



BRAHMS

LIEBESLIEDER WALTZES

for Piano 4-hands

Piano Duo Nadàn

Johannes Brahms 1833-1897

Liebeslieder Waltzes

Liebeslieder Op.52a

waltzes for piano 4-hands

1. I.	Im Ländler-Tempo	1'07	24. VI.		0'48
2. II.		0'38	25. VII.	Lebhaft	1'08
3. III.		1'25	26. VIII.	Ruhig	1'37
4. IV.		0'39	27. IX.		1'13
5. V.		1'23	28. X.		0'44
6. VI.		2'33	29. XI.	Lebhaft	0'40
7. VII.		1'11	30. XII.	Lebhaft	1'33
8. VIII.		1'14	31. XIII.	Lebhaft	1'14
9. IX.		2'21	32. XIV.	Lebhaft	1'50
10. X.		0'37	33. Zum Schluß.	Ruhig, Andante	2'47
11. XI.		0'57			
12. XII.		0'41	Zigeunerlieder Op.103		
13. XIII.		0'42	for piano 4-hands by Theodor Kirchner*		
14. XIV.		1'04	34. I.	Allegro agitato-Più presto	1'19
15. XV.		0'55			
16. XVI.	Lebhaft	1'02	35. II.	Allegro molto	0'50
17. XVII.	Mit Ausdruck	1'47	36. III.	Allegretto	1'20
18. XVIII.	Lebhaft	1'33	37. IV.	Vivace grazioso	1'03
			38. V.	Allegro giocoso	1'03
			39. VI.	Vivace grazioso	1'32
			40. VII.	Andantino grazioso	1'27
			41. VIII.	Andante, semplice	1'25
			42. IX.	Allegro	1'42
			43. X.	Andantino	2'57
			44. XI.	Allegro passionato	1'16
19. I.	Lebhaft, doch nicht schnell	0'42			
20. II.		1'19			
21. III.		1'08			
22. IV.		0'42			
23. V.		1'09			

Piano Duo Nadàn

Nadia and Angela Tirino piano 4-hands

Both the *Liebeslieder-Walzer* Op.52 and the *Neue Liebeslieder-Walzer* Op.65 are based on *Polydora. Ein weltpoetisches Liederbuch* by Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800-1875), a collection of folk poetry published in 1855 that comprised verse of Slavic origins (Russian, Polish, Croatian and Serbian) as well as poems in Hungarian, Italian and Spanish. The first series of the *Liebeslieder-Walzer* was composed between 1868 and 1869, when Brahms had relinquished the idea of obtaining a permanent appointment in Hamburg, his birthplace, and was fully absorbed in Viennese musical life. Indeed, a few years earlier Edward Hanslick, the eminent intellectual and critical advocate of Brahms, had declared that “*The serious, taciturn, north German Protestant Brahms, the man who loathes the world, has written some waltzes!*”. Compared with the major symphonic and chamber works he had written in earlier times, Brahms had clearly embraced the cause of lighter genres, proving to be a multifaceted, versatile progressive. He envisaged the short pieces recorded here as suitable for the throngs of amateur musicians, even though the compositions are not actually that simple! They hark back to a time-honoured tradition glorified by 19th century nationalism: the brief vocal chamber works for one or more solo voices and instrumental accompaniment that derived directly from the folk tradition. Nothing could be more middleclass than the *Walzer*, yet there is an evident thread connecting this collection to *Biedermeier* Vienna and its overt delight in the dances of Schubert.

The *Liebeslieder-Walzer* certainly constitute a brilliant homage to the musical tradition of the Habsburg capital. This was rooted in folk music, and had evolved from the *Ländler* to the *Walzer*, initially in the style and wake of Schubert and later in the works of the Strauss dynasty. Only a few years earlier Brahms himself had composed a successful series of *Walzer* for the piano, published as Op.39. Unlike these latter pieces, however, the two collections of *Liebeslieder-Walzer* were intended for mixed vocal quartet accompanied by piano four hands, in keeping with a model adopted by Schumann in the *Spanisches Liederspiel* Op.74, in the *Minnenspiel* Op.101 and in the *Spanische Liebeslieder* Op.138. The version of the *Liebeslieder-Walzer* presented here is Brahms's own arrangement for piano four hands, published

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Piano: Bosendorfer Concert Grand 290 Imperial

Piano technician: Davide Griffa

Artist photos: © Enrico Carcasci

Cover: Il canto di uno stornello [The song of a stornello] (1868) by Silvestro Lega (1826-1895)

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by Simrock in 1874 and 1877 respectively. Brahms had dedicated the *Alto Rhapsody* to Julie Schumann, whom he adored, and it was this passion that also fired him to write the first series of *Liebeslieder-Walzer*, which were first played in a duo with Clara Schumann. As for the vocal quartet, he indicated that it should be performed *ad libitum*.

These short compositions clearly reveal Brahms's interest in folk music, an attraction that anchored his vast output within the sphere of progressive Romanticism. Moreover, they are also an expression of the fondness he shared with Schubert for writing for piano four hands. The first series comprises 18 *Lieder*, all of them naturally in ternary rhythm, though highly diversified as regards vocal distribution: some are for vocal quartet, while others feature a solo voice and a trio, or are conceived as a double vocal duet, or involve only two voices (2 male or 2 female), or indeed just one voice. The style also varies considerably, moving from examples of simple homophony to others that entail more complex handling of counterpoint. Despite these differences, however, the waltzes relate to each other in terms of the keys involved, which may be close, or relative, or dominant, thereby creating an overall sense of unity. From the structural point of view, some of the *Walzer* feature the classic binary form with recapitulation, while others are in three parts with a central trio.

In the wake of the success of this first series, in 1874 Brahms set to work on a second collection of 15 *Walzer*. In due course he was able to declare to his publisher that this “*was the first time I have smiled at the sight of a printed edition of my work*”. Although in this case folk music clearly remained a source of luminous inspiration, it was not a constant feature in the composer's oeuvre, bearing in mind that earlier works such as the imposing *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and the equally impressive *String Quartets* Op.51 were a far cry from such sources. Likewise the later *Alto Rhapsody* based on Goethe's *Herzreise*. The second collection, which carries no *ad libitum* indications, comprises more pieces intended for solo voice. Another substantial difference lies in the fact that the closing item, indicated by Brahms in Schumann-like terms as *Zum Schluss*, is a pastorale on verse by Goethe rather than

Daumer. Entirely homophonic in structure, the vocal quartet is underpinned by elaborate counterpoint in the piano and features a reference to the Muses that acts as an aptly symbolic conclusion to the series.

The *Elf Zigeunerlieder* Op.103 for vocal quartet and piano largely follow the pattern of the *Liebeslieder*. The texts derive from an anthology of 25 gypsy songs compiled by Hugo Conrat (1845-1906) – effectively a collection of love songs published in Budapest by Rozsavölgyi and translated into German by Conrat – and the arrangements were composed between 1887 and 1888, on Brahms's return from a trip to Hungary. Like the earlier collection, the *Zigeunerlieder* are imbued with a sense of restlessness expressed by means of mood changes. They also share a number of structural features and the choice of bipartite form with repetition and occasional variation as well as more elaborate solutions involving counterpoint or hints of stylistic improvisation. The collection immediately met with considerable acclaim, leading Brahms to publish eight of them in a version for voice and piano in 1889. The four *Zigeunerlieder* also on texts by Conrat included in the *Sechs Quartette* Op.112 of 1891 act as a sort of appendix to the Op.103 collection. They were first performed at a private event on 21 March 1888 hosted by the composer's friend Theodor Billroth, and shortly afterwards were published by Simrock in Berlin. This coincided with the publication of the versions for piano four hands and piano solo made by another close friend of Brahms, the eminent pianist, composer and arranger Theodor Kirschner, known in those circles as the “master of the miniature”. It was to Kirschner that Brahms usually entrusted the compositions for four hands included in his collections of *Lieder* and songs originally conceived for piano and vocal ensemble. The 11 *Zigeunerlieder* speak for a period of great creativity in which the composer glances back for the last time towards the world of Hungarian folklore and the sphere of his erstwhile colleagues Joachim and Reményi. Stylistically less colourful and brilliant than the *Hungarian Dances*, the compositions nevertheless resound with gypsy pride.

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Translation by Kate Singleton



Nadia and Angela Tirino began to study the piano at an early age, later graduating with full marks and honours at the L. Cherubini Conservatoire in Florence under Giuseppe Fricelli and Giovanni Carmassi.

Winners of important national and international competitions (Riviera della Versilia, Città di Massa, “Paul Harris” - Rotary Club - of Milan), they have played in concerts in Italy and abroad, including recitals for eminent institutions and associations such as: S. Marco Museum in Florence, Animosi Theatre in Carrara, Pescara Theatre, S. Anna University in Pisa, Verdi Theatre in Montecatini Terme, French Consulate in Florence, Piazza della Repubblica di Florence for “Lyons Day”, Gaultiana Festival in Malta, Ashwell University of London, Bristol Piano Festival, Villa Medici La Magia di Quarrata, Council Chamber of the Municipality of Scandicci, concert for Emergency-RAI and Doctors without Borders.

They have participated in numerous masterclasses with internationally renowned pianists, such as Franco Scala, Valery Voskoboynikov, Bruno Canino, Massimiliano Damerini.

Piano Duo Nadàn’s performance of the complete works for piano duet and two pianos by the late-Romantic composer H. von Herzogenberg was released by Brilliant Classics (95647) in April 2020. An outstanding event in the international recording scene, the 2-album set comprising seven world premieres received widespread coverage on national and international radio. The two pianists were guests of Rete Toscana Classica, RAI Radio Tre, Radio Popolare (Milan), Orf - Radiothek (Vienna). Moreover, the recording attracted numerous reviews in publications such the “Counterpoint” section of La Repubblica, Report Cult Pistoia, Musica, Classic Voice, Gelderlander, Opusklassiek, Nederlads Dagblad, American Record Guide, which awarded the disc a 5-star rating.

Both pianists teach at the Florence Academy of Music.

...to our parents ...to “Herr Doktor Brahms” ...to the Music!!!

*Special Thanks to:
Davide and Gianfranco Griffa & Ivan Emma*