

John Axelrod presents Schumann 41/51 :
Schumann's 4th Symphony

“John Axelrod is a highly imaginative and dynamic musician, whose rich musicological background and historical insights combine with intellectual drive and charismatic enthusiasm for people and for life, to get probing, rigorous and richly characterized interpretations.” Remy Franck, ICMA President, Pizzicato

The 2021-2022 season begins for Maestro Axelrod with a special project to emphasize this unique ICMA distinction and played by two orchestras with whom he has often performed, streamed and recorded: The Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano “Giuseppe Verdi,” and the ORT Toscana in Firenze . Maestro Axelrod offers a rare opportunity in two Italian cities near each other to experience both versions of Schumann's 4th Symphony: the original version, the one composed and premiered in 1841, and published nearly 50 years later by his champion Johannes Brahms; and the revised version of 1851 advocated and protected by his widow Clara Schumann. Both versions of the same 4th symphony offer insight to tell the story of the two people who loved Robert Schumann most, and how these two versions reflect Schumann's own dual nature.

On October 8, in Teatro Verdi in Firenze, the 1841 version, which Maestro Axelrod calls “Florestanian” for its chamber orchestra qualities and exuberant energy, will be performed with Dvorak's Cello Concerto and soloist Enrico Dindo. On October 16-17 and 19, at the Auditorium di Milano, the 1851 version, considered “Eusebian” for its larger orchestration and darker, more contemplative character, will be performed with Beethoven's 7th Symphony.

Maestro Axelrod shares his reasons: “After recording the Brahms Symphonies and Clara Schumann's lieder, I became deeply immersed in Robert Schumann's life, his love, and his long struggle of mental health. While so much of his music and writings reflected his bi-polar condition, these two versions, one written during a manic year of creative output, the other in the depths of his emotional despair, offer, to me, the most telling portrait of this radical romantic person. While it was endlessly interesting to me, my hope is to share this musical discovery with my fellow musicians and our audience. Perhaps we might all then learn something new about the man who remains for many a mystery.”

What makes these two concerts in two different cities interesting is how one symphony composed in two versions gives music lovers the chance to experience this concept of putting two versions of the same music of the past into a contemporary context, and allowing each city and its orchestra to act as musical ambassadors. While the public who attends might be the beneficiary of this collaborative initiative, the real winner is Robert Schumann, who, with his beloved Clara and best friend Johannes, would no doubt have enjoyed the chance to hear them both again, back to back.

<https://johnaxelrod.com/events>

SCHUMANN 41/51

October 8, 2021, Teatro Verdi, Firenze

INAUGURAL CONCERT: SCHUMANN SYMPHONY 4 (1841)

October 21, 22 & 24, 2021, Auditorium di Milano

BETWEEN GENIUS AND FOLLY: SCHUMANN SYMPHONY 4 (1851)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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