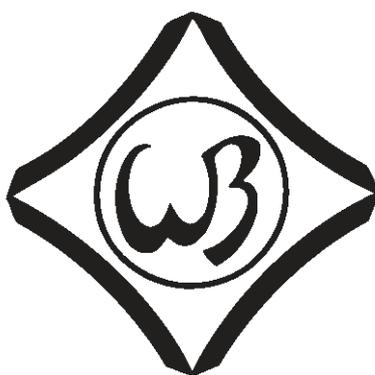


William Bolcom

A Schumann Bouquet

for Saxophone Quartet

Score and Parts



William

BOLCOM

A Schumann Bouquet

for Saxophone Quartet

Full Score

for the PRISM Saxophone Quartet

Notes from the Composer.....	2
I. Lieber Mai (Beloved Maytime).....	4
II. Knecht Ruprecht (The Bogeyman).....	6
III. Sheherazade	10
IV. Ländler	13
V. Sehr langsam	14
VI. Lied italienischer Marinari.....	16

Duration ca 7'



Notes from the Composer

General note: Almost sixty years ago while at the Paris Conservatoire I became friendly with a saxophone student who asked for a piece; I promptly wrote out a jazz tune lead-sheet style with chord symbols, and he had absolutely no idea of what to do with it. The saxophone style of sound taught there at that period was mellifluous, almost sugary, with a wide vibrato. (French hornists had developed a similar vibrato and the two instruments, saxophones and horns, sounded uncannily alike then—listen to the French radio-orchestra or Russian recordings of the 1950s, and you’ll see what I mean—and later the German horn-playing style would take over in France and Russia as elsewhere in the world.)

Invented about the time the Schumann pieces in the present set were composed, the saxophones were perhaps mostly intended for band use (in French the *orchestre d’harmonie*), would be frowned on by orchestras, and still are in some quarters: I’ll never forget the sneer on the face of the concertmaster of the Stuttgart Opera Orchestra when the two saxophonists called for in my *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* came into rehearsal—this was in January 1984—and the orchestra players insisted on putting glass partitions between them and the rest of the orchestra, even at the public performances.

This schism may be why the saxophone literature is still so separate from the classical canon. Debussy wrote a *pièce de concours* for the Conservatoire not knowing much of anything about the instrument; Vaughan Williams and Walton used it also, but these are rare instances. It wouldn’t be until the middle of the 20th century that more composers began to take the saxophone seriously. At first there was an exploration of multiphonics and similar sounds particular to the saxophone (I used many of these various squawks in my *Lilith* because they fit the protagonist’s wild character) and composers used these, often to excess, for a few decades. Clearly the vogue for this is passed, and it’s fine with me.

PRISM is at the forefront of the current expansion of saxophone literature; I’ve had a wonderful experience writing for them as have so many others. I think my idea of arranging this set of short Robert Schumann piano pieces for them as a gift is an attempt to bridge the schism mentioned above, opening the gate to a wider potential expressivity for the saxophone by connecting it with the rich musical past.

I have loved Schumann’s music since boyhood, not only the major piano works like *Carnaval*, *Humoreske*, and *Kreisleriana* but also the many modest short pieces. *Album for the Young*, dating from 1848, is an often-overlooked rich source. Even the technically easy opening pieces are full of poetry, and the interpretative challenges in some later ones are as profound as in Schumann’s larger works (see for example *Sehr langsam*, the fifth “flower” in *A Schumann Bouquet*). These are not just teaching pieces without depth, and I suspect the major difference between the *Album* and most music intended for teaching is the presence of that depth. (In fact the only concession to the young seems to be to the size of their hands.) I can’t help sensing Schumann’s desire to help the young mature by exposing them to a mature expressive universe; by contrast so much of our current culture seems to be dedicated to prolonging childhood and adolescence rather than helping us outgrow them.

For saxophonists to play the Schumann pieces effectively, some mention must be made of performing style proper to the period of their composition, and the following are notes to this effect as they occur in the *Bouquet*:

Notes on the pieces: Marking cadences by a slight hesitation is a must—even Schoenberg should be performed showing where cadences occur—because this highlights the structure of most classical music, particularly in the German tradition. How much and how little to delineate each cadence varies with the expressive content. Many younger performers tend to exaggerate these musical goalposts out of unfamiliarity with the language; this is an area where notation is proven insufficient, and the nuances are best learned by being taught them, and by listening to informed performances. (This is sadly becoming a lost art. In the late 1990s I wrote a contest piece for the Cliburn piano competition and was specially requested to write music concentrating on interpretation—it was assumed any contestant had a full technical arsenal. I was saddened to see how few of the young pianists got the message, something not surprising in new works, but was far more unhappy to hear how the large majority interpreted their Schumann and Chopin works in the exact same way, using the same language of nuance for both; I wish I could say this weren't so commonplace a phenomenon in the regular concert world!)

To specifics: Schumann has a rather idiosyncratic approach to dynamics, as well as in other elements in his music. We have no recordings of the period wherein he composed, but there are rare pianists who do remember how to perform his work in the proper style. What I've heard, and employ myself when performing these works on the piano, is laid out here as best I can to musicians unfamiliar with this music.

In “Lieber Mai” (“Beloved Maytime”) a slight hesitation is called for between the third and last eighths of the first endings of each section in measures 10 and 27—otherwise said, the marking of the cadences. When in measure 8 a *f* is called for, a slight sitting on the fourth eighth, mostly the first sixteenth in the soprano part, would be in style. The same will be true in the *fp* accents in measures 14, 15, 25, and 27. This piece is what inspired me to arrange this whole set.

In “Knecht Ruprecht” measures 4, 8, and 24 have *f* on each attack; the same is true in the reprise of this section. Schumann doesn't use *fz*, I'm surmising, because such accents would be too forceful and imposed on the attacks. Schumann's use of *f* in these bars is to my mind equivalent to the almost-disappeared musical marking of *rf*, that is, of reinforcing the note from within, and I sense the need of spacing the three equal attacks a little apart in each case. Note that the accents don't appear in measures 12 and 16, and I take this to mean that here the rhythm is not stretched. I would also advocate playing the phrase from measure 9 to 16 at *mf* and returning to *f* at bar 17.

In “Sheherazade” I tried to reproduce the harp-like rolling of chords in the Schumann original; care must be taken not to accent the grace notes. Imagine Sheherazade playing a small lute as she recounts each tale of the *Thousand and One Nights*. The despairing sadness of the piece comes for me from her knowledge that, once all her tales are told, she will be executed (maybe we're hearing the thousandth night); she does not know yet that she will soon be not only spared after the last telling, she will also marry the sultan!

“Ländler”—a sort of German waltz—is from 1836 and not from the *Album for the Young* (it comes from the Op. 124 *Albumblätter* [*Album Leaves*]). It is an amusing interlude before the most profound piece of the collection, “Sehr langsam.” What this piece expresses so accurately for me is the knowledge of the vicissitudes of life and death's inevitability, but also the beauty of life and love; it's as if Schumann were showing his children what lies ahead in their lives. Every time I play this moving work I find something else in it.

“Lied italienischer Marinari” is just fun. (PRISM felt it to be the most saxophone-like of the whole *Bouquet*.) I have no idea whether Schumann found an actual dancelike piece Neapolitan sailors sang, but it doesn't matter – it is certainly not like much other Schumann I know—and it affords a rousing conclusion to *A Schumann Bouquet*.

for the PRISM Saxophone Quartet

A Schumann Bouquet

I. Lieber Mai

(Beloved Maytime)

arranged by William Bolcom
(2015)

Robert Schumann
(1848)†

Nicht schnell ♩ = 144*

Soprano Saxophone in B-flat
p
softer second time

Alto Saxophone in E-flat
p *softer second time*

Tenor Saxophone in B-flat
p *softer second time*

Baritone Saxophone in E-flat
p *softer second time*

f

f

f

f

* Clara Schumann's metronome markings throughout
† except Ländler (1836)

IV. Ländler

Sehr mässig $\text{♩} = 56$

Musical score for measures 1-5. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It consists of four staves. The first three staves are in treble clef, and the fourth is in bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Sehr mässig' with a quarter note equal to 56. The dynamics are marked 'p' (piano) at the beginning of each staff. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests.

Musical score for measures 6-11. The score continues from the previous system. It consists of four staves. The dynamics are marked 'f' (forte) at the beginning of each staff in measure 7. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests. There are repeat signs at the end of measures 7 and 10.

Musical score for measures 12-15. The score continues from the previous system. It consists of four staves. The dynamics are marked 'p' (piano) and 'sf' (sforzando) at various points. The tempo is marked 'tratt.' (trattando) and 'a tempo' at the end of the system. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes, with some measures containing rests.

18

Musical score for measures 18-23. The score consists of four staves. The first three staves are in treble clef, and the fourth is in bass clef. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is not explicitly shown but appears to be 4/4. The music features a variety of note values, including quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, often grouped with slurs. There are several dynamic markings, including accents (>) and a *p* (piano) marking. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

V. Sehr langsam

$\text{♩} = 84$

Musical score for measures 1-4. The score consists of four staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 84$. The music is marked with a *p* (piano) dynamic. It features a variety of note values, including quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, often grouped with slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

5

Musical score for measures 5-8. The score consists of four staves. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The music is marked with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic. It features a variety of note values, including quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, often grouped with slurs. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

24 **Im Tempo**

pp

pp

pp

pp

29

fp

fp

fp

fp

1.

2.

VI. Lied italienischer Marinari

Langsam **Schnell** ♩ = 112

f

pp

fp

p

sf

f

pp

fp

p

f

p

fp

p

4
Soprano Saxophone in B-flat

for the PRISM Saxophone Quartet
A Schumann Bouquet

I. Lieber Mai
(Beloved Maytime)

arranged by William Bolcom
(2015)

Robert Schumann
(1848)†

Nicht schnell ♩ = 144*

The musical score is written for Soprano Saxophone in B-flat and consists of six staves of music. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The tempo is marked "Nicht schnell" with a metronome marking of ♩ = 144*. The score includes various dynamics and performance markings:

- Staff 1: *p*, *softer second time*
- Staff 2: *f*
- Staff 3: *p*, *fp*, *softer second time*, *fp*, *mp*
- Staff 4: *p*
- Staff 5: *mp*
- Staff 6: *fp*, *p*, *fp*, *dim.*, *poco rit.*

* Clara Schumann's metronome markings throughout
† except Ländler (1836)

4
Alto Saxophone in E-flat

for the PRISM Saxophone Quartet
A Schumann Bouquet

I. Lieber Mai
(Beloved Maytime)

arranged by William Bolcom
(2015)

Robert Schumann
(1848)†

Nicht schnell ♩ = 144*

p softer second time

f

fp softer second time *fp* *mp*

p

mp

fp *p* *fp* *dim.*

* Clara Schumann's metronome markings throughout
† except Ländler (1836)

III. Sheherazade

Ziemlich langsam, leise ♩ = 92

ppp
 5
ppp
 10
 15
sfp *sfp*
 20
sfp
 25
pp
 1. *rit.*

IV. Ländler

Sehr mässig ♩ = 56

p
 7
f
 13
tratt. *a tempo*
sf *p*
 19

II. Knecht Ruprecht (The Bogeyman)

Rough, rumbling ♩ = 126

6 *f* *f f f* *f*

12 *f* *f f f* *f* *f*

18 *f f f*

25 *p*

32 *cresc.* 2

39 *p sf p fp*

46 *f*

52 *f f f f f f f*

58 *f*

63 *f*

68 *f f f*