

Schumann the Romantic

(N July 29, 1856, Robert Schumann died in the private asylum where he had spent the last two years of his life. Two special commemorative programmes will be broadcast on Sunday, July 29, one by the National Orchestra and the other by a group of artists. Together they show Schumann as a composer for piano, voice, string quartet and orchestra, as representative works from each of these fields will be presented.

Schumann's first compositions were for the piano, and the evening programme opens with his eight small miniatures "Phantasiestücke," to be played by Désirée MacEwan, a visiting English pianist. He then began writing songs. Some of those to be sung by Donald Munro spring from 1840, which has come to be known as "the song year." Schumann's long courtship of Clara Wieck, obstructed by Clara's adamant father, who had also been Schumann's teacher, was about to end in marriage, and Schumann's letters to Clara reveal his happiness at the time. "I can hardly tell you how delightful it is to write for the voice, and how agitated and excited I am when I sit down to work," he wrote; and again, "Here is a slight reward for your last two letters—my first published songs. While I was composing them I was quite lost in thoughts of you." This programme also includes an appreciation of Schumann by Nancy Martin and the seldom heard Quartet in A Minor (YCs, July 29, 8.0 p.m.)

The orchestral programme in the afternoon omits the Piano Concerto, as this is to be played later under Sir Bernard Heinze, and includes instead the Concert Allegro. This is a work suffused with poetic feeling, and it is to be played by David Galbraith. Also to be heard are the overture to *Genoveva*—an opera of great musical beauty but one which has not survived on the stage—and the joyous first Symphony, "The Spring" (National programme, July 29, 2.0 p.m.).

Romanticism today is well and truly out of favour, and consequently Schumann is not a popular composer. These programmes, however, show that his romantic vision was indeed a true one, and they show him too at his best, before he was struck down by an oppressive and ruinous melancholy.



★ ROBERT SCHUMANN and CLARA WIECK, to whom he wrote, "If I were not engaged to such a girl I could not write such music" ★



PETER READ

N.Z. LISTENER, JULY 20, 1956.

Money for Pickle

[N 1751 the Scottish novelist Tobias Smollett published his picaresque chronicle, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle*. This young man's success story was immensely popular, and makes lively reading even today. Not an adaptation but, as the author Dick Cross puts it, a "derivation" from it will be broadcast from YC stations next week in an NZBS production.

In Cross's play, Sir Peregrine's daughter, Sophia, wants to marry a penniless ensign against her father's wishes. Lady Pickle reminds her husband of the days when he wooed her as a penniless young man himself, and was given the alternative by her guardian of either amassing £20,000 in six months, or giving her up. In the story thus recalled, Peregrine goes up to London, is cheated, then wins a sinecure without paying Lord Swillpot the bribe he demands. William Austin plays Peregrine; Peter Read, Lord Swillpot, and Davina Whitehouse, Lady Pickle.

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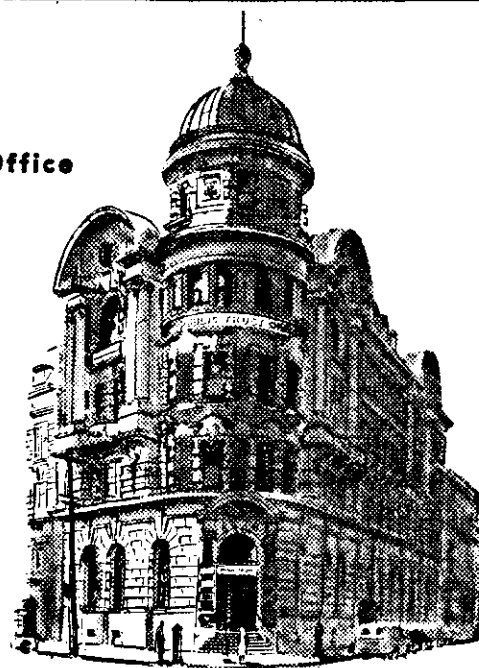
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