

SMARO GREGORIADOU: Reinventing Guitar

Schumann and his Advice to Young Musicians 2



ROBERT SCHUMANN
(1810-1856)

"The painter turns a poem into a painting; the musician sets a picture to music".

Robert Schumann, 1833

Schumann was a quiet, intelligent composer, a generous critic that helped new talents like Chopin and Brahms to rise and flourish. Unfortunately, he suffered a mental illness that troubled his whole life. He nevertheless was very hardworking and multi-talented man: he involved himself not only in composing, but also in conducting, teaching at the Leipzig Conservatory, and editing the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*. His works were all based on his romantic imagination with a sense of free and very personal expression. Schumann's music was always related to poetry, painting, personal allusions and moods. Because of his unique composing style and his highly poetic and introspective musical qualities, Schumann was definitely the genuine exponent of Romantic music.

Among his contributions to humanity, *The Advice to Young Musician* should be highly stressed. I herewith present a selection of this extraordinary work, strongly encouraging every music student, professional, amateur or young musician to deeply reflecting on its importance. Source: www.rowy.net

* Practice frequently the scale and other finger exercise; but this alone is not sufficient. There are many people who think to obtain grand results in this way, and who up a mature age spend many hours daily in mechanical labor. That is about the same, as if we tried every day to pronounce the alphabet with greater volubility! You can employ your time more usefully!

* Play strictly in time! The playing of many a virtuoso resembles the walk of an intoxicated person. Do not take such as your model.

* Strengthen your imagination so, that you may not only retain the melody of a composition, but even the harmony that belongs to it.

* Look deeply into life, and study it as diligently as the other arts and sciences.

* Play always as if in the presence of a master.

* When you play, never mind who listens to you.

* In maturer years play no fashionable trifles. Time is precious. We should need to live a hundred lives, only to become acquainted with all good works that exist.

* You may play too slow or too fast. Both are faults.

* Much playing in society is more injurious than useful. Suit the taste and capacity of your audience but never play anything that you know is trashy and worthless.

* If all would play first violin, we could not obtain an orchestra. Therefore esteem every musician in his place.

* As you grow up, become more intimate with scores than with virtuosi.

* Frequently sing in choruses, especially the middle parts, this will help to make you a real musician.

* Acquire an early knowledge of the art of conducting music. Observe often the best conductors, and conduct along with them in your mind. This will give you clearness of perception and make you accurate.

* The laws of morals are those of art.

* Highly esteem the Old, but take also a warm interest in the New. Be not prejudiced against names unknown to you.

* The Spirit will not become clear to you before you understand the Forms of composition.

* Perhaps genius alone understands genius fully.

* There is no end in learning.