

In the final analysis, it is appropriate to quote from the closing sentence of the critical commentary, which considers the inconsistent application of a staccato marking in bar 352 of the fourth movement: 'Whether this is conceivably close to what Elgar imagined cannot be determined any more precisely.' Del Mar's words apply just as accurately to his own efforts on this edition, an impressive and compelling reading which will be indispensable to cellists, conductors and Elgarian scholars alike.

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Robert Schumann, *Waldszenen* op. 82; facsimile from the autograph held in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. Editorial notes by Margit L. McCorkle (Munich: G. Henle Verlag, 2005). €53

Robert Schumann's *Waldszenen* is a collection of eight pieces for solo piano composed during 1848–50. It was a time when Schumann focused on increasing income by turning more to the home market. *Waldszenen* is not among his best-known works, but it was conceived as one that would sell well. It made few technical demands on the performer, and its programme of a woodland journey (with a descriptive title for each piece) was intended to attract a wide audience.

Schumann would have been the first to admit that *Waldszenen* was far from his finest work, and posterity has agreed. Why, then, would anyone be interested in publishing a lavish edition of a work not that well known and not that well written? There are two reasons, both ignored in the editorial notes for this edition. First, the manuscript sources are comprehensive (there are two complete manuscripts, and sketches for five of the eight pieces), and provide rare insight into the stages of Schumann's compositional process. Second, in addition to the music itself, the manuscripts show Schumann's changing conception of programme music, as he alters titles and toys with the idea of adding poetic mottos to individual pieces in the set.

This edition is 28 pages in length, with 16 pages devoted to the reproduction of the manuscript. Its basis is Ms 344 from the Département de la musique of the Bibliothèque Nationale. It is a fascinating document, containing dozens of changes and alterations in Schumann's hand. Accompanying the facsimile are editorial notes by Margit L. McCorkle. They are at their best when they focus on empirical data. Ms 344 is placed on the dissecting table before us: from the autopsy we learn in detail of its provenance, format and ink quality, and of the effects of the ravages of time.

Also helpful is the complete listing of sketches (many partial) associated with *Waldszenen*. McCorkle notes that some scholars believe they may actually have preceded the dates of initial composition noted by Schumann in his household books (24 December 1848 to 6 January 1849). But she concludes that he 'more likely sketched the pieces between 24 December and 1 January and from these and other similar sketches (no longer extant), prepared the working draft immediately thereafter, filling in the outlines as he went along' (p. 26). It takes a great leap of faith to accept conclusions based on 'no longer extant' material. Unfortunately, similar gaps occur throughout the notes, greatly limiting their usefulness. There is, for example, no discussion of the sketches' relationship to Ms 344. Presumably this particular manuscript was selected for publication

because of the substantial number of revisions made by Schumann in it. Yet the notes hardly mention them. It cannot be a question of lack of space: the notes contain five folio pages (with three columns per page), and some of the notes are irrelevant (such as the discussion of Schumann's other compositions from 1848).

In addition to the sketches and Ms 344, there is one other manuscript source for *Waldszenen*. It is described by McCorkle as a 'dedication manuscript' (p. 26) – and that certainly was its intent. Probably during the summer of 1850 Schumann decided that he wanted to dedicate *Waldszenen* to Annette Preusser. The Preusser family lived in Leipzig and had been very supportive of Schumann during the premiere there of his opera *Genoveva*. Presumably the only manuscript Schumann had at hand was Ms 344, and that was so filled with changes as to be almost illegible in places. So Schumann had his copyist, Karl Gottschalk, prepare a neat version for Annette Preusser. The dedication to her on the title-page is in Schumann's own hand, as is the date: 1 September 1850. The manuscript was given to her in Leipzig as Schumann passed through on his way to Düsseldorf to begin his new job as music director for the city. But although the Gottschalk manuscript was intended as a gift, it represents another stage of composition – a time when Schumann was trying to determine what was effective in Ms 344, and what was not. McCorkle seems unaware that the Gottschalk manuscript is not identical to Ms 344. Nor does she realize that it is not identical to the first edition.

So what does a comparison of the manuscripts for *Waldszenen* reveal about Schumann as a composer? What follows is a brief overview based on my research. From the start, pitches in themes were not changed, changes and revisions in harmony were rare, and only one change was made in rhythm. That, however, was significant: the eerie double-dotted rhythm in the second piece of the set, 'Verrufene Stelle', is not in the Gottschalk manuscript. More common are changes in texture, almost always the intention being to increase clarity. Sometimes the decision is made to double the melodic line, again for clarity, but also at times for dramatic effect (for example, bars 2–5 of 'Verrufene Stelle' in the Gottschalk manuscript lack the doubling of the melodic line in the left hand). The most extensive changes involve the endings of the pieces. Schumann seemed at times unsure of the effect he wanted to create. That was especially the case with 'Herberge' and 'Vogel als Prophet', and in both instances he eventually decided to bring back the opening themes as part of the conclusion.

Equally interesting are the changes in title. Some are fairly straightforward, and involve little alteration in meaning, such as 'Verrufener Ort' (first found in a Düsseldorf sketchbook) to 'Verrufene Stelle'. All textual changes were meant as a refinement in the programme. And that was especially true with the last piece added to the set: 'Vogel als Prophet'. Schumann wanted to make certain that the performer and listener realized that *Waldszenen* did not represent a bucolic walk through the woods. The music was intended to represent the beauty and mystery of nature, including its darker side. That becomes clear in the poetic excerpts Schumann contemplated including in the score. Eventually only one – for 'Verrufene Stelle' – was retained, but he experimented with mottos for 'Jäger auf der Lauer', 'Eintritt', 'Jagdlied', 'Abschied' and 'Vogel als Prophet'. What Schumann intended was a musical counterpart to the German version of the fairy-tale, the 'Märchen'.

All of these points are discussed in detail in my article on *Waldszenen* published in the *Journal of Musicology* in 1984 (Vol. III, pp. 69–89). Many of the

ideas in McCorkle's notes – from the role of Ms 344 to the dating of the Gottschalk manuscript – first appeared in that article. It is cited in her notes, but indirectly, with the misleading implication that the article is a discussion only of the 'dedication manuscript'. In fact, it is a comprehensive survey of the manuscript sources for *Waldszenen*, including a comparison to the first edition. Although not accurate in every detail (I was working from a murky microfilm of Ms 344), it remains the most thorough discussion in English of *Waldszenen*.

A few final points on the editorial content:

1. Schumann valued the covers for his compositions both as a complement to the music and a way to promote sales. The cover for *Waldszenen* is especially attractive, and reproduced as part of this Henle edition. It depicts a hunter in the depths of the woods. But the title of the work and the name of its composer are not etched into a 'tombstone' (p. 25), as McCorkle states. That would have been a macabre touch with no direct relationship to *Waldszenen* – and, given his superstitious side, it would have created untold anxiety for Schumann. Rather it is a rock, large and flattened to accommodate the lettering.
2. The description of 'Jagdlied' as 'something of a brilliant showpiece' (p. 25) is misleading. These are all pieces intended for amateur performers, and whatever virtuosity was detected would be more in the imagination of the listener than in the fingers of the pianist.
3. On p. 25 McCorkle quotes a letter of 8 October 1850 from Schumann to the publisher of *Waldszenen*. She uses as her source a manuscript in the Robert-Schumann-Haus in Zwickau. Published sources were closer at hand. The letter appeared in 1942 in Wolfgang Boetticher's edition of Schumann's writings (*Robert Schumann in seinem Schriften und Briefen*). It is also quoted on p. 69 of my article on *Waldszenen*.

As for the facsimile itself, Henle's reproduction of the *Waldszenen* manuscript is outstanding. It is in colour, and the great clarity permits the reader to follow changes made by Schumann in pen, pencil and red crayon. It is a shame that the high standards of reproduction for the facsimile were not maintained by the accompanying notes. The edition would have been of far more value – both to scholars and the general public – if it had been complemented by text that examined Schumann's compositional approach in Ms 344 and placed it in perspective for *Waldszenen* as a whole.

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