

EDUARD SCHUTT

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Having just played Schutt's Piano Concerto no. 2 in F minor, op 47, I am reminded of what an able composer he was.

Comparatively little is known about him. Musicologists cannot determine whether he was German or Austrian although his parents were clearly Austrian. His main output was piano music but there is a Serenade for string orchestra, Op 6, and a comic opera, Signor Formica, based on E T A Hoffman which was premiered at the Vienna Court Opera on 19 November 1893.

He was born in St Petersburg on 22 October 1853. He had intended to pursue a career in the navy but music took over. He studied at the Conservatory with Petersen and Stein graduating with honours in 1876. Then he continued his studies at the Leipzig Conservatory and was successful in his finals in 1878. From there he went to Vienna to be the conductor of the Akademischer Wagner-Verein which meant that he had to conduct the music of the Strauss family, many of whose waltzes he transcribed for the piano.

He was a brilliant academic and he premiered his Piano Concerto no. 1 in G minor, Op 7, at the Russian Musical Society in St Petersburg in January 1882. It was performed the same year at London's Crystal Palace when the soloist was Frickenhaus.

The Piano Concerto no. 2 is a splendid work ably written for the piano, being romantic and both exciting and tender with a glorious slow movement.

I have been able to look at some of his scores of works for piano. The Berceuse, published in London by Willcocks and Co of Berners Street is a charming piece of music which matches its title. It is not that difficult and would be welcome at recitals. The Deux Humoresques Miniatures, Op 90, were published by Simrock in 1911 and are attractive pieces worthy to be known.

The composer's connection with London is shown by his Romance appassionato, Op 91, another Simrock publication, dedicated to Edwin Hughes. It is an andante but full of chromatic and interesting harmonies. The Theme and Variations, Op 95, published by Simrock in 1914, is a work full of contrast, perhaps too much contrast, reminding us of those Schumann works which are often tiny episodes put together to make a longer work such as Carnival, Op 9 which, because it is stop and start music and does not flow, many pianists refuse to play it. Schutt wrote Carnival Mignon, Op 48, in 1895 which contain some fine pieces and should be made available for the public to hear. His Eight Preludes, Op 35, written for Helen Hopekirk in 1910-1911, published in London by Lengnick, are also worth the attention of pianists.

Earlier Schutt had written his Theme Varea, Op 62, of 1901, very pianistic but episodic although containing some good music. And even earlier there is his Theme Varie and fugato, Op 29, which, at times, is so simplistic that it is banal, but it does contain some moments of worth.

One of his most successful early works is his Five pieces, Op 8, which consists of a strong Humoreske, a delightful Ariette, a Minuet, a charming Intermezzo and a Waltz in G flat major.

Apart from solo piano works, he wrote two Piano Trios, Op 27 and Op 51, a Piano Quartet Op 12, Arioso for cello and piano Op 33, Violin Sonata Op 26, Suites for violin and piano, Op 44, Op 61 and Op 86. There are groups of songs such as Op 4, Op 11, Op 18 and 19, Op 65, 66 and 67.

He died on 26 July 1933 at Obermais, near Meran. He was 79.

