



## Oxford Lieder Festival 2016

**Study Day, Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> October**  
**Jacqueline du Pré building, St Hilda's College**

Presented in association with the Open University's  
Literature and Music Research Group

### **Schumann, his friends and followers: a literary world and its legacies**

Schumann was inspired by literature throughout his life, and saw no real divide between the world of letters and the world of music. His writings, both musical and literary, inspired a generation of creative intellectuals in Germany and beyond, and engendered a wealth of literary responses in turn. This study day is an opportunity to explore the cultural worlds and influence of musical friends and followers such as Mendelssohn and Brahms; literary contemporaries such as Heine and Rückert; and those well beyond Schumann's time and place who have continued the resonance of his ideas down to our own time.

### **PROGRAMME**

**10.30am** Registration

**10.45am** Welcome and Coffee

**11.15am** Three 30-minute talks:

Martin Swales, 'Irony and the Lyric Voice: Heine, Schumann and *Dichterliebe*'

Misha Donat, 'Schumann, Jean Paul and E.T.A. Hoffmann'

Robert Samuels, 'Hashtags and Retweets: Schumann's New Ways of Telling'

**12.45pm** Lunch (light meals will be available to purchase)

**1.45pm** Recital: *Lyrisches Intermezzo*.

Klemens Sander (baritone), Cornelius Obonya (reader) and Sholto Kynoch (piano)

**3.15pm** Three 30-minute talks:

Natasha Loges, 'Song Poetry, Society and Friendship'

Benedict Taylor, 'Mendelssohn's Songs: Ein guter Geist in Schumann's Musical Circle'

Delia da Sousa Correa, 'Fast! Ah too Fast Fade the Roses of Pleasure': British Literary Responses to Schumann and his Circle'

**4.45pm** Close

## Abstracts

### **Irony and the Lyric Voice: Heine, Schumann and *Dichterliebe*.**

Martin Swales

Robert Schumann was a person of astonishingly wide literary interests. In his early years he oscillated between seeing himself as a writer and as a musician. Music won. But he continued to read voraciously and to write music criticism; and that intense relationship to language expresses itself in his extraordinary ability to reflect on the worded texts which he set to music. 1840 was his great 'Liederjahr' in which he produced many of his greatest songs. By a wide margin Heine was the poet who spoke most urgently to Schumann. The two met once – and the composer was struck by Heine's wit and irony. Heine loves puncturing Romantic themes and attitudes, and this is a perennial source of irony. But that irony can sometimes be trivial – a mere exercise in debunking. At its most profound, however, the irony becomes complex and genuinely uncomfortable, and in the *Dichterliebe* Schumann rises magnificently to that challenge.

### **Schumann, Jean Paul and E.T.A. Hoffmann**

Misha Donat

Schumann once described Jean Paul's novel *Flegeljahre* ('Fledgling Years') as a book 'like the Bible', and its penultimate chapter, set during a masked ball, is closely mirrored in his early piano piece called *Papillons*. Schumann was fascinated by Jean Paul's interest in split personalities: the word 'Doppelgänger' was apparently coined by him. Schumann assigned some of his piano works to his own invented alter egos 'Florestan' and 'Eusebius', who reflected respectively the stormy and poetic sides of his own creative persona.

Like Jean Paul, E.T.A. Hoffmann was deeply interested in doubles. From the tales of Hoffmann, Schumann borrowed the titles of several of his piano cycles: *Kreisleriana*, *Nachtstücke*, *Fantasiestücke*. The writer's feverish literary style – 'one hardly dares breathe when reading Hoffmann' said Schumann on one occasion – and his fondness for beginning in medias res, also left their mark on Schumann's piano works of the 1830s.

### **Hashtags and Retweets: Schumann's New Ways of Telling**

Robert Samuels

Robert Schumann and the small circle of friends who founded the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in Leipzig in 1834 placed great store by the word *Neue*. The magazine was new, and devoted to a new way of talking about music, a new way of thinking about music. This new way was one which united the musical with the literary, creating the poetry of music, *Tondichtung*. Rather like the way that social media have altered how we communicate today, the change in musical thought that Schumann advocated and demonstrated began with a small group of friends and colleagues, but played out in public arenas: journalistic articles, published music, and concert performances. Titles such as 'Symphonic Poem', invented by Liszt, resemble today's hashtags, flagging up engagement with this new, literary composition. When Brahms begins one of his symphonies with a quotation from a symphony by Schumann, this is effectively a retweet. This talk explores some of the ways that Schumann's influence spread through his friends and followers.

## **Song Poetry, Society and Friendship**

Natasha Loges

It is often claimed that Robert Schumann, and Hugo Wolf after him, was literate and discerning when it came to his song texts, while Johannes Brahms, like his adored predecessor Franz Schubert, simply responded to the moods which appealed, no matter how mediocre the poetry was. But the truth is far more interesting than this. In both Schumann's and Brahms's lives, poetry occupied a special place; the craft of poetry enshrined precious cultural values to which Germans clung as their country endured huge political upheavals throughout the century. On the other hand, many of their poets were also their friends; poetry was the stuff of daily life, to be improvised at parties, or simply to provide the scaffold on which to hang a good tune. In this talk, I will explore some often overlooked reasons behind Schumann's and Brahms's choice of poets.

## **Mendelssohn's Songs: Ein guter Geist in Schumann's Musical Circle**

Benedict Taylor

Amongst Schumann's circle of friends in Leipzig the figure of Felix Mendelssohn features prominently, and indeed there has been speculation that Schumann's sudden turn to song composition in early 1840 was a result of encouragement from his colleague. Song in fact accompanied Mendelssohn throughout his life, from his first compositions aged ten to the late 'Nachtlied' written shortly before his death, and his work includes several masterpieces in the genre. This talk introduces some of the most prominent examples in Mendelssohn's output, ranging from simple, melodious settings in emulation of folk style to more complex engagements with the poetry of his famous mentor, Goethe, acquaintances such as Eichendorff and Heine, and considers the overlap with Schumann's own work.

## **'Fast! Ah too Fast Fade the Roses of Pleasure': British Literary Responses to Schumann and his Circle**

Delia da Sousa Correa

Schumann's circle of composers left a mark on British literary culture during the nineteenth century and beyond. Writers such as George Eliot and Wilkie Collins recorded their listening responses in their letters and journals, and occasionally within works of fiction too. These surviving responses are part of the ongoing conversation between literature and music; they are also traces of long ago conversations amongst precursors of today's Lieder Festival audience. Interest in Schumann was enhanced in Britain by Clara Schumann's performance career, whilst Mendelssohn inspired devotion in person as well as through his music. However, the impact of their music survived beyond these personal influences. This talk will also present an example from the work of the early twentieth-century writer Katherine Mansfield which incorporates the lyrics and musical rhythms of an 1840s song into a comic and innovative story set in the far reaches of Britain's empire.

## Biographies

### Speakers

**Martin Swales** was educated at the Universities of Cambridge and Birmingham. He has taught German at the Universities of Birmingham and Toronto, and at King's College London and University College London where he is currently Emeritus Professor of German. He has published widely on German literature from the 1770's to the present day, including monographs on Goethe, Stifter, Schnitzler, Thomas Mann, and on the German Novelle and Bildungsroman, and on German realistic fiction of the 19th and 20th centuries. He is a Fellow of the British Academy.

**Misha Donat** was a senior music producer at BBC Radio 3 for more than 25 years. He now works as a freelance writer, lecturer and producer. He provides programme notes on a regular basis for the Wigmore Hall, Edinburgh Festival, Aldeburgh Festival, Royal Festival Hall and other venues. He is currently working on a new critical edition of the Beethoven piano sonatas being published by Bärenreiter.

**Robert Samuels** is Senior Lecturer in Music at The Open University. His work centres on music from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He has written on Schubert, Schumann, Mahler, Cage, and Boulez amongst others. His book *Mahler's Sixth Symphony: A Study in Musical Semiotics* was published by CUP in 1995. He was academic advisor for the award-winning 2012 BBC TV series *Symphony*, made in partnership with the Open University. He is currently writing a book on the relationship between the symphony and the novel in the nineteenth century. He is co-convenor of the Literature and Music Research Group at the Open University and Secretary of the International Word and Music Association.

**Natasha Loges** is Head of Postgraduate Programmes at the Royal College of Music. She studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, King's College London and the Royal Academy of Music, London. She has guest-lectured at the Humboldt University Berlin, and led research seminars at various universities including Manchester and Huddersfield. Her research has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the British Academy. Publications include the book *Brahms in the Home and the Concert Hall* (Cambridge University Press 2014) as well as articles/chapters in *The Cambridge Companion to the Singer-Songwriter*, *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance* and the journal *Music & Letters*. Her book *Brahms and his Poets* is in preparation. She performs regularly as a song accompanist, broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and gives talks for the Oxford Lieder Festival.

**Benedict Taylor** is Chancellor's Fellow in the Reid School of Music, University of Edinburgh, having previously worked here in Oxford as Lecturer in Music at Magdalen and Senior Research Fellow of New College. He is the author of two monographs, *Mendelssohn, Time and Memory: The Romantic Conception of Cyclic Form* (Cambridge, 2011), and *The Melody of Time, a Study of Music and Temporality from Beethoven to Elgar* (Oxford, 2016), and editor of the collection *Mendelssohn* in Ashgate's *The Early Romantic Composers* series. His article 'Cyclic Form, Time and Memory in Mendelssohn's A-Minor Quartet, Op. 13' (*Musical Quarterly*, 2010) was the recipient of the 2011 Jerome Roche Prize from the Royal Musical Association for a distinguished article by a young scholar. Forthcoming projects include editing the volume *Rethinking Mendelssohn* from OUP and a special journal issue on *Subjectivity in Song*, for which he is writing on Eichendorff and Schumann.

**Delia da Sousa Correa** is Senior Lecturer in English at the Open University and co-convenor of the OU's Literature and Music Research Group. She studied in New Zealand, London, and Oxford and previously taught at the universities of Oxford and St Petersburg. Her research explores connections between literature and music in the Victorian and early-modernist periods. Publications include *George Eliot, Music and Victorian Culture* (2003) and, as editor, *The Nineteenth-Century Novel: Realisms* (2000) and *Phrase and Subject: Studies in Literature and Music* (2006). She has also written on the Brontës, John Ruskin, Henry James and Katherine Mansfield and published articles on Victorian literature and music. She is founding editor of the Edinburgh series *Katherine Mansfield Studies* (2009 –) and co-editor, with W.R.Owens, of *The Handbook to Literary Research* (2010). She is currently editing *The Edinburgh Companion to Literature and Music*.

### **Study Day Administrator**

**Frankie Perry** has just started PhD study at Royal Holloway, University of London, where she is supervised by Julian Johnson and funded by the AHRC. Her undergraduate and master's degrees are from, respectively, St Anne's and St Catherine's Colleges, Oxford. Her doctoral project will consider aspects of genre and timbre in nineteenth and early twentieth-century songs that exist in versions for both voice/piano and voice/orchestra. She enjoyed a busy stewarding fortnight at last year's Oxford Lieder Festival, was Research Assistant for Laura Tunbridge's festival-associated project Unlocking Late Schumann, and is looking forward to tweeting through this year's festival as Robert Schumann (@RSchumanntweets).

The Organisers of the Day are:

Delia da Sousa Correa  
Robert Samuels  
Frankie Perry



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University**