

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

aud 92.577

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Gramophone (Bryce Morrison - 2010.12.01)

GRAMOPHONE

**Schumann's virtuoso demands hold no terrors for this
young Japanese pianist**

Hideyo Harada is a prize-winning pianist trained in Japan, Germany and Russia who offers a Schumann recital showing the composer at his dizzying and Romantic height. For Schumann the first movement of the Fantasie, an outcry to his beloved Clara, is "more impassioned than anything I have ever written; a deep lament for you". The challenge is both elusive and intimidating, and although Harada's vividness and instinct for drama are hardly in doubt, she is less attuned to subtlety. She launches the Fantasie in boldly arresting style and the wild, quasi-fugal chase at the heart of the sixth section of Kreisleriana holds no terrors for her. At the same time she is overanxious to squeeze the last ounce out of every phrase and the result can be stilted and periodically pugnacious.

This is notably true in the Fantasie's finale, where you are hardly carried away by music once described as being like constantly shifting sunset vapour. The silvery chiming at the centre of Kreisleriana's opening is overinterpreted (try Géza Anda on Testament for another world of elegance and finesse). The fifth section from the same work is another example of a pianist disinclined to leave well alone, and even in smaller, less demanding fare such as the Arabeske (offered, as it were, as an encore), the playing is marred by selfconscious voicing and inflection. Such intense scrutiny is a far cry from, say, Pollini's formidably patrician style in the Fantasie (DG, 6/96) or Argerich's flashes of summer lightning in both the major works (RCA, 1/91). Audite's sound, like the playing, is bold and brilliantly lit.