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No. 149—Hark! Hark The Lark

—SCHUBERT



HARK! HARK! THE LARK



In the present case we have two composers whose combined work enters into the composition at hand. First, there was the great song-writer, Franz Peter Schubert; and second, the great pianist and composer, Franz Liszt, who arranged the Schubert song, which Schubert had written for voice with piano accompaniment, into an instrumental piece, containing both the melody of the singer and the instrumental part intended to accompany the singer. In fact, Liszt went farther; he added a second verse or stanza, in which he made a different setting of the same melody as in the first.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—FRANZ PETER SCHUBERT (Shoo'-bërt).

Born at Lichenthal, Austria, in 1797.
Died in Vienna in 1828.

In 1797 was born at Lichenthal, a small village near Vienna, a boy to the school-master of that place, one Schubert, a man living, as school masters then did, in a very close poverty. This boy showed musical talent at a very early age. The Schubert family was musical, and the boy, by the age of six, was provided with a violin of small size, upon which he might play his own part. Soon his sweet voice attracted attention, and a place was found for him in the choir at St. Stephens church in Vienna, where in the school belonging to the parish, he received his food and lodging and instruction in music and letters, in return for his services in the choir. In the school orchestra he played violin, and a pupil reports that one day, noticing that some one behind him was playing a singularly beautiful tone upon his violin, he had the curiosity to look to see, and found it a "red-haired little chap in spectacles"—the same being young Schubert.

Schubert began to compose very early, and by the time he was 16 he was composing all sorts of orchestral pieces, many songs, church music, and dances. In the course of his life, which only lasted until he was 31 years of age, he wrote 700 songs, ten symphonies for full orchestra, and an immense quantity of other music.

As a song-writer he was essentially an improviser. The moment he read for the first time a short poem, suitable for music, a melody immediately suggested itself to him. And almost as quickly he added the instrumental part, after which he straightway forgot it, because by then a new poem had attracted his attention. For instance, finding a book of poems unknown to him in the house of a friend, during the friend's absence, he borrowed the book, leaving a note to that effect. The next day his friend, not being through with the book, went to Schubert's room to get it, and found that in this short time he had already composed no less than seven or eight of the poems into songs.

The present melody is an example of his work in this respect. The story is told by his friend Doppler. As they were returning from a long Sunday walk, passing through the village of Waehring, they stopped to rest in a beer garden, as is the German way. There Schubert found at one of the tables a friend of his, and by him a book lying—a volume of Shakespeare's plays. Schubert took up the book and in a few minutes pointed to the words of this song, in the tragedy of Cymbeline, saying: "Such a lovely melody has just come into my head, if only I had some music paper to write it down." Whereupon one of the party drew some staves upon the back of a bill of fare, and upon this improvised music paper, Schubert wrote down the melody of this beautiful song.

Schubert had a great admiration for Beethoven, who was a familiar figure in Vienna, all through Schubert's life, until Beethoven died, a year before Schubert; but Schubert, being very poor, and unknown except to a small circle of intimate friends and admirers, many of them as poor as himself, lacked the courage to try and become acquainted with his idol, Beethoven. But during Beethoven's last illness, some one brought him a package of Schubert's songs, which Beethoven read with admiration and delight.

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Among the most celebrated of the Schubert songs is this melody, which is known as the "Shakespeare Serenade," to distinguish it from another Serenade, which is in D Minor—a very different, but beautiful piece; also "The Erl King," "Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel," "To Be Sung on the Waters," and one very simple song known as "Hedge Roses."

Among Schubert's friends was one whose influence was of great use to him, the tenor singer Vogl, then very distinguished at the Royal opera. Vogl came to know Schubert when the young composer was only 16, and at once saw the beauty of his songs, and used to sing them whenever he could find opportunity. Indeed Vogl used to say: "Should the time ever come when we have a race of intelligent singers, who are also musicians, the songs of Schubert will have a world-wide fame." And while the race of intelligent singers has not yet fully materialized, the songs of Schubert have fully materialized in the sense intended by Vogl.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—FRANZ LISZT (list).

Born at Raiding, Hungary, October 22, 1811.

Died at Bayreuth, Germany, 1886.

Space does not permit a sketch of Liszt upon such a scale as to indicate the remarkable nature of this great genius. Born upon one of the estates of Prince Esterhazy, where his father was Steward, the boy Franz soon showed such a talent for music that his father gave him instructions, and later took him to Czerny in Vienna, who thought him the most astonishing young fellow he had ever instructed, and besought Beethoven to hear him; which Beethoven did, and was so carried away by the boy's talent that at the close of the playing he went upon the stage and embraced the boy with warm praise, and kissed him upon the forehead.

Soon afterwards the father took the boy upon a long concert tour, and later he lived in Paris, the intimate friend of Chopin, Henry Heine, and all the brilliant circle of musical and newspaper men which the capital contained. Chopin and Liszt were very intimate, and between about 1829 and 1839 they worked out their astonishing studies, and transformed piano playing, by making it vastly more musical and expressive than it had ever been before.

Between about 1831 and 1847, Liszt was a most astonishing figure in the concert room, playing with brilliancy and exquisite expression, such as no pianist ever had in like measure. Everywhere he had large crowds, made much money, and conducted himself in all ways like a prince in music, as indeed he was.

Among the many things which Liszt did to place later players under a load of obligation, was his arranging for piano solo so very much of the best music of other composers. Among the most beautiful of these additions to the music of the piano, is his collection of what he called "transcriptions" of 42 Schubert Songs, among which are several which the greatest pianists of the world most highly prize. Rubinstein used to do wonders with Liszt's version of Schubert's "Erl King;" and this "Serenade," while not difficult enough to answer as a display piece for a great artist, is so charming and attractive that all the pianistic world is its friend.

A "Transcription" differs from a "Variation" in the melody not being varied. That is to say, in a transcription the man who transcribes, writes the melody just as it is; then he adds to the accompaniment whatever changes of position or other improvements he thinks best calculated to make an attractive piano piece. Of all transcriptions those of Liszt are much the best, as well as more numerous than those of any other author.

FORM AND STRUCTURE—The piece begins with a prelude of eight measures. This prelude is wholly Schubert's, except that the Chords which answer after two notes of melody, Liszt places an Octave higher. This treatment of the answering Chords, Liszt continues later. The time of the introduction (and of the song) is to be at about the rate of a pendulum swing 22 inches long, each swing being the time of a dotted quarter, two swings to the measure.

With measure 9 (one note before) the song begins. If you compare the melody written above it with the words, you will at first miss the melody notes for the words "the lark" in measure 9, in Liszt's arrangement. But on looking closer you will find them at the top of the left hand Chords. Also in like manner the corresponding notes for "gate sings" in measure 10. So on all the way through, when you do not at first find the melody note in some measure (it will always be present at the accent, but often given to the left hand on beats "four, five") refer to the left hand part. In measure 12, however, the second note for the syllable "rise" is left indefinite, the soprano voice having it. Later on, it is quite plain. But in measure 17 the notation is not quite right. The first of the two 16ths (and highest) is the melody note to the syllable "chal" and for "flowers," and must be accented accordingly, so that the

melody will sound precisely as it does in the plain version above it. In all this change of melody for two notes to the left hand, the left hand must rise to the occasion and bring out the melody, so that it stands out like the voice of a singer.

With measure 39 begins what is in fact a second stanza of the song, the German translator of Shakespeare, being a benevolent soul withal, did not scruple to add two other stanzas to Shakespeare's short one. In this second verse you have certain additional particulars. In the first place, the soprano voice in the right hand part has much of the melody. But in several places, such as measure 40, the transcriber omits two melody tones, which, if we were still singing the Shakespeare verse, would be for the syllables "gate sings." In measure 41, the syllable "phoe" and "sings" loses its final 16th. In measure 47 the left hand has the melody, as also in measures 53 to 64. Meanwhile the right hand has much embellishing material.

The pupil is advised to regard this second stanza as a separate piece, and at first learn only measures 1 to 38. After this part begins to go easily and effectively, then take up the second stanza and learn it thoroughly. It is quite a bit more difficult than the first stanza. But the charm of the melody helps to carry one through; and, after all, the difficulties are not at all great, as piano playing now goes.

HOW TO STUDY—Begin by learning the melody of the song, as written in the fine staff above the piano part. Learn first the melody; then add to the melody its Chords with the left hand below, because the harmonization in the unexpected key of G Flat, in measures 19 to 24, is a most important part of the musical effect, and without this harmony (and an inner feeling for it) you will not have a clear idea of the song.

In the Prelude, the two notes as "six," "one" which belong to the melody, must be played accordingly, because they are a "feature." In the three high chords there is no one tone brought out more than another.

From measure 9, where the melody begins, you must remember that you are always singing the song, singing with your fingers. Hence the Chords at the first two notes are not played simply as Chords, but with the top note singing out distinctly. This will not be very difficult for the right hand, because the right hand is rather used to having to play melody. But the left hand Chords, containing a melody tone, will be more difficult, and must be worked at until the melody begins to sound out clearly, just as it does in the right hand. In this first case of the bass Chords in measure 9, the Chord is "spread" a little, unavoidably, which makes it easier to bring out the note A, which the thumb finally reaches.

With Melody C and its strange harmonies, the harmony needs to be broad, the tone full and commanding. This applies to the melody tone itself, and to the bass which supports it; also to the Chords, only in due subjection to the still more telling melody tones. The high Chords along here always lightly. The pedal as marked below the bass. The old marking of one pedal per measure is quite impossible, upon our modern and much better pianos, than any which Liszt was used to. The vibration is longer now, and tones get mixed up if the pedal is retained too long.

The principles of pedaling this part (measures 19 to 38) are explained under the heading "Melody Pedal" in the Columbia Elementary Technics, Vol. IV. Also in Mathews' Pedal Method. The principle is easy. You simply take the pedal before leaving the key whose sound you wish to prolong; then you leave the pedal at the moment when the next melody tone is upon the point of sounding. In cases where you have two melody tones in succession upon the same note, as at "three, four" in measure 19, and many other places, it is better to pedal with each tone, and not to hold the pedal across both tones.

In finishing the piece (first part, or the complete piece) bear in mind that what you are trying to do is to sing the song with your fingers as clearly and artistically as a fine singer would sing it. Therefore, do not rest content with having in a melody place simply a loud chord; remember that in that chord only one single tone is really a melody tone. Learn to bring out this tone, yet without leaving the chord in the least indefinite. The long spread chord in measure 38, play the top note with the left hand.

In the Second Stanza, measures 39 to 78, the contrapuntal voice (16ths in the right hand part) is played smoothly and connectedly, while the melody voice is brought out so that both voices are heard and may be followed at the same time. This is a rather difficult thing to do, but it will yield to practice, supervised by a good ear. Listen all the time, and insist upon the music.

To get the effect of these two voices together, each in its proper degree of force, you might try the right hand part with both hands together; the right hand plays the melody; the left the running 16ths. In this way the running notes will subside into a softer effect, owing to the weaker left hand. Then take the whole right hand part with the right hand, and try to get this perspective, the melody standing out while the running voice plays more gently in the background, as we might say.

LISZT'S MARKS OF EXPRESSION.

Measure 1, *delicatamente* (dä-lī-kä-tä-měn'tě), delicately. This refers to the three chords, upon "three" and "four."

Measure 9, *sempre dolce e delicatamente*, always sweetly and delicately. This refers to the whole effect, yet the perspective of melody and accompaniment must be preserved. It is meant to guard against a loud and boisterous playing.

Measure 11, *leggiero* (lěd-jī-ā'rō), lightly, referring to the right hand notes, which do not belong to the melody.

Measures 18 and 19: *marcato il canto* (mär-kä'-tō ēl kăn'-tō), the Melody marked; that is, well brought out.

Measure 19: *sempre leggieramente gli accompagnamento* (sēm'-prě led-jā-rä-měn'tě glee äk-kôm'-pän-yä-měn'-tō), the accompaniments always lightly. This refers to all the high chords especially.

Measure 27: *sempre crescendo ed animato* (sēm'-prě krě-shěn'-dō ěd ä-nī-mä'-tō), always increasing and growing more animated (a little quicker by degrees), referring to measures 19 to 30, where the utmost power is needed.

Measure 34: After the strong *sforzato* (*sf*) at beginning of measure, begin to diminish.

Measure 36: *dolce* (dōl'-chě), sweetly. At the end retard a little.

Measure 39: *sempre marcato il canto* (sēm'-prě mär-kä'-tō ēl kăn'-tō), the melody always brought out. This does not mean that it should invariably be loud. But simply distinctly to be heard as the leading thought.

Measure 39: *dolce grazioso* (dōl'-chě grä'-tsě-ō'-sō), sweetly and graciously. This refers to the running work and chords. It limits the degree to which the melody is to be marked.

Measure 49: *marcatissimo* (mär-kä-tīs'-sī-mō), very marked (emphatic), referring to the heavy chords.

Measure 53: *brillante leggiero* (brě-yänt' lěd-jī-ā'-rō), brilliantly, but lightly, referring to the running work of the right hand.

Measure 53: *ma ben articolato il canto* (mä bĕn är-tĕ-kō-lä'-tō ēl kăn'-tō), but the melody well articulated; that is, distinct and well delivered. It offsets the "lightness" spoken of above.

Measures 71 to 73: *dolciss. ralent. poco a poco*. Very sweetly, and slower by degrees.

Measure 74: *armonioso* (är-mō-nī-ō'-sō), harmoniously—a clear but harmonious chord-like effect. This refers to the high chords, and perhaps nobody quite knows precisely what difference in the playing it was meant to indicate.

SHAKESPEARE'S SERENADE.

HARK, HARK! THE LARK.

Revised and annotated by
W. S. B. Mathews.

Melody by SCHUBERT.
Transcribed by LISZT.

Allegretto.

A. *pp* *delicatamente*

1 2 3

4 5 6 7

Hark, hark! the lark at heav'n's gate sings, And

B. *pp* *sempre dolce e delicatamente* *pp*

8 9 10

4
Phoe - bus'gins to rise His steeds to wa - ter at those springs. In

leggiere

11 12 13 14

chal - ic'd flowers that lies; In chal - ic'd flowers that

poco cresc.

15 16 17

lies And wink - ing Ma - ry - buds be - gin to

marcato il canto.

rf *C.* *sempre leggerm. gli* *accompagnati*

18 19 20

ope their gol - den eyes, With ev' - ry thing that

21 22 23

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

pret - ty bin, My la - dy sweet, a - rise! With

24 25 26

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

ev' - ry thing that pret - ty bin, My la dy sweet, a -

sempre cresc. ed animato

27 28 29

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

6

rise, a - rise, a - rise, My

30 *ff con fuoco*

31

32

la dy sweet a - rise, a - rise, a -

33

34 *sf dim.*

35

rise, My la dy sweet a - rise!

36 *dol.*

37

38 *poco ritard.*

sempre marcato il canto

dol. grazioso.

39 40 41

42 43 44

cresc.

45 46 47

sempre più cresc.

48 49 50 51 52

marcatissimo

sf ff

brillante leggiero

8

p ma ben articolato il canto.

53 54 55

56 57 58

59 60 61

sempre più f ed animato

62 63 64

molto energico

sf

65 *sf* 66 *sf* 67 *sf* 68 *sf* *dimin.*

69 *sf* 70 *sf* 71 *dolciss.* 72 *rallent. poco a*

poco 73 74 *armonioso* 75 *armonioso*

76 77 *pp* 78 *ppp*

RECITATION QUESTIONS ON "HARK, HARK, THE LARK."

1. Who composed the Original Poem?
Ans.
2. Who wrote the song to Shakespeare's words?
Ans.
3. Who arranged the present transcription?
Ans.
4. What is the Key?
Ans.
5. What is the Key in measures 19 to 23?
Ans.
6. Which hand plays the melody throughout the first stanza? The right or the left, or both by turns?
Ans.
7. How may you ascertain which notes in chords are melody tones to be brought out with greater force?
Ans.
8. How do you manage the long chord closing the first stanza?
Ans.
9. What new voice is given in the second stanza? Which stanza is more chromatic, the first or the second?
Ans.
10. Which stanza is the more difficult of the two?
Ans.
11. Where did Schubert live, and what other great composer lived there during almost the whole of Schubert's life?
Ans.
12. Which died first, Beethoven or Schubert?
Ans.
13. Give the dates of the birth and death of Liszt, and state for what he was celebrated.
Ans.

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