

While the Romantic piano repertoire is widely performed these days, it is rare to find a pianist who performs it with poetic sensitivity. It is even rarer to find a pianist well versed in literature, someone who appreciates the connection between German Romantic music and that specific literature from which it sprouted. Viennese pianist and professor Roman Zaslavsky, who studied in Russia, Israel and Germany, is one of those rare performers. When Zaslavsky, who stems from Saint Petersburg, decided to study in Germany, this decision was influenced by his curiosity in the land of Brahms and Schumann. He saw it as his duty to become better acquainted in the cultural environment of these two composers.

It is his musical and literary expertise that prompted Zaslavsky to the inception of a celebrated series of concerts called “Ingenious Opposites”. These concerts, which often present piano performance in conjunction with narration, cleverly juxtapose two contemporaneous composers: Schumann and Liszt, for example, who were both inspired by literary suggestions from the Romantic period, transforming them into so-called program music, while their respective implementation of the literary template produced opposite yet complementary musical results. Luckily for us these highly edifying programs were published in CD and DVD format.

Lately—perhaps as a counterpart to his “Ingenious Opposites”—Zaslavsky has initiated another very successful project, a concert series he calls “Travel Companions” and which, rather than juxtaposing opposites, compares related composers. It is common knowledge that both Robert and his wife Clara Schumann inspired Johannes Brahms. Yet, from the beginning of their lifelong friendship, the much younger Brahms had a considerable impact on Schumann and we may very well speak of a “cross-fertilization”. In this regard we are very curious and very much looking forward to Zaslavsky's new CD release and to discover the similarities between these two composers both from a musical and literary perspective. The pianist's uncanny sensitivity for polyphonic nuances and sonority and, last not least, his flawless technical mastery will promise a most unique musical pleasure.

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