ABSTRACT

CREATIVE PROJECT: Robert Schumann: Literary Inspiration and Pedagogical Preparation for Papillons

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Romantic composer and music critic Robert Schumann was greatly inspired by literature in the nineteenth century. This influence is seen in one of his early works, Papillons, Op. 2, a set of character pieces for the advanced piano student. I explore four stylistic similarities between Schumann and his favorite author, Johann Paul Friedrich Richter. I then discuss specific literary associations of Papillons to Richter’s novel Flegeljahre, as indicated by Schumann. Finally, I outline six specific technical challenges a student will encounter when studying this piece, and suggest examples from Schumann’s late elementary and intermediate repertoire that would prepare a student to perform Papillons.