

The first publication of Kirchner's op. 78 was certainly a delightful gift: the music engraving company of C. G. Roeder in Leipzig, which practically had a monopoly on printing music, had commissioned Theodor Kirchner to compose pieces on the twelve months, and the Berlin painter Otto Försterling (1843–1904), active in Dresden since 1873, to design corresponding coloured images, which Roeder reproduced as chromolithographs. The result was a small volume measuring 22.1 x 16.7 cm (8¾ x 6½ inches), a perfect souvenir of the 1885 World Expo in Antwerp, which lasted from 2 May until 2 November. Visitors of Roeder's stand received a copy with the French title *Les mois de l'année: 12 petits morceaux pour Piano: Souvenir de l'Exposition Universelle d'Anvers*. At the same time an English edition was published: *The Twelve Months of the Year: 12 pianoforte pieces [...] published as a Souvenir of the International Inventions Exhibition London 1885 by C. G. Röder, Engraver & Printer of Music*. A supplement to the edition gave a detailed report on the firm with descriptions of the printing processes (see Alexander Hyatt King, "C. G. Röder's music-printing business in 1885", in: *Brio* 2, 1965, and *Fontes* 13, 1966). Later that year F. E. C. Leuckart in Leipzig published a trade edition. Unfortunately, the handy size of the volume spread its contents over 70 pages (with only 44 pages of music!), making it unsuitable for sight-reading: in "January" alone three page-turns were necessary. For this reason, Leuckart released the pieces in single editions in a normal size, but with the confusing title *Bunte Blätter* (Varied leaves), confusing because Kirchner's 12 pieces for piano trio op. 83 are also called *Bunte Blätter*. This edition makes no reference to the months, but each piece bears a title: 1) March; 2) Ländler; 3) Scherzino capriccioso; 4) Polonaise; 5) Reminiscence; 6) Butterfly; 7) Minuetto; 8) Capriccietto; 9) Impromptu; 10)

Girls' waltz; 11) Funny stories; 12) Ring out. Finally, in 1890 the small, illustrated edition was republished with a German title page as *Die Monate des Jahres*, but no copy of this edition has been found.

A review by Arnold Niggli appeared in the 16 March 1886 issue of the *Swiss Musical Times and Singers' Revue*, from which we quote: "Beauty of melodic outline, ingenious delicacy of harmonising and fragrant mellowness of tone colour are treated equally. No further reference is made to the months and their metaphorical representation; instead we have independent character pieces in which serene joy or dreamy grace reigns, and sometimes an elegiac mood prevails. Right at the start there is a magnificent piece of music in the introductory march, buoyantly spirited in the main section (E major) and fraught with noble melody in the trio-like e minor section. Under the title "June" the composer presents us with the musical image of a butterfly, flitting about as though drunk with sunshine, settling upon a fragrant flower to rest in the A major trio, and then fluttering away with redoubled haste. The Capriccietto dedicated to August has a similar character, a precious creation, literally bubbling with wantonness, not for a moment denying the grace of a beautiful disposition. The gems of the album include the Andante for the month of May, an album leaf of touching, heartfelt expression and furthermore the Girls' Waltz No. 10, in which shyness is coupled with roguery. A peaceful composition in D major rings out the volume like evening bells. Anyone who has a taste for the poetry of music, for the intimate charm of compositions that are finely executed and harmonically structured, should not hesitate to get acquainted with Kirchner's album. His gracefully eloquent language conquers the heart with a gentle but irresistible power."