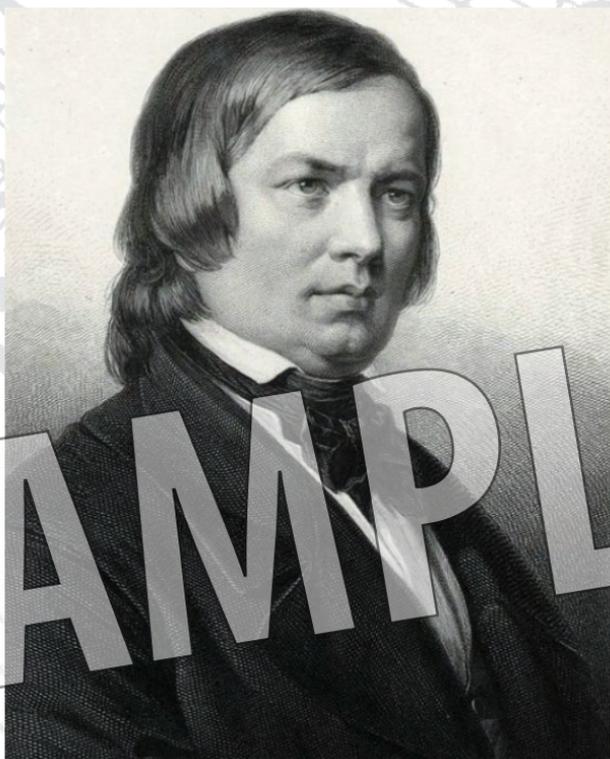


Simply Charlotte Mason presents

Music Study With the Masters



schumann

*“Let the young people hear good music as often as possible,
... let them study occasionally the works of a single great master
until they have received some of his teaching, and know his style.”*

—Charlotte Mason

With **Music Study with the Masters** you have everything you need to teach music appreciation successfully. Just a few minutes once a week and the simple guidance in this book will influence and enrich your children more than you can imagine.

In this book you will find

- Step-by-step instructions for doing music study with the included audio recordings.
- Listen and Learn ideas that will add to your understanding of the music.
- A Day in the Life biography of the composer that the whole family will enjoy.
- An additional longer biography for older students to read on their own.
- Extra recommended books, DVDs, and CDs that you can use to learn more about the composer and his works.

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Robert Schumann
(1810—1856)

by Rebekah Carlson

Music Study with the Masters: Schumann
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Charlotte Mason on Music Study

“Let the young people hear good music as often as possible, and that *under instruction*. It is a pity we like our music, as our pictures and our poetry, mixed, so that there are few opportunities of going through, as a listener, a course of the works of a single composer. But this is to be aimed at for the young people; let them study occasionally the works of a single great master until they have received some of his teaching, and know his style” (*Formation of Character*, p. 235).

How to Use Music Study with the Masters

1. Play the music recordings often and mention the composer's name when you do. You can play them as background music during a meal, while running errands in the car, at nap time or bedtime, or while the students work on some handwork. (Try not to keep them playing all day or during noisy times when other sounds or conversation would distract.) Encourage students to describe what the various pieces make them think of, to “draw the music” with art, or to move to the music. Allow them to form their own relations with it.
2. Read the *A Day in the Life* biography to the students and ask them to narrate. Enter this composer in your Book of Centuries. You can assign the *The Story of ...* expanded biography to older students for independent reading during the weeks you linger with this composer. Other *For Further Study* resources are listed if you would like to learn more.
3. Once every week or so, give focused listening to a particular piece. Use the Listen and Learn ideas in the back of this book to guide your listening and discussion.

As opportunity presents itself, go to a concert that features the music of this composer so students can listen to a live performance.

A Day in the Life of Schumann

(from *The Private Life of the Great Composers*)

by John Frederick Rowbotham, edited by Sonya Shafer)

To spend a day with Schumann, let us single out that season in his life when he had been married a few years to Clara Wieck, when all things smiled around him, when there was happiness in his home and promise of prosperity abroad, and when the house rang with the prattle of children. Let us enter the house where this interesting family have their abode and look to the centerpiece of the family circle—the composer himself.

At once we shall find a curious contrast to the lighthearted atmosphere of the place. After a few minutes' observation, we shall confess that all the happiness and gaiety of the family spring from the wife and mother. The composer has not been up long. He is moving about the house like a man in a dream, his face utterly abstracted from all surroundings, his whole thoughts engrossed upon some fantastic melody that he is pondering in his mind, and he is completely indifferent to all else in the world. It is immaterial to him whether he has breakfast or whether he has not. If you were to ask him, he probably would not be able to give you a certain answer. He would say, "Perhaps I have; but what is breakfast to the development of this admirable theme?" at which he would sit down to the piano and explain in detail the precise idea that is engaging his thoughts.

But no one among his own family would dare to ask any such question. The children have been taught to subdue the noise of their games when he is near. They have been told their papa is often engaged in poring over some intricate musical problem which is of great importance to the family's prosperity. For their own sake and their mother's, no less than his, they should give him the silence he so imperatively demands.

In this way he goes about during the morning hours with

a roll of music paper under one arm and a newspaper under the other, looking at each one in its turn—sometimes filling the score with an abundance of rapidly written notes, at other times unfolding the newspaper and reading several paragraphs with the deepest interest. Occasionally he interrupts his reading with gestures of dissent or smiles of approbation, but often the reading is no sooner commenced than it is abandoned again, and he falls with renewed energy on his score, which is fast accumulating music from one margin to the other.

At times he breaks off both occupations to play a passage on the piano, and that is when we notice a peculiarity of his playing—a weakness, a hesitancy of his right hand. It seems now and then to cause him pain when he moves it. The truth is that the middle finger of his right hand is sprained and can only be used with the greatest difficulty. In his younger days, Schumann had such an ambition to excel as a pianist that he used some mechanical instrument for stretching his hand. Not only did he practice so much that he nearly ruined his health, but the mechanism irritated the sinews of his finger and incapacitated him from touching the piano at all for a while. The maimed finger gradually got well, but the unfortunate composer, who had aspired to be a concert virtuoso, was prevented from appearing on the platform all the rest of his life. Even in private, when he sat down to play, the weakness of the hand was quite perceptible, at times unpleasantly so.

The sound of steady scales and exercises on a piano from an adjoining room, where his wife is teaching, admonishes him that he must be up and doing. Accordingly, he recommences his composition again and by dinner time has so far advanced that he can be free from self-reproach for the rest of the day.

At dinner, what a happy family assembles round the table! The bright faces of his children, the smiling countenance of his wife facing him at the other end of the table, much news to tell, trifling though it may be, universal happiness and merriment—till at last Schumann relaxes the rigor of his brow and takes

The Story of Robert Schumann

from *The World's Great Men of Music: Story-Lives of Master Musicians*
by Harriette Brower, edited by Sonya Shafer

Part 1—Was he to be a musician or a legal drudge?

None of Schumann's relatives showed any fondness for music, and though his father, August Schumann, early devoted himself to literature (combined with bookselling) and was all his life a writer of books, no special talent of any kind was previously exhibited in the family.

Robert Schumann was born on June 8, 1810, at Zwickau, "in the fifth house in the market-place," as his biographer circumstantially relates. He does not seem at any time in his life to have been subject to any very serious financial trials; and as the son of an industrious, intelligent tradesman, who himself loved the arts, his early taste for music was encouraged and fostered from the first.

In his seventh or eighth year we hear of him composing dances, though the rules of composition were quite unknown to him; and he early became renowned among his companions, like Chopin, for his power of extemporising funny stories in music and even "sketching the different dispositions of his friends by certain figures and passages on the piano so exactly and comically, that every one burst into loud laughter."

His father's interest and belief in the boy's musical talent is demonstrated by the fact that he wrote to Weber, the composer, asking him to undertake his son's training. Weber is said to have readily agreed to the request, though, for some unknown reason, the arrangement was never carried out. At this time young Schumann was left too much to himself, and the position of musical prodigy in a small town, with little sound knowledge either of the theory or practice of music, was not a beneficial

one to him and left him afterwards much leeway painfully to be made up.

In 1826 his father died, and his mother and Herr Rüdell, his guardian, considered that it would be better for him to adopt some useful profession, such as the law, instead of dreaming his life away at the piano. So he was sent off to Leipzig and entered there as a student of law in March 1828.

It was in Leipzig that he made an acquaintance which was to become of the utmost importance and blessing to him. He was introduced to the house of Friederich Wieck, a sound musician and sensible, merry-hearted man; and there he first saw Clara Wieck, at that time a girl of nine years of age but already exhibiting marvelous musical powers. For the first time Schumann received real music lessons from Herr Wieck. At that period of his life, he solely devoted himself to piano-playing with little if any idea of the higher art of composition. Indeed, if it had not been for the consequences, calamitous enough at the time, of an experiment with his right hand which he foolishly made, the world might have gained one more *virtuoso* and lost a great composer. As for Schumann's legal studies, it may be fairly said that they were never really commenced; he confessed afterwards that the most he did was to go as far as the door of the lecture-room, pause there, turn on his heels, and walk away.

In 1831 he composed his "Abegg Variations" as they are called. These were written on the name of Meta Abegg, a beautiful young lady of Mannheim; but according to Schumann's own account, the theme was suggested by no sentimental reason, as might have been supposed, for it was not he but one of his friends who was in love with her. However that may be, *A, B-flat, E, GG* made a very good theme for the young composer's first essay.

Passing over a journey to Italy and the continuance of Schumann's student life at Heidelberg, we come to the year 1830, when his artistic career may be said to have first distinctly commenced. The legal farce could not be kept up any longer,

Listen and Learn

Symphony No. 3 in E-Flat Major, Op. 97 - "Rhenish": 2. Scherzo

(Disc 2, Track 2; approx. 7 minutes)

In 1850 Schumann accepted a job as municipal orchestra director in Dusseldorf, Germany, and moved to an apartment in the middle of the city with his wife, Clara, and their seven children. While he enjoyed being invited to dinner parties and official events, he struggled to write with the cramped and noisy conditions of the apartment. To escape the bustle of the city, Robert and Clara took a short trip down the Rhine River to Cologne. Schumann was deeply moved by the beauty of the countryside, the kindness of the people, and the majestic Cologne Cathedral. Inspired and reenergized by his trip, Robert wrote his third Symphony in just five weeks and titled it "Rhenish" in memory of the countryside. He wrote to his friend, "I cannot see that there is anything remarkable about composing a symphony in a month. Handel wrote a complete oratorio in that time. If one is capable of doing anything at all, one must be capable of doing it quickly, the quicker the better, in fact. The flow of one's thoughts and ideas is more natural and more authentic than lengthy deliberation."

Symphony No. 3 in E-Flat has five movements, although most symphonies have four movements. Perhaps Schumann was giving a nod to Beethoven's Sixth Symphony, the "Pastoral," which was also inspired by the German countryside.

Even though the second movement is marked "Scherzo," it is not played quite as quickly as the tempo marking indicates. The original subtitle was "Morning Life on the Rhine," and you can hear the cello section open with a folk-like melody before passing it off to different instrument groups in the orchestra.

The violins play a light dance around the opening melody; and near the end of the movement (around the 5:00 mark), you can almost imagine the sunlight bursting across the countryside. Then the music slowly fades away, much as the birds quiet their songs at the end of the morning.