



# **SCHUBERT**

## **Schwanengesang**

# **BRAHMS**

## **Acht Zigeunerlieder**

**Arranged for French horn and piano**

**Tim Thorpe, French horn**  
**Christopher Williams, Piano**



<b>Franz Schubert (1797–1828):</b>		
<b>Schwanengesang ('Swansong'), D. 957 (1828) (arr. Thorpe, 2017)</b>		<b>41:03</b>
<sup>1</sup>	I. Liebesbotschaft ('Love's Messenger')	2:25
<sup>2</sup>	II. Kriegers Ahnung ('Warrior's Premonition')	4:19
<sup>3</sup>	III. Frühlingssehnsucht ('Spring Longing')	1:57
<sup>4</sup>	IV. Ständchen ('Serenade')	3:36
<sup>5</sup>	V. Aufenthalt ('Resting Place')	2:26
<sup>6</sup>	VI. In der Ferne ('Far Away')	5:10
<sup>7</sup>	VII. Abschied ('Farewell')	2:43
<sup>8</sup>	VIII. Der Atlas ('Atlas')	2:21
<sup>9</sup>	IX. Ihr Bild ('Her Picture')	2:30
<sup>10</sup>	X. Das Fischermädchen ('The Fisher Maiden')	1:32
<sup>11</sup>	XI. Die Stadt ('The Town')	2:15
<sup>12</sup>	XII. Am Meer ('By the Sea')	2:58
<sup>13</sup>	XIII. Der Doppelgänger ('The Ghostly Double')	3:27
<sup>14</sup>	XIV. Die Taubenpost ('The Pigeon Post')	2:46
 <b>Johannes Brahms (1833–1897):</b>		
<b>Acht Zigeunerlieder ('Eight Gypsy Songs'), Op. 103 (1889)</b>		<b>11:19</b>
<b>(arr. Thorpe, 2017)</b>		
<sup>15</sup>	I. He, Zigeuner, greife in die Saiten ein!	
	('Heigh, gypsy, take up the strings and play')	1:01
<sup>16</sup>	II. Hochgetürmte Rimaflut, wie bist du so trüb	
	('High-towered Rima river, why are you so gloomy?')	
<sup>17</sup>	III. Wißt ihr, wann mein Kindchen ('Do you know when my child?')	1:10
<sup>18</sup>	IV. Lieber Gott, du weißt wie oft bereut ich hab	1:25
	('Dear God, you know how often I regret')	
<sup>19</sup>	V. Brauner Bursche führt zum Tanze	1:18
	('The bronzed boy leads the blue-eyed girl to the dance')	
<sup>20</sup>	VI. Röslein dreie in der Reihe blühh so rot ('The little rose blooms so red')	1:20
<sup>21</sup>	VII. Kommt dir manchmal in den Sinn	1:29
	('Do you often think how you promised to love me')	
<sup>22</sup>	VIII. Rote Abendwolken ziehn ('Red evening clouds draw over the sky')	2:02
		1:23

**Franz Schubert (1797–1828): Schwanengesang, D. 957**  
**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): Acht Zigeunerlieder, Op. 103**

**Franz Schubert: Schwanengesang, D. 957**

The son of a school master who had settled in Vienna, Schubert was able to study as a chorister at the Imperial Chapel. As many of his predecessors had done, he profited from the teaching of Salieri, a leading figure in the musical world of Vienna. He could have continued to study at the Stadtkonvikt, after his voice had broken, but he chose, instead, to train as an elementary school teacher, a capacity in which he might, had he been otherwise inclined, have been of help to his father. In the event, Schubert found himself able to concentrate on composition, enjoying the society of friends, his life occasionally interrupted by times when he found it necessary to return home to the classroom. Prolific, above all in his composition of songs, he was beginning to make a more significant name for himself before his final illness, which came after some years of indifferent health, attributable to his earlier way of life.

Schubert's supreme achievement lies in the many songs he wrote, works which could be performed with minimal resources and which corresponded well with the social and artistic circles in which he lived in Vienna. He wrote his first surviving and complete songs in 1811, at the age of 14, and the last of a total of over 600 songs in the month before his death. The present recording offers a transcription of songs for horn and piano, showing some of Schubert's later songs in a new light.

*Schwanengesang* ('Swansong') appeared posthumously in 1829 and contains settings of verses by Ludwig Rellstab and Heinrich Heine, with the last song a setting of verse by Johann Gabriel Seidl. It seems probable that Schubert had intended two possible cycles, one of Rellstab settings and one devoted to Heine.

Born in Berlin in 1799, Ludwig Rellstab began his career as an artillery officer, before turning to activity as a writer, playwright and journalist. He visited Beethoven in Vienna in 1825 and there was talk of a possible opera. After Beethoven's death in 1827, Beethoven's assistant,

Anton Schindler, not the most reliable of witnesses, claimed to have given Schubert copies of Rellstab's poems left among Beethoven's effects. At all events, Rellstab had published a volume of his poems in 1825. In addition to the seven poems set in *Schwanengesang*, Schubert also set three other Rellstab poems, including *Auf dem Strom* ('On the River'), with horn obbligato.

The cycle opens with *Liebesbotschaft* <sup>1</sup> ('Love's Messenger'), a song in which a stream is charged with carrying a message from the poet to the beloved, imagery familiar from other poets and settings. *Kriegers Ahnung* <sup>2</sup> ('Warrior's Premonition') treats each of the four stanzas individually. Here a soldier thinks of his beloved, as he waits for coming danger and death. With *Frühlingssehnsucht* <sup>3</sup> ('Spring Longing') the poet is led who knows where, by the breezes, the flowing streams, the warming sun and the budding foliage, but only his beloved can set free the springtime in his heart. A strophic song, each stanza ends with a question, before the final positive answer. In *Ständchen* <sup>4</sup> ('Serenade'), the poet sends messages to his beloved during the night, conveyed through the tree-tops and the nightingales, as he waits for her. In *Aufenthalt* <sup>5</sup> ('Resting Place') finds the poet by a flowing stream, menaced by the rocks and by the surrounding forest, his only resting place. In *der Ferne* <sup>6</sup> ('Far Away') evokes a particular romantic predicament, as the poet wanders, separated from his beloved. In *Abschied* <sup>7</sup> ('Farewell') the poet bids farewell to his happy city, its gardens, its girls, its sun and stars, and his beloved, for now he must ride away. The pace of the horse is echoed throughout in the song.

Schubert drew his Heine texts from *Die Heimkehr* ('The Return Home'), published in 1827 in Heine's *Buch der Lieder*. Schubert's settings reflect something of the sharper irony of the poet, whose work was attracting contemporary attention. In *Der Atlas* <sup>8</sup> ('Atlas') the Titan bears the burden of the world and would have been happy but, instead, is condemned to misery. In *Ihr Bild* <sup>9</sup> ('Her Picture') the poet weeps over the loss of his

beloved. *Das Fischermädchen* 100 ('The Fisher Maiden') is gently evocative, as the poet invites the girl not to fear him, his heart like the sea, concealing depths and pearls below. In *Die Stadt* 101 ('The Town'), the foreboding of the poem, with its lonely oarsman seeing the distant town and aware of his loss, is reflected in the sinister prelude and following accompaniment. Heine's *Am Meer* 102 ('By the Sea') recalls an evening sitting with his beloved by the sea – watching her weep, he has been poisoned by her tears. In the last Heine sinister setting, *Der Doppelgänger* 103 ('The Ghostly Double'), it is night and the poet watches outside the house where once his mistress lived, haunted by his own double.

Johann Gabriel Seidl published a two-volume set of his poems in 1826, when he was 22. Schubert set eleven of them, the last, *Die Taubenpost* ('The Pigeon Post'), 104 was not included in the 1826 volumes. Written in October 1828, this was Schubert's last song. The bird of the title represents the poet's longing, conveying messages from his mind to his beloved.

## Johannes Brahms: Acht Zigeunerlieder, Op. 103

Johannes Brahms was born in Hamburg in 1833, the son of a double-bass player and his much older wife, a seamstress. His childhood was spent in relative poverty, and his early studies in music, as a pianist rather than as a string player, developed his talent to such an extent that there was talk of touring as a prodigy at the age of eleven. In 1851 Brahms met the émigré Hungarian violinist Reményi, who introduced him to the Hungarian dance music that would later influence his work. Two years later Brahms set out with Reményi on his first concert tour, their journey taking them, on the recommendation of the Hungarian violinist Joachim, to Weimar, where Franz Liszt held court. Reményi profited from the visit, but Brahms, with a lack of tact that was later accentuated, failed to impress the Master. Later in the year, however, he met the Schumanns, through Joachim's agency. The

meeting was a fruitful one, and Brahms would later help Schumann's widow, the pianist Clara Schumann, after her husband's breakdown and death in 1856. Schumann had greeted Brahms as the true successor to Beethoven, and to his friends this prophecy seemed justified. Like Beethoven, Brahms eventually settled in Vienna, making his home there until his death in 1897, a year after the death of Clara Schumann.

Brahms had won considerable success with his *Hungarian Dances*, and his interest in Hungarian music was enough to provoke a hostile comment from Wagner. In 1887, some 20 years later, Brahms turned again to Hungarian sources for a group of eleven *Zigeunerlieder* ('Gypsy Songs') for vocal quartet, using verses translated by his friend Hugo Contrat, drawn from a set of 25 Hungarian songs with piano accompaniment. From his *Op. 103* vocal quartet Brahms arranged eight of the songs for solo voice and piano. He later included four more settings for vocal quartet in his *Op. 112*.

The first song, *He, Zigeuner, greife in die Saiten ein!* 105 ('Heigh, gypsy, take up the strings and play') sets the tone of the work, melodically and in its theme of sorrow at a girl's faithlessness. In *Hochgetürmte Rimaflut, wie bist du so trüb* 106 ('High-towered Rima river, why are you so gloomy?') the singer stands weeping by the shore. The cycle of the narrative continues in *Wißt ihr wann mein Kindchen?* 107 ('Do you know when my child?') and *Lieber Gott, du weißt wie oft bereut ich hab* 108 ('Dear God, you know how often I regret'), where the singer repents of kisses missed. The jaunty *Brauner Bursche führt zum Tanze* 109 ('The bronzed boy leads the blue-eyed girl to the dance') is followed by *Röslein dreie in der Reihe blühn so rot* 110 ('The little rose blooms so red'), calling lovers to unite. *Kommt dir manchmal in den Sinn* 111 ('Do you often think how you promised to love me') suggests wistful optimism and the set ends with *Rote Abendwolken ziehn* 112 ('Red evening clouds draw over the sky'), as the singer dreams day and night of his beloved.

Keith Anderson

The start of this project was really just a chance for me to show that the sound of the French horn can be not only beautiful and sonorous but also just as descriptive as the human voice. The horn can often be thought of as an orchestral instrument and not looked upon as a stand-alone soloist instrument. By making this recording I am hoping to show that it is far more than that.

There are fantastic pieces to choose from in the solo French horn repertoire, but I wanted to step away from the core repertoire and explore other opportunities that show the melodic nature of the instrument. The choice of repertoire was huge, but I have always felt there is a strong connection between the horn and the human voice, so a song cycle that tells a story with beautiful melodies seemed a good place to start!

As a horn player, Brahms has always had a special place in my heart. His writing for the instrument in his *Symphonies* and his *Horn Trio* (one of my favourite pieces

of music) is exquisite, so it was a simple choice to look at his song cycles, and the *Zigeunerlieder* seemed to lend themselves to a transcription.

As soon as I heard the Schubert song cycle, I could imagine it working so well on the horn. The phasing and melodic lines are so descriptive that the music is just as effective without words. Having the text immediately gave me a different insight to performing the pieces and really enabled me to feel the music was telling a story.

Recording the pieces was a very organic process for both song cycles. While trying to keep as close to the originals as possible it was necessary to look at the best key for the instrument to achieve the natural vocal lines of the music. On the whole it worked best to keep the songs in the original key, with the odd passage changing octave to really make the instrument sing!

Tim Thorpe

## Tim Thorpe



Tim Thorpe is gaining a reputation as one of the most accomplished horn players of his generation. He has received extensive orchestral experience as principal horn with several amateur and youth orchestras including the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the European Union Youth Orchestra. In his final year at school, Hertfordshire County Youth Music commissioned *Summernights*, a composition by Martin Ellerby for French horn and concert band which Thorpe premiered with the Hertfordshire County Youth Wind Orchestra. In 2002, he was the UK finalist in the Paxman International Horn Competition and in 2004 he won the Royal Over-Seas League award for wind and percussion and the Philip Jones Memorial Prize for an outstanding brass player. As an orchestral musician, Thorpe has played principal horn with all the major London orchestras and with other UK orchestras including the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the Northern Sinfonia. He also enjoys chamber music and has performed with many ensembles including the London Sinfonietta and the Nash Ensemble.

## Christopher Williams



Born in Wales, Christopher Williams is a music graduate of Cardiff University and now leads a busy and varied professional life as a pianist, composer, conductor, teacher and arranger. He is currently assistant director of the BBC National Chorus of Wales and is a pianist for the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, with whom he has performed at the BBC Proms and recorded for the Chandos and Hyperion labels. Influenced by his first teacher and mentor, Walter Ryan, Williams developed a keen interest in the study and performance of works by undeservedly neglected composers including Carl Reineke and Anton Rubinstein. In addition to his work as a soloist, Williams is in great demand as an accompanist and chamber musician, and has partnered many of the prominent instrumentalists of his generation including Philippe Scharz, Tim Thorpe, David Childs, David Pyatt and Tine Thing Helseth. He has also appeared on BBC TV and been broadcast on BBC Radio and Radio Luxembourg.

[christopherwilliamsplano.com](http://christopherwilliamsplano.com)

Both of the song cycles recorded here combine lyricism with powerful storytelling, covering a wide range of emotions that are well suited to the beautiful sonorities and vocal nature of the French horn. Schubert's late *Schwanengesang* conveys its pastoral setting, messages of love, pain of separation and haunted loss so descriptively that the music is just as effective without words. Brahms arranged his *Zigeunerlieder* or *Gypsy Songs* from vocal quartets, their Hungarian folk-music character lending themselves superbly to further transcription.

Franz  
**SCHUBERT**  
(1797–1828)

**1–14** *Schwanengesang* ('Swansong'), D. 957 (1828)  
(arr. Thorpe for French horn and piano, 2017) **41:03**

Johannes  
**BRAHMS**  
(1833–1897)

**15–22** *Acht Zigeunerlieder* ('Eight Gypsy Songs'),  
Op. 103 (1889)  
(arr. Thorpe for French horn and piano, 2017) **11:19**

**WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS**

**Tim Thorpe, French horn**  
**Christopher Williams, Piano**

Recorded: 20–22 March 2017 at Acapela Studio, Cardiff, Wales  
Producer and engineer: Jim Unwin • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson and Tim Thorpe  
A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.  
Cover: *Sunset at Sea* (1906) by Thomas Moran (1837–1926)