

NAXOS

MARSCHNER

Overtures and Stage Music • 2

Prinz Friedrich
von Homburg
Klänge aus Osten
Kaiser Adolph
von Nassau
Austin

Hradec
Králové
Philharmonic
Orchestra

Dario Salvi



Heinrich August Marschner (1795–1861)

Overtures and Stage Music • 2

Heinrich August Marschner was a composer and conductor who worked for a time as an assistant to Carl Maria von Weber. He was the master of German Romantic opera between Weber and Wagner, developing his own distinctive style. Most famous were *Der Vampyr* (1828, after John Polidori's novella), *Der Templer und die Jüdin* (1829, after Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*) and *Hans Heiling* (1833, an opera of magic and enchantment, his greatest success). From 1830 he worked in Hanover as Kapellmeister. He also wrote songs, choruses, orchestral works and, especially, incidental music for the stage.

Prinz Friedrich von Homburg

(Premiere: Dresden, 6 December 1821)

One of Marschner's early commissions was for incidental music to the play *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg* by Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811). The play (written 1810, published 1821) concerns a young prince in the service of Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg. The issue of the drama is the impetuosity of the young Prince who, in the heat of conflict, disregards orders at the Battle of Fehrbellin, and leads a cavalry charge against the enemy. It is successful, but rather than being honoured for the victory the Prince is sentenced to death for disobedience. The ruler is magnanimous, however, and as Friedrich can at last see the error of his choice of action and admit his guilt freely he is pardoned and able to marry Princess Natalie. The play is famous for its contribution to the discussion of ethical philosophy taking place at the time; the Prince's interior agony and dilemma, the exploration of the issue of the natural law, and the innate sense of justice and rightness examined in Immanuel Kant's famous definition of the categorical imperative. The initial rejection of the play had contributed to the poet's despair and suicide in 1811. The Dresden performance coincided with the publication of the play and marked an upturn in its fortunes, with productions following in other cities.

Marschner wrote five pieces for this work: an overture, four entr'actes and a *Schluss Symphonie*.

Act I: Entr'acte – Love and Military Matters

The music in this entr'acte concerns the romantic attraction between Prince Friedrich and Princess Natalie, and the Prince's fraught military engagement. Surging figures and dotted sequences give way to a gentle passage with an endearingly tender theme, slightly developed and repeated, reflecting the love between Prince Friedrich and Natalie, which grows to a climax with trumpets. This theme then launches into a brisk march with repeated brass chords adding propulsion. This transitions to a dramatic section, leading into a sequence with deep strings. This is repeated, with a return to the brass chords. There is a sudden change of theme with rhetorical gestures, the deep strings launching into a serious development. The sense of drama continues, until a coda with fanfares announces the end.

Act II: Entr'acte – Prison

This begins quietly, the woodwind creating a sense of dark reflection. Dotted chords continue with sad musings in the woodwind. Descending bass begins a dramatic exchange, and plucked strings launch a section of tragic import and hints of a processional march. The strings lead into further reflection, with the music dying away through sustained horns.

Act III: Entr'acte – Reflection

A recitative for tremolo strings and solo woodwinds initiate a string passage with answering woodwind. Dramatic strings begin a reprise of the string and woodwind dialogue. Woodwind cadenzas open a lyrical section with the return of the sad melody.

Act IV: Entr'acte – Military resolution

Rapid and agitated string writing sees a drum roll begin a section of brass fanfares, a type of march melody with several repeats. Agitated lower strings take over, and build into a climax. The drum roll returns, opening a repeat of the march which gradually dies away.

Act IV: Schluss Symphonie

A clarinet initiates a happy section, with declamatory strings and reiterated chords leading into a repeat of the opening melody with a strong cadence. A mysterious tremolo passage accompanies further clarinet reflection that dies away. The piece ends with solemn brass and veiled fanfares.

Klänge aus Osten, Op. 109

This is a dramatic cantata Marschner wrote between his operas *Der Bäbu* and *Kaiser Adolph von Nassau*. It consists of an overture with five songs and choruses accompanied by orchestra: *Ouverture – Zigeuner Gesang – Assats Ständchen – Maisunas Lied – Räuberchor – Kampf der Räuber, Flucht Maisunas und Wiederfinden*. In theme and style it bears resemblance to the Eastern nature of *Der Bäbu*.

The *Overture* begins with woodwinds and horns, interrupted by a dramatic gesture, and suddenly moves into a serene major-keyed melody. A motif on the strings launches into a happy bouncing idea that is developed with the opening theme, and a second melody emerges from dotted string and woodwind figures before the first subject is repeated and elaborated, with interplay between the woodwinds and full orchestra.

The development begins with powerful string motifs and full statement of the themes, with the second bouncing idea extended suddenly into a cello passage, with interplay between both themes. Lower strings lead into the short recapitulation and brief coda. There is little attempt at Oriental tropes in the music.

Kaiser Adolph von Nassau, Op. 130

(Premiere: Dresden, 5 January 1845)

In 1843 the Hanoverian Crown Prince married Princess Marie von Altenburg, an event celebrated firstly in 1844 with a pageant, for which Marschner wrote a short dramatic piece. In the following year came a grand romantic opera, *Kaiser Adolph von Nassau*, with a libretto by the clergyman Heribert Rau (1813–1876), who was known for his novels based on the lives of famous poets and composers (*'kultuhistorische Romane'*). The story is based on real events. Adolph of Nassau was elected King of the Romans in 1293 but never crowned Holy Roman Emperor. He was deposed in June 1298 and killed at the Battle of Gölheim by Duke Albrecht of Austria's forces on 2 July. In the rather fanciful operatic scenario, Adolph of Nassau declares himself Emperor, so provoking the opposition of the ambitious general Gerhard and his rival in love, Count Gerolseck. Adolph is killed by Gerolseck, who is then condemned to death by Gerhard. Adolph dies in the arms of his beloved Imagina, and Albrecht of Habsburg is declared Emperor. Curiously there was no performance in Hanover, but the premiere was secured in Dresden in 1845 by Wagner, who reported that it was apparently a failure.

Act I: Ballo

The ballet is introduced by dramatic *forte* chords that lead through the brass and woodwind then horns. The first movement is a delicate dance with string figures playing over gentle and diffident harp splashes, later strengthened by the brass. In the second movement, tight chordal triplets lead into a delicate passage for strings, with a brisk 4/4 which is more developed, and a contrasting rising and falling middle section with a hint of the harp. The third movement is a return to a variant of the first movement. The coda uses melodic elements of the other movements.

Act II: Marsch

Distant brass fanfares are heard. Lower strings present a strong bass motif, and the high strings then initiate a second idea. The *fortissimo* brass begin the development, using the various ideas. The lower string figure becomes very prominent, leading into a brisk coda.



Heinrich August Marschner (1795–1861)



François I Phoebus, Count of Foix ('Austin') (1469–1483) from a miniature
codice about the French art of war
French School (16th century)

Also available



MARSCHNER

Overtures and Stage Music • 1

Ali Baba

Schön Ella

Der Kyffhäuser Berg

Der Holzdieb

Die Wiener in Berlin

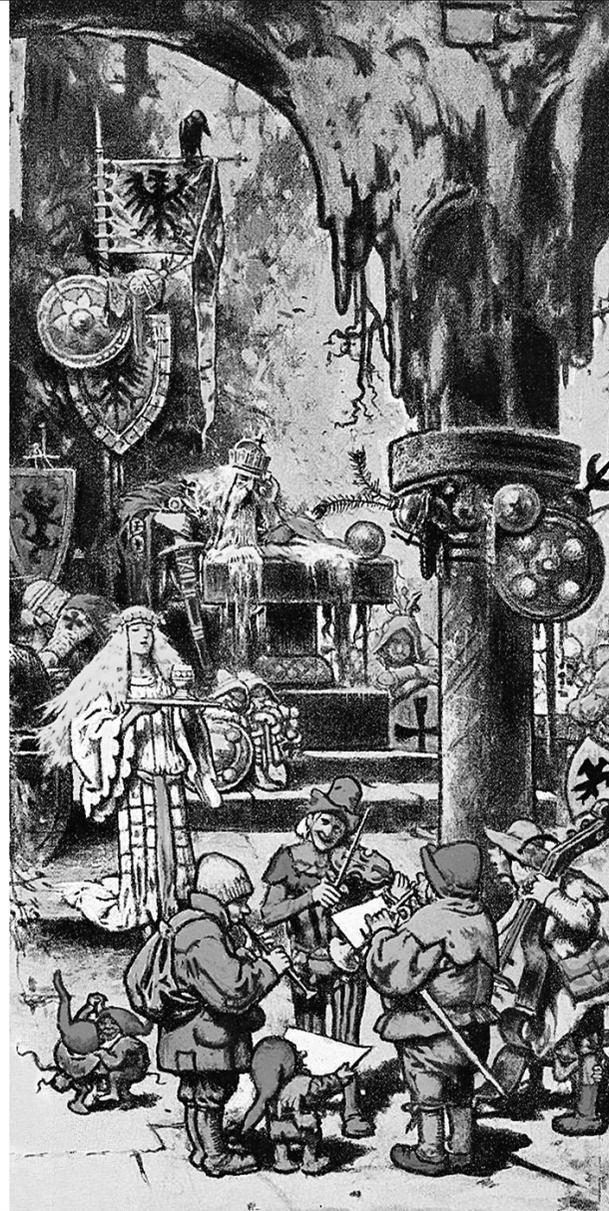
Czech Chamber

Philharmonic

Orchestra

Pardubice

Dario Salvi



8.574449

Austin

(Premiere: Hanover, 26 January 1857)

After the failure of *Adolph von Nassau*, five years passed before Marschner composed another opera. The libretto was by his wife Marianne, and the music was composed between September 1850 and July 1851. The first performance was delayed by the death of King Ernst August in August 1851. There were only six performances, and the work was never mounted again. The story has a chivalric theme, set in 15th-century Navarre, involving political and amorous intrigue at the court of Franz Phoebus von Bearn, King of Navarre (who is called 'Austin' in the opera, but is actually François I Phoebus, Count of Foix, who ruled from 1479 to 1483) and his rivalry with the ambitious Constable of Navarre, Count of Lérin who has designs on the king's life. The failure of the opera was largely the fault of the libretto, which is overloaded with intrigue and has far too many characters, many of them having no structural motivation, resulting in dramatic stagnancy. There are also too many digressions from the main plot, with dancing and lavish spectacle taking up much of the second and third acts. The work is influenced by grand opera, but provides a classic instance of form outweighing content in the absence of a cogent dramaturgy.

Einleitung

Reiterated brass figures with almost dissonant chords lead into a muted dramatic melody that grows in strength with powerful brass and plucked strings. A horn passage continues to ruminate before a high woodwind figure initiates a horn solo with an answering woodwind melody. A sudden *fortissimo* for the full orchestra carries the melody to a lyrical highpoint. A sudden silence is broken by a hushed orchestral figure.

Act II: Krönungsmarsch

In *Act II* Austin has reclaimed his throne and is to be crowned. The scene is set in a festively decorated cathedral. Counts, noblemen, knights with banners, officials and ladies with their pages enter in solemn procession. Lower strings and brass lead into a rather jaunty first subject which is repeated. A second theme begins with prominent woodwind and a descending motif in the brass before the first subject is repeated with variation. A third idea now begins, the trio with woodwind writing, through a transitional figure to a reprise. The whole is then reprised, leading to a short coda.

Act III: Ballo

In *Act III* a sumptuous banquet is celebrated in the garden of the royal castle. There are flowering trees and shrubs, and all is brilliantly illuminated. Noblemen, knights, ladies and pages are assembled for a celebration of the coronation.

The piece begins with a bright confident opening for full orchestra, which is repeated, before moving into a light delicate movement for strings in the ternary pattern A–B–A. A third C-section follows harp chords and answering woodwind, with a cello passage emerging. A is resumed, ending in a hesitant coda.

A violin cadenza with solo horn leads into a 6/8 movement, the violin assuming a filigree melody, over harp chords with the flute taking over from the violin, eventually all playing together. In an extended movement full of busy figuration, the harp is increasingly active.

A strong string motif leads into a perky common-time woodwind melody over diastolic accompaniment, interspersed with commentary from the brass, eventually becoming something of a dialogue over sustained trumpet. The B-section uses the brass with busy string figures, which is propelled into a string version of the melody. A C-section begins, with a reprise of A, all the orchestral elements at work before the sudden cadence.

Robert Ignatius Letellier

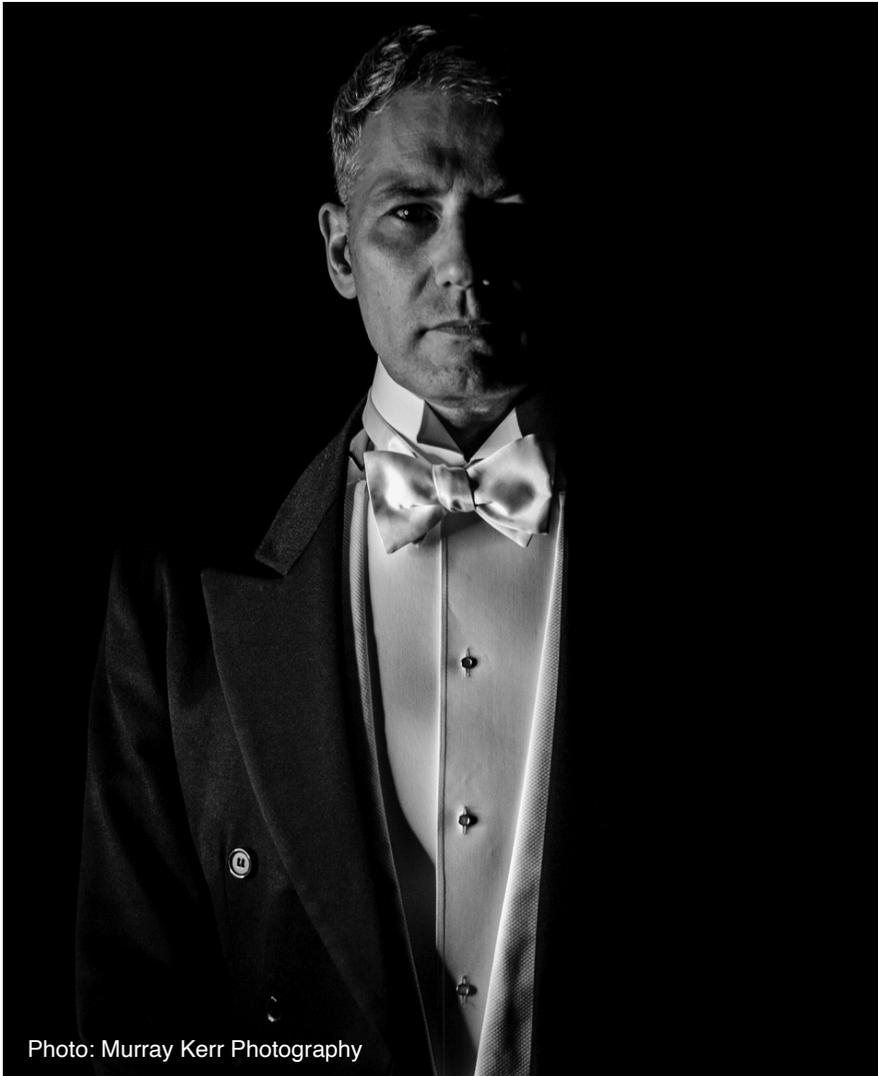
Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra



Photo: Patrick Marek

Established in 1978 as the Orchestra of the City of Hradec Králové and renamed the Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra in conjunction with the establishment of the Czech Republic in 1993, the orchestra has appeared in prestigious concert halls across Europe, including the Große Musikvereinsaal in Vienna, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig and the Queen Elisabeth Hall in Antwerp. František Vajnar served as principal conductor from 1991 until 2001, when he was recognised as the orchestra's principal conductor of honour, with Ondřej Kukul holding the position of principal conductor between 2001 and 2012, followed by Andreas Sebastian Weiser from 2012 to 2018. Kaspar Zehnder is currently principal conductor. The orchestra has had concerts broadcast on Czech Television, TV Noe and Radio Prague, and its discography includes releases for international record labels and Czech Radio. The ensemble has appeared at major festivals such as Prague Spring, Smetana's Litomyšl International Opera Festival and the Leoš Janáček International Music Festival. Together with Czech Radio Vltava, the orchestra coordinates the Music Forum Hradec Králové, a unique festival showcasing Czech premieres of compositions by composers such as Schnittke, Penderecki, Tan Dun and Arvo Pärt.

Dario Salvi



Dario Salvi is a Scottish-Italian conductor, musicologist and researcher who specialises in the restoration and performance of rare works. Salvi conducts symphonic works, ballet, opera and operettas across Europe, the Middle East and the United States. His passion is the rediscovery and performance of long-forgotten masterpieces. Recent collaborations with Naxos include a series on Auber's overtures and orchestral music alongside numerous other projects, such as the operettas of Johann Strauss II and Franz von Suppé and the ballets of Adolphe Adam, and world premiere recordings of works by Giacomo Meyerbeer, Heinrich Marschner and Engelbert Humperdinck. Salvi has also written books on Viennese operetta, published new musical editions of operas and is a lifetime honorary member of The Johann Strauss Society of Great Britain.

www.dariosalvi.com

Heinrich Marschner developed his own distinctive operatic style that enabled him to become the leading German opera composer between Weber and the rise of Wagner. The works in this second volume of overtures and stage music (Volume 1 is on 8.574449) span much of his compositional life, from the early commission for *Prinz Friedrich von Homburg*, a work that explores ethical philosophy, to the sumptuous and varied excerpts from *Austin*. The stirring overture from his dramatic cantata *Klänge aus Osten* reinforces his orchestral mastery and sense of colour.

Heinrich August
MARSCHNER
(1795–1861)

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Prinz Friedrich von Homburg (1821) (excerpts) 27:06	Kaiser Adolph von Nassau, Op. 130 (1845) (excerpts) 11:59
❶ Act I: Entr'acte 8:39	❷ Act I: Ballo 9:05
❷ Act II: Entr'acte 6:16	❸ Act II: Marsch 2:53
❸ Act III: Entr'acte 4:34	Austin (1850–51) (excerpts) 25:12
❹ Act IV: Entr'acte 4:21	❹ Einleitung 5:22
❺ Act IV: Schluss Symphonie 3:13	❺ Act II: Krönungsmarsch 6:14
❻ Klänge aus Osten, Op. 109 (‘Sounds from the East’) – Overture (1842) 11:33	❻ Act III: Ballo 13:34

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Václav Zajíc, Violin ❶ • Petr Lichý, Cello ❶

Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra • Dario Salvi

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Der große Kurfürst – Bild 3 – Frobens Tod bei Fehrbellin (Kant-Cacao & Chokoladenfabrik Trade Card,
Wittenberg Bezirk Halle) by Dario Salvi

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