



Franz Schubert
Complete Works for Violin and Piano
Volume 2

Fantasy for piano duet, D. 940

Julia Fischer - Martin Helmchen

Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

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Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major “Duo”, D. 574 (Op. posth. 162)

1 Allegro moderato	8. 52
2 Scherzo (Presto)	4. 08
3 Andantino	4. 28
4 Allegro vivace	4. 57

Fantasia for Violin and Piano in C major, D. 934 (Op. posth. 159)

5 Andante molto	3. 22
6 Allegretto	5. 36
7 Andantino	10. 21
8 Tempo primo-Allegro-Allegretto-Presto	5. 52

Fantasia in F minor for Piano Duet, D. 940 (Op. 103)

9 Allegro molto moderato	4. 55
10 Largo	2. 48
11 Allegro vivace	5. 41
12 Tempo I	5. 39

Julia Fischer, violin / piano (D. 940)

Martin Helmchen, piano

Total playing time: 67. 04

Recording venue: Concertboerderij Valthermond,
The Netherlands, 3-5/1/2009 & 3-5/7/2009
Executive Producer: Job Maarse
Recording Producer: Sebastian Stein
Balance Engineer: Jean-Marie Geijssen
Editing: Sebastian Stein
Piano: Steinway & Sons D-274
Piano-tuner during recording:
Michel Brandjes, Ehud Loudar

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Franz Schubert (1797 – 1828)

Schubert concluded his personal violin sonata ‘chapter’ early on, as his last work in this genre dates from 1817: the Sonata for Violin and Piano in A major, D. 574 (Op. posth. 162, Grand Duo). Perhaps he put aside any further plans for violin sonatas he might have had due to a number of significant experiences he underwent in 1817. Although Schubert is often portrayed by the lay world as never being successful with his compositions during his lifetime, this is not entirely the case. Thus his cantata *Prometheus* – penned the previous year – had created quite a sensation in Vienna. Otherwise Schubert would hardly have considered giving up his recently (1816) acquired teaching position in favour of creative free-lancing. However, music historians are right about the negative representation of the reception given to Schubert’s works, as indeed, according to traditional tales, fortune did not smile upon him: of all things, this successful work – the *Prometheus* Cantata – was lost to the world and has not yet been rediscovered to this day.

At any rate, in 1817 a number of things occurred simultaneously: his cantata was a success, he resigned from his job as a teacher, he left home and struck out for himself, and he put an end to his composition lessons with Antonio Salieri. In this period of time, Schubert also wrote two of his most famous songs: *Der Tod und das Mädchen* (= Death and the maiden) and *Der Wanderer* (= The wanderer). Two successes in the Lied genre, which led to the contact with the baritone Johann Michael Vogl, who would later become one of his most important friends and patrons. On the other side, the lack of funds, with which Schubert had struggled since resigning from his job as a teacher, had prevented his marriage to Therese Grob, who was most likely the only woman to feature in his life. Thus, these were the circumstances in which he wrote his Violin Sonata in A major – and as so often, it does not say much about the actual frame of mind of the composer at the time of writing the work. For it is a cheerful composition that comes up only with movements in $\frac{3}{4}$ time after the *Allegro moderato*, which appears to be almost pure Mendelssohn, and as a result also retains an irrevocably tripping, airy and rhythmically springy mood.

In 1826, Schubert had met the Bohemian violinist Josef Slavik, who was making a stopover in Vienna at the time. A year later, he wrote his Fantasia in C major, D. 934, a composition tailor-made for Slavik, who was known to be a true master at his profession.

One should not always rely on the musicologists. At least, not as far as the attribution of certain musical characters or moods of a work are concerned, or the appreciation of its tonal characteristics. That puts paid to intuition really fast... How is it otherwise possible that

the music-historian Guido Fischer described Schubert’s Fantasia for Violin and Piano in C major, D. 934 (Op. posth. 159), written one year before the death of the composer, as “a model of cheerful nonchalance and playful this-worldliness”? For although the Fantasia is light and easy-going, sparkling and, as far as I’m concerned, ‘this-worldly’ in its fast sections, at the beginning this piece is anything but this-worldly: rather, it is introverted in more radical a manner than one usually comes across in music from Schubert’s time. For already at the solemn moment of the beginning, when the violin raises its voice in all simplicity above that of the piano (which represents nature, the rushing brook), like a helpless individual pouring out his sorrow, for whom all that remains is the experience of and the dialogue with nature, it becomes clear that this masterpiece is most definitely dealing with – and let us state this clearly – the *hereafter*.

As lonely as the individual clearly is at the beginning of the Fantasia, just as deeply later on does he wallow in memories of lost love. And when Schubert bases the Andantino of the Fantasia on the A-flat-major variation theme from his own Lied *Sei mir gegrüßt*, D. 741, then he is nevertheless ‘saying’ something, admittedly without a word actually being said. For the last verse of the poem by Friedrich Rückert, on which the Lied is based, runs as follows: “Ein Hauch der Liebe tilget Raum und Zeiten, ich bin bei dir, du bist bei mir, ich halte dich in dieses Arms Umschlusse, sei mir gegrüßt, sei mir geküsst!” (= A breath of love wipes out time and space, I am with you, you are with me, I hold you in my arms’ embrace, my greetings, my kisses flow to you!) The first bars of Schubert’s Fantasia are all about distant, long-lost love, thoughts of the end, returning to nature, the embracing of nature, time and eternity – and not particularly, no, definitely not with ‘this-worldliness’.

The German music-historian Walther Vetter (1891 – 1967) once wrote the following: “Schubert himself enjoyed sitting down at the piano together with a partner; for this reason too, he generously delighted chosen acquaintances and patrons with works for piano duet.” Now, we are well aware that Schubert left behind a multitude of works for piano duet. However, what bothers us somewhat about these lines is their complacency – at any rate, if we seriously attempt to apply them to the Fantasia in F minor, D. 940 (Op. 103). This seems to us nevertheless too distressing, too profound a work of Schubert’s to actually “delight” an audience. Particularly since Schubert wrote this composition in 1828, the year in which he died. Nevertheless, the Fantasia is certainly “Hausmusik” (= a piece of music written for performance within the home), as – although it may seem somewhat old-fashioned to us nowadays – performing music for guests in the drawing room was part of normal life during the 19th century. In this manner, people hauled emotional experiences into their own living room. Experiences that nowadays – naturally toned

down in truth, somewhat impoverished – must be replaced by certain occurrences in the media. However, anyone who has truly heard this Fantasia performed in a small room, with just a few other people present, knows how much further the horizon of such an experience extends. The moment alone, in which after 36 bars the F-minor theme simply appears in the major key, is utterly priceless, unmistakable and irreplaceable.

During a funeral gathering held for Schubert in Linz on December 27, 1828, the poet Carl Adam Kaltenbrunner provided those present with an excellent prologue, of which the fourth verse in fact embraced everything that is conveyed emotionally in the Fantasia in F minor: "Wir hören seine Seele sich ergießen, wie eine Nachtigall im Blütenstrauch; In zärtlichen Gefühlen sanft zerfließen, hinwehend wie ein warmer Liebeshauch! Doch mächtig werden wir oft hingerissen, und Schuberts Töne sind ein Donner auch! So wußt' er uns mit sich empor zu tragen, des Herzens tiefste Saiten anzuschlagen!" (= We hear his soul pouring itself out, like a nightingale in the flowering shrubs; softly melting in tender feelings, fluttering like a lover's warm breath! Yet often are we totally spellbound, and Schubert's tones are also like thunder! Thus he managed to bear us up with him, to pluck the most sensitive strings of our hearts!)

Julia Fischer is ranked as one of the leading violinists of the day, captivating audiences world-wide with her music. She was born in Munich in 1983, of German-Slovak parents, and began her musical training at just four years old. At nine, she began receiving lessons from the renowned violin teacher Ana Chumachenko. In 2006, she was appointed professor at the "Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst" in Frankfurt am Main.

Winning the international Yehudi Menuhin Competition in 1995, with the great violinist himself conducting, was a significant milestone in her lightning career. The following year, she won the 8th Eurovision Competition for Young Instrumentalists. Since then, Julia Fischer has performed with reputed conductors and leading orchestras throughout the world. Many of her concerts have been recorded for and/or broadcast live on radio and television.

Julia Fischer receives regular invitations from the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C., the Philadelphia Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, among others, to perform in the USA. She also plays with the leading European orchestras, including the Vienna Symphonic, the St. Petersburg Philharmonic, the Staatskapelle Dresden and the London

Philharmonic Orchestra. She has an especially close relationship with the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, which she first led in January 2006 during a tour of Germany, with which she made history later on in the autumn, performing in Frankfurt to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the reopening of the Alte Oper. Another major tour of Germany, Austria and the Benelux has taken place in 2009, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the foundation of the Academy.

Julia Fischer was appointed Artist in Residence at the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, under Chief Conductor Yakov Kreizberg, for the 2006/2007 season. Further joint projects with Maestro Kreizberg include her first appearance at the London PROMS in summer 2008. Julia Fischer also forms a chamber-music duo with Yakov Kreizberg at the piano: they will first perform as a duo in May 2007 in recital in Valencia. Furthermore, Julia Fischer has so far recorded all her CDs with orchestral music together with Maestro Kreizberg.

Other major conductors with whom Julia Fischer has performed include: Lorin Maazel, Christoph Eschenbach, Yuri Temirkanov, Sir Neville Marriner, David Zinman, Jun Märkl, Ruben Gazarian, Emmanuel Krivine and Marek Janowski.

Julia Fischer is an ardent chamber musician, and performs regularly with Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Daniel Müller-Schott, among others. She receives invitations to play at the major international festivals, such as London's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Aspen Music Festival, the Ravinia Festival, the Prague Spring Festival, the St. Petersburg Winter Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, where she was awarded the Soloist Prize in 1997.

In 2004, her first CD was released by PentaTone - the label for which Julia Fischer recorded exclusively - entitled Russian Violin Concertos with the Russian National Orchestra (under Yakov Kreizberg), which was awarded the *Echo Klassik 2005*. Her latest recording - Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto - was released in November 2006, with the same orchestra and conductor. All CD releases of the young violinist have received major recognition and awards – many have received a *Diapason d'Or* as well as a *Choc* from the *Monde de la Musique*. Her recording of Bach's Sonatas and Partitas for Solo Violin was even voted the *BBC Music Magazine Award* as "Best Newcomer 2006" and the *Diapason d'Or de l'Année*. Meanwhile, PentaTone has released the second CD of Mozart Violin Concertos featuring Julia Fischer with the Netherlands Chamber Orchestra; Piano Trios by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, together with Daniel Müller-Schott and Jonathan Gilad; and the Brahms Violin Concerto and Double Concerto, together with Daniel Müller-Schott. Further recordings are soon to be added to her discography.

Julia Fischer has also been concentrating on contemporary music. As

a consequence, she has already given the first performance of Matthias Pintscher's Piano Trio together with Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Daniel Müller-Schott.

Julia Fischer plays on an Italian violin made by Giovanni Battista Guadagnini, dating from 1742.

Martin Helmchen was born in Berlin in 1982. He received his first piano lessons at the age of six. From 1993 until graduating from school in 2000 he was a student of Galina Iwanzowa at the Hanns Eisler Academy in Berlin. After 2001, he studied with Arie Vardi at the "Hochschule für Musik und Theater" in Hannover. His career received its first major impulse after winning the Clara Haskil Competition in 2001.

Orchestras with which Martin Helmchen has performed include: the Deutsche Sinfonie-Orchester Berlin, RSO Stuttgart, Bamberg Symphoniker, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen, Royal Flemish Philharmonic, BBC Symphony Orchestra, and the chamber orchestras of Zurich, Amsterdam, Vienna, Lausanne, Cologne and Munich. He has worked with conductors such as Marek Janowski, Philippe Herreweghe, Marc Albrecht, Vladimir Jurowski, Jiri Kout, Bernhard Klee, and Lawrence Foster.

Martin Helmchen has been a guest at the Ruhr Piano Festival, Kissinger Summer Festival, the Festivals in Lockenhaus, Jerusalem, Spoleto (Italy), the Rheingau Music Festival, the Spannungen Chamber-Music Festival in Heimbach, the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, the Schwetzingen Festival, the Schleswig-Holstein Festival, as well as the Marlboro Festival in Vermont (USA).

Chamber music is a highly valued part of Martin Helmchen's life, which he always includes in his performance programme. For years now, he has collaborated closely with Boris Pergamenschikow till his decease in 2004; at present, he regularly gives concerts and recitals with Heinrich Schiff and Danjulo Ishizaka. Furthermore, he has partnered Gidon Kremer, Christian Tetzlaff, Isabelle Faust, Daniel Hope, Antje Weithaas, Tabea Zimmermann, Sharon Kam and Lars Vogt.

The young pianist Martin Helmchen has already been awarded two of the most important prizes in the music scene: the Crédit Suisse Young Artist Award and the ECHO Klassik. He received the Crédit Suisse Award in September 2006. The prize included his début with the Vienna Philharmonic under Valery Gergiev, performing Schumann's Piano Concerto during the Lucerne Festival. He was awarded the ECHO prize jointly with cellist Danjulo Ishizaka, as "Nachwuchskünstler des Jahres" (= up-and-coming artist of the year). Martin Helmchen has signed an exclusive contract with the PentaTone Classics label.

