

SCHUBERT

Waltzes and Écossaises

Didier Castell-Jacomin, Piano



Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Waltzes and Écossaises

The son of a schoolmaster who had settled in Vienna, Franz Schubert was educated as a chorister of the Imperial court chapel. He later qualified as a schoolteacher, briefly and thereafter intermittently joining his father in the classroom. He spent his life largely in Vienna, enjoying the company of friends but never holding any position in the musical establishment or attracting the kind of patronage that Beethoven had 20 years earlier. His final years were clouded by illness as the result of a syphilitic infection, and he died aged 31, leaving much unfinished. His gifts had been most notably expressed in song, his talent for melody always evident in his other compositions. Schubert's compositions are generally numbered according to the Deutsch catalogue, with the letter D.

Schubert's compositions for piano include a number of sonatas, some left unfinished, as well as the *Wanderer Fantasy* and two sets of impromptus, *D. 899* and *D. 935*. He also wrote a number of dances for piano – waltzes, *Ländler* and German dances. His music for piano duet includes a *Divertissement à l'hongroise*, marches and polonaises largely written for daughters of a member of the Esterházy family, for whom he was for a time employed as a private teacher.

Keith Anderson

Dances for Piano

In 1815, the Congress of Vienna, the conference at which it was decided how the lands conquered by Napoleon should be redistributed between nations, kingdoms and empires, transformed Vienna into not just one of Europe's foremost cities, but the capital of a huge empire. Although public performances were closely controlled by the city's censors and artistic circles were under police surveillance, an entertainment culture was encouraged to a certain degree, and that included the opening of public dance halls.

In 1816, at the age of 19, Schubert decided to leave his job as a schoolmaster to focus on composing. He had already written around 200 works across many genres, from string quartets and symphonies to operas, Masses and Lieder (the word used without translation to denote the unique aesthetic of the Romantic, melodic German song form), including *Gretchen am Spinnrade* (*Marguerite au rouet*), a work of genius, and a perfect example of a Lied. He had also composed dances, including more than 60 minuets for string quartet and for piano. Schubert wrote five more in 1816, and one last such work in 1818, the minuet by then having fallen out of fashion. He had also written a number of German dances (*Deutsche*) to which he added another set of twelve and, in the years that followed, a few further, less remarkable examples, with one final *Deutsche* appearing in 1828, shortly before his death. His earliest waltzes date from 1812 and their number began to increase from 1821 onwards, with a final set of twelve coming in 1826. Until 1823, there were also *Ländler* (folk dances popular in Austria, the Tyrol and Bavaria), while his efforts in the *Écossaise* form culminated between 1821 and 1823.

Schubert's new chosen profession was beginning to change. Thanks to a combination of the desire for emancipation so characteristic of the Enlightenment (as represented by Mozart's breakaway from his master, Prince-Archbishop Colloredo, on 9 May 1781 – the musicians' equivalent of France's 14 July); an aristocracy feeling the financial hit of war and, perhaps, less of a need for ostentatious display; and, above all, the increasing influence of a young, dynamic, politically successful bourgeoisie, the centres of musical creativity shifted away from courts and towards bourgeois salons and public concert halls. Haydn was finally able to travel as he wished, and to recover the rights to his music from his princely employer and market it freely instead. Beethoven was able to obtain financial support from aristocrats while serving no

court. As for Schubert, he was the prototype of the composer of bourgeois urbanity, independent from any institution, although he did apply for numerous posts, primarily teaching positions. He did not give public performances, but did play an active role in salon life and, from 1821 onwards, at the informal gatherings known as Schubertiads, organised by his friends in a way that was then quite exceptional. He therefore wrote fashionable dances to play in these various contexts but also in order to publish and sell scores – an essential source of income for him.

While these dances were an important part of Schubert's work and social life, they have not featured greatly in biographies of the composer, except where they have anecdotal interest. The *12 Écossaises*, D. 299 of November 1815, for example, are known to be the first work he composed away from Vienna – in Linz, for his friend and patron Josef von Spaun's sister Marie, while the *Six Écossaises*, D. 421 were written at Spaun's home in Vienna, with Schubert having been banished in fun to his room until they were complete: their title page reads, 'Composed while confined to my room at Erdberg, May 1816', and the last page bears the words 'God be praised'.

The tally of dances in Schubert's catalogue comes to 452 for piano, with 17 more for piano four hands, as well as those written for string quartet, solo violin or two violins. Eleven collections were published during the composer's lifetime or shortly after his death. These comprised 226 dances, in other words half the total number, with subtitles added by the publishers. It is now impossible to put these works into any kind of order, be it chronological, tonal or cyclical. The autograph sets are scattered across several different editions. For instance, the *20 Waltzes*, Op. 127, D. 146, known as the *Letzte Walzer* ('Last Waltzes'), include pieces from 1815 (with trio) and ten *Deutsche* from 1823 relabelled as 'waltzes'. For reasons of fashion, *Ländler* were also re-categorised as waltzes; dances were transposed; trios were added to waltzes; a number of dances exist in several different versions; and there is no way of knowing whether differences between the autograph scores and printed editions have anything to do with the composer... One might think that certain dances were intended to be linked together, with some having *da capo* directions to the one before! In short, the situation is one of wonderful confusion. Didier Castell-Jacomin has used the 1982 Henle edition which is based, as far as such a thing is possible, on the manuscripts and first editions.

Some of these dances became particularly famous, such as the *Deutsche* reclassified as a waltz (D. 365, No. 2) and christened *Sehnsuchtswalzer* ('Yearning Waltz'), a work sometimes still attributed to Beethoven. Liszt borrowed about 35 dances for his nine *Valses-Caprices*, S. 427 of 1852. Webern orchestrated the six *Deutsche Tänze*, D. 820 in 1931.

Obviously, these little gems of dances are not intended for concert performance, and it is quite a challenge to fit so many of them on a single album. They do however offer a sometimes surprising and seemingly spontaneous outpouring of melodic, harmonic and rhythmical writing, whose evocative moments even include imitations of Tyrolean yodelling. Schubert's dances stand as a gift for the enjoyment of others, though this does not preclude the occasional melancholy shadow.

As Schubert was writing his last waltzes, and approaching death, Johann Strauss I was mounting his attack on Viennese concert life. The academic refinements introduced by Strauss's son transformed the Imperial capital into the capital of the waltz, home of the lively entertainment culture so longed for in the wake of the Congress of Vienna. In that context, there was less of an inclination to promote the often more sombre larger-scale works of Schubert who, in July 1822, wrote these words: 'When I wanted to sing of love it turned to sorrow, and when I wanted to sing only of sorrow it was transformed for me into love.'

Dr Jean-Marc Warszawski
English translation: Susannah Howe



Didier Castell-Jacomin

French pianist and Steinway Artist Didier Castell-Jacomin enjoys a remarkable career. A pupil of Catherine Collard, György Cziffra and Fausto Zadra, he has appeared in major venues around the world. His critically acclaimed debut at the Berliner Philharmonie, accompanied by the Berlin Chamber Soloists, has led to appearances at the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, Carnegie Hall, New York, a number of American festivals, and engagements in London, Dubai and Bangkok. He has also performed with the Baden-Baden Philharmonic Orchestra in Germany, at the Gstaad New Year Music Festival in Switzerland, and at the Salle Cortot and the Théâtre de l'Athénée in Paris, and appears with the Quintette à vent de Paris and the Eurasia Quartet. Castell-Jacomin's extensive discography includes works by Mozart, Beethoven and Schumann. His award-winning recordings include *Regards*, dedicated to female composers (Continuo Classics), and Mozart's *Piano Concertos Nos. 8 and 23* with the Vienna Chamber Symphony Quintet (Naxos 8.574012). Castell-Jacomin's newly conceived 'Steinway Road Trip' around the globe features concerts, masterclasses and videos of each of his journeys in order to let the public discover his different human and musical experiences.

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As a young composer immersed in the new bourgeois scene in Vienna, Schubert was perfectly positioned to write for the many salons that had opened in the city. The fashionable dances he wrote for them also gave him an avenue for their publication and the selling of scores. These charming gems were not intended for the concert stage but offer a surprising and seemingly spontaneous outpouring of melody and harmonic wit – and even imitations of Tyrolean yodelling. The *12 Écossaises*, D. 299 are known to be the first work Schubert composed away from Vienna. Didier Castell-Jacomin employs the 1982 Henle edition based on manuscripts and first editions.

**Franz
SCHUBERT**
(1797–1828)

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38 Waltzes, Ländler and Écossaises, Op. 18, D. 145 (1815–21)		8 12 Ländler, D. 681 – Nos. 5–12 (c. 1815)	5:11
1 Waltzes Nos. 1–12	11:24	9 Galop and 8 Écossaises, Op. 49, D. 735 (c. 1822)	5:22
2 Ländler Nos. 1–17	7:50	10 8 Écossaises, D. 529 (1817)	3:26
3 Écossaises Nos. 1–9 – No. 8 (da capo)	4:43	11 6 Écossaises, D. 421 (1816)	2:43
4 12 Écossaises, D. 299 (1815)	7:34	12 German Dance in C sharp minor – Écossaise in D flat major, D. 643 (1819)	1:28
5 20 Waltzes, Op. 127, D. 146 (1815–23) (version after second autograph copy)	27:41	13 Écossaise in E flat major, D. 511 (c. 1817)	0:34
6 12 Écossaises, D. 781 – Nos. 2–12 (1823)	5:41	14 Écossaise in D minor/F major, D. 158 (1815)	0:22
7 Écossaise in D major, D. 782 (c. 1823)	0:28		

Didier Castell-Jacomin, Piano

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