

Kreisleriana

GENIE UND WAHNSINN

with

Bill Meilen, actor

David Gramit, scholar

Helmut Brauss, pianist

**Wednesday, February 2, 1994
at 8:00 pm**

**Convocation Hall, Arts
Building University of Alberta**

Program



Program

ALLEY CATS, BUREAUCRATS, ARABESQUES

Perspectives on Kreisleriana

Dr David Gramit

KREISLER'S MUSIKALISCH-POETISCHER KLUB

excerpts from *Kreisleriana* by E T A Hoffmann

Bill Meilen

KREISLERIANA, OP. 16

Eight Fantasies by R Schumann

Helmut Brauss

Program Notes

In the era of German Romanticism literature and music were sometimes so closely interwoven that more often than not the one without the other seems incomplete. The German poet and writer E T A Hoffmann (1776-1822), known mainly for his literary achievements, was not only a writer, but also a lawyer, painter, stage designer, music critic, conductor and finally a quite accomplished composer. Music and musical allusions frequently play an important role in his oeuvre. E T A Hoffmann's fictitious figure, the Kapellmeister Johannes Kreisler, depicts a human being oscillating between genius and insanity (*Genie und Wahnsinn*), and personifies the romantic ideal of the free, roaming spirit colliding with and at the same time transcending the reality of this world. The world of fantasy and imagination was seen then as the desirable essence of life. The total identification with such a realm could be destabilizing, to say the least. For Robert Schumann it might have even contributed to his tragic end in insanity. He must have identified strongly with Hoffmann's poetic visions. His own *Kreisleriana*, a set of eight Fantasies, very much transcends the literary prototype. The musical language per se, totally free of any literary connotations, is perhaps the most suitable medium to symbolize the particular imaginative sphere German Romanticism tried to explore. Thus the *Kreisleriana* reveals the essence of Schumann's fantastic world and might be called his most characteristic creation.

It is interesting to note that the tempo indications of the eight fantasies and their subdivisions are nearly all in the superlative, an indication of the

extreme width of expression Schumann explores in these contrasting pieces:

- 1) Äußerst bewegt (Agitatissimo)
- 2) Sehr innig und nicht zu rasch
(Con molta espressione, non troppo presto)
- 3) Sehr aufgeregt (Molto agitato)
- 4) Sehr langsam (Lento assai)
- 5) Sehr lebhaft (Vivace assai)
- 6) Sehr langsam (Lento assai)
- 7) Sehr rasch (Molto presto)
- 8) Schnell und spielend (Presto e giocoso)

The musical means of characterizing specific moods are highly differentiated, not only in dynamics, but also in articulation and rhythm. Extremely exciting and rhythmically exuberant pieces alternate with slow introspective ones, that frequently seem to recede into a world of dreams.

However, all pieces follow clearly the formal structure of the character piece of the time, either A-B-A or A-B-A-C-A. The musical common denominators are unmistakably delineated, providing coherence and structure. The genius of the composer achieved a kind of imaginative law and order in the realm of intangibility. On the emotional level a unity by contrast is discernible. Thus the work as such is not a collection of pieces, but a unified creation. Larger structural elements can be found in groups of three, two, and three contrasting pieces. These can be seen as representing an emotionally balanced, imaginary A-B-A form encompassing the whole work—a quality, which might be perceived by intuition rather than conventional musical analysis. In this context it might be worth contemplating the thought that the intellect is a relatively poor tool of perception and understanding for this type of musical utterance and in addition largely overestimated in our time.

If the German Romantic can teach us one thing today, it is the awareness of the tremendous importance of intuition as a valid instrument of perception, in general terms as well, as in music specifically. The rational mind is not the human being in toto.

(H Brauss)

A joint presentation by the Departments of Music and Drama and the Alberta Registered Music Association (Edmonton Branch).

Upcoming Events:

Friday, at 8 pm
February 4, 1994
Convocation Hall
Free admission

Master of Music Recital: Charles Stolte, saxophone
Program includes works by Gottkovsky, Mihalovici, Gougeon, and the première of 2 movements of a new work for saxophone and organ by Edmonton composer Jacobus Kloppers.

Sunday, at 8 pm
February 6, 1994
Convocation Hall
Admission: \$7/adult
\$5/student/senior

Kilburn Encounters IV featuring Norman Nelson, violin, with Helmut Brauss and Janet Scott-Hoyt, piano; Diane New, violin; Jonathan Craig, viola; Tanya Prochazka, violoncello; and William Street, saxophone, playing the music of Busch, Walton and Brahms.

Friday, at 8 pm
February 11, 1994
Convocation Hall
Admission: \$7/adult
\$5/student/senior

Visiting Artists Recital with Elizabeth Dubberly, soprano, and Stephen Dubberly, piano. Program will include works by Purcell, Wagner, Debussy, Ives, Bolcom, Musto, Gordon, Dubberly, Thomson, Hall and Hoiby.

Saturday, at 1 pm
February 12, 1994
Convocation Hall
Free admission

Chamber Music Masterclass with Elizabeth Dubberly, soprano, and Stephen Dubberly, piano. A Visiting Artist Series.

Wednesday, at 12:10 pm
February 16, 1994
Convocation Hall
Free admission

Noon-Hour Organ Recital with visiting artist Stephan Bleicher, Director, South German Organ Academy. Program will include repertoire and improvisation.

Thursday, at 8 pm
February 17, 1994
Convocation Hall
Free admission

Master of Music Recital: Michael Coderre, baritone. Program will include works by Krapf, Milhaud, Brandmüller, Coderre, McCune, Poulenc, and Bernstein.

Sunday, at 3 pm
February 20, 1994
Convocation Hall
Admission: \$10/adult,
\$5/student/senior

A Benefit Faculty Recital: Marek Jablonski, piano. Program will include works by Bach, Beethoven and Chopin.

