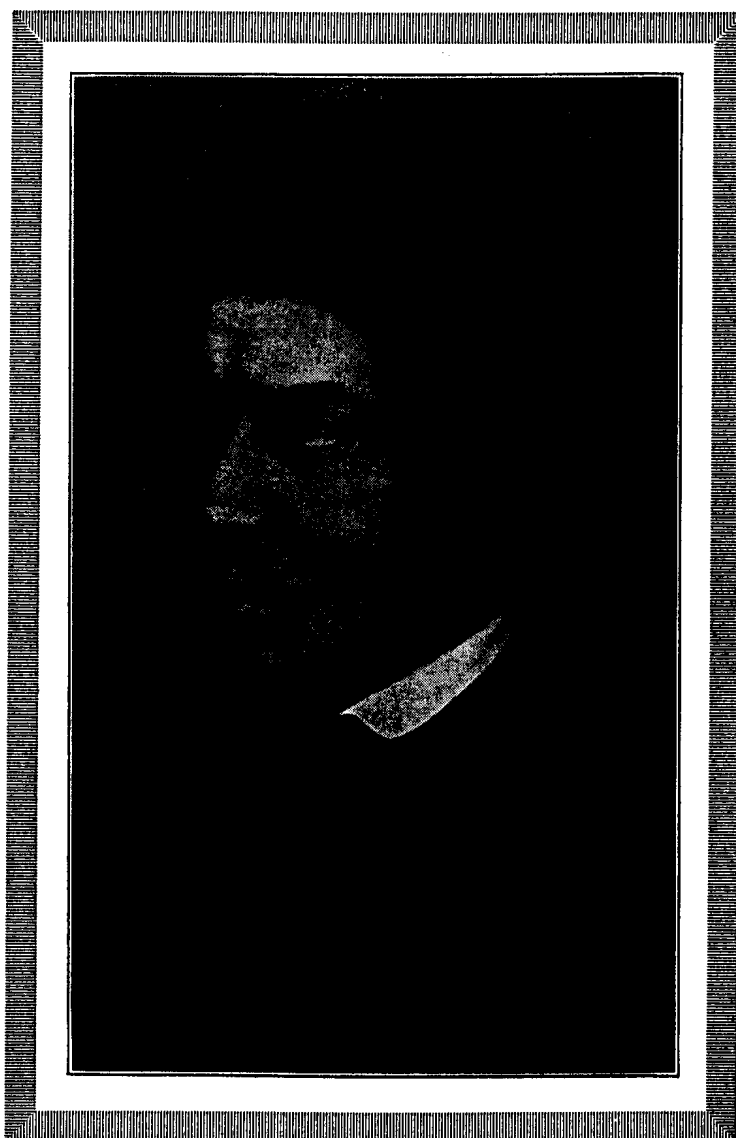


# THE BIRD AS PROPHET

Op. 82, No. 7

By

ROBERT SCHUMANN



St. Louis

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REVISED EDITION WITH FINGERING, PHRASING, PEDALING  
AND INSTRUCTIVE ANNOTATIONS ON INTERPRETA-  
TION AND METHOD OF STUDY

By LEOPOLD GODOWSKY

FORM AND STRUCTURE AND HARMONIC ANALYSIS  
By EDGAR STILLMAN KELLEY

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH, GENERAL INFORMATION  
AND GLOSSARY  
By EMERSON WHITHORNE

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# PROGRESSIVE SERIES COMPOSITIONS

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## THE BIRD AS PROPHET.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—ROBERT SCHUMANN.

*Born at Zwickau, Saxony, June 8th, 1810.*

*Died at Endenich, near Bonn, July 29th, 1856.*



ROBERT ALEXANDER SCHUMANN was the son of a bookseller in the little town of Zwickau, Saxony. His father had dabbled sufficiently in literature to appreciate Robert's literary and musical aspirations. Moreover, Schumann the elder was able to leave his son an income of five hundred *thaler* a year, which gave the young man opportunity to study and compose without the ever-present fear of destitution.

There has been much written by comfortable Philistines about the advantages of poverty. Never has a greater myth been foisted upon the unthinking multitude. No artist of real ability was ever hampered by having an adequate income. There never was a time when the world paid enough for its music; the prima donna may have flourished, but seldom has the composer been duly rewarded.

Perhaps John Paul Richter was the strongest influence in Schumann's literary life, while Schubert and Mendelssohn were his musical divinities. In a romantic period Schumann was an arch-romanticist. It was only his strong, artistic perceptions and ideals which saved him from the maudlin effusions peculiar to that period. With all due respect to John Paul Richter, E. T. A. Hoffmann, and certain of their imitators, we realize that the romanticists overestimated themselves and their place in the history of art. This must not in any sense be taken as a lack of appreciation of the music of Schumann, for we may rightly consider him as the flower of the romantic movement.

After studying law at Leipzig and Heidelberg for three years, Robert Schumann decided that he would not follow the profession of law, but devote himself henceforth to music. He returned to Leipzig, where he lived for two years in the same house with Frederick Wieck, the famous piano pedagogue, and assiduously applied himself to the study of the piano under Wieck's guidance. Here he was brought into close relationship with Wieck's talented daughter, Clara, whom he married in 1840, in spite of her father's objections. Clara Wieck was already a pianist of considerable fame and her father naturally considered the young suitor as ineligible from the financial standpoint. The result of this strongly defended paternal opinion was a case in court, where Schumann used to advantage his small juristic knowledge and succeeded in proving that Wieck's objection was trivial.

At this time his pianistic ambitions were shattered by his over-practice with a finger-strengthening device of his own invention, which ruined the muscles of the fourth finger of his right hand. So he naturally turned to composition and literary work.

During the long winter evenings of 1833-34, in the restaurant "Kaffeebaum" (Kleine Fischergasse, No. 3, Leipzig), the idea of a musical journal was conceived and discussed. This should be a departure from the mild "honeydaubing" critical sheets extant in Germany; it should be written in a style that would cause the Philistines to tremble. The "Neue Zeitschrift für Musik," edited by Schumann for over ten years, lived up to the ideals of its founders and became the leading music journal of the day.

Schumann did most of his composition in the different forms at separate periods; his piano works were largely written before his marriage, after which there was a period of song-writing; then came the chamber music and symphonies, and lastly the operatic and choral works. But this tremendous output of music extended over so few years that the effort undermined his health, and he suffered from lack of memory and melancholia at frequent intervals. Indeed the last two years of his life were spent in the private asylum of Dr. Richarz at Endenich, near Bonn, where he had only short periods of lucidity. His wife was very brave throughout this unhappy time, continuing her concertizing and introducing her husband's works to the public. The letters of Brahms to Clara Schumann give us a sad picture of Schumann's last days.

Ano. 607—3

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**POETIC IDEA:** This composition is the seventh of a set of nine pianoforte pieces, called "Wood Scenes." One must a little realize Schumann's method of work to understand the titles of these small pieces. He seldom had any program in mind, but more often began with an abstract musical idea, to which he afterwards happily put a name. His imagination was so active that he found little difficulty in discovering appropriate titles for his works. In his song-writing he was often obliged to find the words after having conceived the musical idea.

The "Bird as Prophet" was not composed at his most prolific period of piano composition, but comes rather in a middle phase, after his songs and before he took up the composition of larger works on any extended scale.

**FORM AND HARMONIC ANALYSIS:** The student will doubtless note the peculiarities of the song form and trio as modified by the demands of Schumann's poetic subject, "The Bird as Prophet." The main theme, key of G minor (m. 1—18) falls naturally into three parts, part I (m. 1—8), part II (m. 9—16), and part III (m. 17—18), the latter being an unusual contraction of part I. Part I consists of a period with the following grouping of measures: 1—1—2—1—1—2.

Part II is developed from the same rhythmic figure, thus: 2—2—2—2. But we must not forget that these two measure members are differently constructed from those in part I. Furthermore it will be noticed that the sixteenth-note figure in the soprano in m. 9 is imitated in the lower voice in m. 10. The overlapping of the voices in m. 15 affords an instance of "close" rhythmic imitation, the entrance of each part following at the distance of but a single quarter.

In spite of the originality of the main theme suggesting the feathered songster, Schumann felt the necessity of the element of contrast, and secured it by means of a very rudimentary trio in the key of the tonic major (m. 19—24). In fact, so primitive is it in construction, that we find it to consist practically of but one phrase. The first measure is repeated, then follows a two-measure section (m. 21—22), then the first measure once more (m. 23) and now introduced in the key of E flat major—the sixth degree of the tonic minor (m. 24), which leads back to the main theme in the original key repeated exactly (m. 25—42).

The harmonic outline, which is simplicity itself, has been rendered mystical by means of the long changing notes preceding the arpeggio figures, suggestive of the bird's call. For instance, in the first two measures we find nothing but the chords of the tonic and subdominant (key of G minor), and even in the subsequent modulations the chords are equally simple.

In the trio, observe in m. 19, 20, 23, that the A in the tenor on the third beat is an unprepared suspension. This explains the accent which insures the full esthetic value of these curious phenomena.

**METHOD OF STUDY:** The whole atmosphere must be clearly imagined; the fluttering birds, the spring morning, the delicate aroma of leaves and flowers. This is a sylvan picture expressing the mood of the poet in these surroundings.

The little phrases must be clearly stated with quite definite pauses between them. The moments of silence in this composition are of extraordinary value. It is all in the half-light of a wood and the dynamic shadings should remain subdued. If the student plays without delicacy and with long sustained pedals, he will destroy the whole illusion. One may imagine distant horns in the middle section, with an even more distinct echo at the end of measure 23 and in measure 24. At measures 9 and 10, and again at 33 and 34 the student should pay close attention to the *staccato* marks and slurs indicated.



13 *fp* *fp* 14 *fp* 15 *fp* *fp*

16 *pp* 17 *pp* 18 *p* *tranquillo*

19 20 21 *poco cresc.*

22 23 24 *poco più lento.* *una corda.* *pp* *tre corde.* *p*

*Tempo I.* 25 *pp* 26 27

This musical score is for a piano piece titled "The Prophet etc. 8". It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The piece is marked with a common time signature (C). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The measures are numbered 28 through 42. The piece concludes with a double bar line at measure 42.

Measures 28-30: Treble staff has a melodic line with slurs. Bass staff has a simple accompaniment. Measure 28 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff. Measure 29 has a "\*" marking below the bass staff. Measure 30 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff.

Measures 31-33: Treble staff continues the melodic line. Measure 31 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff. Measure 32 has a "\*" marking below the bass staff. Measure 33 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff.

Measures 34-36: Treble staff continues the melodic line. Measure 34 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff. Measure 35 has a "\*" marking below the bass staff. Measure 36 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff.

Measures 37-39: Treble staff continues the melodic line. Measure 37 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff. Measure 38 has a "\*" marking below the bass staff. Measure 39 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff.

Measures 40-42: Treble staff continues the melodic line. Measure 40 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff. Measure 41 has a "\*" marking below the bass staff. Measure 42 has a "Red" marking below the bass staff.

Dynamic markings: *fp* (fortissimo piano) appears in measures 37, 38, and 39. *f* (forte) appears in measure 39. *pp* (pianissimo) appears in measure 40. *marc.* (marcato) appears in measure 34. *tr* (trill) appears in measure 39.

## a) The Bird as Prophet.

\* Edited by Leopold Godowsky.

Robt. Schumann, Op. 82, No. 7.

Lento e con molto tenerezza. (♩ = 63) b)  
*Langsam, sehr zart.*

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a piano (upper) and bass (lower) staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is 'Lento e con molto tenerezza' with a metronome marking of 63 quarter notes per minute. The first system begins with a piano (pp) dynamic and a 'una corda' instruction. The score is heavily annotated with fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 15, 31, 45), slurs, and dynamic markings. The second system continues the piece with similar annotations. The third system concludes the piece with further fingerings and dynamics. The score is marked with '1' through '8' and 'b)'.

- a) This fanciful composition of Schumann, being replete with tenderness and sentiment, demands of the performer a velvety touch and an ethereal lightness. The dotted eighths must be fully sustained and slightly emphasized. All the short notes (32nds) must be played fast and extremely light and soft.
- b) The indication <> on one chord or one tone signifies an espressivo accent- tender, subdued; more of an agogic than dynamic nature.
- \* This edition varies slightly from the original. (See page A). The changes have been made by the editor in order to obtain better sonority. This version is used by Leopold Godowsky in his concert repertoire.

9 10 11

12 *p* 13 *fp* *fp*

14 15 *f* *fp* *fp*

16 *pp* (u.c.) 17 *f* 18 *p* *espr.* *tre corde*

c)

d) This middle part sounds like a heavenly blessing; it is hope mingled with sadness.  
*The Bird as Prophet* ;



3.

19 20 21

pp una corda 24  
pp più lento  
etwas langsamer

22 23 24

a tempo  
Im tempo

pp 25 26 27

28 29 30

Measures 31-33 of the musical score. The treble staff features a complex melodic line with many beamed sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often grouped with slurs. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. Measure numbers 31, 32, and 33 are indicated above the treble staff. Below the staves, there are several 'ped.' (pedal) markings and asterisks indicating specific performance instructions.

Measures 34-36 of the musical score. The treble staff continues the intricate melodic pattern. Measure 34 includes a '15' marking above the first measure. Measure 36 is marked with a 'p' (piano) dynamic. Measure numbers 34, 35, and 36 are indicated above the treble staff. Pedal markings and asterisks are present below the staves.

Measures 37-39 of the musical score. The treble staff shows dynamic markings of *fp* (fortissimo piano) and *p* (piano). Measure 39 includes a 'tr' (trill) marking above the final note. Measure numbers 37, 38, and 39 are indicated above the treble staff. Pedal markings and asterisks are present below the staves.

Measures 40-42 of the musical score. The treble staff features a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking in measure 40. Measure numbers 40, 41, and 42 are indicated above the treble staff. Pedal markings and asterisks are present below the staves.