

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: FROM POST-CLASSICISM TO ROMANTICISM
IN SELECTED CELLO REPERTOIRE OF
FELIX MENDELSSOHN AND ROBERT SCHUMANN

Young Ji Choi, Doctoral of Musical Arts, 2006

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The early 19th century was a transitional period of Western European music history between the Classical and Romantic styles: new ideas and styles of music writing and performances were infused with a spirit of independence and personal freedom that arose all across Europe. Emphasis shifted from the restraint and formal discipline of the Classical point of view to the emotionalism and individualism of the Romantic. Many composers in that period had various styles and differing philosophies of their own music writings. I chose two representative Romantic composers, Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) and Robert Schumann (1810-1856), to compare the characteristics of their music and also to show how differently they approached their music in the environment of post-Classical and Romantic style.

Mendelssohn was significant among many other contemporaries during the early 19th century because his music was somewhat distinct from the high Romantic style. He

had a certain conservatism, an emotional inhibition. His music is certainly Romantic in its treatment of the orchestra and the quality of its imagination, but they were always skillful and controlled with polite gestures and never allow extra musical inspiration to disturb the musical balance.

In contrast, Schumann, the leading exponent of musical Romanticism, was the first of the completely anti-Classical composers and forms as they previously existed. Mood, color, suggestion, allusion – these were important to Schumann, much more than writing correct fugues, rondos, or sonatas.

I gave two recitals of each composer: Mendelssohn and Schumann. The first recital comprised of two works by Mendelssohn: Sonata No. 2 in D Major, opus 58 and Piano Trio No. 2 in c minor, opus 66. Both of these pieces are good examples of typical classical form such as sonata form and rondo. The second recital, I performed the highly romantic late works of Schumann: Five Pieces in Folk Style, opus 102, Adagio and Allegro, opus 70 and Concerto in a minor, opus 129.

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By

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