

## NEWS OF MUSIC

# Joerg Demus Lives Up To Advance Fame

**By DONALD MINTZ**  
Contributing Critic

Joerg Demus, piano. At Phillips Gallery. Program: Four Impromptus, Op. 90, Schubert; Davidsbündler-tänze, Op. 6, Schuman; Moments Musicaux, Op. 94, Nos. 4, 5 and 6, Schubert; Fantasie in C, Op. 17, Schumann.

Joerg Demus is one of those young European pianists whose records had made him famous here before he ever appeared on our shores. As the overflow audience at last night's concert at the Phillips Gallery can testify, the fame is well and truly deserved.

Mr. Demus is a musician who regards the piano as a medium of musical expression, not as a thing that has some kind of a valid life of its own. As his program shows, he plays music written for the piano, but not "piano music." Schnabel was the greatest pianist of this type within the memory of most of us, and Wilhelm Kempff is the current dean.

Everything on last night's program was clearly—indeed, profoundly—thought out. Contrapuntal lines; which so many pianists lose in romantic music were always audible. The pedal was used with discretion. Schu-

bert and Schumann expended enormous invention contriving new and different ways to break chords into arpeggios. Then most pianists go and pedal that invention into a colloidal mess. Not so Mr. Demus.

There were marvelous touches throughout the program. The first of the Schubert Impromptus became almost a march, with a rather more rapid tempo than usual and extraordinarily crisp dotted rhythms. Yet by the most subtle control of dynamic and rhythmic phrasing, Mr Demus kept it from losing tenderness.

The balances of the textures were never fortuitous. There was a most marvelous place in the last movement of the Schuman Fantasia where the left hand "cellos" were allowed to become louder than the right hand "violins" whose melody they were doubling

This Fantasy of Schumann's is a curious and difficult piece. It is preceded by a verse motto taken from Friedrich Schlegel, the gist of which is that among all the sounds of life, there is a special tone sounded for him who listens apart from the crowd. This is music for initiates, and the extent to which

a performance can explain it is limited. The emphasis Mr Demus gave to a chromatic bass scale near the end of the middle part of the first movement showed clearly that he had heard that tone, and the audience reaction showed, that somehow he had communicated his understanding.

After two hours of magnificent playing of difficult music, Mr. Demus should have been exhausted. But, apparently still quite fresh, he offered three encores, two by Schumann and one by Bach.