

Theodor Kirchner's *Six Clavierstücke* op. 45 were published in July 1879 by Friedrich Kistner in Leipzig, in a single volume (plate number 5441) as well as individually (plate numbers 5442–5447). It is Kistner's only publication of an original work by Kirchner, although he did print Kirchner's arrangement of Schumann's *Myrthen* in 1875 (and much later, an arrangement of Charles Davidoff's *At the Fountain*). Of the six piano pieces Kistner reprinted the two Mazurkas (No. 2 and 4) in 1885 in the series "One hundred pieces from Contemporary Piano Works". Kistner was then run by Carl Gurckhaus (1821–1884), who generously allowed Kirchner to dedicate the work to another publisher, namely Max Abraham. Dr. Max Abraham (1831–1900) was part owner of the publishing house C. F. Peters in 1879, but he became sole proprietor in the following year. Peters published Kirchner's opus numbers 21–23, 48, 57 and 86, as well as numerous arrangements.

Whoever is acquainted with Kirchner's piano works and their multifarious names will be surprised to encounter the simple title *Piano Pieces* born by op. 45, for although many works for piano solo are described as such in their subtitles, only op. 2 (Amadeus BP 1982) has no other title. Also, one could wonder whether the individual pieces, at least regarding their names, might not belong to other collections. Indeed, the Mazurkas fit perfectly into the *Mazurkas* op. 42 (BP 1621) also published in 1879, and the Romance (No. 6) to the *Romances* op. 22 (BP 2215). The other names, however, occur only sporadically, for although Kirchner did compose some ballads (op. 2/1; op. 73/19 is "in ballad style"), there is not an entire volume of ballads, apart from the ballad song *Zwei Könige* op. 10. In addition, the term *Novellette* (No. 3) is to be found only in individual piano works (op. 14/6, 56/3, 73/11), as well as in the Piano Trios op. 59 and 83/5. Finally, Kirchner wrote single *Intermezzi* (cf. No. 5) as op. 2/3, 47/9 and 64/2.

The harmonically advanced pieces were not immediately readily understood by everyone.

Arnold Niggli wrote on 31 January 1880 in his review of "Theodor Kirchner's Newest Compositions" in the *Swiss Musical Times and Singers' Review*: "The Six Piano Pieces op. 45 are less easy to fathom and moreover technically much more difficult, as well as being untowardly at times." Niggli closes with the futile appeal that Kirchner "might in addition to his cultivation of the miniature not entirely neglect larger musical forms, for only these are conducive to a broader intellectual development and a deeper emotional expression."

On 20 September 1882 the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* published a review by Hermann Deiters, "With Kirchner it is superfluous to point out that all the pieces reveal inventive taste and are composed with spirit and skill, especially in the harmonies and in regard to a piano-wise performance: with each piece we are immediately carried off above everything commonplace and enchanted in the intellectual realm of a thoroughly singular artist. Especially the two mazurkas, being that their common basic character is predesignated, are characteristic and effective. In the other pieces it appears that partially specific ideas and impulses are effective, which determine their design, but which are not understood immediately; for instance, the Ballad and the Intermezzo begin with very simple, graceful swaying motifs and then gradually give way to restless motion and remote keys, without one's being able to guess their purpose. On the whole, however, in contrast to others the pieces of this collection may be attributed an outstanding significance."

The new edition brings the text of first edition, for Kirchner made no corrections to his personal copy. In the Novellette one slur in the right hand of the first edition deviates in the recapitulation (bars 5–7, b flat' to e flat', as opposed to 73–76, where, probably on account of the new staff, there are two slurs: from b flat' to b flat' and from a flat' to f'). Since Kirchner's handwriting was often unclear, but he liked to have an entire phrase under one slur, we have adjusted accordingly. In the Romance, the slurs in the right hand of bars 75–78 are additions.