

Extra-musical Inspirations in Robert Schumann's *Carnaval, Op. 9*

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Abstract

Robert Schumann's *Carnaval, Op.9* is collection of musical inspirations picked from his life. Between 1834 and 1835, he composed twenty-one short pieces to depict the annual Carnival at Mardi Gras. Although *Carnaval* has brilliant pieces to illustrate each idea, person, or character Schumann had in mind, this paper will explain only a few selected movements out of the collection. Because many of Schumann's inspirations are biographical, the paper will first contain a chapter covering a short biography about Schumann. In the second chapter, the paper will elaborate on the selected movements that contain the most influence from Schumann's life.

Extra-musical Inspirations in Robert Schumann's *Carnaval*, Op. 9

One of the great composers, writers, and thinkers of the Romantic Era was Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856). His early work for piano, *Carnaval*, Op. 9, contains many of the characters, people, and ideas that are used as sources of inspiration for many of his works and writings. In a letter to Clara Schumann, Robert wrote, “I am affected by everything that goes on in the world -politics, literature, people– I think it over in my own way, and then I long to express my feelings in music. That is why my compositions are sometimes difficult to understand, because they are connected with distant interests; and sometimes unorthodox, because anything that happens impresses me and compels me to express it in music” (Schonberg 179). By closely examining each movement within *Carnaval*, one can begin to understand the extra-musical sources of inspiration from his life.

This paper is comprised of two chapters. Chapter One is a biographical overview of Robert Schumann. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of Schumann's life, highlighting significant events, people, characters, and literature that influenced his composition of *Carnaval*. Chapter Two is devoted to selected movements from *Carnaval*, including their meaning, history, musical content, and relevance to Schumann's life.

Chapter One: Biographical Overview

In 1810, Robert Schumann was the last child born in the family of August and Johanna Christian Schumann (Ostwald 11). When the family discovered Robert's interest in music, August did all he could to support his son. He bought Robert sheet music and paid for lessons, and took him to concerts. August also insisted that all his children read, which Robert also grew to love. During his childhood, Robert wrote poems, read volumes of books, and later wrote in journals almost daily.

When August was working, Robert was raised by three women: his mother, his sister Emelie, and the wife of a family friend, Eleonore Ruppius. When Robert was young, Robert's mother fell ill to typhus and Robert went to live for an extended period of time with the Ruppius family. This separation from his family was traumatic (Ostwald 15). Robert wrote that he would cry himself to sleep (Ostwald 13). During this time, music seemed to ease Robert's pain.

Before Robert was seven, his musical education consisted of the rudiments of music theory. Next, he took piano lessons from Johanne Gottfried Kuntsch, a church organist. As he learned more about music, Robert developed a talent for improvisation. He often used his ability to improvise to imitate people's character or style (Schauffer 292). After Robert and his father recognized that he had surpassed Kuntsch, Robert studied music on his own while August searched for a new teacher.

However, shortly after August contacted Carl von Weber, August and his eldest daughter Emelie, both died. Although the cause of August's death is uncertain, the cause of Emelie's death was suicide. According to C.E. Richter, author of *Biographie von August Schumann*, Emelie was diagnosed as mentally ill by the time she reached age 29.

Both of these deaths haunted Robert. At the age of 15, Robert visited thoughts of drowning and, in his diaries, August 10, 1824, continued to be a day of mourning the death of his father (Ostwald 22).

When Robert was 18, he was invited to visit his friend, Emil Flechsig, at the University of Leipzig. In response to his mother's insistence, Robert succumbed to study law. There are considerable doubts, however, as to whether Robert seriously studied law or even attended classes. His roommate, Flechsig, claimed that he never saw Robert attend any of his classes (Ostwald 35). Instead, Robert spent most of his time improvising, reading the works of Jean Paul, and isolating himself from most of student life.

During his time in Leipzig, he secretly took up piano lessons with Friedrich Wieck, a self-taught pianist and well-known teacher. Wieck had a degree in theology, but had decided to pursue music instead. When Robert requested to study with him, Wieck had been boasting to the public that he effectively taught piano to his children, Clara and her two brothers (Ostwald 44). In fact, Clara became a famous virtuoso pianist and eventually married Robert. Robert attended lessons regularly, but Wieck gave him finger exercises that Robert thought were beneath him (Ostwald 45). Flechsig said that Wieck's nickname for Robert was a "hot-head" (Ostwald 44). Although their relationship would continue to be difficult, Wieck also connected Robert to other musicians.

Clara Wieck was born in 1819, and much of her childhood was filled with sadness. In her diary, Clara said that she suffered two losses, contact with her mother and dismissal of the nurse who cared for her since she was born (Reich 11). Wieck had divorced his wife on suspicion of adultery and obtained custody of their children when

Clara was five. Even when he obtained custody of Clara, Wieck was more concerned about building her up to display her virtuosity rather than raising her as a daughter.

While Robert was in Leipzig, he struggled with depression, which he talked about with his friend, Gisbert Rosen. To remedy his predicament, Robert decided to transfer to Heidelberg University in 1829. This transfer did not solve anything; he drank heavily and struggled with depression even more. Next, he asked his mother to send some of his inheritance so he could go to Italy for the summer. Initially, this trip seemed to have put him in better spirits, but after some time, he became homesick and returned to Heidelberg.

Upon his return, Robert began composing and completed his early work for piano, *Papillons* (Butterflies). In 1830, Robert oscillated from two extremes, exuberancy and depression. He spent a majority of his time partying and drinking. In his diary, Robert wrote that he felt so “disgusted” that he considered suicide (Ostwald 61). His reasons for living at that point were as follows: his belief that he was a very special person, his love of feeling all emotions including the painful ones, and his attachment to his mother. He yearned to return home, but his family would not have him return because of his irresponsibility with money (Ostwald 63). Instead, he went to Frankfurt, a decision that changed his career.

In Frankfurt, he attended four recitals showcasing the virtuoso violinist Nicolo Paganini. Robert was so inspired after hearing Paganini that he officially decided to focus on becoming a virtuoso pianist. When Robert told his mother that he was going to devote six years to becoming a virtuoso pianist, his mother objected to his decision, and wrote to Wieck about her distress (Ostwald 65). In response, Wieck reassured Schumann’s mother

that he was a great teacher and exaggerated that he would help Robert reach a professional level in three years (Ostwald 66). Eager about this new pursuit, Robert returned to Leipzig to live and study with Wieck. Within one year, however, Robert realized that Wieck had little intention of making him into a great artist, but rather Clara. Jealous, but still yearning to achieve his goal, he continued to take lessons (Ostwald 71).

Meanwhile, Robert pondered on other ideas that developed his musical style. Since Wieck only offered Robert private lessons, Robert needed another teacher for music theory and composition. Wieck suggested that Robert take lessons from Christian Weinlich, who also taught Clara, but Robert decided to study with Heinrich Dorn instead (Ostwald 81). Heinrich Dorn was a young conductor and opera composer who met Robert at Wieck's house. While he studied with Dorn, Robert began to write music critiques. He published a few essays in the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in December 1831.

As Robert studied with Wieck, he practiced a great deal, which is possibly what led to gradual pains in his right hand. Robert confided to Wieck immediately, but Wieck avidly defended his style of teaching and claimed that Robert injured himself (Ostwald 91). In response, Robert sought out medical advice. He was advised to treat his hand with animal blood, which was an archaic remedy of the time. Today, the most likely diagnosis of his finger would be an inflammation of a tendon within the hand, which is common among pianists (Ostwald 93).

In 1833, Robert formed his own newspaper called *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Journal for Music) (Ostwald 100). As he formed the newspaper, Robert was plagued repetitively with the thought of death. As he continued to live in Leipzig, Robert,

his sister-in-law, and his brother contracted different illnesses. Unfortunately, his brother Julius passed away from tuberculosis. As a way of coping with the grief, Robert mostly isolated himself. Fortunately, the journal was a catalyst for him to continue to spur on more ideas until the death of his sister-in-law.

Following these two recent deaths, Robert suffered a nervous breakdown. At this time, Robert stopped seeing Christel, his mistress, and chose to live with Ludwig Schunke (Ostwald 104). Schunke was a well-known pianist who met Robert at a bar. When they lived together, these men proceeded to think and plan to start a newspaper about music for musicians. In March 1834, Robert signed a contract to publish his newspaper *Neue Leipziger Zeitschrift für Musik*. This newspaper had four editors, Robert (Chief), Wieck, Schunke, and Julius Knorr. The newspaper contract could only be voided if less than 500 people subscribed. Fortunately, the journal attracted the public's interest in Leipzig. Robert's goal was to inform the public of the "lamentable" shape of German music in the 1830s (Ostwald 107).

As he continued to enjoy work, he began to consider marriage (Ostwald 109). In the company of Clara's friends, Robert met seventeen-year-old Ernestine von Fricken, the daughter of a nobleman in Bohemia. Wieck may have noticed Robert's attention towards Fricken because he took Fricken up as a student and allowed her to live in his house. Although Robert desired marriage to Fricken, he had several reasons against marriage: the physical injury he may have sustained after sexual relations with Christel, his financial insecurity, and his extreme devotion towards his roommate Schunke. While Schumann delayed thoughts of marriage to Ernestine, Schunke suddenly contracted tuberculosis. Unable to cope by isolating himself, Robert discussed this predicament with

Carl and Henriette Voigt, who were mutual friends of Schumann and Schunke. They moved Schunke to their house and encouraged Robert to continue to pursue Fricken. After Robert introduced Fricken to his mother, he proposed to her. At the end of July 1834, Robert and Fricken were engaged.

When Baron von Fricken heard about Robert's relationship with his daughter, he quickly informed Robert that Fricken was actually his illegitimate daughter and that any man could marry her, but could not obtain any of his inheritance (Ostwald 111). It is often inferred that this was the reason why Robert broke off his engagement. However, Ostwald writes that Robert broke of the engagement prior to his discovery of her illegitimacy (114). Although Schunke was not living with him, his ambivalence about marriage to Ernestine persisted. Because he valued his reputation, he annulled the engagement by not declaring a date for the wedding (Ostwald 113).

In December 1834, the *Neue Zeitschrift* changed publishers. Ludwig Schunke had passed away, Wieck was on a six-month tour with Clara, Knorrs was incompatible to work with, and Robert was having difficulty running the journal by himself. When Robert found a new publisher, Robert had to take "Leipzig" out of the title according to the terms of the contract, but the journal could now appear twice a week instead of once a week. In the following year, Robert composed *Carnaval*. Aside from composing, Robert continued to practice piano. Possibly due to the accumulating stress from conflicts with Wieck and competition with Clara, Robert reported "lameness" in his right hand in his diary (Ostwald 86). According to Ostwald, Robert decided to use a contraption that was meant to strengthen his right hand (88). Unfortunately, this further damaged Robert's hand and prevented him from becoming a virtuoso pianist. Because of his hand injury, he

asked Clara to play it for him. At this time, Clara began to clearly show her affection towards Schumann; for his birthday, she sent him a watch-chain expressing how intimate she would like them to be (Ostwald 116).

As Clara continued to mature into an adult, Robert wrote more about his “unnamed emotion” towards Clara, until finally they shared a kiss when she was 17 and he was 26 (Ostwald 120). A month after this kiss, Clara performed a concert in Zwickau where Schumann’s mother came to give her approval of their marriage. These events caught Wieck’s attention and he began to take steps toward isolating Clara from Robert. In January 1836, Wieck took Clara to Dresden to separate Robert and Clara from one another and attempted to destroy any letters that passed between them. In response, Robert moved in with a friend named Wilhelm Ulex, who served as a secret messenger between Robert and Clara without her father knowing. The couple decided that if they were to be married then they would have to ask for Wieck’s permission. When they told this to Wieck, he told Clara that he would shoot Robert the next time he came near her again and demanded for her to return any letters that Robert had ever written to her (Ostwald 123). In obedience to her father, Clara did not communicate with Robert for about a year and a half (February 1836 to August 1837).

During this painful separation, Robert was only able to express his pain through music. After the period of mute separation, Clara and Robert carried on secretly communicating for an additional two years. She was scared of bold opposition against her father until she discovered Weick was conspiring against her. Clara found out that her father planned to disinherit her and keep the money she had earned from her concerts for himself (Ostwald 151). Terrified, Clara informed Robert and together they went to court

against Weick. After the court considered the verdict for a year, Wieck surrendered.

Robert was finally free to marry Clara (Ostwald 163).

Unfortunately, much of the union between Robert and Clara was stressful. Both were unprepared to be parents of a family in many ways. Robert had to take on more financial responsibilities even though he would rather focus on composing, and Clara had to take on a wife's responsibilities even though she would rather continue to perform. Producing eight children tore them both from their desires and created a lot of tension within the marriage. In 1844, Robert began to struggle with massive depression. During this time, Schumann sold the journal to continue composing. After years of travel, the family settled in Dresden for five years. Here, Schumann met Ferdinand Hiller, a music director and a conductor of symphonies. When Hiller decided to leave his job as a music director in Düsseldorf, he recommended that Robert to take his place in 1849. In 1850, the Düsseldorf Music Society hired him as music director (Ostwald 229). Because of Robert's social anxiety and introverted nature, the Music Society finally released him in 1853. In the following year, he unsuccessfully attempted to commit suicide by leaping off a bridge into the Rhine River. Once he was rescued, he was hospitalized. From 1854 to 1856, Robert was institutionalized in an asylum where he had very little contact with Clara, family, and friends. Without contact from the outside world, Robert turned to his internal world to provide an imaginary social environment. Unsatisfied, he chose to starve to death and passed away on July, 29, 1856.

Chapter Two: Analysis of selected movements from *Carnaval, Op. 9*

Carnaval is a collection of 20 short movements for piano, written in 1834-1835.

Each movement contains a title that informs the listener of who or what is being depicted. As a whole, the piece is meant to illustrate a masked ball during the season of Carnival (the European equivalent of Mardi Gras) in Italy. According to Robert Greenburg, a former Professor of Music at the San Francisco Conservatory, the masked ball “allows for the emergence and indulgence of secret fantasies and passions.” It was a place for people to reveal their hidden-selves. In this collection, Robert Schumann revealed the people, characters, and ideas that mattered most to him, as well as aspects of his own personality.

“Florestan” (6th movement)

One of the many books Schumann read by Jean Paul Richter was *Die Flegeljahre*. This book spurred his curiosity about split personalities. The main character struggled with split personalities who regarded each other as brothers. One personality was named Vult and the other Walt; each personality had a vastly different personality. Vult was aggressive and assertive while his brother Walt was introspective and shy. In the book, the brothers were involved in a love triangle. Walt was in love with a girl, Wina. Walt was too shy to confess his feelings for Wina, so the brothers agreed to exchange clothes for a masked ball. On the day of the ball, Vult disguised himself as Walt and discovered the girl’s love for his brother. In the end, Walt ran away while his brother was asleep.

On Robert’s 21st birthday, he created “Florestan the Improviser” (Ostwald 77). The name “Florestan” refers to the hero from Beethoven’s opera *Fidelio*. In the opera, Florestan is rescued by his wife Leonora just before he was to be killed in a prison. The

character of Florestan is based on Richter's character Vult. To Robert, Florestan represents the side of himself that is "outgoing, assertive, masculine, and social" (Ostwald 77). In the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and his compositions, Robert would occasionally sign his work with an "F" for Florestan. Florestan makes an appearance not only in the newspaper but also in Robert's other music, such as the *Davidsbündlertanze*.

In this movement, one can hear Florestan's personality through Robert's use of loud dynamics and crescendos. Additionally, he uses a wide keyboard range, numerous leaps, and the indication *passionato* (Passionate) indication, adds to the depiction of his personality (see Figure 1). Because this movement is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, one would expect an emphasis on beat one. Instead, the sforzandos (sf) place an unexpected emphasis on beats two and three in measures 2 and 4.

Figure 1: "Florestan," mm. 1-6



In the middle of "Florestan," Robert includes an allusion from one of his early compositions named *Papillons* (see Figures 2 and 3). "Papillons" means "butterflies" in French. At the time Robert composed this piece, he felt that he was emerging as his own musical artist and related his "metamorphosis" to a butterfly. Like in *Carnaval*, *Papillons* is based on the masked ball depicted in Richter's book, *Die Flegeljahre*. In fact, Robert uses direct quotations from *Die Flegeljahre* for each piece. According to G. Henle Verlag, editor of the urtext edition of *Papillons*, Robert's personal copy of *Die*

Flegeljahre contained cross-references between the book and his music (*Papillons* iv).

Even though Robert uses the title “Papillons,” this section lacks resemblance to his other work, *Papillons* (see Figure 4).

Figure 2: “Florestan” mm. 19-23



Figure 3: *Papillons*, mm. 1-8



Figure 4: “Papillons”, mm. 1-4



“Peirrot” and “Arlequin”

The 2nd and 3rd movements in *Carnaval* are “Peirrot” and “Arlequin,” both of which originate from the Italian *Commedia dell’arte*. *Commedia dell’arte* is a style of drama that uses improvisation instead of a written script to drive the plot. Popular in the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, groups of actors called troupes would travel throughout Europe with costumes, masks, and props, and perform at several locations, such as Northern Italy and France. Two of the most popular characters in *Commedia dell'arte* were Peirrot (or Pedrolino) and Arlequin (or Harlequin or Arlecchino).

However, Robert did not seem to reference *Commedia dell'arte* characters in his well-known works and critiques. Throughout his life, Robert was exposed to different types of drama including operas and plays. When he was a child, Robert acted in plays. In Leipzig, he attended operas. Outside of piano lessons with Wieck, he met other musicians including Heinrich Marschner, the opera director of the State Theater in Leipzig and popular composer of the time. He was taught music theory and composition from an opera composer named Heinrich Dorn. In 1843, he worked on composing an oratorio called *Paradise and the Peri* (Ostwald 182). Overall, Robert was familiar with works of drama even though he may not have referenced *Commedia dell'arte* characters in his popular works and critiques.

“Pierrot” (2nd movement)

Pierrot was a clownish character. He always had a white face and a white tunic with long sleeves that would cover his hands. This character was a shy, sad loner full of unrequited love for Columbina, who was a petite, pretty maid. He was often rejected after he expressed his love. After Columbina's refusals, Pierrot would beat himself for not being the person of her affection. Rather than being a character of pity, Pierrot was a character of ridicule that stirred much amusement from the audience.

Robert Schumann depicts Pierrot musically in *Carnaval* in a variety of ways, including Pierrot's shyness and his clumsiness as a clown. One can sense the shy and sad

nature of Pierrot through soft dynamics, light articulations, and downward melodic movement (see Figure 5). In measure 3, three notes marked “forte” interrupt the calm character, perhaps indicating the clumsiness or comical side of Pierrot.

Figure 5: “Pierrot,” mm. 1

The image shows a musical score for the first measure of 'Pierrot'. The score is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The treble clef staff has a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The bass clef staff has a *rit.* marking. In measure 3, three notes (G4, A4, Bb4) are circled in black, and an arrow points to them from a box labeled “Forte” interruption. Another box labeled “Three notes of interruption” points to the same circled notes. The score is titled “Harlequin” (3rd movement).

According to Tim Shane, founder, director, and writer of Dallas Hub Theater in Texas, Harlequin was a “childlike, tricky, nimble, and acrobatic valet” (shane-arts.com). His black carnival mask suggests a character of African origin. His costume included a feather or tail of a fox, and multiple diamonds of red, brown, yellow, and green. The animal-like prop was a sign of ridicule or the “butt” of a joke. His humorous behavior made him popular with his audience. Although he often behaved like a child, he always won against his opponents in a fight. Unlike Pierrot, Harlequin was able to win over Columbina’s love.

In Figure 6, one can hear Harlequin’s childlike nature in the staccatos, the syncopations, and the leaps of a fifth or an octave. The time signature, the B-flat major key, and the tempo marking *vivo* or “lively” adds to his character. The time signature, $\frac{3}{4}$, imitates a waltz which adds to Harlequin’s “tricky, acrobatic” character. The B-flat major key and the tempo marked, “lively,” perpetuates the energy and in high spirits. Like Pierrot, Harlequin contains dynamic contrast jumps starting from measure 1 and 3.

Figure 6: “Arlequin,” mm. 1-4

“Eusebius” (5th movement)

While “Florestan” is based on of Richter’s Vult, “Eusebius” is based on Richter’s Walt. Eusebius is introspective and shy. The name “Eusebius” came from the name of a Christian martyr who preached about the relationship between the Father and the Son. Eusebius’s zeal and suffering might have been what interested Robert (Ostwald 78). Finally, Robert had a name for both of his imaginary, split personalities. He used them both as coping mechanisms and creative purposes. In the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* and his compositions, Robert would occasionally sign his work with an “E” for Eusebius.

The shy and introspective character of Eusebius is depicted musically through a slow tempo and a melody mostly consisting of steps with a leap that appears on the third beat of each measure (see Figure 7). *Sotto voce* indicates the melody should be played as if sung quietly. The ascending bass line helps create an reflective, dreamy effect. When the four eighth notes are played, it gives the impression of a built in rubato in measure 4. These ideas are continued throughout the piece.

Figure 7: “Eusebius,” mm. 1-4

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of a piece. The top staff is in treble clef, and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Adagio.' and the dynamics are 'sotto voce'. A box labeled 'Leap' points to a large interval in the right hand of the first measure. The left hand is marked 'senza ped.'.

“Coquette” (7th movement)

According to Ann Shteir, a researcher of 18th-century English literature, the term, coquette, referred to a young, single, sexualized woman in the 19th century. In *Carnaval*, Robert could be depicting “Coquette” as this sort of character. Women who behaved in a flirtatious manner were prevalent during Robert’s time. Robert was familiar with women who displayed this sort of character. Even during the time Robert pursued Clara during the period of mute separation, Robert had intercourse with women while he was in distress over his separation from Clara (Ostwald 124). However, there is not a direct reference between “Coquette” and a person in Robert’s past.

At the beginning of the movement, the music seems to be bringing the previous movement, “Florestan”, to an end (see Figure 8). If that’s the case, the theme of “Coquette” begins on measure 4, following the double bar. The theme illustrates a light, dainty character expressed in the syncopation, large leaps in both hands, and dynamics throughout the section. The “flighty” two note groups add to the character of “Coquette’s” flirtatious character.

Figure 8: “Coquette,” mm. 1-5

In the next section of “Coquette,” the melodic arpeggios contrast from the short jumpy two-note groups of the first section (see Figure 9). These flowing arpeggios create a suave, feminine-like character. In measure 43, *ritenuto* means the performer is meant to slightly slow down perhaps suggesting that “Coquette” is making men wait on her.

Figure 9: “Coquette,” mm. 40-43

“Chiarina” (11th movement)

At the time Robert composed *Carnaval*, Clara Wieck was not his wife yet. However, this title was a pet name for Clara. Even before she became his wife, she was an important and inspirational figure to him socially and musically. When he accepted that he could not become a virtuoso pianist due to his hand injury, he asked Clara to perform his compositions for him. Because of their mutual value of music and Clara’s proficiency at the piano, they grew close. During the period in which Robert was separated from Clara, Clara became the source of his motivation to compose music. In at least four of his other works, he alluded to Clara in some way, including dedicating a

piece to her or incorporating a piece Clara performed into his own composition such as the *Sonata in F-sharp minor (Op. 11)*, the *Piano Sonata in G minor (Op. 22)*, the *Fantasia in C major (Op. 17)*, and the *Grand Sonata in F minor (Op.14)* (Ostwald 125).

The fact that Robert was engaged to Ernestine von Fricken at the time he wrote *Carnaval*, this movement seems to show that Robert had emotions for Clara, too (see Figure 10). This can be seen and heard in the opening measures of this piece, where Robert indicates that this section should be played “passionately.” The loud dynamics and accents on the first beats of each measure also add to this. The *sforzandos*, accents, and wide leaps in both hands make this movement sound restless. Perhaps this reflects the longing Robert felt toward Clara at the time.

Figure 10: “Chiarina,” mm. 1-5



“Chopin” (12th movement)

Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) was a Polish composer and pianist during Robert’s time. The two met many times and Robert was well acquainted with his music. Upon hearing a composition of Chopin’s for the first time (his *Lá ci darem la mano variations*) he published a review in which he made his now famous statement, “Hats off, gentlemen– genius” (Plantinga 226). As Chopin continued to compose, Robert reviewed many of his works in his *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. Although Robert’s commentary gave Chopin more publicity, Chopin did not seem to appreciate it or even Robert’s music (Plantinga 233). Judging by Chopin’s lack of response, researchers deduce he was

embarrassed by Robert's critiques. In fact, according to Ostwald, Chopin never forgave Robert for placing him in *Carnaval* (115).

In this movement, Robert alludes to Chopin's early style, which often included arpeggiated figures, arpeggiated bass line, and a "bel canto" or "singing" melodic line. The "bel canto" style originates from Italian operatic singing. In fact, this movement bears resemblance to Chopin's *Etude in A-flat major (Op. 25, No. 1)* which was written when Chopin was just 26 years old. Both of these pieces share key signatures, arpeggiated figures, and melodic lines (see Figure 11). In "Chopin," the melody line is syncopated rather than copy the melody line from the *Etude* (see Figure 12). A technique Chopin was well known for was his improvisation. This improvised figuration is a clear reference to a vocal cadenza, found frequently in Italian opera (see Figure 13). Chopin includes this style in many of his works including: nocturnes, impromptus, polonaises, ballads, and other works.

Figure 11: Chopin's *Etude in A-flat major. Op. 25, No. 1* "Aeolian Harp," mm. 1.

Allegro sostenuto. ♩ = 104.

p

Similar melodic Lines

Arpeggiated figures

Figure 12: “Chopin,” mm. 1-2

Figure 12 shows a musical score for two measures (mm. 1-2) of a piece by Chopin. The tempo is marked "Agitato." and the dynamics are "f". The score is in 4/4 time. The bass staff features arpeggiated figures, and the treble staff features similar melodic lines. Annotations include "Similar melodic lines" pointing to the treble staff and "Arpeggiated figures" pointing to the bass staff.

Figure 13: “Chopin,” mm. 10

Figure 13 shows a musical score for two measures (mm. 10) of a piece by Chopin. The score is in 4/4 time. The bass staff features arpeggiated figures, and the treble staff features melodic lines.

“Estrella” (13th movement)

Estrella is a pet name for Ernestine von Fricken, Robert’s fiancé as the time he composed *Carnaval*. Robert alluded to her in this, and other movements in *Carnaval*, including “Asch-Scha Lettres Dansantes” and “Sphinxes.”

In “Estrella,” Robert may have chosen a minor key to express his ambivalence toward marrying Ernestine. In the middle of “Estrella,” the music is in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, but it contains an abundance of syncopation (see Figure 14). This is accomplished by the tied notes in both hands. In addition, the hands are not in sync, but rather create overlapping $\frac{2}{4}$. The syncopation and the tied notes produce an ambiguity that prevents the audience from recognizing that the music is has been in $\frac{3}{4}$ time the entire piece. From this, it is possible that Robert passed his ambivalence to the audience.

Figure 14: "Estrella," mm. 21-27



Asch was the town in which Ernestine was born. In some of Robert's works including *Abegg Variations (Op. 1)*, *6 Fugues on Bach (Op. 60)*, and *Album for the Young (No. 41)*, Schumann would write in anagrams or ciphers. In Figure 15, "Sphinxes" are three ciphers of the name Asch (in German, the "A" stands for A-flat, "E" for E flat, "H" for B, and "C" is C). In a letter to Henriette Voigt, Robert explained that the town Asch was a "musical" theme (Ostwald 115). According to Ostwald, the ciphers from "Sphinxes" appear within the movements in *Carnaval* such as "Pierrot" and "Florestan" in Figures 16 and 17 (115).

Figure 15: "Sphinxes"

Sphinxes.


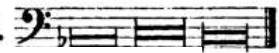
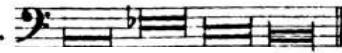
| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Nº1.  E-flat C B A | Nº2.  A-flat C B | Nº3.  A E-flat C B |
|---|--|---|

Figure 16: "Pierrot," mm. 1

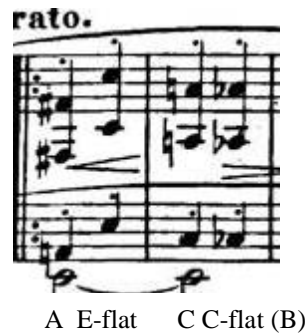


Figure 17: "Florestan," mm. 1

E-flat

A B C

"Paganini" (17th movement)

The miniature movement called "Paganini" refers to a well-known violinist named Nicholas Paganini (1782-1840). Paganini was popular not only for his musicianship and technique, but also for his showmanship as a performer. Once he heard Paganini perform, he was convinced and immediately wrote to his mother about it. As mentioned earlier, Robert was incredibly inspired after hearing Paganini for the first time (Ostwald 64).

In this movement, Robert imitates Paganini's virtuosic style. According to Robert Schaffer, the "Paganini" movement alludes to Robert's transcriptions of Paganini's *24 Caprices for Solo Violin (Op.1)*. By comparing Figures 18, 19 and 20, one can see that

the key signature, rhythm, dynamics, and melody line are similar. For the pianist, this movement is challenging to play because of the many wide leaps, played very quickly. Not only did he include Paganini in *Carnaval*, but also in his *Caprices* (*Op. 3* and *Op. 10*) for piano, *Symphonic Etudes* (*Op. 13*), and piano accompaniments for Paganini's pieces.

Figure 18: *6 Etudes de Concert d'après des Caprices de Paganini pour le Pianof Op. 10, No. 1, mm. 1-2*

Figure 19: *Violin Caprices No. 12, mm. 1-2*

Figure 20: "Paganini," mm. 1-4

"Marche des Davidsbündler contre les Philistines" (21st movement)

When Robert and Schunke were roommates, Robert imagined a fraternity of musicians called the *Davidsbündler* "League of David." The *Davidsbündler* drew its inspiration from David who defeated Goliath in the Bible. Rather than Goliath, the

Davidsbündler fought against the “reactionary, uncultivated enemies” called the “Philistines” (Ostwald 104). The group was initially comprised of the people as followed: Florestan, Eusebius Chopin, Chiarina (Clara), Mendelssohn, and Master Raro (Wieck or sometimes Robert). Later, he added more people including Johannes Brahms. The “Philistines” were the people who did not have the same musical taste as Robert did. Many of the ideas, material, and names in the *Davidsbünder* originated from Robert’s unfinished novel called *Child Prodigies*. In the *Neue Leipziger Zeitschrift für Musik*, he signed several of his publications with “Florestan,” “Eusebius,” or “Raro” (a name for Wieck or a combination for Clara and Robert, ClaRarobert). Not only is *Davidsbünder* mentioned in *Carnaval*, but he referenced it in other pieces including the *Davidsbündlertanze*.

In “*Marche des Davidsbündler contre les Philistines*”, the movement is a march, but it is also in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, which is an atypical meter for a march (see Figure 21). To accomplish a march, Robert uses the quarter notes and eighth notes to create the sense of $\frac{2}{4}$ pattern. The octaves and loud, sudden dynamics produce a sense of grandness. One can depict a scene in which the *Davidsbünder* is marching to battle the “Philistines”.

Figure 21: “*Marche des Davidsbündler contre les Philistines*” mm. 1-8



In conclusion, Robert Schumann included the people, characters, and ideas that inspired him in *Carnaval*. He composed movements based on people such as Paganini,

Chopin, Clara, Ernestine, and those from his *Davidsbünder*. He composed movements based on characters from *Commedia dell'arte*, including Pierrot and Harlequin. He composed movements based on ideas from Jean Paul Richter, including setting at the masked ball. However, none of these was spontaneous. Schumann procured all of them from his life and represented the wide range of people and influences that were in some way meaningful to him.

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