

Theodor Kirchner's *Album for Piano* was published by Friedrich Hofmeister in Leipzig during April 1877 (plate number 7693). It was the first work that Kirchner entrusted to Hofmeister, with whose director Albert Röthing (1845–1907) the composer was soon on friendly terms. On 18 September of the same year Arnold Niggli's review appeared in the *Swiss Singers' Review* with phrases such as "deeply felt and delightfully balanced" (concerning No. 1), "of pure beauty" (Nos. 6 and 8) and "We should like to place [No. 8] alongside the most beautiful passages from Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze', where the same depth of feeling, the same spell of a quietly enchanted mood prevails."

The Album was extremely successful, and so it was reissued several times, available both in paperback and bound, complete and individually, in a luxurious edition on better paper as well as in a popular edition.

The success may have prompted the composer to arrange some movements for piano four hands, then so much in fashion. The first seven of the 24 *Pieces for Piano Four Hands*, which Hofmeister released in May 1878, are from op. 26, now furnished with characteristic titles:

No. 3: Birthday Greetings (1 March). The dedication was to Kirchner's father Johann Gottfried Kirchner (1798–1881), who had just celebrated his eightieth birthday. Perhaps Kirchner was aware that also Frédéric Chopin (1810–1849) had been born on 1 March. Kirchner later arranged the touching piece for string quartet (Amadeus BP 1719).

No. 4: Album Leaf for A. R. Kirchner apparently had an excellent relationship with his publisher

Albert Röthing, to whom he soon began his letters with the salutation "Dear Friend". The *Svensk Musiktidning* (Swedish Music Magazine) published this album leaf as a supplement in 1887.

No. 5: Little Romance

No. 6: May Song

No. 7: Springinsfeld. The German title may be translated as madcap, simpleton, wild lad, a Jack-in-the box.

No. 11: Once

No. 12: Scherzino

The *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in Leipzig brought a review by Hermann Deiters on 11 August 1880, which accurately summarises the work: "There are 12 pieces, mostly in a simple song form, a few somewhat expanded; there is such an abundance of grace, naturalness and simple euphony over all of these pieces, if they indulge in solemn melodies or in short subjects formed out of leaping and broken figures, and this subtle balanced modulation often brings about a new colouring so surprising that we breathe the scent of these delicate flowers with true delight, and hardly know which one we should single out. We are reminded partly of Schumann's Album, partly of Kirchner's own erstwhile published Albumblätter, and we could not have a more urgent wish for this volume than that it might give pupils and players in vast circles stimulation and material to cultivate the dexterity of the hand as well as taste and perceptivity for artistic work and particularly for fine modulation."