTER*, OP. 124, BY ROBERT SCHUMANN

Introduction

The *Albumblätter*, Op. 124, by Robert Schumann, is one of the last collections published during the composer's life. Of the twenty pieces in the album, none were composed specifically for this set; the pieces were either castoffs from earlier compilations, or compositions that Schumann had never before prepared for publication. Schumann revised all of these works during the years 1850-1851, and later compiled them for publication in 1853. F. W. Arnold issued the set in 1854, the same year that Schumann entered a private sanatorium in Endenich. The *Albumblätter* was originally printed in four separate volumes containing five pieces each, and dedicated to the wife of Schumann's friend and biographer, Joseph von Wasielewski.

The *Albumblätter* contains works written as early 1832 and as late as 1845, spanning much of Schumann's creative lifetime. Several of the compositions were discarded from earlier sets, such as *Carnaval* Op. 9 and *Kinderszenen* Op. 15. Others were composed for a projected collection, *XII Burle*, which Schumann later abandoned. He wrote the remaining selections to commemorate specific occasions in his life, or to reflect the influence of prominent composers such as Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, and Johann Sebastian Bach.

Discarded Works from Other Collections

Of the twenty pieces in the collection, five are works Schumann discarded from the *Carnaval*, Op. 9. They are the *Walzer* (no. 4), *Phantasietanz*, *Romanze*, *Walzer* (no. 15), and *Elfe*.

The *Walzer* (no. 4) clearly displays the ASCH (A, E-flat, C, B) motive, which permeates the pieces of the *Carnaval*. Schumann's love interest at the time of composition, Ernestine von Fricken, was from the village, Asch. The right hand begins with an A and D-sharp (the enharmonic equivalent of E-flat) in m. 1, with the notes C and B closely following in m. 2 (Fig. 2.1). In the original sketches for the Op. 9, Schumann placed a draft of this piece between *Pierrot* and *Arlequin* and gave it a preliminary title of *Ballo*.¹²

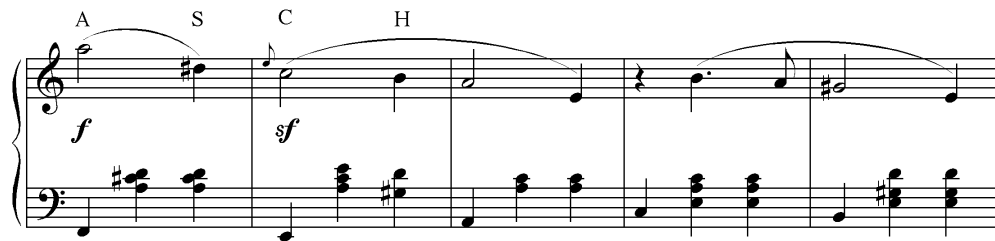


Fig. 2.1. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 4, mm. 1-5, “ASCH” motive.

The *Phantasietanz* does not use the ASCH motive, but some scholars believe that Schumann rejected it from original sketches for the *Carnaval*.¹³ Others, however, reject this theory due to conflicting information concerning the year of composition. Michael Jude Luebbe points to the date of 1836 (listed in the first publication) as an error, since his research indicates 1839 as the true year of composition.¹⁴ This date is two years after the publication of *Carnaval*.

¹²Michael Jude Luebbe, “A History of Robert Schumann’s Characteristic Music for Solo Pianoforte: A Study of the Compositional Process in Sketches, Autographs, and Stichvorlagen” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1995), 397.

¹³Carolyn Maxwell and William DeVan, eds., *Schumann Solo Piano Literature* (Boulder, CO: Maxwell Music Evaluation Books, 1984), 296.

¹⁴Luebbe, 389.

The *Romanze* uses the ASCH motive prominently in mm. 3-4 (Fig. 2.2). In addition, similarities exist between this piece and the *Reconnaissance* from the Op. 9: both pieces have well-defined sections, and their middle sections are especially similar due to the rhythmic interplay between the melody and harmony lines.

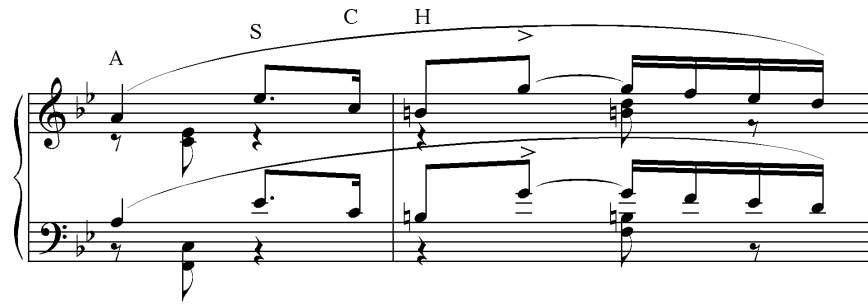


Fig. 2.2. *Romanze*, Op. 124, No. 11, mm. 3-4, “ASCH” motive.

The *Walzer*, number 15 of the set, is the earliest of these five pieces with a date of 1832. Scholars have determined that Schumann intended it for the Op. 9, even though it does not contain the ASCH motive. The basis for this conclusion lies in the fact that Schumann was sketching this piece at the same time he was writing variations on Schubert’s *Sehnsuchtwalzer*, the introductory movement of which “later supplied the material for the ‘Préambule’ to *Carnaval*.”¹⁵

Scholars have surmised that Schumann sketched *Elfe* sometime between 1829-1832, due to its presence in the Zwickau Sketchbook III. Schumann adapted the piece for Op. 9 in 1835, but ultimately discarded it from the set.¹⁶ The right hand contains the

¹⁵John Daverio: “Schumann, Robert”, *Grove Music Online* ed. L Macy (Accessed 28 June 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com.libezp.lib.lsu.edu>>

¹⁶Maxwell and DeVan, 306.

three-note motif of AsCH in the second, third, and fourth notes of the right hand (Fig. 2.3).

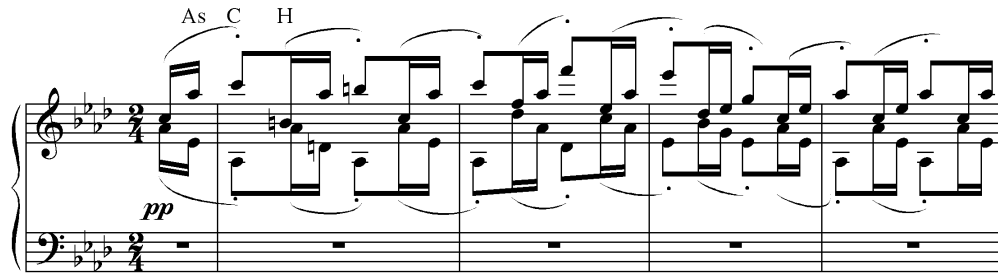


Fig. 2.3. *Elfe*, Op. 124, No. 17, mm. 1-4, “AsCH” motive.

In addition to the *Carnaval*, the *Kinderscenen*, Op. 15, is another collection from which Schumann discarded pieces that he later placed in the *Albumblätter*. The three selections are *Ländler*, *Walzer* (no. 10), and *Botschaft*. Robert Polansky determined that these three selections were discards from the *Kinderscenen* after finding the incipits for the *Walzer* and *Botschaft* along with the completed *Ländler* on a single oblong page containing Schumann’s sketches.¹⁷ The document dates from 1838, the year Schumann composed the *Kinderscenen*, and contains numerous sketches, including one of Op. 15, No. 6 and a fair copy of Op. 15, No. 9. This suggests that the manuscript is a source for Op. 15 and contains initial ideas for the set.¹⁸ It is currently in the Library of Congress in Washington D.C.

¹⁷Robert Polansky, “The Rejected “Kinderscenen” of Robert Schumann’s Opus 15,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 31, no. 1 (Spring 1978): 127.

¹⁸*Ibid*, 128.

Abandoned Project

In 1832, Schumann composed a set of pieces entitled *XII Burle*, which he intended as a sequel to the *Papillons* of 1831. He completed all twelve pieces, the majority of which remain lost, but three of the pieces, probably intended for the *XII Burle*, appeared years later in the *Albumblätter*. The three works are the *Scherzino*, *Burla*, and *Larghetto*.

Schumann sketched the *Scherzino* between 1829-1830, and three drafts of the piece exist. The earliest version, entitled *Papillon*, appeared in a sketchbook following a draft of the eleventh piece from the *Papillons*, Op. 2. Interestingly, the rhythm of the *Scherzino* is similar to the *Großvatertanz*, Op. 2, No. 12.¹⁹ Since three early versions of the piece exist, it is difficult to determine if Schumann rejected this piece from the Op. 2 or adapted it for the *XII Burle*.

Schumann wrote the *Burla* specifically for the *XII Burle*. Dr. Bernhard R. Appell found a draft of this piece, dated 1832, amongst sketches for Schumann's Mass, Op. 147 (1852). Schumann had written the words "Burle, dedicato al Dottore Peter Schoppe" at the top of the sketch.²⁰ Dottore Peter Schoppe is a character from a novel by Jean Paul Richter. Since Schumann based the *Papillons* on a scene from Jean Paul's novel, *Flegeljahre*, the connection with the author suggests this piece's link to the *XII Burle*.

¹⁹Luebbe, 391-2.

²⁰Ibid, 395.

The *Larghetto*, also composed in 1832, functions as a nine-bar interlude within the *Albumblätter*. Michael Jude Luebbe has theorized that it belonged to the *XII Burle*, based mainly on the date of composition.²¹

Influence of Family

Several pieces from Op. 124 commemorate specific events in Schumann's life. *Leid ohne Ende* and *Impromptu* (no. 9) reflect his longing for Clara Wieck during a time when her father forcibly separated the pair. *Wiegenliedchen* and *Schlummerlied* celebrate the births of his eldest daughters.

In the fall of 1835, Schumann began his romance with a then fifteen-year old Clara Wieck. Once her father, Friedrich, became aware of the situation, he sent Clara away from the family home in Leipzig to reside in Dresden. Schumann suffered in her absence and expressed his sorrow in his compositions. The musical manifestation of Schumann's future wife is the descending scalar motive, or "Clara" motive, made famous in his *Fantasie*, Op. 17, of 1839.

This same motive appears in two works of the *Albumblätter*: the *Leid ohne Ende*, and the *Impromptu* (no. 9). Appropriately titled, the *Leid ohne Ende* (Endless Grief) prominently displays the "Clara" motive in the right hand of mm. 3-4 (Fig. 2.4). The *Impromptu* also contains the descending scalar motive in m.1 (Fig. 2.5).

Schumann composed the *Wiegenliedchen* and *Schlummerlied* during the years of his daughters' births. The *Schlummerlied* dates from 1841 and Clara wrote of this piece that, "he (Schumann) also made a present with a charming Cradle Song for me and my

²¹Ibid, 390.

little Marie, which he composed Christmas afternoon.”²² The *Wiegenliedchen* came two years later, in 1843, to celebrate the birth of his second daughter.

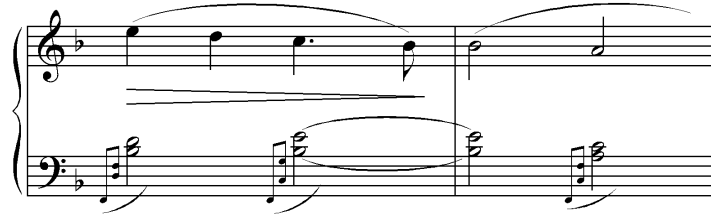


Fig. 2.4. *Leid ohne Ende*, Op. 124, No. 8, mm. 3-4, “Clara” motive.

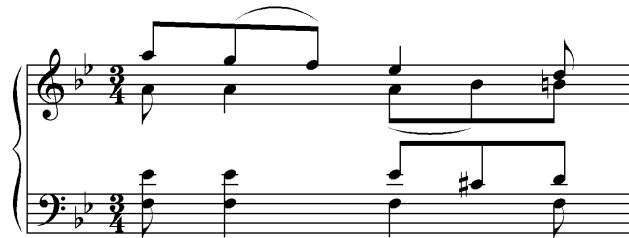


Fig. 2.5. *Impromptu*, Op. 124, No. 9, m. 1, “Clara” motive.

Influence of Schubert, Beethoven, and Bach

Schumann was a lifelong admirer of Franz Schubert. In a letter to Friedrich Wieck, Schumann writes, “When I play Schubert I feel as if I were reading a romance of Jean Paul’s set to music. . .”²³ During his early years of composing, Schumann played a good deal of Schubert’s music. Joan Chissell points to Schubert’s Polonaises for four hands, Op. 75, which Schumann played with his friend Theodor Töpken, as an inspiration

²²Ibid.

²³Joan Chissell, *Schumann, Master Musicians* (London: Dent, 1989), 84.

for the *Papillons*, Op. 2. She also notes that Schumann wrote his own waltzes using the typical “Schubertian key-change at the double-bar.”²⁴

No other piece in the set illustrates the influence of Schubert better than the *Walzer* (no. 4). It bears the quintessential quick jumps in the left hand (Fig. 2.1), so often found in Schubert’s dance pieces. Artur Schnabel describes this style as “three-hand music” since the accompaniment replicates the “oom-pa” of the *Secondo* found in many of Schubert’s duets.²⁵ Thus, the solo performer must duplicate a two-handed technique with merely one hand.

The influence of Ludwig van Beethoven surfaces in the *Leides Ahnung*, which Schumann intended as part of a set of variations on the *Allegretto* from Beethoven’s Seventh Symphony. Scholars have located the sketches for the variations in Schumann’s Zwickau Sketchbook IV.

In later life, Schumann became increasingly interested in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. A period of Bach study in 1845 resulted in many collections of contrapuntal music, including *Studies for Pedal-Piano*, Op. 56, *Sketches for Pedal-Piano*, Op. 58, *Six Fugues on B.A.C.H. for Organ or Pedal-Piano*, Op. 60, and *Four Fugues for Piano*, Op. 72. Another piece that Schumann composed during this time was the *Canon*, no. 20 of the *Albumblätter*. This, the final piece of the set, was included in the collection

²⁴Ibid, 103.

²⁵Konrad Wolff, *Masters of the Keyboard: Individual Style Elements in the Piano Music of Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 163.

even though Schumann apparently wrote it for pedal-piano or organ. The four-voice contrapuntal texture shows the direct influence of Bach.

Other Pieces

Three of the *Albumblätter* bear no specific influence. The *Impromptu* (no. 1) dates from 1832, and Schumann's intent for this piece is unknown. The same is true of the *Vision* of 1838. Schumann wrote the *Phantasiestück* in 1838 while in Vienna.

CHAPTER THREE

PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED PIECES FROM *ALBUMBLÄTTER*, OP. 124, BY ROBERT SCHUMANN

Impromptu, Op. 124, No. 1

Level: 9²⁶

Form: **A:** (mm.1-16) **B:** (mm. 17-26) **A¹:** (mm. 27-34)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Play double thirds
2. Voice to the outside of the hand, especially in the low register of the instrument
3. Control a *piano* dynamic at a fast tempo
4. Play running sixteenth notes evenly at a fast tempo
5. Control parallel movements hands together
6. Vary articulations (legato and staccato)
7. Play chromatic passagework
8. Play large intervals with arm rotation

Initial Presentation

At the first lesson, the teacher should address the topics of fingering, voicing, and score reading. Fingering is especially important in the **A** section for the double third passages found throughout the left hand, while voicing is significant in the **B** section due to several right hand chords containing the melody line. Additionally, score reading is a challenge in the right hand of **B**.

²⁶ Magrath, *The Pianist's Guide*, 242-243. The level numbers for each piece are Magrath's assessment, with the exception of *Leides Ahnung*, *Ländler*, *Walzer* (no. 10), and *Walzer* (no. 15). The author estimated the levels for these pieces following the guidelines set forth in Magrath's book.

The above analysis indicates that the β value for the β value is 2.41, indicating that

The initial $(1 - 1 - 1)$ configuration is shown in Figure 1. As the initial $(1 - 1 - 1)$

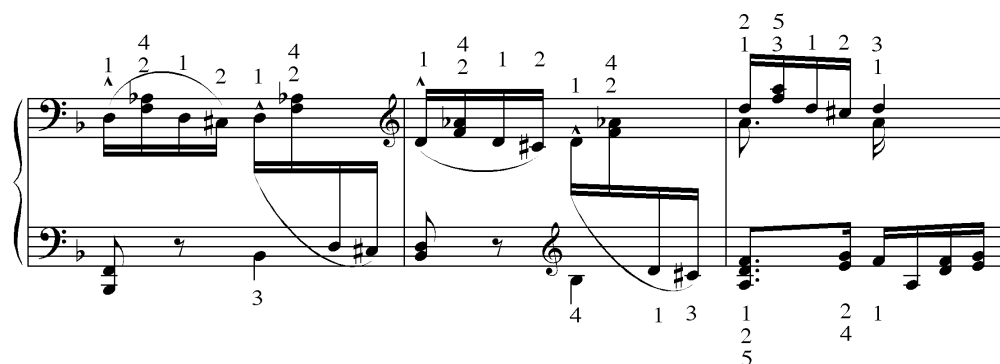


Fig. 3.2. *Impromptu*, Op. 124, No. 1, mm. 25-27, notes redistributed.

Voicing the chords in the **B** section is another issue due to the three-note chords found in the right hand on every downbeat. The performer must voice the top note of the chord, as well as observe the two slurred notes followed by the two staccato notes. Students should be careful not to remove the staccatos altogether through faulty use of the pedal.

Accurate reading is important in the alto line of mm. 23-24. The right hand thumb has a quarter note on the “and” of beat one, which must be held during the change of harmony on beat two (Fig. 3.3).



Fig. 3.3. *Impromptu*, Op. 124, No. 1, mm. 23-24.

Teaching Suggestions

Effective pedaling for this piece requires much practice and attention. Within the **A** and **A**^I sections, a pedal change on every beat will generally achieve the desired effect, as long as the performer plays the left hand smoothly within a *piano* dynamic. One exception occurs in m. 8 where the performer should depress the pedal on the downbeats and release it on the upbeats. The performer should pedal the **B** section the same way to preserve the staccato sixteenth notes (Fig. 3.4).

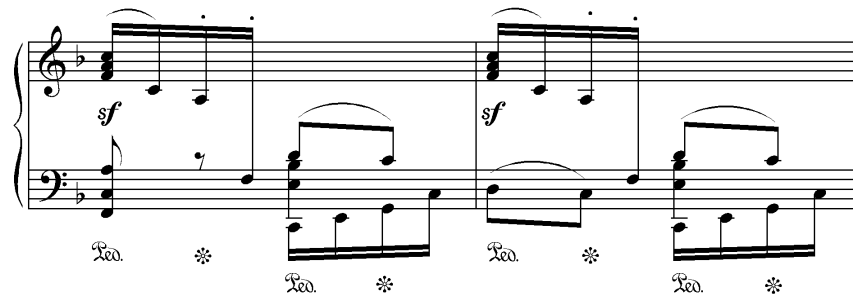


Fig. 3.4. *Impromptu*, Op. 124, No. 1, mm. 17-18, suggested pedaling.

Schumann's dynamics and articulations pose certain interpretive challenges. The figure in mm. 1-2 and 5-6 is marked *sforzando-piano*, while the remainder of the **A** section bears only a *piano* dynamic. This differs with the *sforzandi* in mm. 27-28, and suggests that Schumann desires a stronger performance of the **A**^I material.

The *sforzandi* and accents in both **A** sections also contrast with one another. Within the four-bar phrases, the first two bars contain a *sforzando* or *sforzando-piano* on beat one, while the final two bars contain accents on all beats. This direct juxtaposition suggests agogic treatment of the accents. Thus, the student should emphasize the duration of these notes rather than playing them louder.

The accents also present another interpretive challenge. In the first edition of this piece, accents were not included in mm. 7-8 and 12. Because Schumann repeats these figures and includes accents in many other instances, editors of current editions have surmised that their absence is an error, and therefore include these accents with their editorial markings. Yet, one may argue that the absence of accents is intentional, as Schumann consistently excludes the accents within the consequent phrases, leading the interpreter to believe that he intends a different sound and phrasing at those points.

One technical challenge occurs in the opening figure of the piece, as the student must perform the last sixteenth of beat one and the downbeat of beat two evenly with both hands together. A possible solution is to have the student practice the opening measures in dotted rhythms. The student should play the sixteenth notes first as a dotted sixteenth and thirty-second rhythm, and then as a thirty-second and dotted sixteenth rhythm.

Another area to address is the execution of the repeated pattern found in mm. 17-22. Both downbeats within each measure contain a two-note slur (Fig. 3.4). On each downbeat, the student should emphasize the articulation by dropping his or her arm weight into the key and then removing the weight by slightly raising the wrist before the second note of the slur.

Other details to consider include the sixteenth rest in the right hand at the end of both **A** and **A**¹. The student should hold the left hand through the entire length of beat two while the right hand rests. The half note A in the left hand of m. 16 should be observed, as well as the fermata over the double bar line at the piece's conclusion. Although these

details are likely to be inaudible to the audience during performance, the student should be aware of the score's contents.

Lastly, the teacher should highlight the differences between sections **A** and **A**¹. Examples include the different cadences at the close of each section, and the fact that **A**¹ is half the length of **A**. This will aid the student in memorizing and performing the piece.

Leides Ahnung, Op. 124, No. 2

Level: 8

Form: **A:** (mm. 1-4) **A:** (mm. 5-8) **B:** (mm. 9-12) **A:** (mm. 13-16) **B:** (mm. 17-20)
A: (mm. 21-24)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Sustain one note of a chord while releasing all others
2. Control tone at a *piano* dynamic
3. Voice a melody to the inside of the hand
4. Reach the interval of a ninth in the left hand

Initial Presentation

The two aspects of this piece to address at the initial lesson are voicing the melody line and releasing the harmony notes. Schumann has placed the melody in both hands, but it occurs only inside the left hand, while it is present in the inside, middle, and outside of the right hand (Fig. 3.5). Thus, the right hand poses more voicing challenges for the student. The rhythmic pattern of the harmony line consists of an eighth note followed by an eighth rest. It is essential that the student coordinate the pedal with the hands to ensure proper execution.



Fig. 3.5. *Leides Ahnung*, Op. 124, No. 2, mm. 7-8.

To practice voicing, the student should begin by playing the melody hands separately, and then hands together. This will help the student avoid confusion once he or she adds the harmony notes to the practice regimen. In addition, it is important that the student discern the melody line visually in the score. This may prove challenging for some students, since the melody is embedded among the harmony notes.

Once the student is familiar with the melody, he or she should begin practicing the chords that form the harmony, in order to gain security. The student should also include the pedal at this point. An important aspect of playing the harmony line is releasing the eighth notes and the pedal in perfect unison. If the pedaling is correct, the performer need not worry about holding the eighth notes their full duration with the hand, but most students will find it easier to think of the foot and hands working together by depressing and releasing at the same time.

In concluding the initial presentation, the teacher should note the need to master a mere eight bars of music to learn this piece. Additionally, the teacher should highlight the minor changes in the final two **A** sections, as Schumann embellishes the left hand chords and employs a perfect authentic cadence.

Teaching Suggestions

Pedaling is important when performing this composition. The student can play the majority of the piece with short touches of pedal, depressing it on the accompanimental eighth note and releasing it with the following eighth rest. Yet, there are instances where more sophisticated pedaling is necessary. A prime example occurs in the left hand of mm. 12-13 where the performer must sustain a fifth that resolves to a three-note chord (Fig. 3.6). The best way to smoothly connect these notes is to engage the pedal on beat three of m. 12, and release it on the upbeat of three. Next, the performer must depress the pedal right before the downbeat of m. 13 to ensure a smooth connection of the melody. He or she should then change the pedal after striking the downbeat, and finally release it again with the eighth rest.

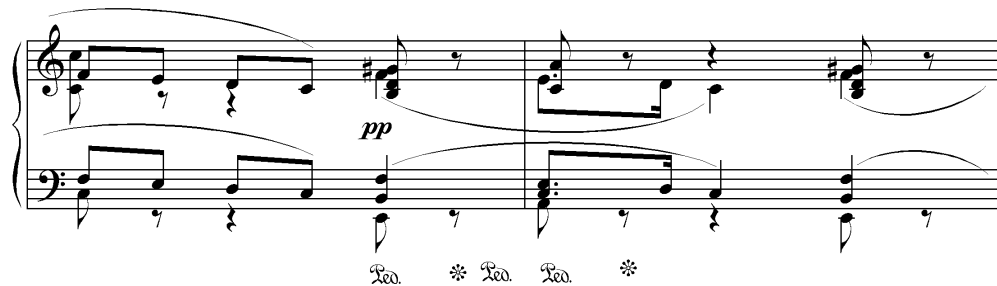


Fig. 3.6. *Leides Ahnung*, Op. 124, No. 2 mm. 12-13, suggested pedaling.

Schumann's use of the *forte-piano* marking on weak beats may pose a challenge for the student. Many students will overemphasize the *forte-piano* on beat three, which then obscures the all-important downbeat of the next measure. Therefore, it is essential to think of the *forte-piano* chord resolving to beat one, which is the point of arrival.

Realizing the various dynamic levels in the A section will be challenging to many students. In mm. 1-4, Schumann uses a *forte-piano* marking on the anacrusis, whereas in

mm. 4-8 he uses only a *piano* dynamic. Two *pianissimo* markings follow in mm. 12-16 and 20-24. The student must learn that dynamic levels are relative. The sound that functions as a *piano* dynamic in this piece may serve as a *mezzo-piano* dynamic in another piece. Ultimately, the performer must create a significant difference between the intensities of the *forte-piano*, *piano* and *pianissimo* sounds to achieve the desired effect.

The overall *piano* dynamic is important when voicing the melody. This is especially true when executing the chords, as it is possible for the harmony notes to add unnecessary volume. Practicing hands separately will help the student to achieve the desired effect, if he or she plays the melodic line with a *mezzo-forte* dynamic and the harmony with a *piano* dynamic.

Scherzino, Op. 124, No. 3

Level: 8

Form: **A:** (mm.1-8) **B:** (mm. 9-16) **A:** (mm. 17-24)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Play linear octave passagework with a flexible wrist
2. Play two conflicting rhythms simultaneously at a fast tempo
3. Voice octaves
4. Execute forearm rotation when playing large intervals
5. Perform melody and accompaniment in the same hand
6. Play with overlapping hands

Initial Presentation

At the first lesson, there are three main areas to address. They include the execution of the right hand octaves found in the **A** section, the varying divisions of the beat in the **B** section, and the overlapping hands in the **A** section.

The octave passagework requires that the student be able to repeat the same octave in quick succession, as well as play linear octaves. At the required tempo, these elements will pose a challenge for many students. To attain ease in playing octaves, the student must keep the wrist loose and minimize the range of motion as much as possible. At a quick tempo, excessive wrist motion is likely to produce a slow or sloppy execution.

The second major area to address is the rhythm of the **B** section. Given the 6/8 meter, the **A** section divides easily into three subdivisions of each main pulse. The **B** section differs in that the right hand contains two subdivisions of each main pulse, while the left hand maintains the rhythmic pattern of **A**. The student must find a way to negotiate these rhythmic changes, whether it is through counting aloud or use of the metronome.

Once the student has mastered the rhythm, he or she must align the hands in the **B** section. Since the right hand melody does not precisely correspond with the tenor line, coordinating the hands can be another trial for the student. One important aspect to note in these measures is that the eighth notes in the left hand align with the right hand thumb (Fig. 3.7). The student may benefit from practicing the right hand alone while tapping the rhythm of the bass line on his or her left leg.

The last area to address is the execution of mm. 1-2, 5-6, etc. using overlapping hands. In all instances, the left hand thumb should play over the right hand thumb to

prevent the hands from colliding. Figure 3.8 illustrates an alternative division of the notes with the right hand playing the top note of the left hand interval in beat four. Coupling this fingering with the pedal should prove successful for the student at performance tempo.

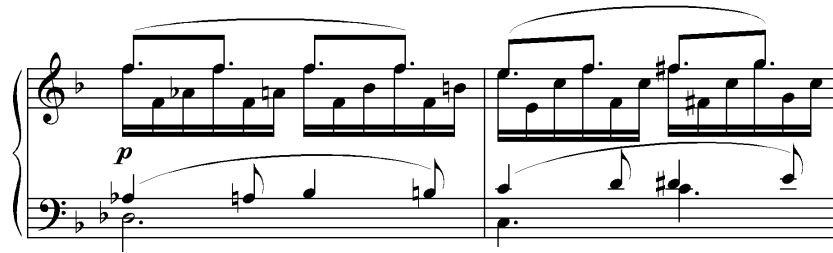


Fig. 3.7. *Scherzino*, Op. 124, No. 3, mm. 9-10.

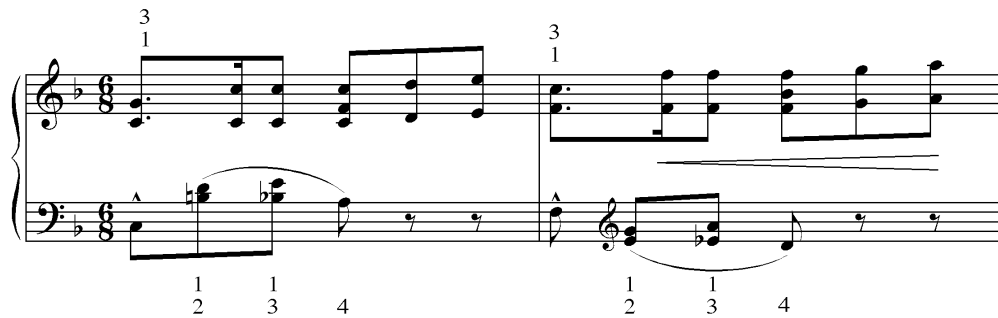


Fig. 3.8. *Scherzino*, Op. 124, No. 3, mm. 1-2, notes redistributed.

Teaching Suggestions

Voicing is an important issue, especially in the **B** section, as the student must play both melody and accompaniment in the right hand. To play this passage, the student must lean to the left to provide the right arm with freedom of movement. Additionally, the student must realize the layers of sound by forcefully playing the melody notes and lightly playing the accompaniment notes, while a circular forearm movement will help in playing this passage up to tempo.

In the **B** section, a pedal change on each major beat is appropriate. The same is true of the pedaling in the **A** section, except for the last measures of each phrase where a pedal change is required for each new harmony. In m. 4, the performer should change on the upbeat of beat two, while in m. 8 the performer should release the pedal with the sixteenth rest, depress the pedal on the upbeat of beat two, and change it again on beat four (Fig. 3.9).

It is important to note in mm. 9 and 13 that the alto line doubles the notes of the tenor line. In addition, the shapes of the melody and tenor lines in mm. 10-12 are similar, as they rise and fall in the same manner. These observations are useful for memorization.

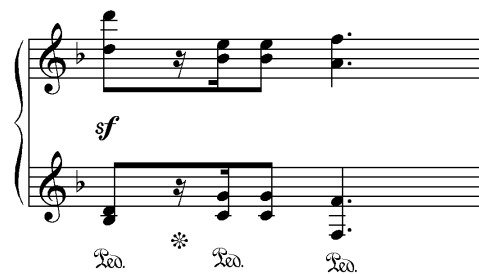


Fig. 3.9. *Scherzino*, Op. 124, No. 3, m. 8, suggested pedaling.

Walzer, Op. 124, No. 4

Level: 7

Form: **A:** (mm.1-16) **B:** (mm.17-28) **A:** (mm.29-44)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Play wide leaps accurately in the left hand at a fast tempo
2. Voice octaves
3. Sustain pitches while playing or releasing others
4. Balance a right hand melody over a left hand accompaniment

Initial Presentation

During the initial presentation, the teacher should address the appropriate balance between the hands, as well as the proper execution of the left hand. Projecting the melody line is of the utmost importance. The left hand is also challenging due to the large leaps found in most measures and the performer must slightly stress the bass notes in the left hand while minimizing beats two and three.

The first step in mastering the left hand is to solidify the fingering, and the second is to play the large leaps smoothly. The student should focus on performing the leaps with a parallel arm motion, rather than arc-shaped motion, and with a controlled touch. One possible practice technique is the “Play-Prepare” exercise, in which the student plays the first beat, and then moves quickly to the notes of beat two without actually playing them. The idea is to land on the keys with the correct fingering, hand and arm position. By practicing in this manner, the student will achieve accuracy while ensuring an effective arm motion.

Balance between the hands is also important, as the student must project the melody over the accompaniment. One technique to develop this skill is “Ghosting.” In this exercise, the student plays the right hand notes with extreme arm weight while pretending to play the left hand notes. Thus, the student feels the different levels of arm weight needed to play the passage.

Teaching Suggestions

Schumann includes a grace note in the second measure of each phrase throughout both A sections, and the performer should play these notes before the beat. Interestingly, all of their subsequent half notes are marked *sforzando*.

It is advantageous for the student to redistribute the notes of m. 8 as shown in Fig. 3.8; because the left hand remains in a five-finger hand position, the execution will be smoother (Fig. 3.10).

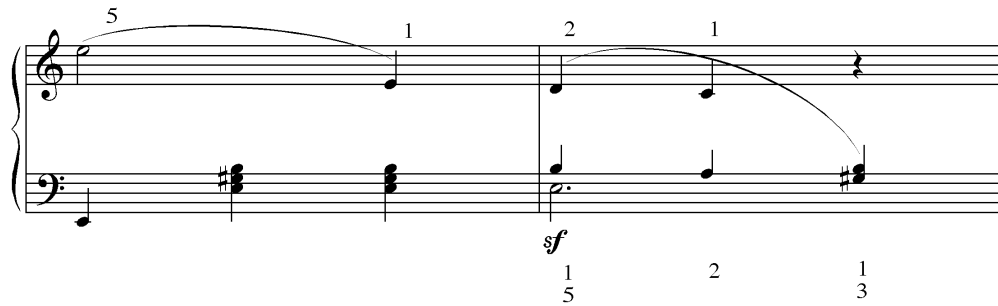


Fig. 3.10. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 4, mm. 7-8, notes redistributed.

Overall, the piece calls for pedal changes on the downbeat of each measure. Two exceptions occur in mm. 19-20 and 27-28, when Schumann ties the right hand melody note over the barline (Fig. 3.11). In these measures, the performer should hold the pedal over the barline as well. The performer may consider changing the pedal on beat three in mm. 13 and 15, when the change of harmony within the measure is cadential in nature.

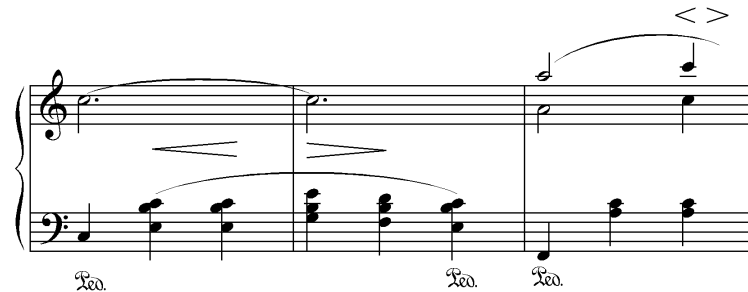


Fig. 3.11. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 4, mm. 19-21, suggested pedaling.

Phantasetanz, Op. 124, No. 5

Level: 6

Form: **A:** (mm. 1-4) **B:** (mm. 5-12) **A:** (mm. 13-16) **B¹:** (mm. 17-24)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Voice a left hand tenor melody
2. Execute a mixture of duplets, triplets, and quadruplets
3. Control tone at a fast tempo with a *piano* dynamic

Initial Presentation

At the first lesson, the teacher should address two main areas: counting the rhythm in the **A** section (mm. 1-4) and projecting the left hand tenor melody in the **B** section (mm. 5-12). The rhythm in mm. 1-4 may look daunting to the student at first glance with the combination of sixteenths, triplet sixteenths, and thirty-second notes, but the student can greatly simplify the rhythm by separating each measure into four pulses (two strong and two weak) and counting according to this rhythmic division. A possible practice technique is to have the student play only the accented notes in the first three measures, followed with m. 4 as written (Fig. 3.12). Once the student gains security with the major beats of each measure, it should be easy for him or her to incorporate the smaller subdivisions.

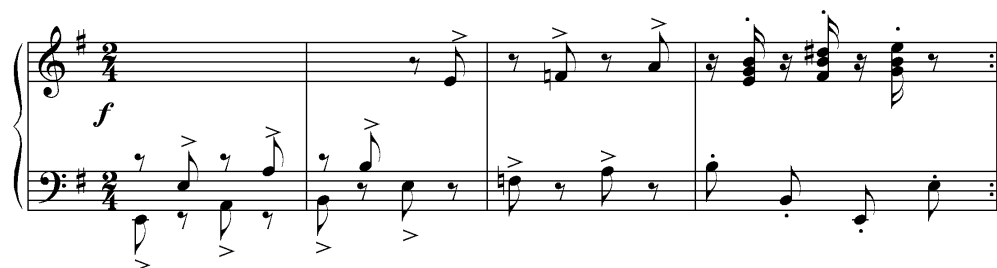


Fig. 3.12. *Phantasietanz*, Op. 124, No. 5, mm. 1-4, rhythmic exercise.

The second area to address is the left hand tenor melody in the **B** section. The student should begin practicing the melody alone with the indicated phrasing. Once the

student adds the bass notes, he or she should focus on projecting the tenor melody. One technique to utilize is the “Play-Release” practice technique where the student plays the left hand as written, but holds onto the tenor melody note while quickly releasing the bass note (Fig. 3.13). This is an excellent way to focus weight toward the inside of the hand.

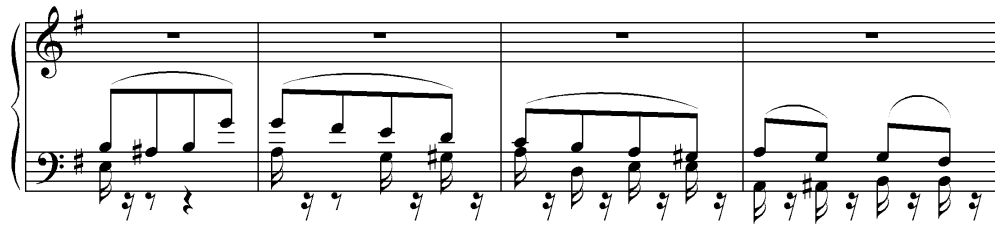


Fig. 3.13. *Phantasietanz*, Op. 124, No. 5, mm. 5-8, “Play-Release” exercise.

In addition to playing the notes accurately, the student should make sure that the bass notes sound for their full duration, for example the half note in m. 5 and the quarter note in m. 6.

Teaching Suggestions

This piece presents an exciting challenge for the student, as an effective performance depends on his or her ability to control the piece at a quick tempo. Using metronome practice to increase the tempo may aid the student in achieving such a performance. The student can begin by using the eighth note as the primary beat and increasing to the quarter note over time. Metronome practice will also aid in distinguishing the various rhythms found in the **A** section. The ideal tempo of quarter note equals 84 should be an attainable goal for the student.

An important discrepancy between the first edition and the Clara Schumann edition is the crescendo and diminuendo markings in mm. 9-10 and 21-22. In Schumann’s first edition, he indicates that both hands should crescendo and diminuendo

in mm. 5-6, but only calls for the crescendo and diminuendo in the right hand for mm. 9-10 (Fig. 3.14). The Clara Schumann edition differs in that both hands are to crescendo and diminuendo in both instances.



Fig. 3.14. *Top*, First Edition of *Phantasietanz*, Op. 124, No. 5, mm. 9-10; *Bottom*, Clara Schumann Edition of *Phantasietanz*, Op. 124, No. 5, mm. 9-10.

Another discrepancy between the two editions is the lack of an accent on the last half beat of m. 4. In the reprints of the first edition, the editor adds an accent in parenthesis, whereas in the Clara Schumann edition no accent is present. Editors' notes justify the addition of an accent because the original publisher inadvertently omitted it from the first edition. This theory is viable since mm. 1-4 are identical to mm. 13-16, but the later contains an accent on the last half beat of m. 16. When the accent is performed on the last note of the **A** section, that note is heard as an anacrusis to the **B** section. If the performer chooses to adhere to Clara Schumann's editing, then only the eighth note in m.

16 will function as an anacrusis, and the concluding note in m. 4 will serve as the end of the phrase.

Lastly, the issue of pedaling is of importance. In the **A** section, the performer should depress the pedal on the downbeats and release it on the half beats (Fig. 3.15). Additionally, he or she should take care to highlight the accents on the first note of each triplet while playing the non-accented notes lighter. In the **B** section, however, the pedal should change with each new pitch in the bass line. Exceptions occur in mm. 5, 9, 11, and 12 when the bass line consists of a half note. In those measures, the performer should change the pedal on the beats while sustaining the bass note with the hand.

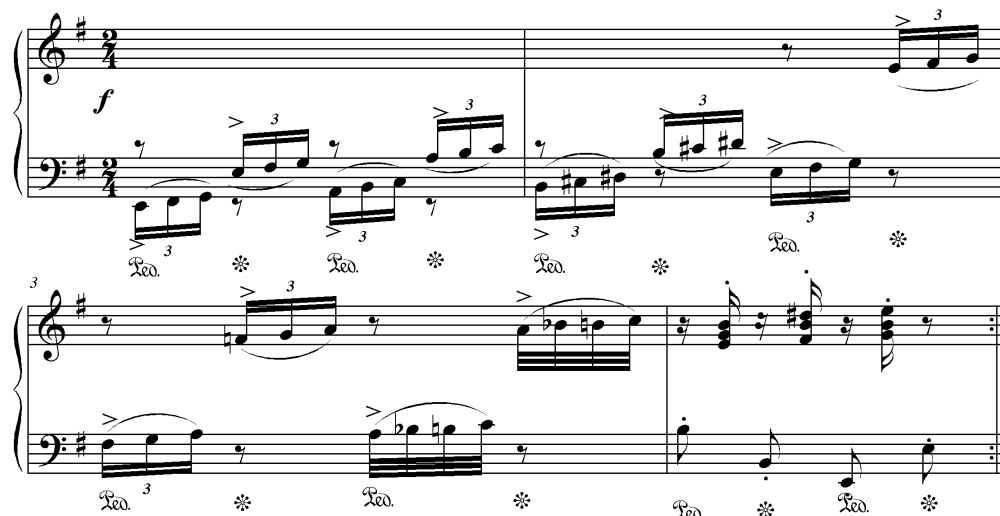


Fig. 3.15. *Phantasietanz*, Op. 124, No. 5, mm. 1-4, suggested pedaling.

Wiegenliedchen, Op. 124, No. 6

Level: 6

Form: **A:** (mm.1-16) **B:** (mm.17-32) **A:** (mm.33-48)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Play melody and accompaniment in the same hand

2. Shape extended phrases in a lyrical manner
3. Provide a musical and sensitive interpretation

Initial Presentation

During the initial presentation, the teacher should address the main subject area of balancing a melody and a harmony within the right hand. The lesson can begin with the student identifying the melody line and practicing it alone. Once the student is ready to add the harmony notes, he or she can incorporate the following practice techniques.

The first technique is “Ghosting.” In this exercise, the student will play the melody notes while pretending to play the harmony notes. This exercise requires the student to focus on the extreme difference in touch between the melody and harmony line. It is important to note that the performer is unlikely to achieve an effective performance of this piece by connecting the notes of the melody line with the fingers. Rather, one should connect the notes with the pedal, while playing the melody with much arm weight and the harmony notes lightly. Thus, when the student practices this exercise, he or she should not attempt to connect the melody notes physically, but allow the pedal to do so.

The second exercise is the “Play-Tap” method. In this exercise (Fig. 3.16), the student will play the melody line with a great deal of arm weight while performing the harmony notes with a very light staccato touch. Again, the student should incorporate the pedal to connect the notes and focus on dropping arm weight into each melody note. The result should be a full-sounding melody with a much softer accompaniment.

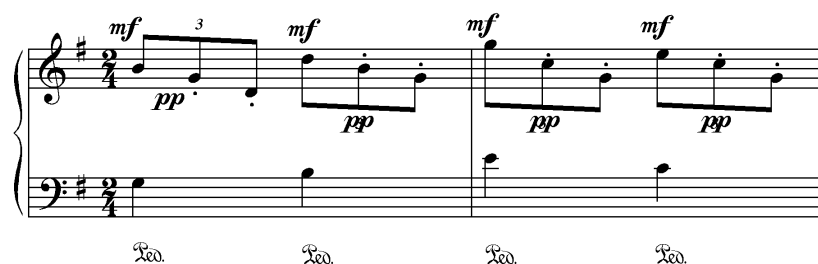


Fig. 3.16. *Wiegenliedchen*, Op. 124, No. 6, “Play-Tap” exercise.

Teaching Suggestions

This lullaby should be performed with interpretive simplicity, and a few suggestions follow. In mm. 1-2 and 33-34, Schumann includes a hairpin for both hands; the left hand doubles the right hand a tenth lower. Schumann also uses hairpins in mm. 9-10 and 41-42 when he transposes the opening melody line. In all instances, the performer should emphasize the phrasing by slightly subordinating the left hand.

Schumann marks a crescendo in m. 23 and a hairpin in mm. 27-28. The performer must carry the crescendo all the way to m. 28 to prepare the listener for the unexpected harmony in that measure.

In this piece, the pedal should change with each harmony. Many measures contain the same harmony throughout, such as mm. 1-3 and 5-6, and the performer should hold the pedal through both pulses. Other measures contain two different harmonies and the performer should change the pedal every beat. Examples include mm. 4, 8, and 12 (Fig. 3.17). A special note should be made of mm. 14 and 46 where the left hand holds a half note, but the right hand changes harmonies on beat two. Thus, the performer must change the pedal mid-measure to reflect the harmonic change.

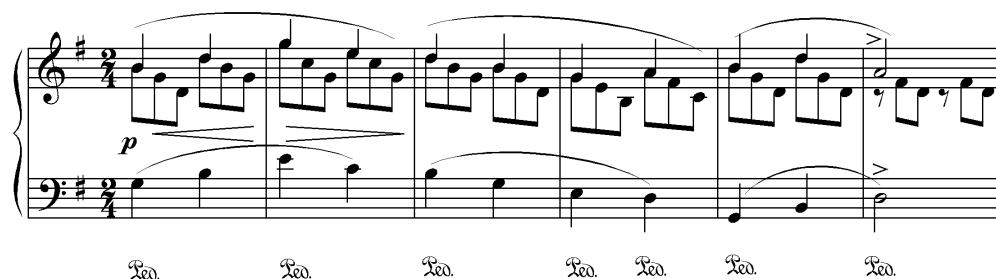


Fig. 3.17. *Wiegenliedchen*, Op. 124, No. 6, mm. 1-6, suggested pedaling.

Ländler, Op. 124, No. 7

Level: 8

Form: **A:** (mm. 1-8) **B:** (mm. 8-16) **A¹:** (mm. 16-24)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Play melody and accompaniment in the same hand
2. Play grace notes with finger five in the right hand
3. Voice rolled chords
4. Voice grace notes

Initial Presentation

At the initial presentation, the primary topic to address is voicing the opening four chords in their various forms. The four chords found in m. 1, together with its anacrusis, are initially phrased in two-note slurs; the theme is subsequently stated in rolled chords (mm. 4-5), staccato chords (mm. 16-17), and staccato chords preceded by grace notes (mm. 20-22). Interestingly, the chords in mm. 20-22 are rolled from outer note to inner note, rather than bottom to top in the normal way. The notes in each instance are the same, except for the final statement in mm. 20-22, where Schumann's alteration prepares his approach to the final cadence.

The performer may easily execute these chords if he or she uses the same fingering in all instances, with the exception of mm. 20-22. The four chords divide easily into two hand positions, which constitute two chords each. In this manner, the hands change position together and the chords fit easily under the fingers (Fig. 3.18).

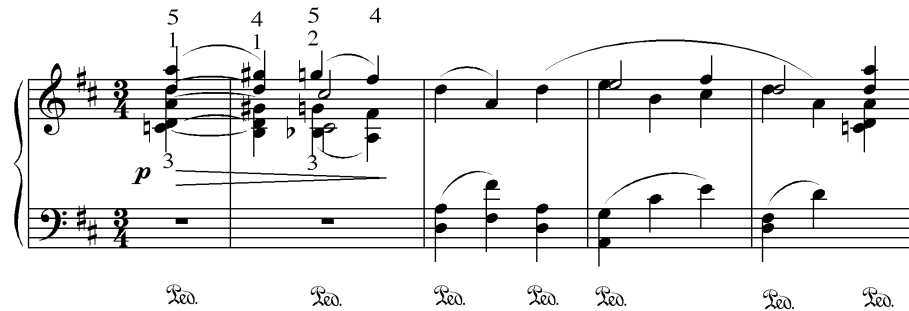


Fig. 3.18. *Ländler*, Op. 124, No. 7, mm. 1-4, suggested fingering and pedaling.

Voicing is important when executing the chords. The student must be aware that the grace notes in mm. 20-22 function as melody notes, and should voice them over the staccato quarter notes. This is challenging, since the performer will play many of the quarter notes with the thumb, the heaviest finger of the hand. To play these measures, the student must keep his or her fingers close to the keys and minimize the forearm rotation. When performing the rolled chords in mm. 4-5, the performer may use more forearm rotation to produce a bigger sound on the melody notes.

Voicing is also important in passages where the right hand plays both melody and accompaniment. Examples include mm. 3-4 where the melody consists of a half note on beats one and two. The accompaniment has a quarter note on beat two that the performer must subordinate, so that the listener does not hear it as part of the melody line (Fig. 3.18).

In the **B** section, the left hand contains large chords spanning, at times, an eleventh. The performer can redistribute these chords between the hands for easier execution as shown in Fig. 3.19. Since the majority of the chords are located in the middle of the keyboard, the performer should lean to the left and bring the right elbow towards the body to play this passage.

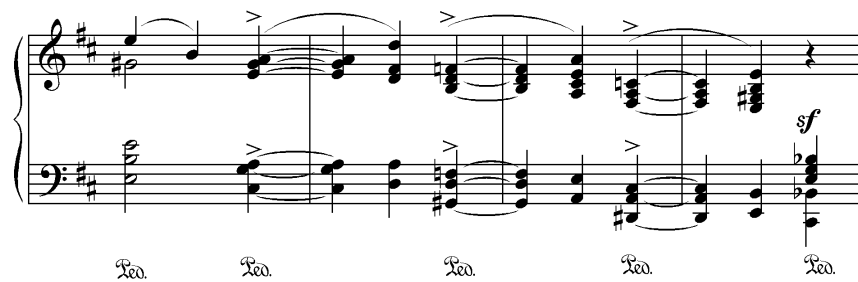


Fig. 3.19. *Ländler*, Op. 124, No. 7, mm. 12-15, suggested pedaling and redistribution.

Teaching Suggestions

In the **A** section, the performer should pedal the opening two measures, including the anacrusis, according to the slurs (Fig. 3.18), and should pedal similarly in mm. 6 and 18. Additionally, each rolled chord in mm. 4-5 should receive a fresh pedal. Measures 16-17 and 20-24 of **A**¹ contain staccato quarter notes and should have subtle touches of pedal to promote resonance and prevent a brusque sound.

In the opening of the **B** section, the performer should pedal the slurs, and release for the staccatos. At the arrival of the chords in m. 12, the performer should pedal with the slurs until the section's conclusion in m. 16 (Fig. 3.19).

Each phrase in the piece begins with an upbeat, and the student should think of these pick-up notes as leading to the downbeats of the following measures. Matters are

complicated in m. 16, where Schumann adds a B-flat on beat two. In this instance, the student must hear beats two and three leading to beat one in m. 17.

The rhythm of the **B** section is more complicated than **A** since the performer never strikes a note on the downbeat and must play each chord on beat three with an accent. Thus, the student must feel the pulse internally in order to achieve rhythmic accuracy. Metronome practice may prove beneficial for the student in developing this advanced skill.

In mm. 16 and 17 of the first edition, Schumann changes the voicing of the chords in the left hand as shown in Fig. 3.20. These notes are omitted in the Clara Schumann edition.



Fig. 3.20. *Top*, First Edition of *Ländler*, Op. 124, No. 7, mm. 16-17; *Bottom*, Clara Schumann Edition of *Ländler*, Op. 124, No. 7, mm. 16-17.

Walzer, Op. 124, No. 10

Level: 8

Form: **A**: (mm. 1-8) **B**: (mm. 8-16) **A**¹: (mm. 16-24) **B**: (mm. 24-32) **A**¹:
(mm. 32-40)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Execute octave passagework with a flexible wrist
2. Play a mixture of contrary and parallel motions between the hands
3. Voice octaves and large chords spanning an octave

Initial Presentation

At the first lesson, the teacher should address the voicing of the large chords and octaves in the right hand, the execution of the repeated chords and scale-like passages, and the redistribution of the large chords between the hands.

The student needs to be competent in the voicing of chords and octaves before studying this piece. One practice technique to help achieve correct voicing in these passages is the “Play-Release” exercise. In this exercise, the student plays the entire chord or octave, and then quickly releases the harmony notes, while sustaining the melody note (Fig. 3.21). By practicing in this manner, the student shifts weight toward the outside of the right hand.

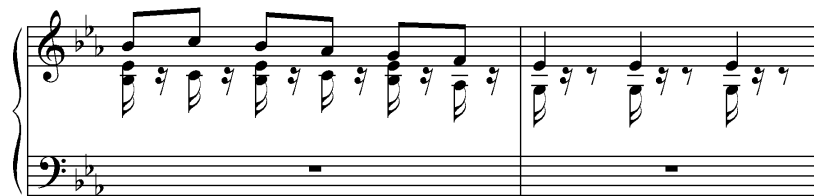


Fig. 3.21. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 10, mm. 5-6, “Play-Release” exercise.

Only two gestures are required to perform this piece, as it consists entirely of repeated chords (mm. 2-4) and scale-like passages in octaves (m. 1) (Fig. 3.22). In order

to perform both elements, the student must position his or her torso correctly. Since most of the right hand chords and octaves are located in the middle of the keyboard, the student must lean to the left and back, while bringing the elbow close to the torso to avoid twisting at the wrist. When playing the repeated chords, the student needs a flexible wrist to avoid tension in the arm. During the scale-like passages in octaves or sixths, the student must keep the fingers close to the keys while moving the arms in a linear fashion across the keyboard.

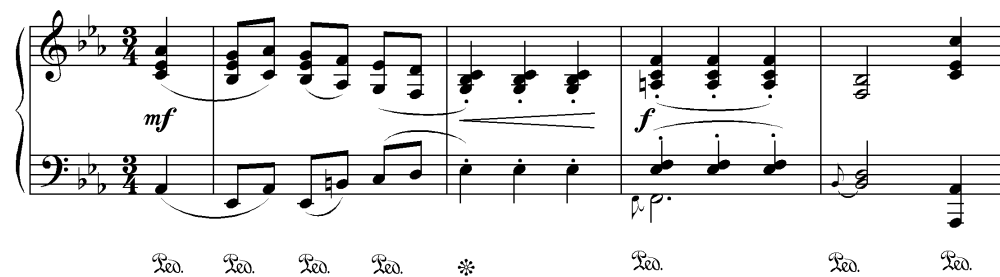


Fig. 3.22. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 10, mm. 1-4, suggested pedaling.

In mm. 1-12, 15-16, and 23-24, Schumann has written widely spaced chords that many pianists are unable to reach. Yet, it is possible to revoice these chords, without negating the effect of Schumann's music, by omitting a pitch in one hand that is present in the other.

In m. 11, the chords can be revoiced as shown in Fig. 3.23:



Fig. 3.23. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 10, mm. 11-12, revoiced.

Measures 15-16 can be handled as shown in Fig. 3.24:

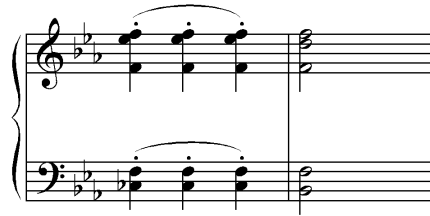


Fig. 3.24. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 10, mm. 15-16, revoiced.

Measures 23-24 can be revoiced as shown in Fig. 3.25:

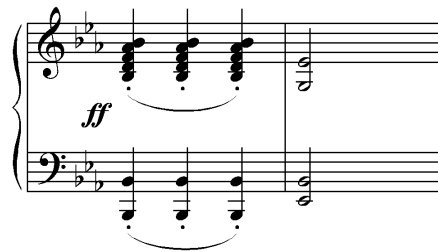


Fig. 3.25. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 10, mm. 23-24, revoiced.

Teaching Suggestions

The piece consists entirely of four-bar phrases that begin with anacrusis. In all instances, the performer should pedal on the anacrusis and change on the downbeat of the following measure. Subsequently, the performer should change the pedal on every beat, except for the measures containing repeated chords (Fig. 3.22).

Schumann includes a slur with the repeated staccato chords in many measures, but omits the slur in others. Comparing mm. 2 and 3, both contain repeated staccato chords, yet m. 2 does not possess a slur whereas m. 3 does (Fig. 3.22). One may interpret these markings with the pedal by omitting it in m. 2 and adding it in m. 3. Thus, the

performer will stay faithful to Schumann's intent by playing a true staccato in the measures where he omits the slur.

One final element of note is the difference between the **A** and **A**¹ sections. The first six bars of both sections are similar (note the presence of a *forte* marking in m. 20 that is absent in m. 4), but their cadences are vastly different. The **A**¹ sections conclude with perfect authentic cadences, whereas the **A** section ends in the major form of the mediant key. The student should note this distinction when memorizing the piece.

Walzer, Op. 124, No. 15

Level: 8

Form: **A:** (mm. 1-8) **B:** (mm. 9-17) **A:** (mm. 17-24)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Voice double thirds
2. Voice a left hand melody
3. Voice a secondary melody
4. Perform a melody containing large leaps musically
5. Play a melody in canonic imitation
6. Deal with sophisticated pedaling issues

Initial Presentation

When presenting this piece for the first time, the teacher should address the area of voicing. The **A** section contains both a primary and secondary melody, while in the **B** section, the melody is imitated canonically between the hands.

The primary melody of **A** is located in the upper voice of the double thirds, and the secondary melody is in the quarter notes of the right hand. The student must voice to

the outside of the hand, and subsequently bring out the secondary melody with the thumb. The combination of these two elements is challenging, yet the weight of the thumb allows for easier voicing of the quarter notes (Fig. 3.26).

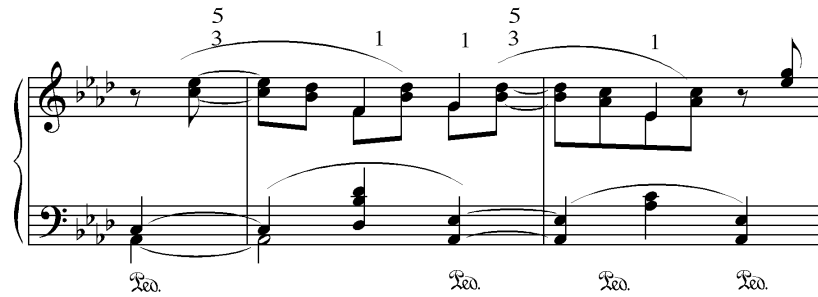


Fig. 3.26. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 15, mm. 2-4, suggested pedaling.

Schumann places the melody of the **B** section first in the left hand (mm. 9-10) and then imitates it in the right hand (mm. 11-12); this continues until m. 16. The melody line contains several large leaps, requiring a sensitive execution. The student must listen for evenness and direction in the melody line (which tends to be more difficult when executing large leaps) while attending to the phrasing in both hands.

The student should note the melodic contour of the harmony notes in mm. 11 and 15. These three notes resemble the shape of the opening notes in the melody line. Therefore, the performer should subtly emphasize the left hand in these two measures, and stress the tied quarter notes according to Schumann's hairpin notation (Fig. 3.27).

Teaching Suggestions

The pedaling in the **A** section should follow the A-flat pedal point in the bass line, with a change on beat three of every measure. Additionally, the performer should change the pedal on the “and” of beat one, while holding the left hand notes, to highlight the changes in harmony over the pedal point (Fig. 3.28).

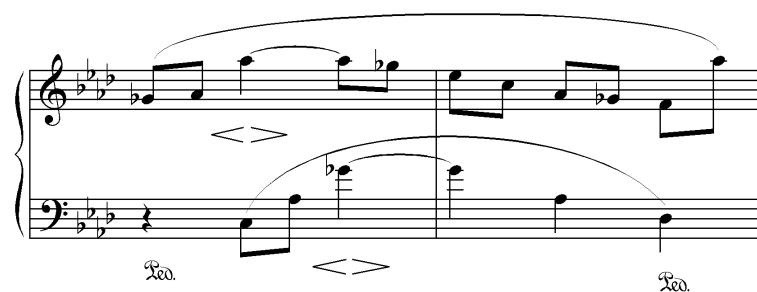


Fig. 3.27. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 15, mm. 11-12, suggested pedaling.



Fig. 3.28. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 15, mm. 1-2, suggested pedaling.

Exceptions occur in mm. 3, 7, 19, and 23 where the bass line contains a half note. In these measures, the performer should hold the pedal throughout beats one and two (Fig. 3.29).

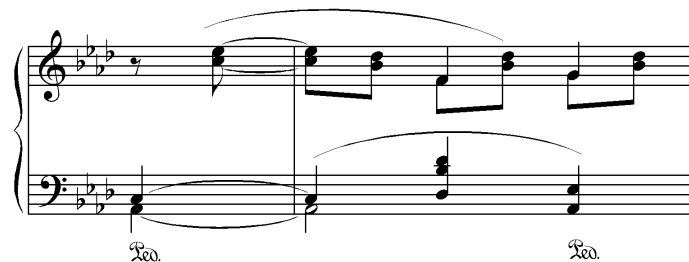


Fig. 3.29. *Walzer*, Op. 124, No. 15, mm. 2-3, suggested pedaling.

The pedaling in the **B** section should support a clear presentation of the melody. When breaking the section down into two bar units (mm. 9-10, 11-12, etc.), the pedal should be applied on the downbeat, while in the second bar, the performer should change the pedal on beat three (Fig. 3.27).

The performer should note the lack of a downbeat in the **A** section, and must feel the pulse on beat one to achieve rhythmic accuracy throughout the section.

Schlummerlied, Op. 124, No. 16

Level: 8

Form: **A:** (mm. 1-16) **B:** (mm. 17-24) **A¹:** (mm. 25-40) **C:** (mm. 41-52) **A:** (mm. 53-68) **B:** (mm. 69-76) **A¹:** (mm. 77-92) **Coda:** (mm. 92-99)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Share an accompaniment between the hands
2. Play a cross-rhythm of two against three
3. Use a flexible arm to perform a wide-ranging accompaniment
4. Voice the melody and control tone at a *piano* dynamic
5. Reach the interval of a ninth quickly and easily with the left hand
6. Sustain one note while releasing and playing another
7. Perform a succession of leaps quickly in the right hand

Initial Presentation

At the initial presentation, it is important to discuss the execution of the large leaps and intervals in the **C** section. In mm. 41, 43, 45, etc., the performer must play a quick succession of wide leaps in the right hand on the final three beats of the bar (Fig. 3.30). The performer should use the pedal, not the fingers, to connect the notes, or he or

she is unlikely to be able to play this passage smoothly at the required tempo. The student must also take care to perform these measures with a lateral arm motion, rather than an arc shaped motion, to ensure precision.

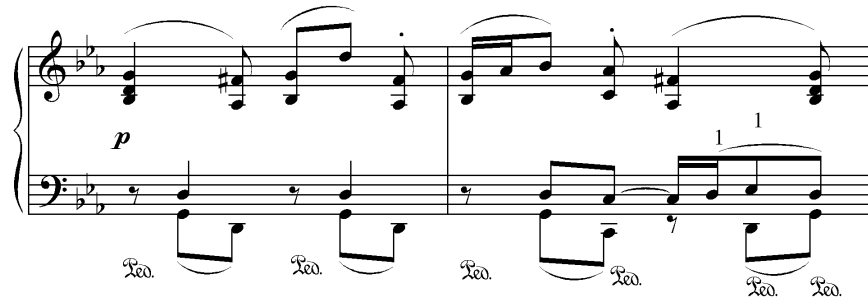


Fig. 3.30. *Schlummerlied*, Op. 124, No. 16, mm. 41-42, suggested fingering and pedaling.

The large intervals in the left hand occur on beat five of mm. 42, 44, 46, etc. Throughout these measures, the student should play all of the upper notes in the left hand with the thumb. This will ensure a smooth execution, while avoiding awkward expansions and contractions of the hand.

One of the greatest challenges in this piece is that of voicing the melody while sharing the accompaniment between the hands. This becomes even more difficult in certain measures when the right hand contains both harmony and melody notes that are in close proximity to one another. An example lies in m. 5, where G functions both as the melody note for the first three beats and the harmony note on beat three. The performer must subordinate the G on beat three, as failure to do so will distort the melody that Schumann intended, as clearly indicated by the stemming of the notes in mm. 5-6 (Fig. 3.31).

In the C section, the student must primarily voice the right hand, and secondarily highlight the tenor line in mm. 42, 44, 46, etc. The challenge here is to voice the top of a three-note chord while controlling, at times, a *pianissimo* dynamic. Matters are complicated due to the use of the lower register of the instrument. To achieve the desired effect, the performer must voice the right hand clearly, in addition to playing the left hand passages with a light, delicate touch.

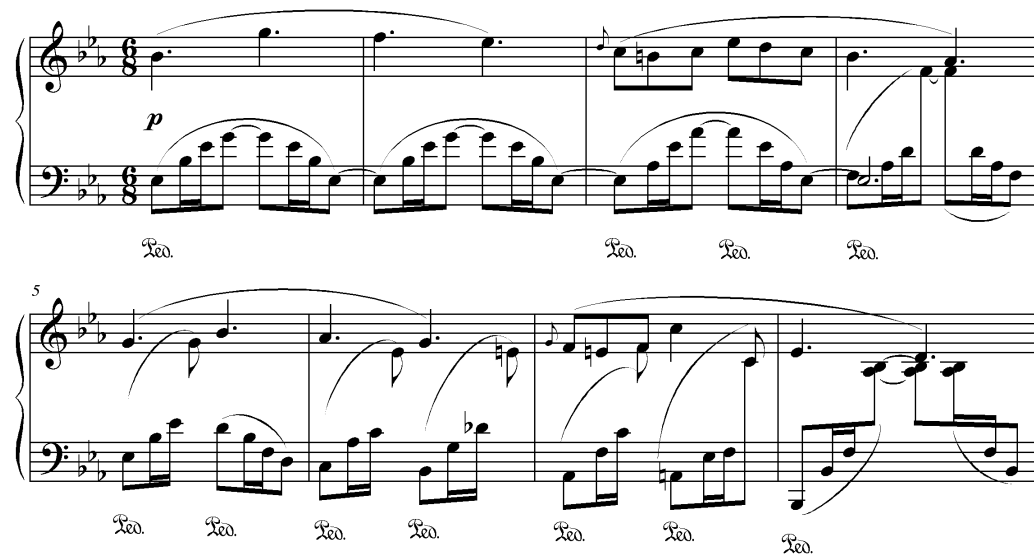


Fig. 3.31. *Schlummerlied*, Op. 124, No. 16, mm. 1-8, suggested pedaling.

Teaching Suggestions

The pedal should change with each new harmony. In some measures, the melody contains non-harmonic notes. One example is m. 2, where the left hand outlines an E-flat Major harmony, and the right hand contains an F and E-flat. In this instance, it is appropriate to hold the pedal throughout the measure, even if it produces a slight haze (Fig. 3.31). A pedal change on beat four would undermine the legato singing quality necessary in this piece.

Two exceptions occur in mm. 3 and 11 of the A section. Even though the left hand maintains the same harmony throughout the measure, the performer may choose to change the pedal on beat four to avoid blurring the melody notes (Fig. 3.31). In these instances, the right hand is more active and may require a pedal change to produce a clearer rendition of the melody. Final decisions regarding the pedaling in these measures will also be determined by tempo and voicing, along with the acoustics in the performing venue.

The performer should hold the pedal over the barline when the left hand maintains the same harmony. An example lies in mm. 9-10, where the left hand contains an E-flat major broken chord on beat four and carries it over the barline into the first three beats of m. 10 (Fig. 3.32). A change of pedal on the downbeat of m. 10 produces an empty, hollow sound, with the bass note eliminated.

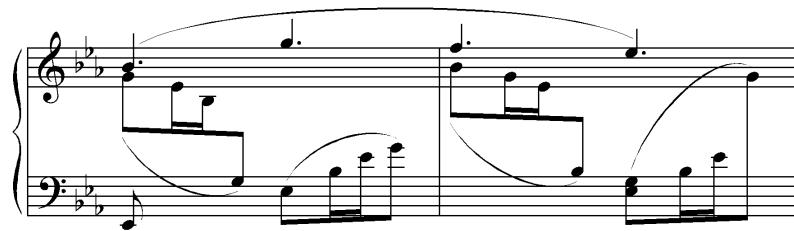


Fig. 3.32. *Schlummerlied*, Op. 124, No. 16, mm. 9-10.

Two examples of cross-rhythms are found in mm. 19 and 71. In both measures, he divides the main pulse into two units in the right hand and three units in the left hand. As a result, the performer must play a melody note with the second sixteenth note of the accompaniment (Fig. 3.33).



Fig. 3.33. *Schlummerlied*, Op. 124, No. 16, m. 19, cross-rhythms.

A passage requiring finger independence occurs in m. 4. In this example, the student must sustain the E-flat in the left hand to maintain the bass line during the pedal change on beat one. This same challenge occurs again in m. 12 of the **A** section and mm. 28 and 36 of the **A**¹ section, but in these examples the performer is not required to sustain the E-flat from the previous measure. Thus in m. 4, the student needs greater finger independence to perform the left hand correctly (Fig. 3.31).

In the **C** section, the performer should pay careful attention to the variety of dynamic markings between the sections. When examining mm. 41-44 and 49-52, note that the former is marked *piano*, while the latter is marked *mezzo forte* in mm. 49-50 and *pianissimo* in mm. 51-52. The performer should emphasize these distinctions as much as possible.

To achieve the *piano* dynamic in the **A** section, the student must play the wide-ranging figuration in the left hand with the utmost finesse. A flexible elbow and forearm, along with a light touch, will allow the student to play smoothly and evenly.

Elfe, Op. 124, No. 17

Level: 8

Form: **A:** (mm.1-8) **B:** (mm. 8-24) **A¹:** (mm. 24-28)

Musical and Technical Requirements

1. Coordinate contrary movements between the hands
2. Control a *leggiero* touch and *piano* dynamic at a fast tempo
3. Play with forearm rotation
4. Perform large leaps at a fast tempo

Initial Presentation

The main subject to address at the initial presentation is the contrary motion between the hands. The student must precisely coordinate the movement while using a relaxed forearm rotation. In order to achieve this skill, the teacher should consider three areas. The first is the position of the torso and arms. The performer should lean to the right and back, preventing the left arm, which frequently plays in the middle register of the keyboard, from crossing the torso to create greater freedom of movement. Secondly, the student should have full control over a relaxed forearm rotation, noting that more rotation is required to cover larger intervals (m. 1), and less for smaller intervals (m. 3) (Fig. 3.34). Lastly, the student's fingers should remain close to the keys at all times. With these three elements combined, the student is more likely to perform the piece with the necessary precision.

Because each rhythmic cell begins on an upbeat, and the first note of each cell is played with both thumbs, one challenge is to eliminate the accent that may occur at the beginning of each slur. The stress should ultimately occur with the downbeat at the end of each rhythmic cell.

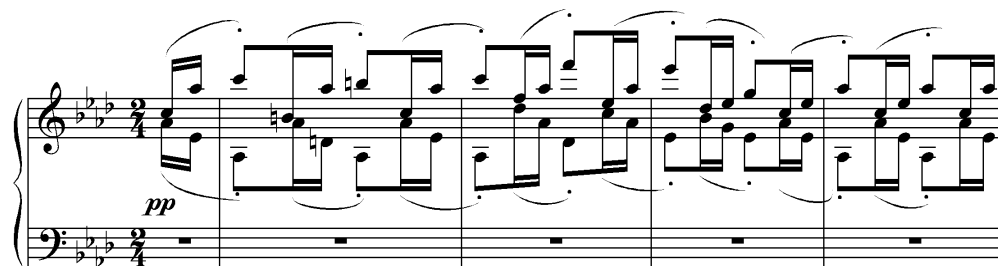


Fig. 3.34. *Elfe*, Op. 124, No. 17, mm. 1-4.

To eliminate unwanted accents, the performer must quickly move to each new hand position. One practice technique to develop this skill is the “Play and Freeze” technique. In this exercise, the student will play the first pattern and then quickly move to the next hand position, freezing his or her fingers over the notes. It is likely that the student will accurately emphasize the notes according to their metric position with a precise change in hand positions.

Teaching Suggestions

The subject of execution with the hands together is two-fold, as the student must master both the coordination and balance between the hands. With the *pianissimo* marking of the opening section, it is advisable for the performer to play the right hand at a *mezzo-forte* level and the left hand at a *pianissimo* level. This will aid in achieving the needed tonal balance, while maintaining the appropriate dynamic level.

When examining the **A** and **A**¹ sections, the student should carefully observe each section’s concluding note values. The **A** section ends with a quarter note (m. 8), while **A**¹ closes with an eighth note (m. 28). The performer should emphasize these differences.

Conclusion

The selected compositions from Schumann's *Albumblätter* are excellent teaching pieces, which provide an alternative to the more commonly encountered repertoire of Schumann, as well as that of other Romantic composers. The elements contained in these pieces prepare the intermediate student to undertake Romantic literature that is more advanced by exposing him or her to such complexities as sophisticated pedaling techniques and voicing to various parts of the hands. Overall, this set contains exceptional teaching pieces that are both appealing and accessible to the intermediate student.

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