

Since Autumn 1890, Theodor Kirchner lived in Hamburg, now cared for by his pupil Mathilde Schlüter. Here he looked back, often bitterly, upon his life. Yet whoever listens to the *Souvenirs* composed during this time would hardly surmise this situation, but take pleasure in some last blossoms before these wither. Kirchner suffered his first stroke in December 1894.

In spite of his pension fund, Kirchner's financial situation was not comfortable, and thus he depended on additional support through his more affluent pupils. This may have been the reason to dedicate each of the four piano pieces to a different young lady, all of whom were probably members of the Hamburg society: Miss Nanna von der Hellen (1876–1968) was the daughter of the merchant August Paxmann von der Hellen and Nanna née Holst. In 1913 she married the physician Professor Franz Reiche. – Miss Hermine Rahter (1877–1905) was these daughter of Daniel Rahter (1828–1891), formerly of St. Petersburg, and Selma née Winter. Kirchner supplied Rahter, the music publisher of Tchaikovsky und David Popper, with a number of arrangements of the composers' works. The merchant Wilhelm Victor Hertz became Hermine's husband in 1899. – Miss Thekla von der Meden (born in 1872) was the daughter of the merchant Carl August von der Meden, who is known for his contribution to tennis, and Sophie Mathilde née Eckhardt. – The identity of the last dedicee, Miss Martha Roever, remains obscure.

The first edition of the *Erinnerungsblätter* was published in May/June 1894 by F. E. C. Leuckart

in Leipzig (Plate No. F.E.C.L. 4709). On the 31st of July 1894 Arnold Niggli's review appeared in the *Swiss Musical Times and Singers' Revue*, from which the conclusion is worth quoting: "As tender and rich in melody both preceding slow movements are, and as sweet particularly the Larghetto no. 2 in F sharp major sounds, we prefer the more eventful structures, especially the G major Allegretto no. 3, whose dedication to Miss Thekla von der Meden reminds us of the marvelous singer with the same name\*, a piece of charming grace that ends with unsurpassed finesse. May the master delight us again soon with similar gifts that reveal that in spite of increasing years his imagination is still driven and his heart young."

In the same year Anna Morsch discussed the work in the journal *Der Klavierlehrer* ("The Piano Teacher"), where she writes that the *Erinnerungsblätter* are "warm and tender, fraught with gracious musical beauty, but they require sensitive and skilful players, even though they place no great demands on technique. Particularly appealing in its contrasts are no. 2, a mournfully inclined Larghetto, and no. 3, a whimsically playful Allegretto grazioso."

The present edition is based on the first edition, but takes into account a correction Kirchner entered into his personal copy (Brahms Institute at the Musikhochschule Lübeck) in no. 4, bar 49f; here in the right hand Kirchner originally wrote a minim b' tied onto a dotted crotchet.

\* The tenor Hermann von der Meden, 1855–1886.