

SCHUMANN
Etudes Symphoniques – Kinderszenen – Kreisleriana

Peter Bradley-Fulgoni – Piano

Delphian Records – DCD 34015

(An independent review by Denby Richards, Musical Opinion, September/October 2003)

This is a wonderfully satisfying CD by a mature artist who has the rare gift of understanding the sense of romantic imagery and innate passion which distinguishes Schumann from the other keyboard giants of this generation, including Brahms, Chopin and Liszt. Listening to Fulgoni's interpretation of the *Etudes Symphoniques* brought back memories of the young Arthur Rubinstein and the mature Shura Cherkassky. Many of the leading players today tend to approach Schumann with a reverence which befits a legend. Fulgoni brings us a composer whose genius was always on the edge of a precipice. With this work we have a theme played almost as though casually improvised on the spot followed by nine variations themselves interspersed with three comments. The majesty of the piece is its overall shape and conception which all too often is lost through individual sections being treated as individual episodes rather than parts of a cohesive whole. Fulgoni has the architectural concept always in mind and each item organically stems from what has gone before and leads naturally into its successor. The best example of this is the fiendishly difficult tenth Study, *presto possibile* linking the Eight and Ninth Variations, here played with stunning virtuosity but always within the musical context.

The *Kinderszenen* Cycle has a whimsicality and deceptive sense of fantasy which I found delightful while the ten pieces of *Kreisleriana* were a perfect dessert to the feast of Schumann.

The recording, made on 16 to 18 November 2002, has a warmth and a sense of space as befits the Reid Concert Hall in Edinburgh. I must congratulate the producer, Paul Baxter and whoever prepared the Steinway piano for these recordings.

Information about Peter Bradley-Fulgoni may be obtained from:

Christine Talbot-Cooper – International Artists
Stoneville Cottage, Gretton Fields, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 5HH
Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1242 620736 email: talbotcooper@onetel.com