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Liebeslieder – Walzer Op. 52a

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Neue Liebeslieder – Walzer Op. 65a

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PREFACE

The arrangement of music for four hands at one keyboard was the chief means by which amateurs in the nineteenth century came to know important concert works, which there were few opportunities to hear: for while public concerts were rare by today's standards, domestic pianos were plentiful. So popular were both instrument and medium, that works of lesser scope were also issued by publishers, not least Brahms's publisher Simrock of Berlin, who naturally responded to the composer's suggestion of an arrangement of his new and very successful *Liebeslieder-Walzer*. As a fine composer for the piano, Brahms lavished great attention on the transcription process and many of the numerous duo versions of his works were actually made by him, though rarely with published acknowledgment.

In their original versions Brahms's *Liebeslieder-Walzer* were first published in 1869 as Op. 52 for piano duet ('und Gesang *ad libitum*'), and first performed, with vocal quartet, on 5 January 1870. The texts were taken from *Polydora, ein weltpoetisch Liederbuch* (1855), a collection of European folk poems translated by G. F. Daumer. The *Liebeslieder* rapidly joined Brahms's most popular works, uniting his love of song in a popular vein with the medium of piano duet, and expressing a new lightness of spirit associated with the waltz city, Vienna, which he had made his home since 1863. However, it was not only the newly fashionable orchestral waltzes by Johann Strauss that inspired him, but also the various dances for piano solo and duet written by Franz Schubert many years earlier, some of which Brahms arranged during the same period.

Brahms's first published waltzes, the sixteen Op.39 (1866), were composed originally for piano duet, though soon afterwards he made the more familiar version for piano solo. The intimate relationship between dance and song in some of these pieces is particularly striking in No.5, which was also set in a version for vocal quartet and piano, with the title 'Der Gang zum Liebchen' (Op.31 No.3). In composing the *Liebeslieder* for piano duet with voices, Brahms was therefore realising the vocal potential of his waltz-style; the version for piano duet alone, which appeared as 'Waltzes after the Liebeslieder' Op.52a in December 1874, brings the process full circle (perhaps even suggesting that the work's first concept was as text-inspired instrumental music). This version had first been performed by Brahms and Otto Dessoff on 14 November the same year in a concert in the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, Vienna.

In producing the version for piano duet, Brahms did not reincorporate the vocal parts in the many cases where they are not doubled in the original piano parts, but for one small exception: in the opening of the Primo part of No.1, he doubles the first vocal note, omitted in the original presumably to avoid ensemble problems between voice and piano at a point so exposed. There is, however, a more notable distinction between the two versions: the repetition of the second part of No.7 includes in the Primo part an elaborate written-out embellishment of the melody in gipsy style, suggesting an unexpected facet of Brahmsian performance practice. Since many duo performers have hitherto used the vocal version, this variant is little known.

Brahms's *Neue Liebeslieder-Walzer* for vocal quartet and piano duet appeared in 1875. Like the second set of Hungarian Dances for piano duet, they appeared in the wake of the great popularity of their predecessors, Op.52. Indeed, this popularity inspired a different form of title: no longer waltzes for four hands ('und Gesang *ad libitum*'), but 'four voices and piano four-hands'. Daumer's translations again provide the source, though Brahms adds a reflective conclusion from Goethe's *Alexis und Dora*, beginning 'Nun, ihr Musen genug!' ('Now, ye Muses, enough!'). The duo version followed soon after and was published in April 1877 as Op.65a. Brahms's greater experience in duo writing led him to adopt a more creative approach to the reworking. Although, as with the *Liebeslieder*, there is no attempt to recompose the whole set to incorporate the vocal parts where they are not doubled, details are more frequently changed in passing, to give a fuller chord or vary a rhythm. In the following instances there are major reworkings of the piano texture (though not the musical essence), generally to incorporate the melody: No.2 (bars 13-21, 29-33), No.3 (bars 16-32), No.12 (bars 25-36) and No.14 (bars 77-88). Most striking is the conclusion, where the reproduction of the unaccompanied vocal parts necessitates a complete re-casting of the piano parts.

SOURCES

The present edition of Op.52a is based on the printer's model for the first edition, and Op.65a on the first edition itself. Brahms made no separate manuscripts for these editions, but simply amended the vocal versions by deleting the vocal parts and making other small changes. The straightforwardness of his task may explain why Brahms apparently kept no personal copy of the duo editions, a vital source of subsequent revision in virtually all his works. The texts, however, are so close to the vocal versions that few problems arise.

Thanks are expressed to Mrs Irene Schreier Scott of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who owns the engraver's model for the first edition of Op.52a, for facilitating access to this source and permitting the reproduction of the elaborated reprise of No.7, noted above; and to Mr Clifford Wurfel, of the Special Collections of the Library of the University of California, Riverside, where the source is on deposit as part of the Oswald Jonas Memorial Collection, for providing the copies. The valuable assistance of Professor William Reynolds of the University's Music Department is also acknowledged with gratitude.

The engraver's model for Op.65a is part of the Rosaleen Moldenhauer Memorial Collection of the Moldenhauer Archives in Spokane, Washington. This source, which includes a manuscript sheet for the final number 'Zum Schluss', was not freely available for consultation.

EDITORIAL PROCEDURE

A comparison of the printer's model and first edition of Op.52a reveals only one discrepancy in note-content: in the Primo part of No.1, bars 26 and 42 (beat 2), the vocal note *b'* has been added in the first edition whereas the printer's model leaves the piano part as in the original: *g#'* on beat 3. Whether or not it was Brahms who made this change at proof stage, to keep the vocal line as at the opening, the original has been kept here since it is more consistent with the rest of the piano part in this passage. One editorial cautionary accidental has been included in addition to Brahms's own, in the Primo part of No.8, bar 25 (second beat), where there might otherwise be confusion. In the few cases where crescendo marks have apparently been added or deleted at proof stage, the original text has been retained. Following the example of the *Neue Liebeslieder*, translations of the initial German tempo/expression marks have been added where appropriate.

In the absence of the printer's model for Op.65a, the first edition has been followed exactly, but with the following addition. The vocal version includes the marking 'Lebhaft' in both piano parts of No.12 and in the Primo part of No.14. These markings are omitted in the first edition of the duo version but, since there seems no reason to omit them, they are supplied here.

In both volumes the notation has been modernised, and some notational standardisations have been made in order to iron out inconsistencies such as in the placement of rests, phrase marks, slurs and staccato dots. Brahms does not always make a clear distinction between a tie and a slur, for example in the Secondo part of No.7, bars 21 and 22. Comparison with bars 37 and 38 creates some doubt as to which was intended in the earlier passage. Since one can only speculate on this and other comparable examples, Brahms's original forms have been retained throughout.

The first editions of Op.52a and 65a included parallel German and English texts, the latter provided by his publisher. Brahms was particularly insistent to Fritz Simrock as to the presence and position of the text above each number, rather than between the lines¹. He even chided Simrock when he published a version of Op.52 for piano solo without any text, with the characteristic comment 'That's actually the best thing in the whole business!'² (The version was by Theodor Kirchner, Brahms regarding the task as thankless³). Although the piano parts are frequently independent of the voices, the texts are clearly essential if players are to fully recapture the extraordinary imagination with which Brahms has matched music to words. To this end a new English translation of Daumer's texts is provided editorially, intended as more accurate to the sense as well as rhythm of each line than the poetically freer renderings in the first and later editions.

Michael Musgrave
1988

¹ letters of 2-5 November 1874 (Nos. 155-7), *Brahms Briefwechsel*, vol. 9, p.182-5

² letter of 22 March 1881 (No.364), *ibid.*, vol. 10, p.171

³ letter of 5 November 1874 (No.157), *ibid.*, vol.9, p.185

LIEBESLIEDER-WALZER

Op. 52a

Johannes Brahms
1833 - 1897

Rede Mädchen, allzu liebes,
Das mir in die Brust, die kühle,
Hat geschleudert mit dem Blicke
Diese wilden Glutgefühle!

Willst du nicht dein Herz erweichen;
Willst du, eine Überfromme,
Rasten ohne traute Wonne,
Oder willst du, daß ich komme?

Rasten ohne traute Wonne –
Nicht so bitter will ich büßen.
Komme nur, du schwarzes Auge,
Komme, wenn die Sterne grüßen!

Im Ländler - Tempo

1
Secondo

p dolce

8

15

22

28

p dolce

LIEBESLIEDER-WALZER Op. 52a

Johannes Brahms
1833 - 1897

Tell me maiden, far too lovely,
You, who cool, indifferent feelings
Have ignited with your glances
Into passions all consuming!

Won't you let your heart be softened;
Will you, like a pious nun,
Live without the purest rapture,
Or would rather that I come?

Live without the purest rapture-
'Tis too bitter to endure;
Only come you dark-eyed beauty,
When the stars are greeting, come!

Im Ländler-Tempo

1
Primo

7

13

19

27