

# Summary of the Audio Interview

## by Dr. Wolf-Dieter Seiffert with Dr. Norbert Gertsch, Head of Publishing of G. Henle Publishers

SEIFFERT: Across from me is my colleague, Dr. Norbert Gertsch, head of publishing at Henle. You just arrived back from the Frankfurt Musikmesse. This year, at the G. Henle booth the focus was clearly on Robert Schumann.

*GERTSCH: At this year's music fair we consciously focussed the presentation of our editions on Schumann. For several years now our work in the editing department was strongly determined by Schumann's works. Several members of the editing staff were jointly responsible for ensuring that all the previous editions of his piano works were completely and thoroughly revised in time for the anniversary in 2010. In addition, some piano solo pieces were still missing in the Henle catalogue, and of course these gaps needed to be filled. Our aim was to publish the complete solo piano works in six volumes, and of course based on the latest research.*

*At the Musikmesse we were able to present the complete edition in the popular blue Henle Urtext soft cover, as well as clothbound and in the slightly smaller study format.*

*The study edition is also available in a slipcase that contains all six volumes. Schumann's Piano Concerto which we jointly published together with Breitkopf & Härtel, our partner for orchestra music, was of course a bullseye hit: Parallel to the Henle piano reduction Breitkopf presented the complete orchestra material and score at the Musikmesse.*

*Henle roots in piano literature, and to revere Schumann with two so majestic publications was a particular concern of ours.*

*Also, we must not forget that for several years now Henle has also increasingly focussed on songs. We were able to accentuate that fact with the Eichendorff Song Cycle which we also released for the Musikmesse. In the following months we will be adding some chamber music highlights: Fairy-Tale Pictures and Five Pieces in Folk Style. I may also let out that the piano trios are on their way, and, with some luck, we will witness their appearance in Henle editions by the end of the year.*

*All in all, I do have the impression that at the Musikmesse we beat the drum most loudly for Schumann. In contrast, it was surprisingly more subdued in regards to Schumann at the booths of our publisher colleagues, as there was equally less celebration of the other anniversary composer, Frédéric Chopin.*

SEIFFERT: For Henle Schumann editions are certainly not a novelty. Quite the contrary: For that reason we call our new publications of the complete piano works "revised editions". What was "revised", and to phrase it more pointedly, was this tour de force of a complete revision really necessary, and why?

*GERTSCH: That is exactly the question we are asked most often by musicians as well as music dealers whose shelves are already stocked with the Henle Schumann volumes. These editions that were published many years ago were the best at the time, and even today they continue to set standards. But since their publication Schumann researchers have gone a few steps further, as has the technique of editing. One of the triggers for starting the task of revising our editions was the research work of Margit McCorkle. Her Catalogue of Schumann's Works was published in 2003 by Henle, but of course we had access to the findings a few years earlier. And some truly surprising things surfaced. I would like to mention two of the most obvious examples, namely the large annex to the Album for the Young, which after all includes 19 additional pieces not published in our "old", unrevised edition. And secondly, the early version of the Toccata op. 7 which we are publishing for the first time ever. It is quite surprising that first editions of, above all composers, Schumann, had to wait till the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be printed. But this is exactly what we accomplished with the first version of the later Toccata. This piece is almost unknown to most musicians, but it can certainly be regarded as an early, small masterpiece.*

*A special problem arises with the existence of compositions that Schumann himself published in two different versions. As long as these versions, for instance the Symphonic Etudes or Sonata op. 14, were not published in clear separation some musicians played their own personal combined versions. This must certainly not reflect what Schumann intended. We published the two complete versions of both works. The single editions include the second version as a loose insertion to the*



Dr. Wolf-Dieter Seiffert and Dr. Norbert Gertsch

volume. This offers the advantage of being able to compare the two musical texts next to each other without needing to tediously leaf forwards and backwards. We were only able to develop this solution for the revised editions. In this regard our older editions did not have a truly satisfying solution to offer.

SEIFFERT: Our revised Urtexts of Schumann's piano music replace the earlier editions; why aren't they offered parallel to the already well established older ones?

GERTSCH: No, it wouldn't make sense to sell the old and new ones parallel. For one, we are absolutely convinced that the revised editions are better in every aspect and make the old ones obsolete. Secondly, the way we perceive it, there can only be one Urtext of this music. We publish it at Henle under consideration of all the available and relevant sources, and with the use of diligent editorial methods. These two aspects could be subject to change in the future. But for the composer Schumann the ideal was always only one last version, not several. The object of our efforts is to disclose this version. Our customers will "automatically" receive the revised Schumann Urtext, because we have left the order numbers unchanged.

SEIFFERT: So these editions apparently offer more; presumably they have also become much more expensive?

GERTSCH: The answer is no. The price of only very few editions was tentatively inched up. This is the case with the Sonata op. 14 which now includes two complete versions, or also the Toccata, because the edition has doubled in size.

SEIFFERT: Schumann's piano oeuvre, also his chamber music and other compositions are available in numerous editions by other publishers. Where is, in your opinion, Henle's position on the market and why?

GERTSCH: Surprisingly many of Schumann's works are available in true Urtext only at Henle. That in itself secures our position with those musicians who value true accuracy. But even in those instances where other publishers offer good Urtext editions, the acclaimed quality features of our editions still serve our market. It's not for nothing that we describe our editions as "practical Urtext editions". Aesthetically appealing and intuitively understandable notations, highest quality paper, printing and binding, good page-turns and spread pages etc. More than enough reasons to choose Henle!

Dr. Gertsch, thank you very much for your time and for this highly enjoyable conversation.



Memorial room in Schumann's birthplace in Zwickau with Clara Schumann's grand piano