

Theodor Kirchner's *Romantische Geschichten* were published in August 1884 in four volumes (plate numbers 7190–7193) by C. F. Siegel, run at that time by Richard Linnemann (1845–1909). In order to differentiate more easily between the volumes and concomitantly to suggest the colourfulness of contents, each volume received a different coloured cover in green, yellow, blue or grey. The title page brings not only the general English title *Romantic Poems* (the translation *Romantic Tales* would have been more exact), but also the titles of the individual pieces; where their meaning might not be clear to English-speaking readers, English translations are given as well.

Contrary to the title page, the music of No. 17 bears the title “Dahin” in quotation marks, as if it were a quotation. One thinks inevitably of Goethe's song by Mignon (“Kennst du das Land, wo die Citronen blühen? ... Dahin! dahin möcht' ich mit dir, o mein Geliebter, ziehn”: “Know'st thou the land where the citrons bloom ... Thither! thither would I go with thee, oh my beloved”), but the lugubrious, melancholy tendency of the dance makes it appear that the word *dahin* means not “thither”, but rather its other connotation “lost”. The only other title in quotation marks is No. 4, “Damals”, creating the connexion between No. 4 and the fourth from last piece: “Back then”–“Gone forever”. The version on the title page (*Daheim* = “At home”) might well have its origin in Kirchner's unclear handwriting. In addition, the music of Nos. 11 and 14 bear alternative spellings, namely “Novelette” and the old German spelling “Impromptu”.

Kirchner composed the single pieces during an extremely productive period: between 1881 and 1884 he published the works of opus 53 to 73. Nonetheless we should not imagine that he simply dashed off the quite demanding *Romantic Poems*. Two of them, specifically numbers 18 and 20, are preserved in an early version from 1881 as Preludes in autographs kept in the Moldenhauer Archives of the Northwestern University Music Library in Evanston, Illinois. Apparently Kirchner first conceived these pieces in C major and F major, before transposing them to D flat major and F sharp major. The first version of number 20 is dated June 1881.

The new edition brings the text of the first edition, respects however a correction entered into Kirchner's personal copy (Brahms Institute of the Musikhochschule Lübeck): in our edition page 11 the d sharp' in bar 47 was printed as e' in the first edition. On page 12 we have supplemented the missing natural before the e' at the end of bar 62, as well as on page 54, bar 90, before the a'. A few missing articulation marks were added where justified by parallel passages. In No. 11, bar 76, third chord, it is not clear if Kirchner wanted G major as in bar 72 or g minor. The first edition brings an unnecessary natural before the g', but not before the b', but prints a flat before the b' flat of the fourth chord in the right hand as well as in the left hand. We have opted for a major chord and supplemented the natural, being that Kirchner seldom changes harmonies in repeated passages.