



R. Schumann: Fantasie op. 17,
Kreisleriana op. 16 & Arabeske op. 18

aud 92.577

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Hideyo Harada's highly calculated, painstakingly detailed pianism seems best to digest in small doses, such as in her unusual yet compelling Grieg Lyric Pieces. However, her approach quickly wears out its welcome over the course of these two large-scale Schumann works. The pianist's languorous ritards and tenutos, tapered legato phrases, highlighted inner voices, and pockets of exaggerated articulation become increasingly predictable and irritating, and usually take precedence over rhythmic momentum and narrative sweep. As a result, the C major Fantasy's first movement doesn't gush but moves in sectionalized fits and starts, while the second movement's obsessive dotted rhythms are either rigidly projected or awkwardly parsed.

Surprisingly, Kreisleriana's slower, introspective sections flow better than the impassioned, quicker movements. Harada's mannered treatment of the Arabeske's first few beats signifies the contrivance and fussiness up ahead (the march section's hiccuping upbeats, for instance). If you want remarkable pianism with more instinctive and fluid musicality in a Fantasy/Kreisleriana coupling, Evgeny Kissin (type Q7673 in Search Reviews) remains top choice.