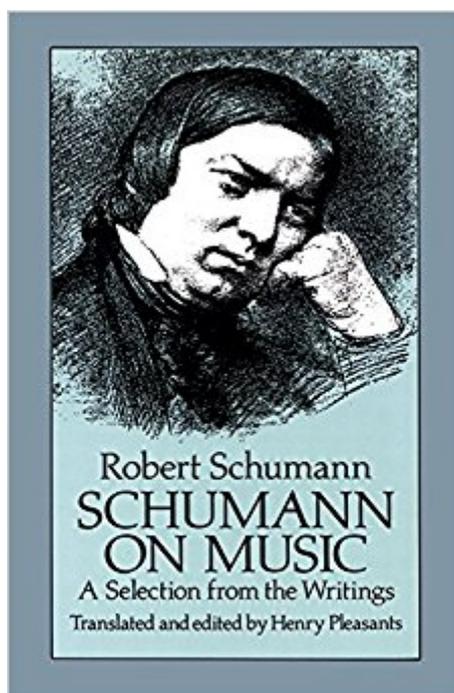


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Schumann On Music: A Selection From The Writings (Dover Books On Music)



Synopsis

Schumann's genius as a composer is well known; perhaps less well known is the fact that he was also a gifted music critic who wrote hundreds of perceptive essays, articles, and reviews for the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, the influential music journal he founded in 1834. The present work, translated and edited by noted critic Henry Pleasants, contains 61 of the most important critical pieces Schumann wrote for *Neue Zeitschrift* between 1834 and 1844. The articles are arranged in chronological order, with ample annotation, demonstrating not only Schumann's development as a writer and critic but also the evolution of music in Europe during a decisive decade. In addition to such major set pieces as "Florestan's Shrovetide Oration," the essays on Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique* and Schubert's *Symphony in C Major*, and the imaginative and literate "The Editor's Ball," this volume offers discerning observations on Mendelssohn, Chopin, Beethoven, Liszt, Cherubini, and other giants. Also included are critical considerations of an ensemble of minor masters: Sphor, Hiller, Moscheles, Hummel, and Gade, among others. The result is a rich and representative picture of musical life in the mid-19th century. Schumann's criticism has long been famous for its perceptiveness and literary style. Those qualities are in ample evidence in this treasury of his finest critical writings, now available to every music lover in this inexpensive, high-quality edition.

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Customer Reviews

Text: English, German (translation)

Schumann on Music: A Selection from the Writings (Dover Books on Music) is an excellent resource for anyone who is interested in the music of the German romantic movement, in particular the music of Chopin, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Clara Schumann, Tchaikovsky, Liszt, and indirectly, Schumann himself. I'm reviewing this book for my own blog, and so this is a little more brief than I would like it to be. But Schumann is not only knowledgeable and enthusiastic, he was very much an insider as a composer himself, as a former performer in these early years of the ascendancy of the piano as the solo instrument of choice (his concert career was interrupted by an early hand injury), but also a connoisseur of contemporary German literature, and its influence on music (and a personal friend of many important authors).

Interesting book.

Great product, in great conditions! thank you! Obrigada :-)

Very useful for my researches on Schumann due to my lack of intimacy with the German language.

It is very difficult for us to see and understand the present as a confluence of a vast array of tributaries from the past. To us it appears as the single world. It certainly has constituent parts, but we cannot readily apprehend what has been discarded and forgotten or why the things extant were remembered. The past has a flatness to it that only diligent and attentive study can remedy. Unfortunately, in music, we are forgetting almost everything because the current conglomeration of commercial activities we label music has so little in common with what the artists of the past were interested in creating and performing. If you want evidence for my claim, you simply need to pick up this extremely valuable little book. Henry Pleasants, himself a gifted writer on music, has edited and translated some of the great Robert Schumann's writings on music. Schumann himself is suffering from an unjustified eclipse at present. He was also a wonderfully great composer of music and an insightful writer, popularizer, and critic. With all the lesser music being programmed and performed nowadays, we should get back to Schumann right away before we cheat ourselves of one of our great composers. What is important about this collection is not what it confirms about our present tastes, or even what Schumann expresses that disagrees with our own views. What is fascinating to me is how many of the subjects he discusses have fallen from our consciousness, from our sense of history, from our artistic traditions. Just as a few examples. Have you heard any of the John Field

piano concertos? I haven't. Yet in 1836, Schumann in the guise of Florestan raves over Field's seventh piano concerto. Now, I am not saying that the Field concertos are good or bad, I have not heard them, but how could they have fallen into such complete eclipse given what is being performed nowadays? What about the concertos of Moscheles, D'ÁfÂ¶hler, and Herz? (D'ÁfÂ¶hler and Herz?!). There is so much here that it brings the musical scene of Schumann's time (mid-1830s to early 1840s) to life. We get to read contemporary appraisals of works we have retained in the repertoire and works that have fallen into eclipse and others that are so far removed from our conceptions of our musical tradition that one might have to travel to a moon of Saturn to find a copy. Unless you already have other volumes of Schumann's writings, this book deserves to be in your library. Your music education will be enriched by spending a few hours reading these short articles and thinking about what they mean about our understanding of the past and our sense of musical tradition in our present.

This book represents a wonderful cross section of Schumann's writings on his philosophy of music and critiques of specific works. Schumann, in addition to being a talented composer, was a gifted writer whose style will appeal to a wide variety of readers and whose ideas on music and musical style are as applicable today as they were in his time. His early tendency to present his ideas via conversations between the characters of the Davidsbund is extremely entertaining. This book also gives great insight into Robert Schumann the man, the musician/composer, and the philosopher/critic.

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