

Robert Schumann

Träumerei



This month **Bridget Mermikides** has arranged a piece by one of the greatest composers of the Romantic era, Robert Schumann (1810-1856).

ABILITY RATING

● ● ● ● ● Moderate

INFO	WILL IMPROVE YOUR
KEY: C	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melody and accompaniment
TEMPO: 60 bpm	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Use of rubato
CD: Tracks 33-34	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Romantic repertoire

A LOVER OF THE arts, highly regarded music critic and (until his hand injury) talented pianist, Robert Schumann wrote over 140 stunning and varied pieces in his short and - at times - troubled life. Schumann's passionate relationship with pianist and composer Clara Wieck, battles with physical and mental health, a number of suicide attempts and final incarceration in a mental institution, all paint a beguiling image of the archetypal tragic romantic figure. However, this one-dimensional view does Schumann a huge disservice as his writing, music and life was also full of invention, wit, passion, and even optimism.

Here I've arranged one of Schumann's most famous works - the short but beautiful piano work *Träumerei* (also known as *Reverie* or *Dreaming*) Number 7 from *Kinderszenen*, a set of 13 pieces musically depicting nostalgic scenes from his childhood.

Träumerei's charming and infectious

“This arrangement has a drop C tuning for the sixth string and a drop G tuning for the fifth, so you need to retune these first.”



Robert Schumann:
tragic romantic
genius


melody has found its way in popular culture appearing in films, TV, classical compilations and as a staple of the piano repertoire.

Originally in the key of F, I've transposed it down a 4th to C, using a Cmaj9 open tuning (CGDGBE) which allows for some wide, pianistic voicings. The challenge here is to make the melody very legato (connected) and singing, and it's worth listening to a few versions from the recommendations below, so that you absorb the melody and know well what you are aiming to play. An approximate tempo of 60bpm is given, but this piece is to

be played rubato which allows a rhythmic freedom for expressive purposes. And again I'd urge you to listen to my, and others' performances for inspiration.

As ever, take your time and be patient, making sure you're comfortable with every bar, and you'll be rewarded with a great piece for your repertoire.

This arrangement has a drop C tuning for the sixth string and drop G tuning for the fifth, so you need to retune these to begin with. After the count-in and 'up' beat into the melody there is very little of this piece that is played in strict time.

The style is very romantic and is laden with rubato. This 'pulling around of the rhythm for expressive effect' is vitally important, since your main aim as a performer is to shape and bring out the melody line. Have fun. 

TECHNIQUE FOCUS

POSTURE

Classical guitar playing requires a specific posture and way of holding the instrument in order to achieve the best possible position for both arms and hands in order to best serve a successful technique. The under curve of the guitar sits on the left upper leg (for right handed players) and the larger bout of the instrument rests on the inner right thigh. The left knee points forwards so your knee is under your nose and the right leg points out the way to the right. Your right forearm rests on the top of the larger bout and the three points of contact keep the guitar securely in place. The right hand should now fall next to the strings close to the sound hole and the guitar neck should be angled slightly upwards for ease of left hand movement along the fret board.



TRACK RECORD Claudio Arrau's *Schumann; Carnaval; Kinderszenen; Waldszenen* (1987 Universal), boasts an excellent performance of *Träumerei* alongside a collection of other Schumann piano works. The movie *Song Of Love* (1947) was about Schumann's life, featuring Katherine Hepburn in the role of Clara Schumann. The piano virtuoso Arthur Rubinstein was impressed by her playing!

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 34

[Bars 1-4] When the melody is single line as in bar 1 it can be played rest stroke. The chord on beat 2 of bar 2 requires a barre at the 5th fret and is spread using the thumb and fingers as indicated below the tab. Work on being very precise with the indicated fretting hand fingering in bars 3 and 4 in order to achieve clarity.

[Bars 6-9] There a stretchy chord on the second beat of bar 6 so open up the fretting hand and keep the fingers lengthened to reach it. On the last quaver beat of the same bar play the B note on the side of the first finger as a 'hinge barre' in preparation for the Am chord next bar. The exact same technique should be used on the A note, second beat of bar 7 (play on the

side of the first finger) in order to grab the Cm without a big jump for this digit. There is a bit of stretchy awkwardness on beat 2 of bar 8 before the descending bass line back onto the repeat of the main melody.

[Bars 17-23] At bar 17 the melody is reiterated again but this time goes in a different harmonic direction. On the second beat of bar 18 the first finger has to 'hop' up the first three notes of the arpeggio bass line and the fretting hand fingering is very clearly indicated at this point for the best possible solution. Use a 2nd fret barre on beat '2&' of bar 20 and a barre at the 9th fret on beat 2 of bar 22. There is more fretting hand fingering indicated in bar 23 for technical clarity.

♩ = 60 (approx)
N.C.

Altered tuning (drop C and G)

1, 9

3, 8

7, 5

3, 8

5, 6

5, 4

5, 3

2, 0

5, 4

4, 12

5, 8

3, 4

5, 0

5, 0

2, 0

5, 2

4, 0

1, 1

0, 1

0, 1

0, 1

3, 12

12, 0

10, 8

7, 0

8, 12

5, 8

7, 8

0, 6

6, 8

5, 7

8, 8

0, 1

0, 1

5, 0

2, 0

9, 11

0, 9

5, 2

0, 0

8, 11

11, 10

8, 9

6, 7

0, 3

0, 1

3, 0

3, 0

3, 2

3, 2

3, 2

0, 2

2, 3

0, 5

3, 0

5, 2

4, 2

7, 15

Gm A(b9)

A7/C# Dm

Gm6/Bb Dm/A

Gm6/Bb Dm/A

A7 Dm/A

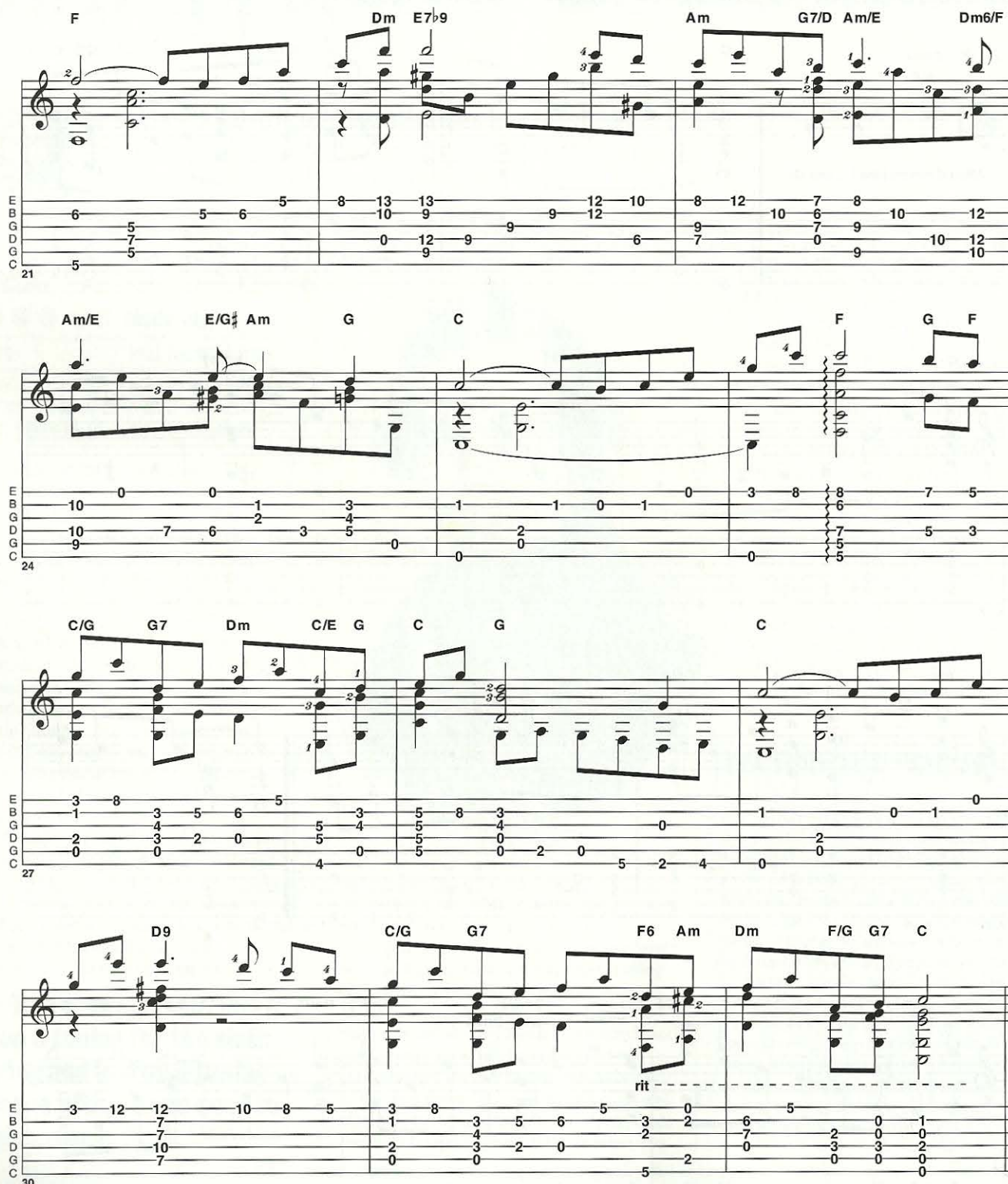
Dm C/E

PLAYING TIPS

CD TRACK 34

[Bar 24 to end] Here the clever use of open strings helps keep the resonance to get us back to the lower positions and ready to play another rendition of the main tune at bar 25. This is immediately followed by one final appearance of the melody, this time re-harmonised to a stretchy D9

chord on beat 2 of bar 30 and then on to the final few chords. Although there are some awkward moments in the piece it is quite playable, even if you are not a virtuoso, so do persevere with the piece as I think you'll agree it's really enjoyable to play once mastered!



Sheet music for CD Track 34, measures 21 to 30. The music is in standard notation with a guitar-specific bass line. Chords are indicated above the staff: F, Dm, E7b9, Am, G7/D, Am/E, Dm6/F, Am/E, E/G# Am, G, C, F, G, F, C/G, G7, Dm, C/E G, C, G, C, D9, C/G, G7, F6, Am, Dm, F/G, G7, C. The bass line includes fingerings and natural harmonics (indicated by 'n' and a natural sign). Measure 24 has a double bar line. Measure 27 has a double bar line. Measure 30 has a 'rit' (ritardando) marking.