
Johann Strauß: Walzer (Arr.)



Title	Walzer von Johann Strauß [Waltzes by Johann Strauß]
Time of Origin	1921 – 25
Premiere	27 May 1921, Vienna, Festsaal der Schwarzwaldschen Schulanstalten 26 April 1925, Barcelona, Palau de la Música Catalana
Duration	ca. 10 min., ca. 9 min., ca. 13 min.

Rosen aus dem Süden op. 388 für Klavier, Harmonium und Streichquartett (1921)

Lagunenwalzer op. 411 für Klavier, Harmonium und Streichquartett (1921)

Kaiserwalzer op. 437 für Flöte, Klarinette, Streichquartett und Klavier (1925)

“Schönberg had a brilliant idea once again: [...] to establish a society whose mission it is to present weekly performances of music from ‘Mahler to the present’ to its members.” (Alban Berg to his wife Helene, 1 July 1918) Schönberg’s impetus to create this innovative concept stemmed from the success of ten open rehearsals of his Chamber Symphony in Vienna, as well as his teaching activities in his Composition Seminar at the pedagogically advanced Schwarzwald School. The Board was established at the first general meeting of the “Society for Private Musical Performances” in December 1918. Its nineteen members consisted of Schönberg’s Viennese students and friends, with Arnold Schönberg as President. The Society set new standards by fostering new ideas and by adopting unconventional means in order to “provide artists and art lovers a true and exact knowledge of modern music:” the list of works to be presented was not announced beforehand (in order to “ensure regular attendance”); works were performed more than once; the concerts were not open to the public; displays of approval or disapproval were prohibited. Works were intended to speak for themselves: they were meticulously rehearsed by the performers and presented in an unpretentious manner. The primary goal was comprehensibility. Schönberg also rejected the corrupting influence of the general public by not allowing advertising.

The concerts originally took place in the festival hall of the Merchants Society (Kaufmännischer Verein) in Johannesgasse. The performances were held in the small Musikverein hall until May 1919, and in the Vienna Konzerthaus until mid-1920. After briefly relocating to the Club of Austrian Railroad Workers (Club Österreichischer Eisenbahner) in Nibelungengasse, the concerts were then held in the Schwarzwald School (designed by Adolf Loos) in Wallnerstrasse from 1921 onwards. The mostly young performers were selected through auditions. The financial backing for the concerts came from varying levels of membership fees. A repertoire list of 27 contemporary composers was published in the Society’s November 1919 report after only one year of existence. Among those listed were Max Reger, Claude Debussy, Richard Strauss, and Igor Stravinsky. Beginning in autumn of 1920, and in order to counteract the growing inflation following the war, public propaganda

concerts, intended to bolster the Society's finances, took place along with the regular concerts that were closed to the general public.

An "Exceptional Event" with four waltzes by Johann Strauss arranged by Anton Webern, Alban Berg, and Arnold Schönberg took place on 27 May 1921. This concert proved to be a musical milestone. After the concert, in which the composers also performed (Berg: harmonium, Schönberg: 1st violin, Webern: cello), the original manuscripts were auctioned in order to secure financial support for further Society evenings. The rehearsals were held in five sessions of five hours each. Admission tickets were sold by the performers in the form of program booklets. Both the curiosity of the stylistic opposition between Strauss and the Second Viennese School as well as Schönberg's humorous hosting of the event were crucial factors to the concert's success. Alban Berg reported on 2 June 1921 to his colleague Erwin Stein: "The waltzes sounded fabulously good without exception [...]! Schönberg's instrumentation naturally towered far above mine. I, of course, would never have dared to go that far. For example, Steuermann, who grinned at Schönberg's suggestion that each performer should study his part at home, received an extremely difficult piano part, which of course sounded magnificent." Berg's waltz arrangement was met with enthusiastic applause, which Schönberg, making an exception, permitted, in order to enhance the mood and increase the interest of potential buyers for the manuscripts. In the requested encore of Webern's "Treasure Waltz" from the "Gypsy Baron," Schönberg and his student switched music stands and also instruments. In the ensuing auction, Berg's manuscript brought in 5,000 Kronen, Schönberg's score of "Roses from the South" 17,000 (parts used in the concert were reproduced by Hanns Eisler) and the "Lagoon Waltz" 14,000. In an attempt to increase the price of Webern's "Treasure Waltz" the president of the Society became the unintentional winner at 9,000 Kronen.

The Society's practice of producing arrangements arose primarily from economic considerations: orchestral performances could not be realized due to both lack of available personnel as well as financial considerations. Alban Berg commented on the practice of arranging for smaller ensembles, piano four hands, or two pianos in the brochure of the Society for Private Musical Performances: "In this manner it is possible to hear and judge modern orchestral works stripped of all sound effects that an orchestra produces and all of its sensory aids. Doing so invalidates the common criticism that this music owes its effect solely to its more or less rich and striking instrumentation and does not possess all of the features which formerly were characteristic of good music: melody, richness of harmony, polyphony, perfect form, architecture, etc."

The degree of musical transformation in the Society's arrangements varied from work to work. The Strauss arrangements are characterized by a sophisticated procedure that emphasizes the Viennese *Espressivo*. The harmonium is used to supply color, and serves as a substitute for wind instruments. Plans to have a personal harmonium built for the Society never materialized due to the high cost involved (200,000 Kronen). Schönberg's own instrument (with A tuned to 438 Hz) was therefore used, and had to be transported from his home in Mödling to Vienna for rehearsals and concerts. Schönberg selected the pieces from an anthology of the most popular Strauss waltzes in a piano reduction published by Cahn in Leipzig.

The original manuscript of the "Lagoon Waltz" disappeared after the first Society concert. According to Schönberg's student Josef Rufer, it had been purchased by Arthur Prager, the Society's treasurer, at the auction. On 12 January 1958, the "Lagoon Waltz" arrangement was performed at an anniversary celebration of the North German Radio Station. In the series entitled "Das Neue Werk" (The New York), organized by Josef Rufer, a cross-section of Schönberg's works from all compositional periods was presented with Hans Rosbaud conducting. Some of these works were being performed for the first time, including the "Jakobsleiter" fragment and the choral work "Israel exists again." Schönberg's widow Gertrud had sent the NDR (North German Radio) copies of the unpublished works. Josef Rufer had previously catalogued the manuscripts in a List of Works and based the program's content on the results of this research. The performing parts used for the "Lagoon Waltz" were never located after the 1958 Hamburg Radio Station performance. In early 2005, the performing parts from the Society's library were discovered in the estate of Herbert Hübner, one of the editors of the NDR in the field of new music. This handwritten copy (Josef Waschaurek, Vienna), based on the original manuscript score, and bearing the stamp of the "Society for Private Musical Performances," formed the basis for the first edition of Arnold Schönberg's arrangement of Strauss' "Lagoon Waltz," published by Belmont Music Publishers, Pacific Palisades (2005).

Schönberg orchestrated Johann Strauss's Kaiserwalzer with the intention to use it as an encore for a performance of "Pierrot lunaire" he conducted in Barcelona. The instrumentation recalls salon ensembles he had been familiar with since his involvement with Ernst von Wolzogen's musical cabaret "Überbrettl" in Berlin around 1900. Schönberg wanted the arrangement to have a "light, ironic-satirical tone" (letter to the conductor Fritz Stiedry, August 31, 1940). Johann Strauss had composed the waltz in 1889 on the occasion of the opening of the Berlin concert hall "Königsbau." Instead of the harmonium he employed for his other Strauss arrangements, Schönberg instead used flute and clarinet, since they were also present in the Pierrot ensemble. He also decided to include quotations from the Kaiserhymne (Hymn to the Emperor). The arrangement was probably partly motivated by the fact that the concerts in Barcelona were organized as part of a festival of Viennese music. It was desirable to perform works of the late 19th century in addition to chamber music by Schönberg, Mozart, and Beethoven. In the reduction of the Straussian orchestra, the Pierrot instrumentation produces "the effect of an X-ray, filtering away the lush sound of the tutti passages" (Horst Weber). When analyzing Schönberg's arrangement, it is important to keep in mind that he was working from a piano reduction, since no study score of Strauss's concert waltzes had yet been published. However, certain details in the arrangement make clear that Schönberg must have been familiar with Strauss's orchestration: he remembered, for instance, the accompaniment of the snare drum when he prescribed arpeggiated chords for the pianist in the first six measures. Timbral differentiations of recurring elements indicate that Schönberg was primarily thinking in terms of development. Quotations from the Kaiserhymne run through the entire piece, from the piano part in the introduction all the way to the march section, the repetition of the first section of the 1st waltz, the coda and the final stretto, but in places are recognizable only after careful listening.

