

*Märchenerzählungen Op 132.*  
("Fairy-tale tellings") for Clarinet, viola & piano

Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

*Lebhaft, nicht zu schnell*  
*Lebhaft und sehr markirt*  
*Ruhiges Tempo, mit zartem Ausdruck*  
*Lebhaft, sehr markirt*

Although by 1853 Schumann's mental health was deteriorating, an unannounced visit to Robert and Clara by the 20-year old Brahms in September, bearing an introduction from their mutual friend the violinist Joseph Joachim, stimulated Schumann to new compositions. A happy collaboration between Schumann, Brahms and Schumann's close friend Albert Dietrich produced the F-A-E violin sonata dedicated to Joachim, and then in three days from 9 to 11 October 1853 Schumann wrote *Märchenerzählungen* which he dedicated to Dietrich. "Predominantly cheerful pieces, written with a light heart" he told his publisher. The somewhat tautological title *Fairy-tale tellings* perhaps stands in contrast to his *Märchenbilder* ("*Fairy-tale pictures*") for viola and piano written in 1849.

Schumann doesn't tell us what Fairy Tales he had in mind, so you can have fun imagining what they were - most of Grimm's fairy tales were published by then. You can also try projecting onto the pieces the characters of Schumann's *alter egos* Florestan and Eusebius: Eusebius an introverted but compelling poet perhaps in the third movement and the exuberant and extroverted Florestan in the last; maybe also the third of Schumann's *persona* Meister Raro (ClaRA-RObert) the wise mediator?