

The Wienerlieder Choirbook

The Best Wienerlieder for Doblinger's 200th Birthday
by Claudia Böckle

Chorvereinigung Jung-Wien © Chorforum Wien



A volume of *Wienerlieder* arranged for four-part mixed chorus: a constant request made in the choral department of our music shop. In 2017, the shop's 200th anniversary, this dream has finally come true: composer Wolfram Wagner arranged classics like 'In einem kleinen Kaffee in Hernals' by Hermann Leopoldi, 'Ich hab mir für Grinzing einen Dienstmann engagiert' by Bruno Uher or 'Wenn ich mit meinem Dackel' by Hans Lang for four-part mixed choir with ad lib. piano accompaniment.

On 28 March 2017 three Viennese choirs gave a *wienerlieder* concert at the Schutzhhaus zur Zukunft in Vienna's Schmelz district. Ars Vivendi, the Louis Braille Chorus and the Chorvereinigung Jung Wien performed the world première of the 15 *wienerlieder* exquisitely arranged for polyphonic singing by Wolfram Wagner. 'Even the basses don't always sing monotonous lines,' says Bertram Wassermann, president of the Louis Braille Chorus, named after the inventor of the tactile writing system for the blind. Wassermann, who joined the choir 17 years ago, describes the choir rehearsals, where severely visually impaired, blind and visually unimpaired singers work together: 'Music and lyrics are prepared especially in braille; our conductor, Michał Juraszek, prepares the individual parts so that one can practice them later at home without sheet music.'

The Chorvereinigung Jung Wien rehearses twice per week, permitting intensive work on new pieces – *wienerlieder*, however, being nothing new to the choir members: founded after World War II by noted music pedagogue Leo Lehner, the choir specialized in Viennese choir repertoire, especially in the waltz and operetta era and pieces by Strauss, Lehár, Ziehrer, Kálmán and Stolz. Arrangements prepared by their former conductor Professor Gerhard Track, who has by now created more than 650 compositions and arrangements, and songs by recently deceased Karl Hodina, composer of the famous 'Herrgott aus Sta' underscore the Viennese focus, but the choir's repertoire also includes other

sacred and secular works. And it is already a tradition that the choir sings the midnight mass on Christmas Eve in Vienna's St Stephen's cathedral.

The repertoire of Ars Vivendi, the third choir from the choral *wienerlieder* project, runs a wide gamut of sacred and secular choral music, gospels, classics, and pop. The choir already gave concerts in France, Germany, the Czech Republic, Italy, and Bulgaria. With conductor Svetlomidir Zlatkov the repertoire extended to songs sung in Slovak. President Friederike Heigl answers the question after her experiences with the *wienerlieder* project: 'There are *wienerlieder* in all manners of versions: for solo voices in all ranges and ages, for every possible or impossible instrument (just think of musical saws and glass harmonicas). But it is very rare that *wienerlieder* are being composed or arranged for choral singing'. She is full of praise for Wolfram Wagner's arrangement: 'Not everybody likes *wienerlieder*, they are like the raisins in a cake: you like them – or you don't. But the further this project developed the joy in the music grew. The last straw it took in convincing us was the totally enthusiastic audience that mentally – or even physically – joined in singing; we felt their joy and we were touched by this truly Viennese vein – and, especially, that the 'Herrgott aus Sta', the song we opened the concert with, had gained unintentional urgency with the death of Karl Hodina: that gave the evening a very special note!'

Bertram Wassermann of the Louis Braille Chorus answers the question after the highlight of this three-choir project with the joy in singing, the successful concert, and the good collaboration with the other choirs. All three choirs wish to repeat such a project: learning the repertoire, giving a concert with two other choirs and the excellent collaboration made the *wienerlieder* choral concert an unforgettable event for all participants. In the final piece, 'Wien, du Stadt meiner Träume', all three choirs joining together onstage, one could see the huge enthusiasm on the faces of audience and choirs alike.



Doblinger's CEO Peter Pany
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