

**Liebeslieder Waltzes, Op. 52**

Rede, Mädchen, allzu liebes  
 Am Gesteine rauscht die Flut  
 O die Frauen  
 Wie des Abends schöne Röte  
 Die grüne Hopfenranke  
 Ein kleiner, hübscher Vogel  
 Wohl schön bewandt war es  
 Wenn so lind dein Auge mir  
 Am Donaustrande  
 O wie sanft die Quelle  
 Nein, es ist nicht auszukommen  
 Schlösser auf, und mache Schlösser  
 Vögelein durchrauscht die Luft  
 Sieh, wie ist die Welle klar  
 Nachtigall, sie singt so schön  
 Ein dunkeler Schacht ist Liebe  
 Nicht wandle, mein Licht  
 Es bebet das Gesträuche

The *Liebeslieder* (Love Song Waltzes) Opus 52 of Johannes Brahms were written in 1869 and published primarily for *Hausmusik*, for amateur performers, with the expectation that they would be sung and played by family and friends. In private homes, two players side by side at the family piano were playing chords of typical Brahmsian, almost orchestral richness, and four singers blending their voices in expressive harmonies and melodies. That Brahms could compose such a piece testifies to the high level of performing skill accomplished by amateurs in those pre-television years, in singing and in playing the piano.

These waltzes (actually Ländler) are grounded in the German folk music, which Brahms loved, and composed to 18 settings of texts from Georg Friederich Daumer's (1800-1875) *Polydora*. The poems express the many moods of love, in imitation of folk poetry of the Austrian Empire, mostly Russian, Polish and Magyar. The song *Am Donaustrande* is also a nod to Brahms's friend Johann Strauss II, "The Waltz King" and his famous piece *An der schönen blauen Donau*, (The Beautiful Blue Danube).

The popular conception of Brahms as a dark brooding romantic composer can be forgotten in these sunny, uncomplicated expressions of the Viennese spirit and love of life and the waltz. As Ernest Newman, the British critic put it, "had Brahms never been stretched to the tension of such works as the C-minor Symphony and the Requiem, he could never have relaxed to the charm of the waltzes."




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**Faculty Recital Series**
**2009-2010 Season**

Friday, February 5, 2010  
 Sara M. Snell Music Theater  
 7:30 PM

## An Evening with Johannes Brahms, His Friends and His Music

**Based on *Johannes Brahms: A Biography*  
 by Jan Swafford**

**Jill Pearson, Soprano**  
**Lorraine Yaros Sullivan, Mezzo Soprano**  
**Donald George, Tenor**  
**David Pittman-Jennings, Baritone**  
**Hannah Gruber, Piano**  
**Julie Miller, Piano**  
**Paul Zweifel, Supertitles**

**Intermezzo in A Minor, Op. 119, No. 1**

Hannah Gruber, Piano

"I am tempted to copy out a small piano piece for you, because I would like to know how you agree with it. It is teeming with dissonances!... The little piece is exceptionally melancholic and 'to be played very slowly' is not an understatement. Every bar and every note must sound like a ritard, as if one wanted to suck melancholy out of each and every one, lustily and with pleasure out of these very dissonances! Good Lord, this description will surely awaken your desire!" Brahms to Clara Schumann

**Vergebliches Ständchen** (Futile Serenade)

Poem by Wilhelm Anton Florentin von Zuccalmaglio  
Jill Pearson, Soprano  
Julie Miller, Piano

This is a humorous dialogue between a young man, described by pianist Gerald Moore as "a country bumpkin not over-burdened with wit," and his intended, a woman higher on the intelligence scale. Verses one and three are his, verses two and four are hers. He wants her to come out for a tryst, she cannot.

**Wiegenlied** (Lullaby)

1st verse from *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*

2nd verse by George Scherer

Lorraine Yaros Sullivan, Mezzo-Soprano  
Hannah Gruber, Piano

According to Jan Swafford the song is based on a Ländler, which Brahms had composed for his women's choir in Hamburg. When one of them married and had a child he composed a melody, a lullaby, for her and her child. Thus she could remember the carefree days with Brahms with a dance tune while simultaneously singing a song to her new baby.

**Sapphische Ode**

Poem by Hans von Schmidt

Ernestine Schumann-Heink, Contralto

We first hear the 1934 Radio Broadcast interview in which she recounts her last visit to Johannes Brahms.

The poem, Sapphische Ode, borrows the form, but not the subject matter, of "Sappho of Lesbos." The quatrain pattern, identified with the poetess was followed by both the writer and the composer. The singer tell us that she picks roses at night and is covered in dew as if she plucks kisses and is covered with tears

**Der Tod, daß ist die kühle Nacht** (Death, Which is the Cool Night)

Poem by Heinrich Heine

Donald George, Tenor  
Hannah Gruber, Piano

Death is the cool night; life is the stifling day. The singer tells of feeling tired, wearied by the day. Over his bed, a tree holds a young nightingale who sings of pure love. The singer hears it, even in his dreams. The song and the poem, exists in that place between waking and sleeping, between life and death.

**Auf dem Kirchhofe** (in the Churchyard)

Poem by Detlev von Liliencron

David Pittman-Jennings, Baritone  
Julie Miller, Piano

The poem presents us with some of the most common aspects of Romanticism and with Brahms: a melancholy fascination with Death and how our inner turmoil is projected onto the natural world. A storm rages while the dead lie peaceful and undisturbed in the churchyard. We picture an old, overgrown church cemetery on a blustery, rain-swept day. The singer first describes the violence of the storm then grows more introspective as he looks upon the gravestones and contemplates rebirth and healing, during a lull in the storm.

**Ballade in G Minor, Op. 118, No. 3**

Julie Miller, Piano

Together with the Op.119, the Op.118 was the last solo piano pieces Brahms composed before his death in 1897. Written around 1893, the *Six Piano Pieces* Op.118 reflect the maturity of the aging Brahms and are a staple of the piano repertoire; thus ending this section with the immensely energetic *Ballade*.

**Intermission**