

ROBERT SCHUMANN AND HIS WORLD including the world premiere of *La Tierra No Prometida*

“I learned more about counterpoint from Jean Paul than from any music teacher.”

It is not an overstatement that Schumann is all about fantasy. He lived in fantasy and he created fantasy. Schumann’s music is very much related to that quality of fantasy in the novels of German Romantics he greatly admired, literature and music being for him interdependent arts. Novels of German Romantics such as E. T. A. Hoffmann and Jean Paul made him hallucinate, and he was eager to incorporate their characteristics in his music. **Papillons** (butterflies) is not an exception. The image appears in every major work by Jean Paul as a symbol of transformation, and in this piece Schumann set out to recreate in music the final scene, the masked ball, of Jean Paul’s novel “Flegeljahre.”

In the final scene Walt and Vult, twin brothers, are in love with Wina, although neither has confessed this to the other, and Wina is in love with Walt. All three attend the masked ball, each not knowing what costume the other is wearing. However, somehow Walt and Wina recognize one another and dance. After that, Vult calls his brother to a separate room and asks to exchange costumes. Walt agrees without knowing Vult’s plan and his love for Wina. After the exchange, Vult approaches Wina and dances with her. Wina, not knowing about the exchange, confesses her love for Walt. Vult, his hopes dashed, decides to leave, and the next day he departs playing his flute, which his brother Walt hears, not realizing Vult is vanishing from his life.

Papillons consists of ten short movements depicting the final scene of the novel.

Papillons Op. 2	Marked passages in Flegeljahre
Papillons 1	1. Walt’s delight
Papillons 2	2. Entry into the ball room
Papillons 3	3. The gigantic boot
Papillons 4	4. Hope and the nun (Vult and Wina)
Papillons 5	5. Meeting of Walt and Wina
Papillons 8	6. Walt dances with Wina
Papillons 7	7. Vult discusses the costume exchange
Papillons 9	8. Walt agrees
Papillons 6	9. Vult mocks Walt’s dancing
Papillons 10	10. Walt’s concern over the costume exchange / Vult dances with Wina

Most are in 3/4, which is easy to understand considering the masked ball and Schumann’s fondness for Schubert and German dances. In the last movement, Schumann quotes the ‘Grossvater Tanz,’ which was traditionally used at the end of masked ball. As Schumann wrote, “Often I turned over the last page, for the end seemed to me actually to be a new beginning – almost unaware of what I was doing, I found myself at the piano, and thus one Papillon after another was created.” In the last movement the Grossvater Tanz and the melody from the first movement are placed together. Furthermore, Vult’s flute playing as he departs is portrayed in this concluding movement as repeated fragments becoming progressively one note shorter.

The **Piano Sonata in F-Sharp minor Op. 11** was dedicated to Clara by Robert’s “Doppelgänger”, Florestan and Eusebius. Among the works composed at the time when Robert and Clara were separated, this sonata especially is filled with messages expressing his love for her, the emotional distress of the separation, and the promise they would be reunited.

The piece is in four movements, the sharply dotted rhythms and dramatic left hand figurations of the opening introduction expressing the pain Robert felt in being separated from Clara. In this movement, there are two themes which were used in his previous composition “Fandango,” and Clara’s work “Le Ballet

des revenants”. Fandango is a dance in which it is not allowed to touch and hold each other, refers to the present separation. His obsessive use of these two themes, as well as commonly known Clara themes throughout the movement shows Robert was intensely longing to be reunited with Clara. The second movement is an aria in which Robert used the melody from his song, “An Anna II,” from *Fünf frühe Lieder* Op. posth. 21 No. 4 in which the text describes a man dying on the battlefield thinking about his love in his home country. Robert identified with the man in his longing for Clara. The third movement is a Scherzo with an intermezzo in which Schumann incorporated elements from a waltz and polonaise. At the end of the intermezzo, the inscription ‘oboe’ over a recitative-like section implies a symphony concept. The last movement, which has two almost identical sections and a coda, is the longest movement. Although the form is clearly identified, the nature of the melodic writing is whimsical and capricious. The sonata ends with an F-sharp major chord, reflecting Robert’s wish to be reunited with Clara.

Hyejin Cho

La Tierra No Prometida (*The Not Promised Land*) draws inspiration from different moments in the novel *Cien Años de Soledad* (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*) by Colombian Nobel-prize winning author Gabriel García Márquez. The composer wrote, “It was commissioned by my friend and wonderful pianist Hyejin Cho, who suggested approaching the piece as a 21st-Century response to R. Schumann’s *Papillons*, which is why I decided to structure the work as a sequence of short programmatic movements.”

I. *El Río* (*The River*) is a recurring reference Macondo, the town where the story takes place. At the very opening of the novel García Márquez writes: “...Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses, built on the bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs.” Movements V. *Troubled River*, and IX. *River (reflection)*, are based on the same musical idea, presented in different forms and framing the whole composition.

II. *Entre Pitos y Tambores* (*Amongst Pipes and Kettledrums*): “Every year during the month of March a family of ragged gypsies would set up their tents near the village, and with a great uproar of pipes and kettledrums they would display new inventions.”

III. *El Valse de los Relojes* (*The Clocks’ Waltz*): “They were wondrous musical clocks made of carved wood...which José Arcadio Buendía had synchronized with such precision that every half hour the town grew merry with the progressive chords of the same song until it reached the climax of a noontime that was as exact and unanimous as a complete waltz.”

IV. *Mariposas Amarillas* (*Yellow Butterflies*): “It was then that she realized that the yellow butterflies preceded the appearances of Mauricio Babilonia...she did not have to see him to know that he was there, because the butterflies were always there...She lost her mind over him.”

VI. *Amaranta*: “Macondo woke up in a kind of angelic stupor that was caused by a zither that deserved more than this world and a voice that led one to believe that no other person on earth could feel such love. Piestro Crespi then saw the lights go on in every window in town except that of Amaranta...in the midst of that mad concert his brother found Pietro Crespi at the desk in the rear with his wrists cut by a razor and his hands thrust into a basin of benzoin.”

VII. *El Vals Enrevesado* (*The Mixed-up Waltz*): “Finally José Arcadio Buendía managed, by mistake, to move a device that was stuck and the music came out, first in a burst and then in a flow of mixed-up notes...But the stubborn descendants of the twenty-one intrepid people who plowed through the mountains in search of the sea to the west avoided the reefs of the melodic mixup and the dancing went up until dawn.”

VIII. *La Parranda* (*The Party*): “Then the man of the house played the accordion, fireworks were set off, and drums celebrated the event throughout town. At dawn the guests, soaked in champagne, sacrificed six cows and put them in the street at the disposal of the crowd. No one was scandalized.”

Victor Marquez-Barrios