

NAXOS

MARSCHNER

Overtures and Stage Music • 1

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Heinrich August Marschner (1795–1861)

Overtures and Stage Music • 1

Heinrich Marschner was the leading German composer of Romantic opera between Carl Maria von Weber and Richard Wagner. He was famous for his works of supernatural horror, especially *Der Vampyr* (premiere: Leipzig, 1828) and *Hans Heiling* (premiere: Berlin, 1833). Marschner developed the psychological aspects of Romantic opera, adding a new dimension to its dramatic imagination. His engagement with preternatural protagonists saw them developing mortal personalities possessing foibles and weaknesses similar to humans. He located separate good and evil traits within a single, centrally significant character, allowing his dramas to become all the more complex, with intensified individual psychological conflict. The kind of anti-hero he developed is closely related to the title role in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787). Marschner likewise vested his interest in a central dramatic baritone who is either supernatural or mortal.

Marschner employed original dramatic techniques to sustain the generally sombre atmosphere of his operas. One was melodrama, speaking or acting against orchestral accompaniment to heighten dramatic tension, as in the operas of Mozart, Beethoven and Weber. Comic relief was also necessary to keep works of this sort from becoming overwhelming.

Marschner worked within the musical style of his contemporaries, but again developing some techniques most originally. He increased the scope of the opera orchestra, adding particularly to the low brass – using, say, three trombones instead of horns for darker effect. And in place of the conventional harmonies of German folk song, Marschner extended the bounds of tonality by using chromatic elements in both melody and bass lines to sometimes accomplish a rapid modulation to a remote key, to avoid a cadence altogether, or to convey a mood of foreboding. He intended to write music that would bind intimately with the drama. Several revivals of *Hans Heiling* and *Der Vampyr* took place from the 1970s onwards in Germany, the UK and America.

The music here is from the early part of Marschner's career, in Dresden and Leipzig, before his operatic breakthrough. Nearly all of it is incidental music, written for plays by famous contemporary dramatists. These give an insight into the theatre of the time in Germany and Austria, while Marschner's music indicates his skill and mastery of form and melody even before his first great operatic success.

Der Kyffhäuser Berg – Overture

(Romantische Oper, 1816; premiere: Zittau, 2 Jan 1822)

Adapted from a folk legend by August von Kotzebue (1761–1819) set in the Harz Mountains, *Der Kyffhäuser Berg* is a story of frustrated love and supernatural events, a version of the Rip van Winkle legend in which the heroine's father returns from an enchanted sleep of 20 years bearing a fabulous golden ball acquired from dwarves, enabling his daughter to marry the man she loves.

A slow, cautious opening punctuated by chords with prominent horns gives way to a dignified processional theme on the woodwinds. This suddenly explodes into a jolly idea, a dance-like motif with a figure on descending strings, which is repeated. A second pensive idea with strong woodwind element unfolds, with short development. The recapitulation follows, building into an exuberant peroration with busy descending string figures, and strong chorale-like brass with interspersed answering woodwind, moving onto a lively finale with hushed coda.

Schön Ella

(Volkstrauerspiel by Johann Friedrich Kind [1768–1843], 1823; published Leipzig, 1825)

Friedrich Kind's 'folk tragedy' is based on the fable of Leonore, the deathly bride (*Totenbraut*) of German folklore. The ballad by Gottlieb August Bürger (1773) made the story of the terrific night-ride of a young bride fetched away by the ghost of her dead lover famous all over Europe. The story, set during the Thirty Years' War, was closely associated with folk customs and traditions, reflecting the language of everyday people and using the supernatural to make a moral point. Unlike the ballad, Ella is mysteriously saved from being buried alive by her revenant lover when she asks where the real William is. The ghost flees and

Ella is able to return and tell her tale before expiring. The play was not successful despite its didactic attempt to demonstrate that striving after riches rather than true spiritual values can be disastrous.

Overture: A quiet woodwind passage leads into a busy restless theme passed among all of the instrumental groups, growing in strength, suggesting the ghostly night-ride. It launches into a clear extended melody (perhaps representing Ella) that becomes another thematic exchange before a mysterious passage for the horns initiates a serene motif for the woodwinds. Harsh reiterated chords mark an agitated development with powerful trombones and trumpet calls. The recapitulation presents the themes again in an extended form leading to the decisive coda. The whole unfolds somewhat leisurely, despite the ghostly nature of the story.

Act II: Entr'acte: This is brisk, galloping and marked by a lovely clarinet melody. It settles down reflectively with further scoring for the clarinet, before becoming agitated again, the melody developed into a fervent peroration before the quiet coda.

Act II: Ballet:

I – This is a sustained folksy piece, in several sections, initiated by an elegant waltz with a trio marked by intertwining woodwind exchanges.

II – Another pleasant waltz follows, riding upwards on the woodwinds with brass interjections.

III – A movement in common time takes over, with attractive serene strings and rich woodwind alternation. A tentative, rather longing theme is repeated, with another leisurely 3/4 melody on the strings.

IV – The opening waltz returns.

V – The 4/4 passage recurs with its lovely woodwind writing. A delicate passage in 6/8 with strong gestures follows.

VI – The opening waltz is repeated, transforming the whole sequence into a rondo.

VII – A strong passage in 4/4 follows with recurring trumpet fanfares alternating with a delicate theme.

VIII – The common time third movement is reprised.

IX – The mood darkens with a more disturbed movement, fast moving, with reiterated brass figures leading into a quiet whispered coda.

Act III: Entr'acte: This is hushed and reflective, with prominent wind parts alternating with the strings, and a rather emphatic droning bass.

Act IV: Entr'acte: This is a serene movement with a descending figure in the lower strings alternating with the woodwinds, and culminating in a strong conclusion with chromatic inflections and a decisive coda.

Act IV: Marsch der Krieger und Mädchen ('The March of Soldiers and Young Girls'): Powerful timpani and brassy fanfares with strong trombone parts set up a processional movement without strings, calling for several repeats in march style.

Act V: Entr'acte: A quiet sustained opening, serious, in the minor key, is marked by an agitated descending figure repeated several times, with sustained trumpets giving way to a melancholic melody, followed by silence, and then a rather anguished reflection in the winds and an agitated dialogue. The mood becomes more disturbed and dramatic, the winds and lower strings alternating.

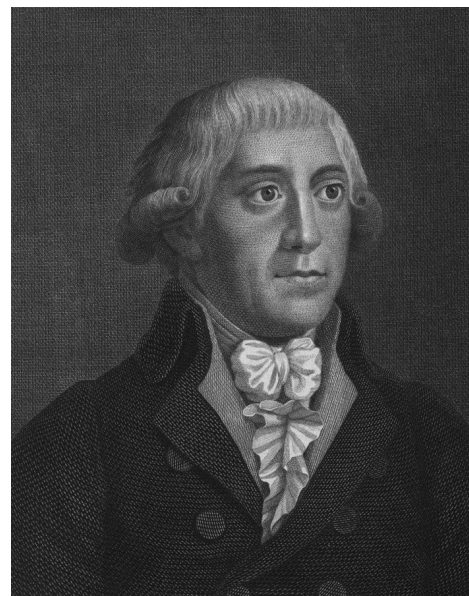
Ali Baba, oder Die vierzig Räuber

(Drama with music and songs; premiere: Dresden, 22 July 1823)

This play by Karl Gottlob Theodor Winkler (1775–1856) (who used the pseudonym Theodor Hell) was never published. It was the adaptation via a French vaudeville of the classic Arabic story derived from Antoine Galland's translation of *Les Mille et une Nuits* (1704). Galland heard the story from an oral source and included it in his translation, which became a huge popular success, sweeping across Europe in several printed versions in different languages. Marschner wrote the music in March and April 1823 (an overture, three songs, choruses and dances). The production was a complete failure. The work was repeated in Prague in 1825. The play begins with a band of robbers murdering Cassim. The robbers mask themselves as Gypsies, their captain as a shopkeeper, then a Kadi. The band of brigands is rolled onto the stage hidden in casks. They draw their scimitars in anticipation of their victims, and remaining quiet in this position, await the arrival of the true Kadi (Ali Baba), who hurries to free the unfortunate victims of the robbers and punish their betrayers.



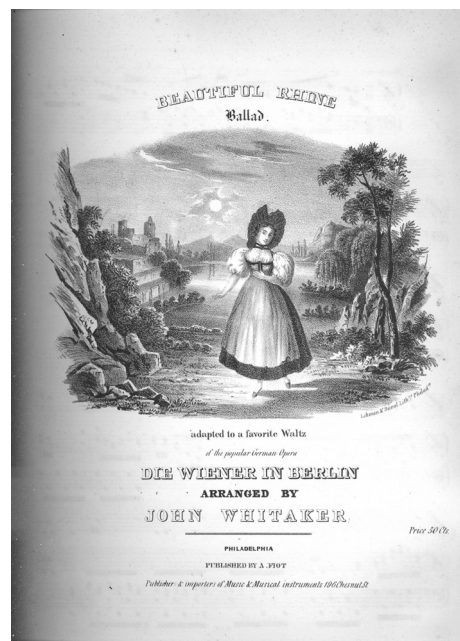
Heinrich Marschner (c. 1830),
lithograph after a drawing by F.A. Jung



Gottfried August Bürger (1820),
engraving by Johann Christian
Benjamin Gottschick (1776–1844)



Cassim in the Cave (1909)
by Maxwell Parrish (1870–1966)

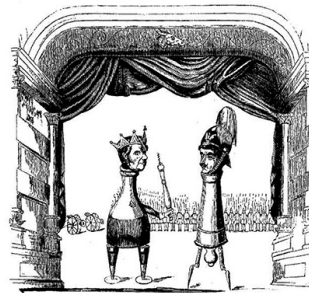


Die Wiener in Berlin



Rip Van Winkle (1829) by John Quidor (1801–1881)

Die Wiener in Berlin.



**Letzter Act. Erste Scene.
König und General.**

Die Wiener in Berlin



Lenore (1774), engraving by
Johann David Schubert (1761–1822)

Overture: The opening features reflective lower strings passing to horn calls, then gives way to a yearning melody on the winds. The opening rumination returns. Plucked strings lead into the bright, fresh first theme which is developed at length with a descending Oriental figure giving way to the second idea on the woodwind that is also elaborated with descending trombones. The first theme reappears, the descending motif now for full orchestra and again powerfully accompanied by the trombones. The second theme is recapitulated with strong wind writing and developed into the fervent peroration.

Act II: Melodrama: A striking introduction turns into a musing passage on the woodwinds, broken by pizzicato strings and sustained chords for the horns, leading into a brisk coda.

A dramatic opening passage moves into a delicate dialogue section for the high woodwind. A distinctly sinister mood is created by descending dotted figures. Hushed diminishing chords peter away over a reiterated trumpet figure.

Act II: Schluss: A lonely minor key first theme with a second motif of woodwind exchanges expands into the full orchestra, then with descending string figures moving reluctantly to the conclusion.

Act III: Ballet:

I – The ballet is initiated by a strong positive theme for full orchestra with prominent solo clarinet, taken over by all of the wind.

II – A flute cadenza launches into the spiky second dance, with prominent interacting woodwind before being decisively taken over by the strings.

III – The opening clarinet movement appears again *da capo*.

Act III: Schluss: This is a brisk headlong lengthy celebratory movement full of brio and culminating somewhat triumphantly in trumpet calls and timpani.

Der Holzdieb – Overture

(Singspiel in one act by Johann Friedrich Kind. 1823; premiere: Dresden, Hoftheater, 22 February 1825)

This is a rustic story purged of all magic and supernatural intervention that was so favoured by the Viennese Zauberspiel. It is another tale of foiled matrimonial plans. Felix the blacksmith is not able to marry Suschen until a scheme is devised whereby the rich but mean landlord of the smithy, Barthel, is tricked into selling the smithy to Lorenz, so removing the objections of Suschen's stepfather to her marriage with Felix.

The *Overture* comes across in a relentless, slightly rollicking mode, as if underscoring the essentially comedic tone of the play. The piece is in rondo form. There is a bright, brisk start, with whistling woodwind runs with strong fanfares and powerful timpani, strings and clarinets, a descending flourish followed by a quieter mood with woodwind cadenzas. The busy first 6/8 theme is taken over *fortissimo* by the whole orchestra, before settling into the second quieter idea with strong clarinet writing and wind interplay. The propulsive first theme is developed with verve before being repeated in its opening form. This is briefly developed. An oboe motif and other woodwinds muse for a moment before the return of the relentless opening theme moves precipitously into the final cadence.

Die Wiener in Berlin – Overture

(Liederspiel in one act by Karl Eduard von Holtei [1798–1880], 1825; premiere: Dresden, am Linckeschen Bade, 24 August 1825)

This farce by Karl Eduard von Holtei, playwright, producer, secretary, lecturer and actor, generates humour by depicting the differences in culture and manners between Prussian Berlin and Austrian Vienna. With its premiere at the Royal Schauspielhaus in Berlin on 14 June 1824 (42 performances until 1842), Holtei's play proved a success, with further performances in Hamburg, Breslau, Münster, Leipzig, Brunswick, Cologne, Hanover, Aachen, Altona, Dresden, Düsseldorf, Karlsruhe, Plauen and Paris. The production in Dresden (47 performances) in August 1825 was with the addition of Marschner's *Overture*.

A processional theme emerges immediately, transmuting into a very definite comedic melody with secondary ideas for the woodwind, developed with some verve. This gives way to third theme with rustic drone, which builds up into a recapitulation of the opening comic theme and its extension. Lower strings over the drone launch into a very vivacious third melody which grows in exuberance and is repeated in several forms before a brief development and recapitulation with gurgling clarinets and a brilliant treble peroration rushing into a sudden coda.

Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice



The Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice is valued for its stylistic interpretations and the extraordinary quality of its orchestral sound, and it is rightly ranked amongst the world's leading representatives of Czech musical culture. It often performs at the most prestigious festivals in the Czech Republic and venues throughout Europe such as the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, the Grosses Festspielhaus, Salzburg, the Herkulesaal and the Gasteig, Munich, the Musikverein, Vienna, the Brucknerhaus, Linz, and the Meistersingerhalle, Nuremberg among many others. Outside Europe the orchestra has performed in Japan and toured extensively around America. The first principal conductor, Libor Pešek, quickly raised the orchestra to a high standard, and subsequent principal conductors have included Marco Armiliato and Mariss Jansons. The orchestra has also welcomed

numerous world-renowned soloists such as Isabelle van Keulen, Vladimir Spivakov, Ludwig Güttler, Radek Baborák, Gábor Boldoczki and Sergei Nakariakov. Aside from concerts, the orchestra regularly engages in operatic and theatre projects and has recorded dozens of successful albums on record labels including Naxos, ArcoDiva, Supraphon, Classico, Monitor-EMI and Amabile.

www.kfpar.cz

Dario Salvi



Dario Salvi is a Scottish-Italian conductor, musicologist and researcher who specialises in the restoration and performance of rare works. Salvi conducts symphonic works, ballet, opera and operettas across Europe, the Middle East and the US. His passion is the rediscovery and performance of long-forgotten masterpieces. He is currently collaborating with Naxos on recordings of Romantic ballets and a series on Auber's overtures and orchestral music. Other important projects include recording Viennese operettas by Johann Strauss II, Franz von Suppé, Carl Michael Ziehrer and others, as well as completing world premiere recordings of works by Giacomo Meyerbeer and Engelbert Humperdinck. Salvi has also written books on Viennese operetta, published new musical editions of operas and is a lifetime honorary member of The Johann Strauss Society of Great Britain.

www.dariosalvi.com

Heinrich Marschner, the leading German composer of Romantic opera between Weber and Wagner, was a progressive innovator, bringing to his music a new dimension – the supernatural anti-hero enmeshed in horror, such as the protagonist of *Der Vampyr* (1828). Before his psychological operas, however, Marschner composed a series of overtures and stage works exploring more conventional material. These have long been overlooked. In this first volume *Schön Ella* represents Marschner's mastery of form, skilful orchestration and melodic gifts, while the excerpts from *Ali Baba* reveal his flair for theatrical concision and mood setting.

Heinrich August
MARSCHNER
 (1795–1861)

Overtures and Stage Music • 1

1 Der Kyffhäuser Berg (‘The Kyffhäuser Hill’) – Overture (1816)*	8:40	Ali Baba, oder Die vierzig Räuber (‘Ali Baba, or The Forty Thieves’) (1823) (excerpts)*	20:05
Schön Ella (‘Beautiful Ella’) (1823) (excerpts)*	25:55	9 Overture	7:23
2 Overture	6:21	10 Act II: Melodrama	1:42
3 Act II: Entr’acte	2:32	11 Act II: Schluss (‘Ending’)	2:09
4 Act II: Ballet	12:04	12 Act III: Ballet	6:16
5 Act III: Entr’acte	1:29	13 Act III: Schluss (‘Ending’)	1:30
6 Act IV: Entr’acte	3:23	14 Der Holzdieb (‘The Wood Thief’) – Overture (1823)	4:40
7 Act IV: Marsch der Krieger und Mädchen (‘March of the Warriors and Maidens’)	2:40	15 Die Wiener in Berlin (‘The Viennese in Berlin’) – Overture (1825)*	6:11
8 Act V: Entr’acte	4:08		

*WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice

Dario Salvi

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