

SCHUMANN • VINCENZO CARUSO *piano*

INTERMEZZI OP. 4 (1832)

01 I. Allegro quasi maestoso	03:14
02 II. Presto a capriccio	04:18
03 III. Allegro marcato	05:33
IV. Allegretto semplice	03:33
04 V. Allegro moderato	04:47
05 VI. Allegro	02:59
06 IMPROPTUS ÜBER EIN THEMA VON CLARA WIECK OP.5	
versione del 1850	16:00
Thema	00:00
Variazione I	01:37
Variazione II Più vivo	02:20
Variazione III Molto preciso	03:17

Variazione IV Piuttosto lento	04:08
Variazione V Vivo	04:59
Variazione VI Allegro	06:13
Variazione VII Tempo del tema	07:10
Variazione VIII Con molta forza	08:22
Variazione IX	09:55
Variazione X Vivace	11:15
FASCHINGSSCHWANK AUS WIEN OP.26 (1839)	
07 I. Allegro	08:17
08 II. Romanze	02:55
09 III. Scherzino	01:57
10 IV. Intermezzo	02:29
11 V. Finale	06:11

Total time: 59:00



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Mixing & Mastering **Rosella Clementi**
Piano Steinway & sons D-274
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SCHUMANN

Intermezzi Op. 4
Impromptus Op. 5
Faschingsschwank aus Wien Op. 26

VINCENZO CARUSO

piano



The programme of this album outlines a fundamental evolutionary arc in Robert Schumann's (1810–1856) piano production, moving from the experimental audacity of his youth to the mature formal synthesis of his Viennese period.

Intermezzi, Op. 4 (1832) - In the early 1830s, Schumann was grappling with a musical question of considerable weight: how—and if—it was plausible to approach the sonata form following the definitive experience of Beethoven. This explains why the Sonata Op. 11 and those of Op. 14 and Op. 22, though begun during this period, were only completed several years later. In the meantime, Schumann sought and found his unmistakable style in an "aphoristic" music, strongly influenced by the Romantic literature of the era, where "speaking figures" (figure parlanti) frolic like actors upon a stage. Thus were born Papillons Op. 2 and, shortly after, the Intermezzi Op. 4, which he himself defined as "longer Papillons." With this work, Schumann liberated the title of "intermezzo" from its traditional role of being "in between" larger compositions. He united them into a cycle of six standalone yet coherent pieces, woven together by literary and musical quotations—some overt, others concealed. A notable example is the reference to Schubert's Lied *Meine Ruh' ist hin* in No. 2, which Schumann explicitly marked in the score. In the Intermezzi, Schumann's two alter egos, Florestan and Eusebius, are clearly evident both in the alternating characters of the six pieces and within the individual movements themselves through the use of "alternatives"—sections that stand out within the A-B-A structure with a character contrasting that of the A section.

Impromptus on a Theme by Clara Wieck, Op. 5 (1833) – 1850 Version - This work marks a crucial moment: the artistic and sentimental encounter with the very young Clara Wieck. Schumann utilized a theme written by Clara herself (Romance Op. 3) to build a series of variations in a "new form." He precedes the theme with a basso ostinato (ground bass) present in all variations—a technique that recalls the Baroque tradition, here transfigured into a dreamlike and modern atmosphere. In Op. 5, Schumann treats Clara's theme by indulging its nature of extreme tenderness. The "speaking figures" encountered in Op. 2 and Op. 4 now pass this theme from one to another, filtering it through their individual characters until reaching the exhilarating final fugato, where Schumann displays remarkable contrapuntal mastery starting from the first four notes of the bass. Although originally written in 1833, the version presented on this CD is Schumann's 1850 revision, in which he removed two variations to achieve greater cohesion and overall composure.

Faschingssschwank aus Wien, Op. 26 (1839) Composed during his stay in Vienna, the "Carnival Jest from Vienna" is a large-scale work in five movements, described by the composer as a "Grand Romantic Sonata". "Schumann opens the Allegro with a sweeping Dance, immediately followed by an intimate lyrical theme. This structure—the initial Dance interrupted by moments of diverse character—suggests a wanderer gripped by existential questions, suddenly pulled back to life by the jostling of a noisy, dancing square. Within this bustle, Schumann embeds a political jest, surreptitiously inserting the melody of the Marseillaise, which was banned at the time by Metternich's Austrian censorship. In the Romanze, through a descending minor scale, Schumann touches upon one of the most intimate and mournful moments of his output. Perhaps the aforementioned wanderer, having left the square,

finds himself alone with his doubts; yet a glimmer of hope shakes him for a moment in a C major passage – as illuminating as it is unexpected – before he plunges back into the sad, solemn descending scale, which finally resolves into a reassuring G major chord. In the Scherzino, a mood of lightness returns; we are back in the square, where one can easily imagine the playful games of children in the alternating dotted theme between the high and low registers. The Intermezzo is one of Schumann's most intense pieces. The E-flat minor key and the theme unequivocally convey a sense of drama, sustained by the restless, continuous swirl of arpeggios in the right hand. In the Finale, Schumann employs a virtuosic sonata-form that closes the cycle with a coda of "irresistible vitality," celebrating the exhilaration and freedom of the carnival spirit.

Vincenzo Caruso - Salvatore Totti Renda photographer



Vincenzo Caruso Graduated with top grades and honors in Piano and Choral Conducting and Composition at the Conservatory of Naples, Italy. He perfected his studies in piano under the guidance of Maestros Mariapia Ruggiero, Sergio Fiorentino, Pierluigi Camicia for the piano, and in chamber music with Maestros Giacinto Caramia and Edoardo Hubert. Starting from 1990, he has been a professional figure at the Teatro San Carlo in Naples where he currently holds the role of Collaborating Maestro of the Opera Choir, a role that leads him to interact as a pianist with internationally renowned conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Zubin Mehta, Fabio Luisi, Juraj Valchua, Nello Santi, Daniele Gatti, Dan Ettinger and many others. As a performer at the piano, he is frequently selected as the

accompanist for choir of the Teatro San Carlo in numerous concerts including: "Petite messe solennelle" by G. Rossini, broadcast by Rai radio 3; "Six choirs for female choir and piano" by S. Rachmaninov; "Canti di prigionia" by Luigi Dalla Piccola "Requiem" by "A. Dvorjak" performed on the organ; Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana"; "Requiem" and "Liebeslieder Waltzes" by Johannes Brahms and in numerous concerts dedicated to opera choirs and chamber pieces for piano choir. They appear regularly in various ensembles during the Teatro San Carlo's chamber music seasons. In 2003 he collaborated as a pianist with the Opera Comique in Paris in the Italian tour of the musical comedy "Irma la douce" directed by Gerome Savary. In 2009 he was invited by the Etoile Roberto Bolle for the gala for "Unicef" and "Bolle and friends" at the Arena Flegrea in Naples, where he accompanied the dancer's performance with the étoile Isabel Ciaravola at the piano with music by F. Chopin. In 2023, he was appointed to prepare, as the Choir Master of the Teatro San Carlo, the operas "Madama Butterfly" by Giacomo Puccini, "Beatrice di Tenda" by Vincenzo Bellini, "Winter Journey" by Ludovico Einaudi, and "Maometto II" by Gioachino Rossini. He released "Sirene a Cadaques" (2020) (piano & jazz contralto) "Chansons sous les doigts" (piano solo) (2022) for the Dodicilune label; "Melodies pour rien" (2022) (piano solo) for Landr digital label. For the Da Vinci Classics label, "Larmes" (2023) Fabio D'Onofrio, (oboe) - Vincenzo Caruso, (piano) and "Vico Novecento" (2023) (piano solo) "Douce Novecento" (2025) (piano solo) Aulicus Classics