

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
AT PRINCETON

SENIOR RECITALS | SPRING 2024

Thursday, May 9, 2024, 5:00 PM

Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

Kimberly Shen '24

Piano

Music by Robert Schumann



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PROGRAM

**ROBERT
SCHUMANN**
(1810-1856)

Piano Sonata No. 1 in F-sharp minor, Op. 11
I. *Introduzione: Un poco adagio - Allegro vivace*
II. *Aria: Senza passione, ma espressivo*
III. *Scherzo: Allegrissimo - intermesso: Lento*
IV. *Finale: Allegro un poco maestoso*

Duration: 30 minutes

**ROBERT
SCHUMANN**
(1810-1856)

Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13
Theme - Andante
Etude I - Un poco più vivo
Etude II - Andante
Etude III - Vivace
Etude IV - Allegro marcato
Etude V - Scherzando
Etude VI - Agitato
Etude VII - Allegro molto
Etude VIII - Sempre marcatissimo
Etude IX - Presto possibile
Etude X - Allegro con energia
Etude XI - Andante espressivo
Etude XII - Allegro brillante

Duration: 30 minutes

PROGRAM NOTES

By Kimberly Shen

SCHUMANN: *Piano Sonata No. 1 in F-sharp minor, Op. 11*

Schumann's first piano sonata, like many of his early piano works, reflected his troubled personal life marred by romantic difficulties and mental illness. Dedicated to his future wife, Clara Wieck, the sonata could broadly be interpreted as an outcry of love for Clara and simultaneously an outcry of pain due to her father's staunch disapproval of the couple and attempts to separate them. The first movement opens rather unconventionally with a lengthy introduction preceding the exposition. The remainder of the movement is alternately tumultuous and introspective, transparently demonstrating Schumann's alternate musical personalities, Florestan and Eusebius. The second movement is a delicate and hauntingly beautiful aria based on the song *An Anna* written by Schumann at the age of 18. The third movement is a playful scherzo with two humorous trios—parodies of a Viennese waltz and a Chopin polonaise, respectively. The fourth and final movement thoroughly expands on a serious yet victorious theme (repeated five times in four different keys!) and explores a startlingly wide range of textures. The sonata ends in a triumphant coda featuring Schumann's beloved galloping rhythms.

SCHUMANN: *Symphonic Etudes, Op. 13*

Schumann's *Symphonic Etudes* had a turbulent publication history and were similarly composed against the backdrop of his romantic struggles. In 1834, Schumann secretly got engaged with fellow pianist, Ernestine von Fricken, a few months after meeting her and began composing a set of variations on a theme composed by her father. Early drafts of the work also bore a dedication to Ernestine's mother. Schumann, however, abruptly dissolved the engagement the following year, perhaps after becoming infatuated with Clara. Nonetheless, he completed and first published the work as *Symphonic Etudes* in 1837 with a dedication instead to English pianist, William Bennett, and no mention of von Fricken apart from the commentary that the theme was "the composition of an amateur". Schumann later made some revisions and published a second version in 1852. Later, in 1890, five additional variations were discovered and published posthumously by Johannes Brahms. It is now common performance practice to reincorporate some or all of the posthumous variations in locations chosen by the performer. Like a typical procrastinating college student I have not decided whether or not to follow this practice as of writing, so this will be left as a surprise.

The title *Symphonic Etudes* reflects the intense technical demands and orchestral textures of the variations. In general, the etudes explore a wide variety of characters but largely maintain the dark and intensely emotional atmosphere of the theme up until the final etude based on completely different theme derived from the romance "Du stolzes England freue dich" ("Proud England, rejoice!") by Heinrich Marschner. The final theme is jubilant and triumphant and provides a highly memorable end to this monumental masterpiece.

ABOUT

Kimberly Shen '24 (also known as Kimie) is a senior from Arden Hills, MN majoring in physics and pursuing certificates in piano performance and applied mathematics. She studied piano in the class of Francine Kay while at Princeton and previously studied with Alexander Braginsky and Jean Krinke. Kimie has also performed in masterclasses for many noted performers and pedagogues such as John Perry, Jose Ramos Santana, Sasha Starcevich, Markus Groh, Jan Jiracek von Arnim, Grigory Gruzman, Sontraud Speidel, Stanislav Khristenko, and the late Nelita True, among others. She has also benefited from private lessons with Denis Evstuhin, Tania Spector, and Susan Billmeyer and from chamber music coachings with Eric Wyrick and Tanya Remenikova.

Kimie's academic interests vary wildly from quantum mechanics to theoretical ecology and renaissance counterpoint. Her non-academic interests also vary wildly and include tinkering with 3D printers, riding roller coasters, and collecting stuffed animals. Post-graduation, she will be pursuing a masters degree in piano performance at the Peabody Institute in the studio of Boris Slutsky.

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Dr. Francine Kay—for being a most demanding yet devoted and inspiring teacher; for looking after my happiness and well-being; for wholeheartedly supporting my ambitious repertoire choices; and for accompanying me twice in Princeton's Concerto Competition.

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My parakeets, Sky and (in memoriam) Avocado—for cheering me up and putting up with listening to me practice for so many years.

My friends and chamber music collaborators—for your numerous contributions to my collection of happy memories.

My audience, both in person and online—for making the time and effort to listen to my recital today. Your support means the world to me.
