



Friedrich GERNSHEIM

PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE

PIANO SONATA NO. 2 IN E FLAT MAJOR

PIANO SONATA NO. 3 IN D MINOR

SIX PRELUDES, OP. 2

Jens Barneck

FIRST RECORDINGS

FRIEDRICH GERNSHEIM: PIANO MUSIC, VOLUME ONE

by William Melton

According to informal family history,¹ Gernsheim antecedents first arrived in the Rhenish city of Worms in the sixteenth century as refugees from the Inquisition in Spain. Worms had hosted a Jewish presence since long before, the first written evidence dating from 960; the first synagogue was erected in 1034.² Within the severe constraints imposed upon Jews, the family thrived: Machol Falk Gernsheim, son of Falk ben Schmuël Gernsheim, served for over 30 years as the last official spokesman of the Jewish community of Worms before the dissolution of the ghetto. One descendant, Abraham Gernsheim, was able to study and practise medicine; he was also an amateur flautist. His son Friedrich, an only child, born just before midnight on 17 July 1839, displayed early musical gifts (like the perfect pitch that allowed him to mimic the horn of the passing postilion on the piano). Young Fritz was given piano instruction by his mother, Josephine, *née* Kaula, and received further piano tuition from Adjutant Kressel of the local infantry garrison, Eduard Hecht³ and Carl Haine, as well as violin instruction from Christian Haine. This schooling was augmented by lessons from Louis Liebe, a pupil of Louis Spohr. ‘When I took over the music director position in Worms in 1846,’ wrote Liebe,

I was soon given the musical training of little seven-year-old Fritz by his parents. Even then Fritz showed an extraordinary talent. Sometimes he wrote down, standing at a chair, as well as he could manage, a march which the passing military band was playing; he also tried his hand at childish compositions. From that point onwards it

¹ Karl Holl, *Friedrich Gernsheim. Leben, Erscheinung und Werk*, Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, 1928, p. 3.

² Fritz Reuter, *Warmaisa. 1000 Jahre Juden in Worms*, Reuter, Worms, 2009, pp. 17–18. The German family name may have stemmed from the town of Gernsheim, about ten miles to the northeast of Worms, on the eastern bank of the Rhine.

³ After leaving Germany for England in 1854, Hecht (1832–87) settled in Manchester, where he served as director of a number of choruses, often working under Charles Hallé.

became my aim to give the boy a thorough schooling in piano-playing and to instil an understanding of Classical music (sonatas by Mozart and the lighter ones by Beethoven), but I avoided anything that bordered on virtuosity. I had the joy of seeing him make extraordinary progress in both technique and understanding. Soon afterwards I started him on theory, which he romped through with ease, to the point that just two years later he was able to compose under my direction, in addition to many shorter compositions, an overture for orchestra.⁴

When the boy was nine, mother and son spent time in Mainz, thus escaping the worst of the Revolution of 1848 and the harsh conservative reaction. In Mainz Friedrich was a pupil of the Viennese-born Ernst Pauer (a student of Mozart's son, Franz Xaver Wolfgang, as well as of Simon Sechter and Franz Lachner). The following year the entire family moved to Frankfurt, where there was a lively concert life, and the youngster studied with Eduard Rosenhain (piano), Johann Christian Hauff (theory) and Eduard Eliason and Heinrich Wolff (violin). He attended the city theatre frequently, and soon appeared there himself as pianist, violinist and composer. He also toured as a pianist in 1850–51 in the Rhineland, Switzerland and Alsace, the last region generating notices that circulated across France.

Strasbourg, 21 January.

Yesterday evening we attended the last of the concerts given in the auditorium on 22, 25 and 27 January by the young Frédéric Gernsheim. This ten-year-old pianist-composer is one of the most phenomenal manifestations in the history of music. In the three concerts he has just presented, he has given us the great concerto (Konzertstück) by Weber, the concerto in A minor by Hummel, that in E major by Moscheles, the rondo capriccioso by Mendelssohn, a few modern pieces, and two orchestral overtures composed and conducted by the young virtuoso with great aplomb. His pure, elegant, expressive, often lively and highly strung playing, though his small hands embrace the width of an octave with difficulty, is not that of a child, but that of an artist consumed. [...] Frédéric Gernsheim must go to Paris: it is to be hoped that there he will find a more perceptive

⁴ Quoted in Karl August Krauss, 'Friedrich Gernsheim. Zu seinem 70. Geburtstag,' *Der Musiksalon*, Vol. 1, No. 13/14, 1909, p. 167.

audience. As for us, we are not afraid to say that if he did not duplicate all of the marvels told of Mozart's childhood, since that great man we have not experienced such surprising and extraordinary powers, and we believe that one day all of Europe will enthusiastically profess the name of this child.⁵

After his arrival in Leipzig in 1852 the thirteen-year-old Gernsheim enrolled as the youngest pupil at the Conservatoire there. To his lengthy list of mentors he now added a roster of teachers who had been hand-picked by the late director of the institution, Felix Mendelssohn. They included Ernst Friedrich Eduard Richter and Moritz Hauptmann for theory, August Wilhelm Julius Rietz for composition, Karl Franz Brendel for music history, Hermann Zille for literature, Otto Wacker for classical languages, Raimund Dreyschock and Ferdinand David for violin, and Louis Plaidy and, perhaps most notably, Ignaz Moscheles for piano.

Prague-born and a pupil of Bedřich Diviš Weber, Moscheles had gravitated to Vienna in 1808 and continued his studies with former teachers of his idol Beethoven, Johann Georg Albrechtsberger and Antonio Salieri. Beethoven was so impressed by Moscheles that he chose him to arrange the piano score of *Fidelio* in 1814. After Moscheles had spent more than two successful decades in London, an appeal came to relocate to Leipzig in 1846. Mendelssohn, who would die a year later, was much relieved to secure a pianist of stature for the Conservatoire at last. Moscheles was a strict traditionalist in his teaching, but one who also valued excellent relations with his students: 'Moscheles enjoyed having them around him', his wife, Charlotte, wrote, 'celebrated their progress, and took a keen interest in the growing youngster Gernsheim.'⁶ In fact, the entire institution was proud of its precocious star pupil. When he left Leipzig in 1855 at the age of sixteen, Gernsheim was seen off at the train station by Conrad Schleinitz, the administrative director of the Conservatoire, who made the young man the unprecedented gift of a curl of Mendelssohn's hair.

⁵ Anon., 'Correspondance: Frédéric Gernsheim', *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, Vol. 19, No. 6, 8 February 1852, pp. 44–45.

⁶ Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles, *Aus Moscheles' Leben nach Briefen und Tagebüchern*, Volume 2, Duncker & Humblot, Leipzig, 1873, p. 232.

Gernsheim then spent the years 1855–61 in Paris, polishing his piano technique with Joseph Lambert Massart and Antoine François Marmontel, the latter a pupil of Alkan and Halévy and the highly esteemed teacher to decades of Conservatoire students, ranging from Bizet by way of Edward MacDowell to Debussy. Gernsheim also had the considerable benefit of being taken under the wing of Théodore Parmentier, a gifted military engineer and aide-de-camp to Général Adolphe Niel, a future Marshal of France. Parmentier, who would soon be decorated for his service in the Crimean War, also excelled as a musician and writer. His 1856 profile of Gernsheim made it clear that a pianist of unusual talent had taken up residence in Paris.

The young pianist composer F. Gernsheim, whose arrival we have announced in Paris and of whom the *Gazette musicale* has already informed its readers, has won the most brilliant successes in the evenings where he has been heard and enjoys the greatest favour in the aristocratic salons of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. It is rather awkward to have the task of presenting a great artist who is not yet fifteen years old, especially in this age of child prodigies and hothouse talents, the least of whom would complain if they were not compared favourably to the young Mozart. Thus we do not invoke for Gernsheim the protection of his tender age. He is a true artist, whose talent is doubtless destined to grow further and to make the most brilliant development, but who, just as he is now, can do without the indulgence of the public and be judged without regard to size or age. If this artist emerges from the salons to appear in front of the general public, we do not doubt that all lovers of good classical music who have the felicitous sense to go hear him will be struck at the perfect understanding of style with which he interprets the immortal works of Mozart, Beethoven and especially Mendelssohn and the delicate and dreamy inspirations of Chopin. Skilful pianists are hardly lacking today, but intelligent pianists whose thoughts are as lofty as those of the great men just mentioned, are and will remain rare.⁷

With Parmentier's considerable help, Gernsheim was rapidly introduced to the Parisian musical world, enjoying contact with Rossini, Berlioz, Stephen Heller, Liszt, Lalo, Anton Rubinstein, Saint-Saëns, Brahms' friend Julius Stockhausen (with whom

⁷ Théodore Parmentier, 'F. Gernsheim', *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, Vol. 23, No. 6, 10 February 1856, p. 43.

Gernsheim read through Schubert's Lieder) and even Richard Wagner. Gernsheim attended the Paris premiere of *Tannhäuser* in 1861, and found much to admire in the work, despite its famously hostile reception.

Gernsheim left Paris in 1861 after succeeding Hermann Levi (a friend whose paternal grandfather, Samuel Levi, had been a rabbi in Worms) as Musical Director in Saarbrücken. It was there that Gernsheim was first drawn into Ferdinand Hiller's circle, but in 1865 he was lured away by a teaching position at the Cologne Conservatoire, to be awarded the title Professor and named Kapellmeister at the Cologne Stadttheater. Among Gernsheim's pupils were Engelbert Humperdinck and the conductor and future Elgar champion Julius Butts. A long friendship with Max Bruch began, and Gernsheim was introduced to Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms (although a visit by Brahms to Leipzig in 1853 may have brought a brief earlier meeting). Gernsheim and Brahms developed a respectful relationship that would prove a major stylistic influence on the former and a boon to the latter in the form of important performances under Gernsheim's baton (including the Cologne premiere of the *Deutsches Requiem* in 1870).

In 1874 Gernsheim was named Music Director of the *Maatschappij tot bevordering van toonkunst* (Society for the Promotion of Music) in Rotterdam. His duties included leading the municipal orchestra, chorus and conservatoire, and there he created an important centre for the performance of Brahms, Bruch, Hiller and other contemporary composers. Gernsheim married Helene Gernsheim in 1877, and two daughters, Marie and Clara, would follow. The Rotterdam audience proved as open to their conductor's German tastes as they were tolerant of his Jewishness, and the sixteen-year stint was both an artistic and personal success.

In 1890 Gernsheim was engaged by the Stern Conservatoire in Berlin, his candidature strongly bolstered by testimonials from Brahms, Bruch, Hans von Bülow and Joseph Joachim. In Berlin he taught, conducted the Stern Gesangverein and other choirs, was named a Senator in the Prussian Academy of Fine Arts in 1897 and, in 1901, took over one of three Academy master-classes in composition (Bruch and Humperdinck led the others). His many contributions to Berlin life (he led the chorus of the local premiere

of Mahler's Symphony No. 2 in 1895) were enumerated by another of the leading choral conductors of the city, Siegfried Ochs:

There is no disputing Gernsheim's importance as a musician in the general sense. There is not an area of musical skill or knowledge that he had not mastered. He knew every secret of compositional theory. He was one of the truly excellent pianists, especially in the domain of chamber music. He was a score-player of uncommon gifts, and a talent for composition that rose above the ordinary cannot be denied him. He was also experienced beyond a doubt in every province of the art of conducting.⁸

Gernsheim's longtime correspondence with his close friend Max Bruch often mirrored their agreement on issues of musical style. Bruch had coined the expression 'Parthei des vernünftigen Fortschritts' ('Party of Sensible Progress') to describe an alliance against what he felt were dangerous modernist tendencies, and was capable of harsh words when he felt Gernsheim was veering too close to New German influences. For his part, Gernsheim had continued in his admiration of Wagner's works, attending *Tristan und Isolde* at Hans von Bülow's invitation and the entire *Ring* cycle under Hermann Levi in Munich. He was also prodded by Bruch to give up the older religion to gain a better reception: 'My advice is: let yourself be baptised (but with authentic Jordan river water).'⁹ Gernsheim confided to Hiller:

One does one's best, trying to represent musical Germany honestly to the outside world, but nonetheless those all-knowing gentlemen appear and say 'he is a Jew', or, which borders on bigotry, 'He has too many Jewish supporters, he does not belong to us, etc.'¹⁰

Gernsheim would never recant his faith. He also composed two works inspired by Judaism – *Eloheanu* for cello and orchestra (or piano; 1882) and the Symphony No. 3 in C minor, Op. 54 ('Miriam'; 1887) – but his pieces to Latin texts (including the *Salve*

⁸ *Geschehenes, gesehenes*, Grethlein, Leipzig and Zurich, 1922, p. 137.

⁹ Alexander L. Ringer, 'Die Parthei des vernünftigen Fortschritts – Max Bruch und Friedrich Gernsheim', *Die Musikforschung*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 1972, p. 19.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Regina, Op. 11, Ave Maria, Op. 80, and Te Deum, Op. 90) are a testament to his broadmindedness.

In the new century Gernsheim's symphonies were performed by conductors including Bülow, Eduard Colonne, Arthur Nikisch and Richard Strauss. Gernsheim remained active through his retirement, observing the newest trends with interest, and stepping in for his ailing colleague Wilhelm Berger to lead winter 1907–8 concerts with the Meiningen Hofkapelle. On a visit to Worms in 1912, Friedrich Gernsheim once again walked through the streets of his youth. Near the Mainz Gate a building had once displayed the sign 'Jewish Jail', which had held those who transgressed against the long list of restrictions. Standing outside this former jail Gernsheim told his listeners:

When the French army made its victorious march through the Rhineland and occupied the old city of Worms, the existence of 'les droits de l'homme' was proclaimed. According to these rights there were no more Christians or Jews under the law, but only citizens, united as one community under the motto 'liberté, égalité, fraternité'. These human rights had barely been declared when my grandfather climbed up a ladder, took an axe to the sign with the legend 'Judengefängnis' and utterly destroyed it!¹¹

Dortmund held a Gernsheim Festival for the composer's 75th-birthday celebrations in July 1914, in which he conducted his own works in two orchestral concerts and displayed his still-fine piano technique in a chamber-music matinee. *Die Musik* commented that the festival

made a name for itself with a dignified, academic compositional style in which the developments of the post-Brahms era seem to have passed by without a trace, yet one which employs the symphonic and sonata form so captivantly that it was able to conjure interest, especially under the guidance of the astonishingly elastic old master [...].¹²

The *Neue Musik-Zeitung* concurred:

¹¹ Samson Rothschild, 'Persönliche Erinnerungen an Professor Friedrich Gernsheim', *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums*, Vol. 80, No. 40, 6 October 1916, p. 476.

¹² Theo Schäfer, 'Konzert: Dortmund', *Die Musik*, Vol. 13, No. 22, August 1914, p. 235.

To experience a 75th birthday in perfect spiritual and physical freshness is one of the great and beautiful rarities, and it is a feast of joy when the celebrant still stands in the full force of his creation, with echoes of the works just performed also announcing with certainty that this creator will have something to say in the future.¹³

Only a month after the Gernsheim Festival the First World War began. A valedictory honour was bestowed in Berlin in 1915 when Gernsheim was named Vice President of the Academy of Fine Arts, but his contented existence received a hammer blow when his elder daughter, Marie, was killed in a car accident in October of that year.¹⁴ 'Whether I will recover from this greatest pain that life has yet inflicted remains to be seen.'¹⁵ In fact, Gernsheim's health collapsed and he was confined in a Berlin clinic with rapidly worsening arterial sclerosis. Sent to a sanatorium in Bad Wildungen, he returned home in early 1916, but was eventually confined to his bed. At his death in the early hours of 11 September of that year the eulogies were many. From Gernsheim's hometown Samson Rothschild wrote: 'So he has passed on, a prince in the kingdom of music, an unpretentious, unassuming Mensch who, and this cannot be stressed enough in these times, always remained a true son of Judaism.'¹⁶ The *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* observed: 'With Gernsheim, art loses one of its best and most faithful representatives, a man of the highest principles and pure, high ideals, but his strong individuality will live beyond death, and his artistic legacy ensures him immortality.'¹⁷

In spite of the demands of Gernsheim's performing and teaching duties and his scrupulous approach to composition, he was able to produce an estimable catalogue of works in most genres, with the exceptions of opera and oratorio. Absolute music, his instrumental works being twice as numerous as his vocal works, was a lifelong preference. His creations included four symphonies, concertos for piano, violin and cello, choral works for mixed or male choirs with orchestra or *a cappella*, 40 Lieder and

¹³ Katarina Schurzmann, 'Friedrich Gernsheim. Ein Gedenkwort zu seinem 75. Geburtstag (17. Juli)', *Neue Musik-Zeitung*, Vol. 35, No. 21, 1914, p. 410.

¹⁴ The composer's younger daughter, Clara Pick-Gernsheim, would die in Tel Aviv in 1974.

¹⁵ Holl, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

¹⁶ Rothschild, *loc. cit.*, p. 477.

¹⁷ Katarina Schurzmann, 'Friedrich Gernsheim. Ein Nachruf', *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 83, No. 38, 21 September 1916, p. 296.

piano works. Gernsheim had a special affinity for chamber music, and composed two string quintets, two piano quintets,¹⁸ five string quartets, three piano quartets and two piano trios, as well as four sonatas for violin and two for cello.

Once a mark of approbation, the label 'Berlin academic' has since become a stigma, a synonym for compositional mediocrity. Gernsheim's academism is best understood as a rigorous mastery of compositional technique, wholly without what his biographer Karl Holl called 'an unpleasant aftertaste of artistic sterility, stiffness, and dessication'.¹⁹ As Willi Kahl observed of the composer,

Within the circle of Berlin academics, he can probably be considered as the most advanced in terms of rhythmic flexibility, harmony and instrumental colour. This is especially interesting in the tone poem *Zu einem Drama* which is not free of the influence of R. Strauss and Reger.²⁰

In fact, Gernsheim was shaped by multiple influences across decades.

Studying at the Leipzig Conservatoire led him on the path of musical conservatism like that of Mendelssohn. The warning of his piano teacher Moscheles against the 'Labyrinth of the future seekers' and the aesthetic positions of the Cologne circle around F. Hiller (Bruch, Bargiel) pointed in the same direction. The study residence in Paris formed a counterweight which enabled encounters with Berlioz and Wagner and opened up more progressive musical influences. Because he was open to musical modernity in his later works, he was accused of chasing success 'too strongly and purposely with the latest radicals' (letter from Bruch to Willy Hess, 7 June 1915). The oft-noted Brahms emulation of the young Gernsheim was limited to some works of the 1860s and early 1870s.²¹

In short, although certain Brahmsian trademarks undoubtedly found their way into Gernsheim's style, further developmental influences cannot be ignored. The scholar Sandra Maria Ehses concluded: 'The openness to different trends runs through his life

¹⁸ Recorded by Edouard Oganessian and the Art Vio String Quartet on Toccata Classics TOCC 0099.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 112.

²⁰ 'Gernsheim, Friedrich', *Rheinische Musiker*, Vol. 3, Volk, Cologne, 1964, p. 31.

²¹ Dietrich Kämper, 'Gernsheim, Friedrich', *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, Personenteil: Vol. 7, Bärenreiter, Kassel, 2001, pp. 795–96.

story';²² and for Michael Brocke, 'Gernsheim's art is versatile and fed by many sources',²³ Otto Lessmann saw him thus: 'Not a pioneer in the vast field of art, but he is one of the most outstanding caretakers of that which has been created by greater minds and left as a fruitful legacy to subsequent generations.'²⁴ 'One can disagree over Gernsheim's position in contemporary music, over the measure of his character and invention', Leopold Schmidt wrote, 'but what he produced was always mature and distinguished art'.²⁵ Alexander Ringer has described

a gifted composer utterly devoid of the self-centeredness that is so often the mark of genius, a first-rate musician too civilized to offend even in the interest of a daring new idea, in short an artist of the highest caliber tragically representative of the lost generation that failed to reach true greatness [...].²⁶

It is unsurprising, considering Gernsheim's successes as a pianist, that works for piano were the most numerous of all his creations, spanning from the six-year-old's March in C major (1845) to the 75-year-old's *Verwehte Blätter* ('Scattered Leaves'; 1914). The unpublished piano works which followed that March were a *Polka-Galoppade*, an *Andante* and a *Rondo brillant*; three sonatas, in D minor (1853), E flat major (1853) and D minor (1854); a Prelude and Fugue (1860) and, 44 years later, another pairing, a Prelude and Fugue in G minor (1904). The published piano works with and without opus numbers are, with their dates of publication, a Sonata in F minor, Op. 1 (1863); six *Präludien*, Op. 2 (1864); a Suite in D minor, Op. 8 (1867); two *Romanzen*, Opp. 15 and 23 (1869 and 1871); two sets of variations, Op. 18 in E flat major (1869) and Op. 22 in C minor (1870); a set of seven pieces called *Ins Stammbuch* (which might translate as 'Into the Autograph Book'), Op. 26 (1872); *Fantasie*, Op. 27 (1873); *Vier Tanzstücke*, Op. 30, for four hands (1873); four *Stimmungsbilder*, Op. 36 (1877); *Zwei Klavierstücke*, Op. 39

²² *Die vier Symphonien von Friedrich Gernsheim*, Are, Mainz, 2013, p. 54.

²³ 'Nach rückwärts und vorwärts Freiheit bewahren. Der Komponist Friedrich Gernsheim', *Kalonymos: Beiträge zur deutsch-jüdischen Geschichte*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2003, p. 10.

²⁴ 'Friedrich Gernsheim †', *Allgemeine Musik-Zeitung*, Vol. 43, 1916, p. 508.

²⁵ *Aus dem Musikleben der Gegenwart*, Hesse, Berlin, 1922, p. 164.

²⁶ 'Friedrich Gernsheim (1839–1916) and the Lost Generation', *Musica Judaica*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1980/81, p. 11.

(1879); *Legende*, Op. 44 (1883); *Capriccio* in E minor (1883); five piano pieces published as *Symbole*, Op. 59 (1894); *Vier Klavierstücke*, Op. 61 (1895); *Fünf Tongedichte*, Op. 67, for four hands (1900); three pieces, *Auf der Piazzetta* (sic), Op. 68, *Weihe der Nacht*, Op. 69, and *Walzer*, Op. 70, published together (1900); a ‘Phantasiestück’, *Auf der Lagune*, Op. 71 (1902); a four-movement *Tondichtung*, Op. 72 (1902); a Fantasia and Fugue, Op. 76b, transcribed from an organ original (1906); *Capriccietto* in F major (1906); and, penultimately, a *Fantasia* in F minor, Op. 81 (1909).

The sonatas for piano in E flat major and D minor were composed in 1853 and 1854 respectively for Gernsheim’s composition teacher in Leipzig, August Rietz. Neither work has yet seen publication, but the pianist Jens Barneck obtained manuscript copies from the Gernsheim Archive of the National Library of Israel. These copies were problematic and full of confusing incompletions, deletions and superimposed competing versions.

‘You have to do style-critical detective work’, says Barneck. ‘On the other hand, you build a much closer relationship to a piece the trajectory of which you can understand from the corrections than if you had practised it from a score already complete. And I am always amazed that Gernsheim was only 15 years old’, he says. ‘This music was composed by a very fine craftsman. You can recognise a great preoccupation with Beethoven. For example, all fast movements begin with a slow introduction. Gernsheim relied upon such models, but advances beyond them in his own, very elegant manner.’²⁷

The **Sonata in E flat major** (which Gernsheim’s biographer Karl Holl lists as No. 2; MS, National Library of Israel, Gernsheim Archive: MUS 0010 A 026) was composed in Burbach²⁸ during July and August 1853, while Gernsheim was on holiday from his classes in Leipzig. From the beginning of the *Allegro di molto* (⁴/₄) in E flat major [1] the composer approaches the monument of sonata form with a balanced, late-Classical aesthetic. The opening theme with its leaping octave quavers is followed by a more relaxed contrasting theme in the dominant, B flat major (bar 40). A modestly

²⁷ Doris Kösterke, ‘Pianist Jens Barneck rekonstruiert Klaviersonate von Friedrich Gernsheim und spielt sie in Worms’, *Wiesbadener Kurier*, 17 August 2016. Barneck’s transcriptions of the two sonatas are available at www.jensbarneck.de.

²⁸ The inscription ‘Burbach near Worms’ is little help in location: three different towns named Burbach exist to the north, northwest and west of Worms.

proportionate development (bar 71) employs fragments of both previous themes in new keys and the expected recapitulation (bar 151) occurs with the contrasting theme now anchored firmly in the tonic key, E flat. An *Adagio* in C minor ($\frac{6}{8}$) follows [2], in which the level of chromaticism is increased. This *da capo* aria treatment has a middle theme in E flat major (bar 22) and a high degree of variation in the return of the opening material (bar 47). A buoyant Scherzo, *Allegro molto* in F major ($\frac{3}{4}$) [3], with a sentimental trio in A flat major, lightens the prevailing drama, and the finale, *Allegro vivace assai* in E flat major (common time) [4], winds its rondo elements through related keys and back again, before ending its perpetual quavers in a *presto fortissimo* reaffirmation of E flat major. That the fourteen-year-old negotiated these sonata-form tropes with assurance and even elegance is a taste of things to come.

The **Sonata in D minor** (which Holl lists as No. 3; MS, National Library of Israel, Gernsheim Archive: MUS 0010 A 025) was composed for ‘Herrn Kapellmeister Rietz’ from Easter (25 April) to the beginning of June 1854 in Leipzig. Jens Barneck elaborated on Gernsheim’s influences and personal style, which employed

the formal constructions of Beethoven sonatas, melodic structures reminiscent of Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, a robust approach to the keyboard much like Brahms, etc. Still, the process of transcribing and then listening to the result uncovers the explorations of a serious and independent composer. Certainly, Gernsheim was a child of his time and no ‘iconoclast’, but perhaps the public fixation with the unconventional can often lead to overlooking beauties [...].²⁹

The opening *Adagio molto* ($\frac{4}{4}$) in A major [5] functions as a slow introduction to the exposition, effectively announcing that this movement will manifest a more painstaking approach to sonata form. The key of A major functions as a dominant to an *Allegro appassionata* in D minor (bar 9), where the haunted opening material is provided with a lyrical, Mendelssohnian close (bar 34). A genial contrasting theme in the submediant, B flat major (bar 53), brings brief stability. In the development (bar 163) a high degree of modulation is combined with fragments of both opening and contrasting themes, even

²⁹ E-mail from Jens Barneck, 16 January 2019.

passing through the faraway B minor (bar 177). Afterwards Gernsheim felt the necessity of emphasising the dominant A major over an eleven-bar span (bars 201–11) that rises to *fortissimo* before finally relenting in favour of a D minor recapitulation (bar 212) (Ex. 1).

Ex. 1

203

sempre dim. *pp*

207

crescendo *ff* *ff* *il tempo più moderato*

210

Tempo primo *ff*

214

The musical score for piano, measures 203 to 214, is presented in four systems. The first system (measures 203-206) is in B minor, 4/4 time, with a dynamic of *pp* and a marking of *sempre dim.*. The second system (measures 207-210) continues in B minor, with a *crescendo* leading to *ff*, and a tempo change to *il tempo più moderato*. The third system (measures 210-213) begins with *Tempo primo* and *ff*. The fourth system (measures 214-217) changes key signature to D minor and returns to a piano dynamic.

The recapitulation itself incorporates developmental touches. A coda on elements of the opening then employs A major to prepare the way for a long reiteration of the home key of D minor, fading *sempre diminuendo* to the last two bars, where final cadences are marked *Adagio, pianississimo*. In stark variance to his Sonata in E flat major, where Gernsheim employed traditional formal aspects with respectful but distant care, his Sonata in D minor is a more dynamic, committed engagement with sonata form.

A Scherzo ⁽⁶⁾ follows, again in D minor [6], where dotted rhythms and syncopations intensify the rapid *Agitato assai* tempo. The Trio, marked *meno allegro* and *dolce*, undulates gently in D major (bar 67) before returning *da capo, ma senza replica* to the turbulence of the D minor opening (bar 143). The third-movement *Adagio* ⁽⁴⁾ [7], formally a ternary structure, begins with calm, homophonic chords in F major. Increased chromaticism arrives with a diffuse contrasting section before a Brahmsian thickening of the piano texture signals the return of the opening theme, now clad in a bustling semiquaver accompaniment (bar 55). A short coda on this opening material leads to a *pianissimo* close. Jens Barneck has stressed the ‘depth of soulful expression and ultimately the charm which can be marvellously revealed, particularly in the middle movements of the sonatas’.³⁰ The finale begins with six bars of *Poco andante* that quicken (*stringendo*) into the brisk *Allegro agitato* ⁽³⁾ (4) in D minor [8]. The first theme of this rondo is powered by perpetual semiquavers which relent only at the appearance of a more slowly paced theme in the dominant, A minor (bar 67). These two themes contend throughout the balance of the movement, not without developmental action and alterations of key (the second theme is in F major at bar 215, the first in G minor at bar 235), but the first theme is always in D minor when it reappears complete. The slower *Poco andante* of the beginning returns (bar 303) before the third rendition of the first theme, and the second theme that follows is now in D major (bar 365). The final two pages emphasise fragments of the first theme and reinforce D minor in 37 continuously *fortissimo* bars.

The **Six Preludes, Op. 2** – dedicated to Henriette Gouvy, *née* Böcking, the wife of Theodor (or Théodore) Gouvy (1819–98), a French-German composer of Belgian

³⁰ *Ibid.*

antecedents – were published by J. Rieter-Biedermann of Leipzig and Winterthur. Karl Holl commented on the Preludes: ‘Their circle of influences, in addition to Schumann and Brahms, also includes Mendelssohn and Chopin.’³¹ Just as the early sonatas had demonstrated Gernsheim’s mastery of form, the Preludes gave notice of his command of pianistic colour. No. 1 (*Un poco lento e sostenuto*, common time) [9] announces a marked departure from Gernsheim’s previous models, as Frédéric Chopin is evoked in cascades of demisemiquaver arpeggios. The restless, virtuosic mood in C sharp minor grows from *piano dolce ed espressivo* to *forte energico e più* and *fortissimo* (bar 19) before closing on a *sforzando* C sharp major chord. A more subdued D flat major is presented in Prelude No. 2 (*Andante espressivo*, ³/₄) [10] to sustained rhythmical syncopation. Prelude No. 3 (*Allegro energico*, ⁶/₈) [11] delivers a *forte* dotted rhythmic motif in the melody over semiquaver arpeggios in the left hand, and the B flat minor beginning shifts to G flat major (bar 27). In Prelude No. 4 (*Andantino*, ³/₄) [12], the simple melody is supported by a gently rocking accompaniment in D major. No. 5 (*Allegretto vivace e leggero*, ²/₄) in F major [13] is constructed almost wholly of quavers (here Holl observed ‘some very Kirchner-like echoes’³²). A blistering pace is set by Prelude No. 6 in D minor (*Allegro molto agitato* in ⁶/₁₆) [14], with splashy *crescendi* and no less than 50 *sforzandi* strewn through a modulating succession of keys (A major in bar 77) before its ultimate return to D minor.

The Preludes mirror the 25-year-old composer’s ‘cultivated, subtle playing’³³ in their balance of three movements in major keys and three in minor ones, all with quite different tempi. Gernsheim’s contemporaries received the set well. Adolf Ruthardt offered a one-word verdict on the Op. 2 Preludes: ‘Lovely’.³⁴ The music, Leopold Schmidt observed, ‘never verges on the salon-like and even in miniature always maintains a noble demeanour’.³⁵ Hermann Mendel noted that ‘Attractive melodies, often expanded

³¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 116–17.

³² *Ibid.* Theodor Kirchner (1823–1903) was the composer of over a thousand piano works, particularly of expressive miniatures and character pieces. His skills were admired by many contemporaries, including Brahms, Mendelssohn and Schumann.

³³ A. G., ‘Kürzere Correspondenzen: Köln’, *Musikalisches Wochenblatt*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 30 December 1870, p. 12.

³⁴ In J. C. Eschmanns *Wegweiser durch die Klavier-Literatur*, Hug, Leipzig & Zürich, 1910, p. 122.

³⁵ ‘Unsere Bilder und Noten’, *Kunstwart und Kulturwart*, Vol. 27, No. 12, March 1914, p. 496.

into truly dramatic and colourful expressions in characteristic tone pictures and mood pieces, greet the listener in a stimulating and poetic way.³⁶ The early pianistic offerings by Gernsheim in this album do much to affirm Malcolm MacDonald's conviction that 'Gernsheim was a creative artist with substantial gifts of his own.'³⁷

William Melton is the author of The Wagner Tuba: A History (edition ebenos, Aachen, 2008) and Engelbert Humperdinck: Hänsel und Gretel in Context (Toccata Press, London, in preparation), and is a contributor to The Cambridge Wagner Encyclopedia (2013). Further writings include articles on lesser-known Romantics like Felix Draeseke, Henri Kling and Friedrich Klose. A career orchestral horn-player, he has researched and edited the scores of the 'Forgotten Romantics' series for the publisher edition ebenos.

Jens Barnieck, born in Wiesbaden, Germany, has performed in major concert halls and festivals, including the Konzerthaus, Berlin; European Festival Week, Passau; Music Festival Saarland; Jazz- and Klassik Days, Tübingen; Fluxus at 50 in Wiesbaden; Jewish Culture Days in Worms; Long Night of Culture, Kaiserslautern; Roaring Hooves, Mongolia; Ravello Festival, Italy; Performing Tangier, Morocco; 2 Days and 2 Nights of New Music in Odessa, Ukraine; Almeida Theatre, London; North American New Music Festival, Buffalo; ReViewing, Black Mountain College, Ashville, North Carolina; Lincoln Center, Steinway Hall and the German Consulate, New York; and at Harvard University.

As an active accompanist and chamber musician he has worked with such musicians as Deborah Lynn Cole (soprano), Sarah Leonard (soprano), Julia Oesch (mezzo soprano), Lukas Eder (baritone), Kurt Ollmann (baritone), Stephan Breith (cello), Michael Höfele (oboe) and Jan-Filip Ćupa (cello).



Photograph: Atila Durnus

³⁶ 'Gernsheim, Friedrich', *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon*, Vol. 4, Oppenheim, Berlin, 1880, p. 206.

³⁷ 'Friedrich Gernsheim Piano Quintets', Toccata Classics TOCC 0099, p. 3.

He has made numerous radio and television recordings and given interviews for stations like ARTE, 3Sat, Südwestrundfunk, Saarländischer Rundfunk, Deutsche Welle (Germany), NBC, WNED-FM Buffalo (USA), Omroep Gelderland (The Netherlands), etc. An album with first recordings of Lieder by Friedrich von Flotow and a short opera by Patrício da Silva (*It's Never too Late to Lie*), sung by Julia Oesch, is available through his website; and solo-piano recordings are available via download sites such as Amazon, iTunes, Spotify, CDBaby and so on.

Through his interest in new music and cultural cross-over, he has collaborated with, and/or premiered works by, many composers, among them Luis Hilario Arévalo, Vyintas Baltakas, Carl Christian Bettendorf, John Cage, Gloria Coates, Mayako Kubo, Felix Leuschner, Stefano Gianotti, Piotr Grella-Mozejko, Erik Oña, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Patrício da Silva, Bruce Stark, Karmella Tzepakolenko, Kevin Volans, Christian Weidt and Philip Wharton. Together with Frank Mehring, professor for cultural sciences and American studies at Radboud University in Nijmegen in The Netherlands, he regularly performs in multimedia settings – in, for example, *Vogue Mexico: Diary of German-American painter Winold Reiss (1886–1953)* or *Soundtrack of Liberation: Dutch Liberation Songs after the Second World War*.

Apart from concertising, he publishes articles and artists' biographies, writing on musicians as diverse as Carl Christian Bettendorf, Ludger Brümmer, Charles Ives, Mayako Kubo, Misato Mochizuki, Dane Rudhyar, Ruth Crawford Seeger, Karmella Tzepakolenko and Philip Wharton.

Jens Barneck studied at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Detmold with Gregor Weichert. His time studying at the State University of New York at Buffalo with American pianist and composer Yvar Mikhashoff was formative, and resulted in a Master in Musical Performance *cum laude*. Master-classes with Peter Feuchtwanger in London and Renate Kretschmar-Fischerin in Detmold were also important stimuli.

The Cultural Ministry of the German government and the Federal State of Hessen selected him for scholarships at the Cité Internationale des Arts in Paris and the German Study Centre in Venice. He received a grant from the cultural foundation of the city of Taunusstein and was also artist-in-residence at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.



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FRIEDRICH GERNSHEIM Piano Music, Volume One

Piano Sonata No. 2 in E flat major (1853)

16:28

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------|
| 1 I <i>Allegro di molto</i> | 4:48 |
| 2 II <i>Adagio</i> | 4:29 |
| 3 III <i>Allegro molto</i> | 2:26 |
| 4 IV <i>Allegro vivace assai</i> | 4:45 |

Piano Sonata No. 3 in D minor (1854)

27:06

- | | |
|--|------|
| 5 I <i>Adagio molto – Allegro appassionata</i> | 9:31 |
| 6 II <i>Agitato assai</i> | 4:56 |
| 7 III <i>Adagio</i> | 5:39 |
| 8 IV <i>Poco andante – Allegro agitato</i> | 7:00 |

Six Preludes, Op. 2 (publ. 1864)

17:10

- | | |
|---|------|
| 9 No. 1 <i>Un poco lento e sostenuto</i> | 2:51 |
| 10 No. 2 <i>Andante espressivo</i> | 2:57 |
| 11 No. 3 <i>Allegro energico</i> | 2:35 |
| 12 No. 4 <i>Andantino</i> | 4:14 |
| 13 No. 5 <i>Allegretto vivace e leggiro</i> | 1:59 |
| 14 No. 6 <i>Allegro molto agitato</i> | 2:34 |

TT 60:45

Jens Barneck, piano

FIRST RECORDINGS