

**TOM BORROW**

piano

**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)**

**Violin Partita No. 3 in E major BWV 1006 (arr. Rachmaninoff)**

Preludio - Gavotte - Gigue

(approx. 9 minutes)

**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)**

**Organ Sonata No. 5 in C major BWV 529**

**Largo (arr. Feinberg)**

(approx. 8 minutes)

**FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)**

**Ständchen (arr. Liszt)**

**FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797-1828)**

**Auf dem Wasser zu singen (arr. Liszt)**

**ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)**

**Frühlingsnacht (arr. Liszt)**

**ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)**

**Widmung (arr. Liszt)**

(approx. 18 minutes)

**JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH (1685-1750)**

**Chaconne in D minor (arr. Busoni)**

(approx. 14 minutes)

- Intermission -

**ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810-1856)**

**Fantasie in C major Op. 17**

Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen

Mässig. Durchaus energisch

Langsam getragen. Durchweg leise zu halten

(approx. 30 minutes)

## Johann Sebastian Bach

### Violin Partita No. 3 in E major BWV 1006 (arr. Rachmaninoff)

#### Preludio - Gavotte - Gigue

In 1933 Rachmaninoff composed keyboard transcriptions of three selections from Bach's *Violin Partita No. 3 in E major* and performed them for the first time in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania as part of his 1933/34 season of concert appearances. They received a mixed reception, being roundly sniffed at by Bach purists and early proponents of "authentic performance." But their effective scoring and stylistic *panache* soon won them wide acceptance in the piano repertoire.

In transcribing these works Rachmaninoff avoided the thick textural upholstery that characterized many of Busoni's keyboard transcriptions, preferring instead a thinner texture that merely filled out the implied harmonies of the original score, with the addition of the odd countermelody here and there — in Baroque style, of course.

Rachmaninoff had more than merely the violin score to work with in transcribing the opening *Preludio*, as Bach himself had twice re-used it in fully harmonized versions for organ and chamber instruments. The version known as the *Sinfonia to Cantata No. 29* later achieved fame as the opening track of the Moog synthesizer album *Switched-On Bach* (1968) by Wendy (born Walter) Carlos.

The *Preludio* begins with a celebratory fanfare on the E-major triad tumbling down two octaves in rhythmic figuration to capture our attention.



What follows is a *moto perpetuo* of continuous 16th-note motion bobbing and weaving through a succession of related keys, keeping our ears alert with unpredictable phrase lengths, perky syncopations and captivating violin idioms such as *bariolage* (a succession of notes played on alternating adjacent strings, one stopped, the other open).

\* \* \*

As one of the "lustier" dances in the suite, the *Gavotte* was danced with a lifted step and a skipping forward motion, embodied musically in a characteristic half-bar upbeat and short-short-long rhythm.

Bach's Gavotte is particularly memorable for its simple question-and-response melodic structure and "spicy" dissonant 7th chords at phrase endings.



The form in which Bach presents this Gavotte, namely *en rondeau*, is quite rare. The rondo pattern, consisting of an opening refrain theme alternating with intervening episodes, was later to become the standard format for sonata finales in the Classical era, but here Bach uses it to structure a dance movement.

\* \* \*

The Partita ends with a *Gigue* in the Italian style, which is to say it is a hop-filled romp with plenty of harmonic and melodic sequences centred around chordal figuration.



Rachmaninoff's transcription here is somewhat heavier, with octave reinforcement in the texture.



But the quasi-*moto-perpetuo* feel of this finale makes for a balanced ending to the suite – and Rachmaninoff's reduced transcription of it – that began in just the same way with the *Preludio*.

## Johann Sebastian Bach

### Organ Sonata No. 5 in C major BWV 529

#### Largo (arr. Feinberg)

Bach's *Six Sonatas for Organ* were composed in the late 1720s, in the early years of his tenure as Kantor and organist at the famous Thomaskirche in Leipzig, the leading centre of Lutheranism in Germany.

The Largo slow movement from Bach's *Sonata No. 5 in C major for Organ* is a very curious affair, quite abstract and introspective in its winding, wandering, often chromatically inflected melody lines.



The movement features an imitative dialogue between the two upper voices over a walking bass line in the organ's foot-pedals.

Soviet pianist-composer Samuil Feinberg was a courageous champion of the "church" composer Bach in an officially atheist USSR, and he was the first pianist to perform Bach's complete *Well-Tempered Clavier* in the Soviet Union.

Feinberg did this transcription for piano in the late 1930s, during a time when his concert activities were curtailed due to the Stalinist purges of that period.



The image shows a musical score for Franz Liszt's transcription of Franz Schubert's 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen'. The score is in 6/8 time and features a piano part with a melody line in the middle. The score includes dynamic markings such as 'mf marc.', 'mf', 'pp', and 'Echo pp'. There are also performance instructions like 'sempre p e stacc.' and '72'.

This transcription became one of Liszt's favourite encore pieces.

## Franz Schubert

### Auf dem Wasser zu singen (arr. Liszt)

Schubert's pictorial imagination was rarely as inspired as when he sought to depict for the ear the sounds of water. *Auf dem Wasser zu singen* (Singing on the water) is a setting of a poem by the twice-named pre-Romantic German poet Friedrich Leopold, Graf zu Stolberg-Stolberg (1750-1819), and it is one of Schubert's most delicious creations.

This is "water music" of the most imaginative kind. The setting is a shimmering lake at sunset where a philosophical narrator meditates on the passage of time as the waves gently lap at the sides of his boat. Schubert's musical image of the flickering light of the evening sun glinting off the rolling waters comes in the form of a series of two-note figures that "flicker" musically between minor and major.

The image shows a musical score for Franz Schubert's 'Auf dem Wasser zu singen'. The score is in 6/8 time and features a piano part with a melody line in the middle. The score includes the tempo marking 'Mässig geschwind.' and dynamic markings such as 'pp'.

This frequent alternation between major and minor not only represents the visual scene depicted by the poet, but it also re-creates in tonal colours the "tick-tock" of the poet's mental clock as he measures time passing by, reinforced by the classic 6/8 "boat-rocking" rhythm of the barcarolle.

In his transcription, Liszt at first confines himself to reproducing Schubert's mesmerizing two-note figures while cleverly nestling the melody line in the middle of the texture. But later on he just can't resist increasing the drama of the scene by roughing up the waters quite a bit



and adding more than a few choppy whitecaps to what, in Schubert's setting, was a quite placid little boat ride.

## Robert Schumann

### Frühlingsnacht (arr. Liszt)

Another night-song perfumed with the promises of love comes from Schumann's song cycle *Liederkreis*, Op. 39, composed in 1840, the year of Schumann's long-awaited marriage to the young Clara Wieck. In this "Year of Song," as it came to be known in the composer's biography, Schumann wrote almost 140 works for voice and piano, many of them — not coincidentally — on the subject of love.

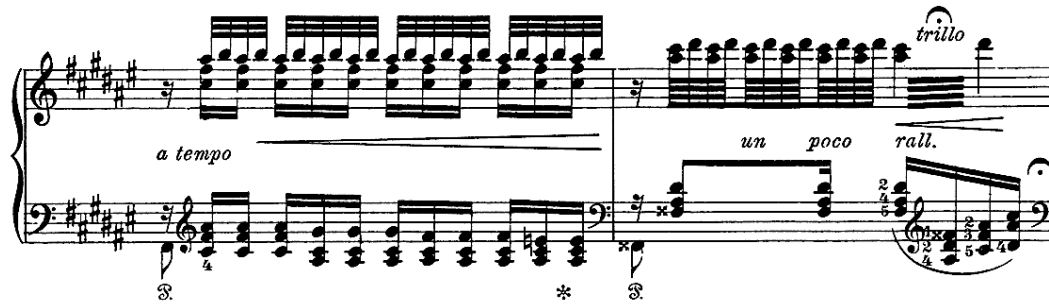
Given the rapturous sense of fulfillment that Schumann experienced at finally being married to the woman he loved, it seems likely that he identified strongly with the young lover pictured in *Frühlingsnacht* (Spring night) by German Romantic poet Joseph von Eichendorff (1788–1857).

The poem portrays a young man thrilling to feel that the entire natural world in its springtime rebirth is imbued with the secret message he has longed to hear: "She is yours!"

His breathless panting at this tantalizing thought is conveyed with great immediacy in the fluttering triplets of the song's piano accompaniment, which Liszt makes the centrepiece of his transcription.

Ü - berm Gar - - - ten durch die  
Lüf - - te hört ich Wan - der - vö - gel

But Liszt seems even more thrilled than Schumann himself by this poetic scene, to judge by the quantity of trills and other ear-tickling pianistic effects he adds to the score.



Robert Schumann

Widmung (arr. Liszt)

In Robert Schumann's "Liederjahr" 1840, his "Year of Song," one song collection, *Myrthen*, Op. 25, had a special meaning for the composer. It was a wedding gift to his young wife, the pianist Clara Wieck, whom he had married on September 12, 1840, the day before her twenty-first birthday. The "myrtle flowers" of the song collection's title are associated with Aphrodite, goddess of love, and thus with marriage.

The first song in the collection, *Widmung* (Dedication) was a setting of a love poem by Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866). The intense fixation of the lover on his beloved is reinforced by the poem's frequent repetition of "you" in virtually every line:

You my soul, you my heart,  
 You my rapture, O you my pain,  
 You my world in which I live ...

Schumann's song begins with an evocation of blissful emotional fulfillment in a series of rippling arpeggios topped by a dotted rhythm, indicative of a quickened heartbeat.

**Widmung.**  
 F.Rückert. Componirt 1840.

**Nº 1.**  
 Innig, lebhaft.

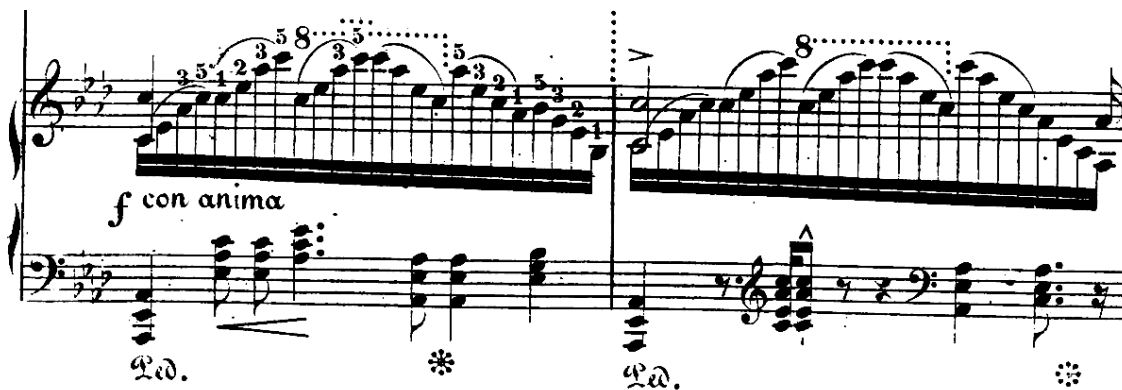
Du meine See - le, du mein Herz, du meine Wom', o du mein

Liszt preserves the original scoring, but in his repeat of the first section he reverses the roles of the left and right hands, allowing us to savour even more Schumann's gorgeous melody — and his own pianistic ingenuity.

The middle section pulses with soothing triplets, underscoring the text's reference to peace and heavenly repose ("You are bestowed on me from heaven"). Liszt, of course, can't help but beef up the texture just a tad, but

he is generally on his best behaviour – until, that is, the reprise of the first section, when he reveals the identity of his own true love: the piano itself.

Schumann's simple, reverential restatement of the opening section becomes, in the hands of Liszt, a glorious apotheosis. In a brilliant application of the "three-hand effect" popularized by pianist Sigismond Thalberg (1812-1871), Liszt keeps the melody singing out in the mid-range, richly supported by a resonant bass texture, while a full-on Fourth of July fireworks show sizzles up and down in the treble, splattering the celestial regions of the keyboard with tonal sparkle.



In the film *Song of Love* (1947), Katharine Hepburn, playing Clara Schumann, indignantly turns up her nose upon hearing Liszt play his self-aggrandizing adaptation of her wedding present.

But notwithstanding this swipe from Hollywood, Liszt's transcription has remained a favourite piece among concert pianists right up to this day. And justly so.

## Johann Sebastian Bach

### Chaconne in D minor (arr. Busoni)

The chaconne is a musical form in which a thematic core, conceived of as a succession of chords, serves as the harmonic foundation for a series of variations that follow.

The "theme" of Bach's *Chaconne in D minor*, the last movement of his *Partita No. 2 for Solo Violin*, is a stern and resolute chord pattern in the distinctive rhythm of a sarabande, with its emphasis on the second beat of the bar.



Then come 33 varied restatements in the minor mode, 19 in the major mode, and finally 12 more in the minor, giving the work a rough three-part design.



Within these variations Bach often uses the *style brisé* (“broken style”) typical of seventeenth-century French lute music, in which chord progressions are “broken up” into irregular and unpredictable patterns of arpeggios and running notes.

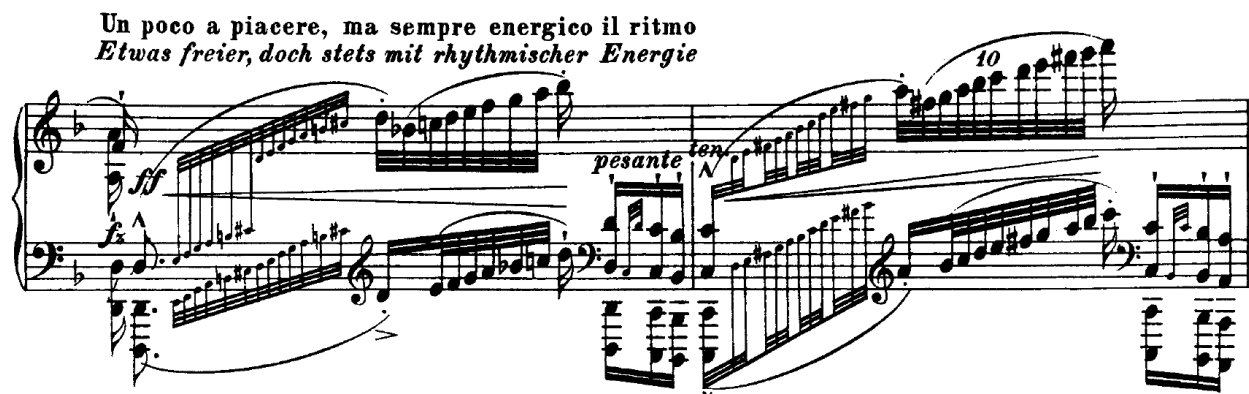


The piano transcription of Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924), while remaining faithful to the notes of the score, makes the work more imposing by padding the texture and increasing the sheer *volume* of sound coming out of the instrument.

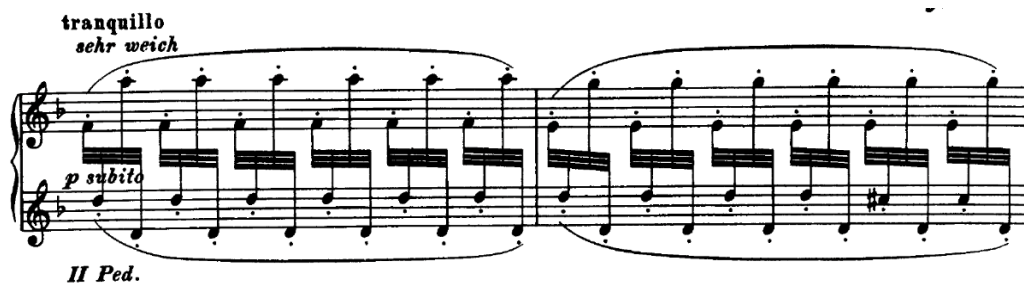
This is because Busoni, writing at the end of the nineteenth century, saw Bach as a kind of Romantic hero figure: a moody, solitary genius sitting at his organ, making the great stone walls of Leipzig’s Thomaskirche rumble and shake with the force of his musical personality.

Busoni’s transcription is to Bach’s original score much as a blockbuster film is to the short story on which its storyline is based: everything is presented in higher relief and is much more “epic” in concept.

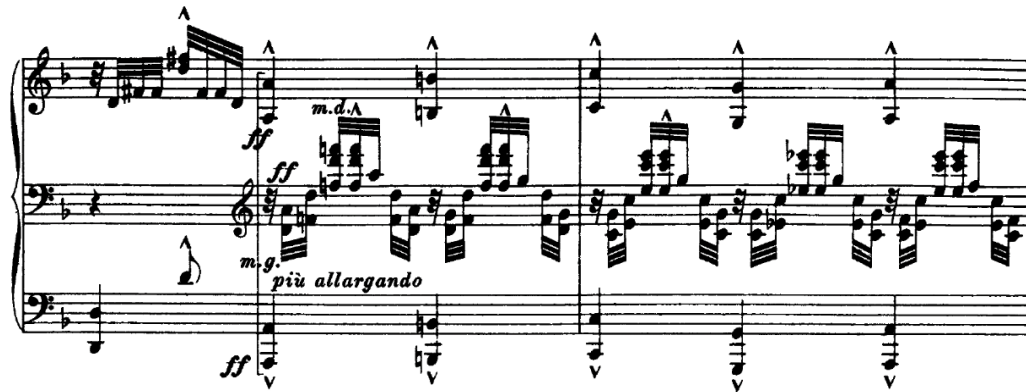
A simple series of sequential runs, for example, is transformed into a sonic earthquake, spawning flamboyant aftershocks in the high register.



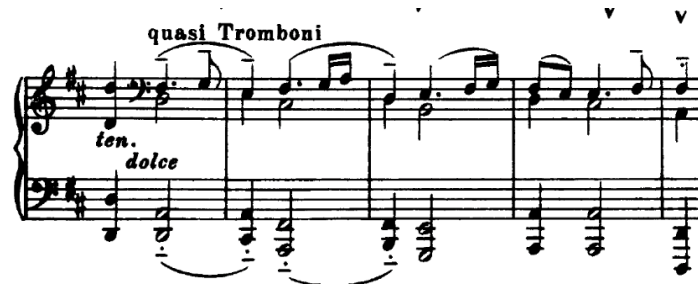
Busoni’s score is filled with dramatic contrasts. Sometimes the violin’s *ricochet* idiom, which produces a “firefly” pattern of scintillating tone colours as the violinist’s bow crosses all four strings, is vividly evoked in all its simplicity.



But more often Busoni turns this idiom into a tsunami of rolling thunder echoing over broad swathes of the keyboard.



And just as there are mighty mountains of sound, so too are there valleys of serenity and repose, for example at the beginning of the second section in D major, where Busoni hears a choir of trombones intoning this chorale-like tune:



But whether Busoni is projecting the booming sounds of the organ, the ear-tickling textures of the piano, the resonant echo of a choir of trombones or the nimble acrobatics of the violin, his intention is as much *spatial* as it is *musical*.

He is taking a piece of Baroque chamber music, meant to be played in a small, elegant salon or music room, and re-imagining it as a score capable of echoing throughout the vast dimensions of a Romantic-era concert hall.

## Robert Schumann

### Fantasia in C major Op. 17

Schumann's love life and his admiration for Ludwig van Beethoven interacted in a curious way in the composition of his C major Fantasia, Op. 17, Schumann's largest and perhaps greatest work for solo piano.

In 1836 the path of true love was not running smooth for young Robert as he pined in vain for his beloved Clara, the teenaged daughter of his teacher Friedrich Wieck.

Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen. M.M. ♩ = 80. Composit 1836.

The Fantasy's first movement was composed under the stimulus of these strong emotions, and it expresses them in a spontaneous flow of soaring melodies and swirling rhapsodic left-hand accompaniments that only finds temporary respite in its mysterious middle section.

This middle section is labelled *Im Legendenton* ("in the character of a legend").

Im Legendenton. ♩ = 72.

That same year, a civic project was launched to raise a memorial to Beethoven in Bonn, the city of his birth, and Schumann offered to raise funds with the publication of a "Grand Sonata" in three movements. The tribute to Beethoven may well have been conceived before the first movement was completed, however. Its *Adagio* coda features a quotation from the last song in Beethoven's mini song cycle *An die ferne Geliebte*.

Nimm sie hin denn, die - se Lie - der, die ich dir, Ge - lieb - te, sang,  
 Take my songs, of love the flow - er, That for thee, mine own, — I sing;

Adagio.

The text of this musical quotation could easily have been intended for Clara: "Take, then, these songs which I have sung for you, [my] beloved."

The second movement is a stirring march of nostril-flaring patriotic fervour with a forthright opening theme that alternates, in rondo fashion, with contrasting

material. Its headlong forward momentum is propelled and sustained by an almost constant pulse of dotted rhythms throughout.



Pianistically, the final page of this movement is remarkable for its coda, which bristles with hair-raising leaps that test the pianist's ability to look both right and left at the same time.



The final movement is a poetic reverie that drifts between the gentle unfolding of evocative harmonies, murmuring with intimations of melody in the inner voices, and more openly songful patches that create their own swells of passionate climax and subsiding emotion.



Schumann's three-movement "sonata" was eventually published in 1839 under the title *Fantasie*, and the monument to Beethoven in Bonn was indeed built, thanks to a generous top-up of funds on the part of Franz Liszt, to whom Schumann's work is dedicated.

The unveiling took place in 1845, with the young Queen Victoria, no less, in attendance.