

G A V O T T E

By

GLUCK-BRAHMS



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By JOSEF HOFMANN

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND GLOSSARY
By EMERSON WHITHORNE

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GAVOTTE

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH CHRISTOPH WILLIBALD, RITTER VON GLUCK

*Born at Weidenau, near Neumarkt, in the Upper Palatinate, July 2nd, 1714.
Died in Vienna, Austria, November 15th, 1787.*

ALLEXANDER GLUCK was a gamekeeper on the estate of Prince Lobkowitz. With his faithful wife Walburga he enjoyed the bounty of that nobleman at Castle Eisenberg. In this romantic atmosphere was born to them a son, Christoph Willibald Gluck, destined to become one of the world's greatest composers of opera. His early years were spent at the castle; at the age of twelve years he was sent to a Jesuit School at Komotau, in Bohemia where he was taught singing, violin, harpsichord and organ. After a period of six years at this school he went to Prague, taking up the theory of music and the 'cello under Czernohorsky. He was an ambitious youth and very willing to work. He supported himself by playing and singing in church and did not even hesitate to play his violin at country dances when his resources became low.

Going to Vienna in 1736 he was fortunate in meeting Prince Melzi with whom he had become acquainted at Castle Eisenberg. Prince Melzi was extremely interested in music and musicians. Gluck was engaged as director of his private orchestra, traveling to Milan in the Prince's retinue. His duties were not arduous so he had sufficient time to continue his musical studies; thus four years were spent in the north Italian city under Sammartini in the study of musical theory and composition. In the year 1741—his twenty-seventh year—he wrote his first opera, and within a period of four years composed nine dramatic works. These were produced in various Italian cities with such complete success that an offer came to him from London to make his home there and compose for the famous Haymarket Opera.

He accepted the invitation and journeyed across the English Channel in 1745. There three works were produced, all equally unsuccessful. Robust old Handel, who had been experiencing one bankruptcy after another in his operatic ventures, was not pleased that Gluck should have been invited to encroach upon his domain. Handel was notoriously ill-tempered, so we may easily believe that he said of Gluck that he "knew no more counterpoint than his (Handel's) cook". It was unfortunately true that counterpoint was not Gluck's strongest talent.

However, this failure in England was food for reflection for an artist of so thoughtful a nature. He went to Paris and listened attentively to the operas of Rameau; indeed he was strongly influenced by this master's works. Later he returned to Vienna and devoted himself seriously to the study of the esthetics of music. Not satisfied with only contemplative methods, he sought out the society of the intellectual and took up the literatures and languages of different nations. It is often contended that musicians are narrow and limited, but one has only to consider the lives of the truly great creators of music to observe that they usually educated themselves in a most careful and thorough manner, often acquiring learning and culture such as are not found within the walls of universities.

Shortly after his return to Vienna he sued for the hand of Marianna Pergin, the daughter of a wealthy merchant. The father refused his consent, and in deference to his wishes Gluck considerably deferred his marriage to Marianna until the hand of death had removed all paternal objection. The wedding took place September 15th, 1750. The production of his opera *Antigono* in Rome, in 1756, won for him the *Order of the Golden Spur*. Being a man of extraordinary vanity he joyfully took to himself the attendant title and thereafter signed himself "Christoph, Willibald, Ritter von Gluck." In France the title of "Ritter" naturally became "Chevalier".

Perhaps the most fortunate circumstance in Gluck's career, that is in the advantages which it brought to him later in life, was Marie Antoinette's choice of him as her singing master. It was at this period that his opera *Alecste* was produced in Vienna. The date December 16th, 1767, is an important one in the history of the music drama, for with *Alecste* Gluck finally broke away from the antiquated style of the old Italian opera and followed his own convictions. Naturally the critics gave him a most admirable punishment, thus living up to the ideals of their profession—that is, to cling to the old and deery the new. But Gluck was not easily discouraged; he quickly realized the inferior intellects with which he had to deal, and forthwith hied himself to Paris where he hoped for more intelligence and encouragement.

He prepared the soil most carefully for the revolutionary seed he intended planting. He was the soul of diplomacy with the aristocracy and intellectuals, he arranged a campaign of excellent publicity; and yet it was only through the influence of his former pupil, Marie Antoinette, that *Iphigenia in Aulis*—the Gavotte is drawn from that opera—was produced in Paris. Thereupon rose a howl as of wolves unhungred. The admirers of Lully

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and Rameau realized that Gluck was an element to be opposed. The Gluckists knew that the death-knell of those composers had sounded. Pamphlets, epigrams, satires and lampoons, all so dear to our bewigged ancestors, swept in clouds along the windy gutters of Paris. Piccini came from Italy to discover this new rival in the operatic arena. Immediately the Piccinists, with their love of the vapid *aria* and guitar-like orchestration, joined the fray. The pamphlets now darkened the sky, so thickly did they swirl about the chimney-pots of old Paris. The criticisms of that day were singularly like those we read today, for studiously do the critics read the literature of their professional forebears: . . . "little melody, little nature, and little elegance or refinement". . . . "noise of the orchestra to drown clumsy modulations". . . . "no creative genius whatsoever."

One opera followed another, the pamphlet war actually dividing Parisian society, and yet Gluck's success increased. It was only his ill health that forced him to retire to Vienna in 1780. He had fame and wealth, and he lived his latter years with the satisfaction of having won a great battle against artistic ignorance. He had composed in all fifty-four works for the stage and incidentally had founded an entirely new school of opera writing. A stroke of apoplexy caused his death November 15th, 1787.

His artistic creed is contained in the preface to his opera *Alceste*.

"When I undertook to set the opera *Alceste* to music I resolved to avoid all those abuses which had crept into Italian opera through the mistaken vanity of singers and the unwise compliance of composers. . . . I endeavored to reduce music to its proper function, that of seconding poetry by enforcing the expression of the sentiment and the interest of the situation without interrupting the action or weakening it by superfluous ornament."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH—JOHANNES BRAHMS

*Born at Hamburg, Germany, May 7th, 1833.
Died at Vienna, Austria, April 3rd, 1897.*

IN the town of Heide, in the province of Holstein, lived an innkeeper by the name of Brahm. He enjoyed life upon this earth precisely seventy years and apparently his only tribulation was a son, born to him in 1806, Johann Jacob by name. This son was beset with the idea of becoming a musician; the father, however, was convinced that innkeeping was more lucrative and stable. Hence the boy took it upon himself to forsake his father's house in order to devote himself to music. The altitudes of art were never reached by him as it was not his fortune to achieve more than the position of double-bass player in the Hamburg Theatre orchestra, and yet had it not been for his enthusiasm and love of music, would we now possess the great works of Johannes Brahms, his son? Does not the ambition of the father frequently find supreme expression in the work of his offspring?

Born in a fine old six-story house in the Speckstrasse of Hamburg, May 7th, 1833, Johannes Brahms came at once into a musical atmosphere which must have had a far-reaching influence on his later development. Until the age of ten he studied music with his father and with Cossel, a pupil of the famous Marxson. After this excellent preparation he went to Marxson himself, studying pianoforte and the theory of music under that master. Even at this early age he was already composing secretly when he should have been diligently practising the pianoforte.

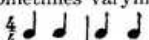
He played in his first concert when fifteen years of age, and we discover that a year later he gave a public performance of the Beethoven's Waldstein Sonata, at the same time introducing a Fantasy of his own. His tour with the violinist Remenyi, in 1853, may be considered the actual beginning of his career, for on this tour he met the illustrious Joachim. This meeting was destined to affect Brahms' whole future. Joachim gave him letters to Schumann and Liszt. The letter to Schumann produced the most fortunate results that a young composer could desire. Not only did Robert Schumann find the manuscripts of Brahms intensely interesting but he did all in his power to assist the flaxen-haired youth. He wrote to Dr. Härtel, the well-known music publisher, advising him that in Brahms he considered he had discovered a genius; this worked magically in opening to him the doors of the largest publishing house in Germany. Moreover, Schumann published an article in his music journal, entitled *Neue Bahnen* (New Paths) which was the cause of a most lively controversy throughout Germany. Indeed the limelight of musical Germany fell upon Johannes Brahms, and it is to his credit that finding himself thus the center and cause of such disputation he still retained his accustomed calm.

Perhaps no great composer's career has been so devoid of incident. Outside his compositions and his historic friendship with Robert and Clara Schumann there is little to chronicle. From 1854 to 1858 he was director of the court concerts and the choral society at Lippe-Deimold. Except for occasional concert journeys, the following two years were spent in Vienna. It was in 1859 that he played his D-minor pianoforte concerto at the Gewandhaus Concerts, in Leipzig, stirring up a storm of criticism. Indeed it was not until twenty years later that this work was favorably considered. As Brahms grew older his piano playing grew more careless until in his later years he was rightly accused of playing badly. But he may be easily forgiven all the wrong notes, for his time and energies were being devoted to far greater things. After two years in Winterthur, where he studied composition with Theodor Kirchner, he moved to Vienna, which city he made his home until his death in 1897.

In Vienna he was appointed conductor of the *Singakademie* but resigned at the end of his first season. He conducted for the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* (*Society of Friends of Music*) from 1872 to 1875; after giving up this position he devoted himself exclusively to composition and no further official appointments were accepted by him. His income was derived from the sale of his compositions and the fees from his tours as pianist and conductor. He lived his life quietly and uneventfully in his comfortable rooms at No. 4 Karlsgasse, beneath the towers of the old *Karlkirche*.

In Brahms we find the rare combination of romanticist and classicist. His harmonic fabric was essentially modern, while in his contrapuntal weaving of themes and his cleaving to the formal structures of his musical progenitors he was essentially academic. His songs and most of his compositions for the pianoforte accentuate the romantic note; his orchestral and chamber works show him the worshiper of classic formalism. Since Beethoven there has been no symphonist to approach Brahms either in mastery of form or nobility of content.

THE ESTHETIC IDEA: Fundamentally the character of the composition is lyric and graceful, suggestive of the dancing of well-bred young people in "*je goede olden tyme*".

FORM AND STRUCTURE: The composition, consisting of 48 measures, is in compound song-form—three parts subdivided into two sections each. The form of the Gavotte requires that it begin on the third beat of four-four measure; its various periods must, therefore, always begin in this way and end with the second beat of their final measures. All repetition marks should be strictly observed and conscientiously executed with their—sometimes varying—endings. Every section of the composition consists of eight measures in this working form: 

The third part is a slightly varied repetition of the first part but with the repetition of the sections omitted. The 40th measure leads at once into the second section of the first part and is followed by a brief reiteration of the main subject which now occupies but four measures and terminates the composition in the 48th measure.

EXPLANATION OF SPECIAL SIGNS: Every measure is provided with a number. Noting these numbers in the music the student can easily find the corresponding references in the text, while inversely, in reading the text he can at once locate any measure referred to by the corresponding number in the music.

The correct use of the pedal is indicated by Ped. and *. At Ped. the pedal should be pressed down quickly, but noiselessly, while at * it is to be promptly released. It should be observed that, as a rule, the pedal is to be pressed down after the note or notes to be prolonged have been struck. The exceptions to this rule are not frequent. The editor has taken special care to mark the pedaling with the utmost precision and he advises the student to follow the markings closely. Where * and Ped. stand close together, the pedal should be released at the striking of the key and be immediately retaken before the finger has left the key.

The soft pedal is not marked, because it should serve as a means of coloring rather than of weakening the tone. It should change the quality of the tone rather than the quantity.

INTERPRETATION: All indications of phrasing, dynamic shadings, pedaling and kindred matters should be closely observed and carried out. This will greatly aid the student in gaining the proper insight into the spirit and structure of the composition. A certain amount of freedom will be granted the student, but not until he has fully complied with the annotations given here and has assured himself of a punctiliously exact reading of the notes.

The *tempo* (about $\text{♩} = 84$ to 96) must be rhythmically well marked. To give variety to the rendition it is recommended that the upper voice of the treble be made especially prominent in measures 1 to 8 and 33 to 40, also in measures 13 to 16. The upper voice in the left-hand part should be treated likewise. The rolled chords may here and there be played with a slight hesitation so as to accentuate the whimsicality of the composition; for example, in measures 1, 13, 33, 37 and 45.

The first section of the first part should be interpreted resolutely while the second section demands gracefulness and delicacy. Both sections of the second part should be played very tenderly and with scarcely any pedal. The melody should be given with a singing tone and the accompaniment—while not exaggeratedly sharp or pointed—should suggest a violin *pizzicato*. At the resumption of the first part a little subjective feeling may not be amiss, a certain cheerfulness, a pleasure over the return of the pretty main subject. In m. 40 (third beat) and the following four measures the counter voice of the left-hand part should be noticeable as an additional enrichment. The last return of the main subject—m. 44 (third beat)—may be played more tranquilly so as to prepare for the considerable *ritardando* with which the composition closes.

GLOSSARY

NAMES

Christoph Willibald, Ritter von Gluck, pronounced	“	<u>Cris-tōf</u> <u>Vil-li-bald</u> , <u>Rit-ter</u> fōn <u>Gluck</u> .
Lobkowitz,	“	<u>Lōb-kō-vits</u> .
Weidenwang,	“	<u>Vī-dēn-vāng</u> .
Newmarkt,	“	<u>Noi-märkt</u> .
Walburga,	“	<u>Väl-boor-gä</u> .
Eisenberg,	“	<u>Ī-zēn-bērg</u> .
Kommatow,	“	<u>Kōm-mō-tow</u> .
Prague,	“	<u>Präg</u> .
Czernohorsky,	“	<u>Tschēr-no-hōr-sky</u> .
Melzi,	“	<u>Mēl-tsī</u> .
Sammartini,	“	<u>Sām-mär-te-nē</u> .
Händel,	“	<u>Hēn-dl</u> .
Rameau,	“	<u>Rä-mō</u> .
Lully,	“	<u>Looō-lē</u> .
Antigono,	“	<u>Än-tī-gō-nō</u> .
Marie Antoinette,	“	<u>Mä-rē</u> <u>Än-twä-net</u> .
Alceste,	“	<u>Al-sēst</u> .
Piccinni,	“	<u>Pī-chē-nē</u> .
Johannes Brahms,	“	<u>Yō-hän-nēs</u> <u>Bräms</u> .
Hamburg,	“	<u>Hām-boorg</u> .
Heide,	“	<u>Hī-dē</u> .
Holstein,	“	<u>Hōl-shtēne</u> .
Cossel,	“	<u>Cōs-sel</u> .
Marxson,	“	<u>Märx-son</u> .
Waldstein,	“	<u>Väl-shtēne</u> .
Beethoven,	“	<u>Bä-tō-ven</u> .
Remenyi,	“	<u>Rē-mēn-yī</u> .
Joachim,	“	<u>Yō-ä-kīm</u> .
Liszt,	“	<u>Līst</u> .
Schumann,	“	<u>Shoo-män</u> .
Härtel,	“	<u>Hēr-tel</u> .
Lippe-Detmold,	“	<u>Līp-pē-Dēt-mōld</u> .
Winterthur,	“	<u>Vīn-tēr-tooēr</u> .
Neue Bahnen,	“	<u>Noi-ē</u> <u>Bä-nen</u> .
Gewandhaus,	“	<u>Gä-vänd-house</u> .
Leipsic,	“	<u>Līp-sic</u> .
Speckstrasse,	“	<u>Shpök-sträs-sē</u> .
Singakademie,	“	<u>Zīng-ä-kä-dē-mē</u> .
Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde,	“	<u>Gä-sēl-shäft</u> <u>dēr</u> <u>Moo-zēk-froin-dē</u> .
Karlasse,	“	<u>Kärl-gäs-sē</u> .
Karkirche,	“	<u>Kärl-kēr-khē</u> .
Theodor Kirchner,	“	<u>Tä-ō-dör</u> <u>Kērkh-ner</u> .

TERMS

gavotte,	pronounced,	grā-vōt, a graceful, old-fashioned dance, generally in quadruple measure.
grazioso,	"	grā-tsē-ō-zō, gracefully.
molto legato,	"	mōl-tō lē-giā-tō, very smooth, connected.
espressivo,	"	ēs-prēs-sēe-vō, expressively.
legg. (leggiero),	"	lēd-jē-ā-rō, lightly, delicately.
dolce,	"	dol-tshē, soft, sweet.
rit. (ritenuto),	"	rē-tō-noo-tō, detained, slower.
ten. (tenuto),	"	tā-noo-tō, held, sustained.
meno mosso,	"	mā-nō mōs-sō, less movement.
lunga,	"	loon-gā, long.
a tempo,	"	ā tēm-pō, in time.
ritard. (ritardando),	"	rē-tār-dān-dō, slackening the time.
dim. (diminuendo),	"	dē-mē-noo-ēn-dō, diminishing the tone.
pizzicato,	"	pīt-sē-cī-tō, 'pinched', plucked with the finger.
'cello,	"	tshēl-lō, an abbreviation for violoncello.
aria,	"	ā-rē-ā, an air, song.

Gavotte

Revised and edited by Josef Hofmann

Transcribed By Johannes Brahms
From the Opera "Iphigenia in Aulis"
By Christoph Willibald, Ritter von Gluck.

Grazioso. $\text{♩} = 84 - 96$

tr *molto legato* *p*

1 *p* 2

3 4 5

6 7 *p* 8 *8a* *8b*

espressivo 9 10

11 12 13 *legg.*

14 15 16a 16b

p *R. H.* *L. H.* 17 18 19 20

p dolce senza Ped.

21 22 23 24a 24b

36 *a tempo* *ril.* *leggiere* 37 38

39 40 41 *p dolce* *ten.*

42 43 44 *ten.* *meno mosso* *a tempo* *lunga*

45 46 47 48 *legg.* *dim.* *ritard.* *pp*

GAVOTTE
RECITATION QUESTIONS

1. Give the dates and places of Gluck's birth and death.
Ans.
2. Was his journey to London successful?
Ans.
3. By whose operas was he influenced in Paris?
Ans.
4. Who was his famous pupil and how did she assist him?
Ans.
5. Where did he achieve his greatest success?
Ans.
6. When and where was Johannes Brahms born?
Ans.
7. What was his father's profession?
Ans.
8. Who were his early teachers?
Ans.
9. With whom was his first tour?
Ans.
10. To whom did Joachim give him letters?
Ans.
11. What was the result of one of these letters?
Ans.
12. How was D-minor pianoforte concerto first received?
Ans.
13. To what extent was Brahms both classicist and romanticist?
Ans.
14. What is the form of this composition?
Ans.
15. In what measures should the upper voice of the treble be made prominent?
Ans.
16. How should the first section of the first part be interpreted as compared with the second section of that part?
Ans.
17. How is the last return of the main subject to be played?
Ans.
18. Define *gavotte*, *legg.*, *lunga*, *pizzicato*.
Ans.

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