

Mp3 Magnus Svensson - Schumann & Kokkonen - Magnus Svensson, Piano



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Classical Piano 14 MP3 Songs CLASSICAL: Traditional Details: Magnus Svensson Swedish pianist

Magnus Svensson has established himself as a prominent interpreter of the classical piano literature. He works not only as a soloist but as a chamber musician and accompanist, and over the years has gained an extensive repertoire. In addition to his concerts in Sweden, Svensson has performed in Denmark, Norway, Finland, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Hungary, Russia, England, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, France, and the United States. Svensson studied at the School of Music in Gothenburg with Professor Stella Tjajkowski and at the Academy of Music in Stockholm with Professor Staffan Scheja. When he completed his postgraduate program in 1998, he was awarded the gold medal for best student. In addition, he has attended master classes by Hans Leygraf, Willem Brons, Dimitri Bashkurov, and Petras Genusas. In London he studied song interpretation with Sir Geoffrey Parsons.

FOURTEEN MINIATURES FOR PIANO It might seem far-fetched to compare the music of Robert Schumann and Joonas Kokkonen, but there are some similarities, especially in the selections on this CD. To begin with, all these pieces share the characteristics of distinctive miniatures: in each, the music creates a unique soundscape within a short space of time and tells a specific story. Further, both Schumann and Kokkonen showed great sensitivity to the piano's potential, without drifting into superficial virtuosity or pianistic frippery. It takes a master musician like Magnus Svensson to express such subtleties. His convincing interpretation makes the step from Schumann to Kokkonen merely a question of differences in musical style.

KREISLERIANA: Robert Schumann This piece comprises eight fantasy pieces of varying nature. The structure is completely unique, for it is neither sonata, suite, nocturne, variations on a theme, nor any other established form for piano music at that time. The piece is dedicated

to the pianist and composer Frédéric Chopin, whose music Schumann greatly admired. At the age of twenty-one Schumann wrote an enthusiastic article on his colleague of the same age. One would think that Chopin would have been delighted by this generous gift, but, like many of their contemporaries, Chopin didn't understand Schumann's piano music. It was too new to him, both in form and in texture. He is even supposed to have said to the publisher Schlesinger that Schumann's *Carnaval* is on the whole not music (*Carnaval* being another of his piano pieces that offended convention). For us, living some 150 years later, such reactions might be difficult to understand, but they show us how radical and original Schumann's music was in his own time.

ARABESQUE: Robert Schumann Being part of Arabian (Islamic) culture, with its reluctance to depict living beings, the Moors developed an elaborate decorative art in which stylized leaves, flowers, vines, and other elements were usually arranged in a symmetrical way. These artistic patterns are called arabesques. The term is also used to describe certain ornamental passages in music. But regardless where Schumann's delightful composition in C major finds expression it is notably without any connection to literature or poetry.

FIVE BAGATELLES: Joonas Kokkonen The Finnish composer Joonas Kokkonen was also a pianist. But unlike his German colleague, he wrote surprisingly few pieces for the piano. His most important work is the opera *The Last Temptations*, which may be regarded as Finland's national opera. It has received more than 250 performances quite exceptional for an opera written in 1975 and it has even been performed at The Metropolitan Opera in New York. Kokkonen also wrote four symphonies, a requiem, and numerous other pieces. All five distinctive miniatures have Latin titles; the first two, *Praebulum* (Prelude) and *Intermezzo* (Interlude), are fairly unevocative, whereas the third and perhaps most interesting movement is called *Aves* (Birds). It lacks a proper theme, but its trills and quick figurations in the treble give the impression that Kokkonen has taken down the singing of birds, like the French composer Olivier Messiaen. But this is not a study in ornithology, it is a brilliant scherzo. The two concluding movements also have names that fire the imagination. Not at all sentimental, *Elegiaco* (Elegy) possesses a touching, elevated dignity. *Arbores* (Trees), the last bagatelle, resembles a passacaglia, a form that has a grand theme repeated a number of times. Above this large theme are other, quicker melodies and gestures, perhaps like small branches and leaves growing from larger limbs on a tree. It forms a powerful ending to Kokkonen's small but important suite of bagatelles for piano. Professor B. Tommy Andersson, 2006

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