

Johann Strauss Senior:

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| 1. Chinese Galops | 1.44 |
| 2. Kettenbrücke Waltz | 4.20 |
| 3. Eisele und Beisele Sprunge | 1.52 |
| 4. Cachucha Galop | 2.14 |
| 5. Beliebte Annen Polka op.137 | 2.30 |
| 6. Gitana-Galop | 2.29 |
| 7. Hofball-Tanze ('Court-Ball Dances') | 4.53 |
| 8. Seufzer Galop ('Sighing Galop') | 1.41 |

Johann Strauss II:

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| 9. Wiener-Gemüths Waltz | 6.02 |
| 10. Champagne Galop | 1.25 |

Josef Lanner:

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| 11. Die Werber Waltz ('The Suitors') | 7.06 |
| 12. Styrian Dances | 5.28 |
| 13. Abendsterner Waltzer ('Evening Stars') | 6.38 |
| 14. Neue Wiener Landler | 4.34 |
| 15. Johann Mayer: Schnofler Tanz | 4.08 |
| 16. Josef Haydn: Zingarese Nos. 1, 6, 8 | 2.55 |
| 17. Vinzenz Stelzmüller: Stelzmüller Tanz | 1.33 |
| 18. Franz Schubert: Ecossaisen | 3.40 |
| 19. Josef Strauss Marien-Klänge Waltz Op.214 | 7:28 |
| 20. <i>Dances of Old Vienna:</i> Anon, Franz Gruber | 4:40 |

Total Time: 78:48

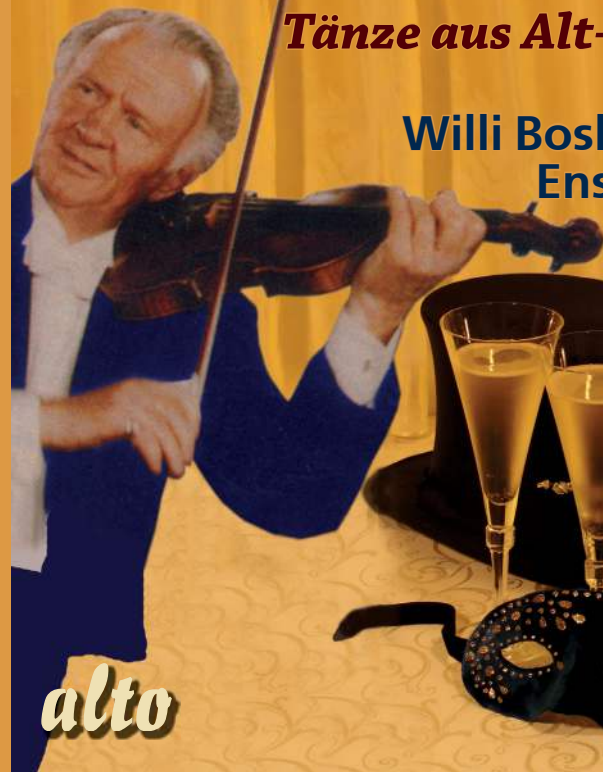
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Dances of Old Vienna

The 'Old Year's Concert'

Tänze aus Alt-Wien

Willi Boskovsky
Ensemble



No dance music rivals that of Old Vienna in combining the most ravishing, open-hearted popular appeal with the artistry and permanence of the finest musical aspects. In the tradition of the Viennese waltz composers who led their small bands with violin in hand, Willi Boskovsky, the celebrated violin soloist and concert-master of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, and a group of first-desk musicians of this famous orchestra address themselves nostalgically and affectionately to the exquisite ländler and boisterous dances of old Vienna.

Vienna's reputation as the city of dance began at the end of the 18th Century, when the nobility was losing its aura of divine status and the middle class was beginning to imitate its way of life. Popular dance music with its folk origins filtered into art music; likewise, art music purified and idealized dance music. This was also the period of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. These classical giants relished the opportunity to write dance music. The dances composed by Mozart and Schubert were in the centuries-old tradition of ländler, "German dance" and country dance. Mozart wrote them for outdoor performance wherever people danced, and Schubert for home and tavern. That these composers loved the material is made manifest by their occasional use of its typical turns of melody and rhythm in much more ambitious works; Mozart in his chamber music and operas and Schubert in his symphonies, quartets and piano sonatas.

By 1815, with the end of the Napoleonic wars, the demand for dance music reached fantastic proportions. The Council of Vienna, while shrewdly trying to restore a conservative order throughout Europe, had the atmosphere of an un-interrupted ball. A fabulous blossoming of dance music took place between 1815 and 1848. In the arena that opened up for new talent, resources were dispersed among the common people. The Strausses and Lanner came up from below, and their achievements were to win critical respect for what has previously been considered the lowly art of writing dances.

Joseph Lanner and Johann Strauss the elder lifted the ballroom dance itself out of the cafeteria/beer-hall fiddling tradition and made it concert stage material. They themselves rose from performers in dreary dance joints to composers who presided over imperial court balls. Lanner and Strauss started with the most modest instrumental resources, and even the large orchestras they later employed were reserved for important occasions. For the numerous balls that the nobility and the middle class of Old Vienna used to stage at home, they evolved a singular band; three violins and a double-bass, the godfather of which was the classic string quartet. A third violin, readily procured, took the place of the viola, while the more striking double bass replaced the violoncello,

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entertainment or in the streets as carnival music. The *écossaise*, a French word meaning “Scottish,” is a dance of Scottish origin in 2/4 time which developed in Europe along the lines of a contredance in either double or triple time.

Johann Strauss’s second son, Josef (1827-70), originally wanted to become an engineer; he was forced against his will into the trade of a musician and composer, certainly not to the disadvantage of his contemporaries and the world of today. One of the most valuable of the many true pearls that came from his pen is the *Marien-Klänge Waltz* (2 violins, viola, bass, flute, clarinet, 2 horns), written in the composer’s mature years.

The pieces collected here as *Dances of Old Vienna* (2 violins and guitar) typify the dances that have been handed down to the present day not only in writing but in the memories of musicians. Many of these compositions were written for the pleasure of listening rather than for dancing. The first dance is by an anonymous fiddler, and the last two are by Franz Gruber (who also wrote the famous carol *Stille Nacht/Silent Night*).

The Boskovsky Ensemble (first desk men of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra)

Willi Boskovsky, 1 st violin	Wilhelm Hubner, 2 nd violin
Rudolf Streng, viola and 3 rd violin	Otto Ruhm, double bass
Josef Niedermayr, flute	Rudolf Jettel, clarinet
Otto Nitsch and Roland Berger, horns	

Willi Boskovsky (1909-91) studied music in his native Vienna and joined the Vienna Philharmonic in 1933, becoming its leader in 1936, a role he retained until 1979. He succeeded Clemens Krauss as conductor of the annual New Year’s Concerts in Vienna and also led the Vienna Johann Strauss Orchestra, directing the orchestra with the violin as was usual in the 19th century. Besides many recordings of the music of Johann Strauss II and his contemporaries, Boskovsky also conducted acclaimed records of Mozart’s complete Dances and Marches. He also led a Quartet and The Vienna Octet, (ALC 1227) consisting of front rank players from the Vienna Philharmonic, and his own Boskovsky Ensemble, as here.

the tone of which was too soft for dancing.

Rarely was the music of Lanner and Strauss, in their lifetime, played by a full orchestra. Rather, the instrumental group was most often a small one. Similarly, Mozart’s and Haydn’s dances were published in arrangements for two violin; and doublebass, with wind instruments to be added as needed. These small bands achieve astonishingly rich sonorities. The appeal of this music is also a testament to the composers’ rich melodic invention; like their great prototypes, Lanner and Strauss were never at a loss for inspiration. In this “chamber music” of dance, it is through the small instrumental framework that the origins are made manifest. To the appeal of the dance music itself was added the sensuous attraction of the solo violin, as played by the charismatic composer-leader, partly driven by the popularity of entertainer / fiddlers used by Cafes and Restaurants as added attractions to encourage clientele, and indeed many dance bands developed and prospered in this scenario where Owners wanted to ‘market’ their establishments in this blossoming of Europe’s ‘cafe culture’.

While this old Viennese ‘light’ music seems simple and raises no knotty problems to the listeners, it is by no means simple to perform. Schubert, who was hard to please, listened with admiration to Josef Lanner’s violin playing, and Johann Strauss the elder was honored for his faultless violin playing and for the precision with which he wielded the baton. Today’s violinists, even with their considerable prowess, often will find fewer difficulties in going through a standard virtuoso concerto than in handling this Viennese music with the proper style and nuance it needs. The same is true when the music is approached by a small chamber orchestra, like that heard in these original scorings. As Willi Boskovsky jokingly says, those who think this music is easy to play will change their minds when they try it!

The titles of Johann Strauss Senior’s compositions often referred to contemporary events that are forgotten today. His *Chinese Galops*, played by four strings, with flute, clarinet and two horns, may have some such connection. It is also obviously influenced by Mozart’s “Turkish March”, both in key and character, and it makes the most attractive introduction to his temperament. The *Kettenbrücke Waltz* gets its title from the “Zur Kettenbrücke” – *At the Sign of the Suspension Bridge* - Hall where it was first played. It was the first big hit in Strauss’s career as a composer, and it displays the true Viennese waltz-poem being born out of its origins, an alternation of easy-going Landler, with themes full of temperament, and deep Viennese sentiment. Its solid musical worth is indicated by how entrancing it sounds in an ensemble of two violins and a double-bass.

The saucy, tingling and jolly polka, *Eisele und Beisele Sprunge* goes back to the full complement of four strings and four winds. The heroes of the title were comic figures in the pages of the Munich “Fliegende Blätter”. The following piece, the *Cachucha Galop* by the elder Strauss uses in addition to a Spanish dance refrain the theme of the Cachucha made famous by Fanny Eissler, which turned the Viennese into a frenzy in 1837. A minor concession to the spirit of the times, it gives us a glimpse of the dance life of the vanished Vienna of the Biedermeier period.

The elder Strauss’s *Beliebte Annen Polka*, Op. 137 (2 violins, viola, doublebass, flute, clarinet, 2 horns) titled in honour of Vienna’s traditional Feast of St. Anne, is the most brilliant and inventive of his instruments of the polka form. The polka was born in Bohemia early in the Century. In 1837 the first polka was printed, in Prague. The dance became the rage in Europe, and was especially popular at the Vienna Mardi Gras of 1842, the year from which this work dates. Even in the waltz, the elder Strauss was a composer of not only melodic beauty but also a fine wit and love for tricky rhythmic, as we hear in the delightful *Hofball-Tanze*, Op. 51, or “Court Ball Dances” (3 violins, double-bass). They were composed in 1832 and adorned a splendid occasion, a marriage in the Imperial family. The setting here, for three violins and double bass with soaring violin solos, gives us something of the effect that must have been when the elder Strauss himself led a band with violin in hand. Following is the light-hearted and frothy *Seufzer Galop*, Op. 9, or “Sighing galop” (2 violins, double-bass, flute, clarinet, 2 horns) which is one of the elder Strauss’ early works, composed in 1828.

Wiener Gemüths is a big waltz, by the “waltz king”, Johann Strauss II, the son. He pulls out all the stops of contrasting moods. An intimate opening theme is contrasted with playful figures, a broad cantilena is followed by tingling rhythms, the dancers are surprised by general rests, and there is a spirited code. The group consists of two violins, viola and double bass. The *Champagne Galop* by Johann Strauss II, is a delightful genre piece which whirls past us in bibulous glory, suddenly stops, and ends with a contemplative conclusion. Lanner’s waltz masterpiece which follows, *Die Werber* or “The Suitors,” is a work of art pure and simple. How naturally one theme seems to grow out of the other, how effortless is the invention of motifs one more beautiful than the other, how organic the structure – what more is there to admire? Here the performing group is three violins and double bass.

Josef Lanner 1803-43), the master of melodic waltzes, was inexhaustible in his invention of flowing themes. Lanner’s quieter nature triumphed through its special inwardness; his music

suiting the Viennese heart, while at the same time offering an effective contrast and complement to that of the elder Strauss. His *Styrian Dances* (two violins, viola and double-bass) illustrate the contrast between his inwardness and Strauss’s effervescence. The title is half correct. While the form of the dances is Styrian, their content is the purest, unadulterated Vienna. The city’s heart and sentiment are in the tiniest phrases; the work is really too good for dancing. Igor Stravinsky paid the compliment of extracting one of its tunes in the first tableau of *Petroushka*.

Lanner’s *Abendsterne*, Op. 180 or “Evening Stars,” (3 violins, double-bass) is the waltz masterpiece of his late years. It exhibits Lanner’s sweet, gentle, lovely lyricism and tasteful harmonies. More so than Strauss, Lanner prized not only the waltz, polka, and galop, but also the gentle, folk-style predecessor of the waltz, the landler. We hear how perfectly Lanner captured the gentle fragrance of this music in his first published work, the *Neue Wiener* or “New Vienna” *Ländler*, Op. 1 (3 violins, double-bass).

An enchanting novelty follows: the languorous, Schubertian *Schnofter-Tanz* (2 violins, guitar) by the almost unknown Johann Mayer. Mayer was one of the crop of composers (others being Vincenz Stelzmüller, also represented here) who appeared in Vienna at about mid-century, and wrote dance music to be listened to rather than danced. A new form was born, as we see here; a sustained cantilena followed by a faster second section.

In his youth, the peasant-born Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) wrote dances of a robust folk quality. In his old age, he wrote more courtly dances, but the earthy folk style returned, and motifs of it can be found in the opening and closing movement of some of his most exalted symphonies and quartets. An example of his love for the rough-hewn folk style may be found in his *Zingarese*, or Hungarian Gypsy dances (2 violini, guitar, double-bass, flute, clarinet) from his native Burgenland. With their skillful recreation of Oriental colour, their strange scales and harmonies, they prove to us how varied were the influences that met and fertilized one another in Imperial Vienna. Vincenz Stelzmüller’s *Stelzmüller-Tanz* (2 violins, guitar) is in the same vein as the dance by Mayer, above.

The noblest master of the Viennese dance was Franz Schubert (1797-1828). The occasions for which he would invent these sublime yet intimate and unpretentious waltzes and Ländler were often the “Schubertiad,” the frolicking evening spent with his friends in fiery discussions, earnest music-making, and, at the end, jolly dancing. Schubert’s *Ecossaisens*, Op. 49 (2 violins, viola, double-bass, flute, clarinet, 2 horns), date from about 1822, to be played on the piano for home