

## Liedtext

Was soll ich in der Fremde thun,  
 hier ist es ja so schön!  
 Der Winter stürmt und brauset nun,  
 verschneit sind Thal und Höh'n  
 und hier ist es so schön, so schön,  
 la la la la la so schön!

Was soll ich in der Fremde thun?  
 Hier ist es ja so schön!  
 Sie reichte mir die weisse Hand,  
 Und sprach: du magst nur geh'n;

Und hier ist es so schön, so schön,  
 La la la la la la so schön!

Und mit dem Wandern ist's nun aus,  
 Hier ist es ja so schön!  
 Kein holdes Liebchen find' ich d'raus,  
 Warum denn weiter geh'n?  
 Hier ist es ja so schön, so schön,  
 La la la la la la so schön!

## Introduction

“The viol di gamba, that night-violet among instruments, is dead; today, it has been replaced by the violoncello. Soft, touching and plaintive was the tone of the gamba ... The last, but perhaps also the most ardent lover of the gamba was Carl Friedrich Abel.” With the tale “The Last Viol di Gamba Player”<sup>1</sup> by Mendelssohn-Bartholdy’s student Luise Polko, published in Leipzig in 1859, the creation of a myth about the viol – that it missed the nineteenth century and vice versa – was complete; this myth has shaped our view of the 19th century to the present day.

I, too, shared the traditional belief that, as a gambist, I was excluded from participating in the sound world of the 19th century. I owe it to none other than Robert Schumann to have shaken this worldview and to have planted in me doubts about its truth. I read the article “Podbielski, the Teacher of E.T.A. Hoffmann,” which was published on March 3, 1840 in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*,<sup>2</sup> edited by Schumann. Its author, Friedrich Hieronymus Truhn, writes: “The old Podbielski,<sup>3</sup> who was a virtuoso not only on his main instruments, organ and piano, but also on the viola di gamba, was never absent from these concerts. An idiosyncrasy of the old, capricious musician was this: he would never play *this romantic instrument*, the viola [di gamba] before a

large group of people or during the light of day, but only late at night and only for a few or, if possible, just for a single listener.”

Among the music lovers who were responsible for the creation of “romantic paintings for the ear”<sup>4</sup> from the tones of the gamba were the counts Maltzan of Castle Militsch (Milicz, Poland) in lower Silesia. Joachim Carl Count Maltzan (1733–1817), a Prussian diplomat, served as Frederick II’s special envoy in London beginning in December 1765. Count Maltzan was a subscriber to the *Bach-Abel Concerts* and presumably was Abel’s gamba student. We owe to him the preservation of numerous works by Carl Friedrich Abel, Johann Christian Bach and Andreas Lidl (the Maltzan Collection).<sup>5</sup> After his recall in 1782, Count Maltzan did not immediately return to his Silesian homeland, but rather stayed in London for two more years, at his own expense, where he was part of the royal family circle; he did not settle in Breslau (Wrocław) until 1784. That same year, Count Maltzan acquired a seven-string gamba from the Breslau builder, Johann Casper Göbler. In 1786, upon the death of his father, he became the ruling prince, was accorded his father’s title of hereditary arch-chamberlain for the duchy of Silesia, moved to Militsch, founded the

<sup>1</sup> Elise Polko, *Musikalische Märchen, Phantasien und Skizzen*, vol. 2, Leipzig 1859. English edition: *Musical Tales, Phantasms and Sketches*, London 1877.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. 12, N<sup>o</sup>. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Christian Wilhelm Podbielski (1740-1792).

<sup>4</sup> Carl Friedrich Zelter, 1802.

<sup>5</sup> Sonia Wronkowska, “Newly discovered works for viola da gamba by Carl Friedrich Abel: Maltzan Collection”, *Early Music* Vol. 46 (May 2018). The gamba works of the Maltzan collection are all available from Edition Güntersberg, publishing numbers G301–310.

first English park in Silesia in 1789, and, from 1790–97, had a new palace built.

With his court orchestra, active until 1810, he organized the *Reichsgräflich von Maltzahn'sche Konzerte* (The concerts of the Imperial Count von Maltzan); for these concerts the young Carl Wilhelm Ferdinand Guhr (1787–1848), an orchestra member and chamber musician of the count's from the age of fourteen (1800/01), fulfilled commissions for gamba concertos along with sextets and quartets with viola da gamba. The count's son, Joachim Alexander Casimir Count Maltzan (1764–1850), inherited his father's passion for music. We do not know whether he played the Göbler gamba himself, as did his father, but since Herrmann Gustav Jaeschke<sup>6</sup> dedicated his *Variations for Viola da Gamba and Piano-Forte* to him, it seems quite likely.<sup>7</sup> The following generation, likewise, perpetuated the musical inclinations of the family: Joachim Carl Ludwig Mortimer Count Maltzan (1793–1843), the oldest son of Joachim Alexander Casimir Count Maltzan, played and composed music for voice, French horn and piano. In 1841 he was appointed Royal Prussian secretary for foreign affairs. In 1945, the family library, including the musical scores, which had accumulated over many generations, was taken from Militsch castle and, as part of the compulsory transfer into state ownership, removed to the library of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (Poland). The works for gamba in the Maltzan Collection were not rediscovered until 2015, by the Polish musicologist Sonia Wronkowska.

Among these are the *Variations for Viola da Gamba and Orchestra* by Friedrich Heinrich Florian Guhr (1791–1841), the younger brother of Carl Wilhelm Ferdinand Guhr, mentioned above, and *Variations* for a similar scoring by Johann Ludwig Willing (1755–1805). Friedrich Heinrich Florian Guhr was already considered “an accomplished violinist, pianist and organist” in his youth. He was engaged by the orchestra of Count Maltzan as early as 1806. In 1811 he succeeded his father as teacher and cantor in Militsch. Since the court orchestra, owing to shrinking personnel, was dissolved in 1810, a *Concert Society of Amateurs*, under the direction of Friedrich Heinrich Florian Guhr, was

founded in 1811. It met weekly in the count's palace to make music together, and Guhr was named the music director of these concerts. In 1813 the *Concert Society* morphed into the *Militsch Musical Society*, with Friedrich Heinrich Florian Guhr as its “vitalizing principle, its soul”. The variation sets by Guhr, Willing, Chwatal and Jaeschke that have come down to us must have been performed at these concerts.<sup>8</sup>

Of Franz Xaver Chwatal's *Introduction et Variations Amusantes sur l'air très favori „Was soll ich in der Fremde thun“ pour le Viola di Gamba et Pianoforte* only the handwritten gamba part has been preserved in the Maltzan Collection.<sup>9</sup> On its title page we read this pencil note: “Mr. Mohaupt! I am asking for the piano part for this piece. Guhr”. The accountant Mohaupt was a member of the *Militsch Musical Society* and seemingly took care of organizational matters as well. The roster for the years 1826–1829 lists both their names: “First Violin[s]. Cantor Guhr, the director of the whole, accountant Mohaupt of Militsch.” The theme of the *Variations*, the song “Was soll ich in der Fremde thun, hier ist es ja so schön!” (Why should I go abroad, if it is so beautiful here!), did not appear in print until 1828, as No. 5 of the *Sechs deutsche Lieder, Opus 71*, by Peter Joseph von Lindpaintner at C.F. Peters in Leipzig.<sup>10</sup> Therefore the period in which Chwatal's set of variations was created can be narrowed down to 1828 to 1829. We do not know whether the search for the piano part was successful. In order to derive a financial gain from the *Variations*, versions for piano four hands were published as Opus 29 by Erneste Wagner et Richter in Magdeburg in May 1837, and by Friedrich Hofmeister in Leipzig in March 1841.<sup>11</sup> The chronological sequence shows that Chwatal's set of variations is an original composition for viola da gamba and pianoforte. The reconstruction of the original piano part, which was and is still lost, is based on the Hofmeister edition. The addition to the title of the words “Nouv. Edit. corr. p. l'Auteur” (New Edition Corrected by the Author) confirms Chwatal's supervision of the musical text.

Lindpaintner's song (1828) „Was soll ich in der Fremde thun, hier ist es ja so schön!” on a text

<sup>6</sup> 1818-?

<sup>7</sup> Hermann Gustav Jaeschke, *Variationen über ein Thema aus der Oper „Jakob und seine Söhne in Egypten“ von Étienne-Nicolas Méhul für Viola di Gamba und Piano-Forte* (Heidelberg: Güntersberg, 2020), G325.

<sup>8</sup> The premiere recording of the works can be heard on the CD *The 19th-Century Viol*, Coviello Classics (2020), COV92001.

<sup>9</sup> RISM Sigel and Signatur: PL-Pu 7470.

<sup>10</sup> C.F. Peters publishing number 2036.

<sup>11</sup> Friedrich Hofmeister publishing number 2577.

(1823) by Johann Valentin Adrian enjoyed such extraordinary popularity in the nineteenth century, that it became a folk song. As a commonly used humorous quotation the song found its way into magazines and satirical papers and caused an overwhelming flood of variations and salon compositions.<sup>12</sup> The fact that Chwatal based his *Variations for Viola da Gamba and Pianoforte* on a song that every child whistled in the street, shows us that the viol at the end of the third decade of the 19th century was suitable for everyday use and was contemporary in the best sense of the word.

In June 1837, Robert Schumann reviewed recently published music in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, including the edition by Erneste Richter et Wagner of Chwatal's Opus 29: "Several variation sets by Mr. Chwatal are almost all of instructive character and contain, aside from a few dry stretches, quite lovely pieces, which I would like to call small parlour music." The term was coined by Schumann and meant to imply a high artistic level; it is synonymous with house music during the Biedermeier era. The reviewer of the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* No. 8 (February 21, 1838) praised the same work, saying: "We already made this young composer known to the public as a skilful man who has successfully endeavoured to provide pleasant and useful things for students and players of middling strength. He succeeded so well again this time that we draw your attention to the booklet."

Hailing from Rumburg in Bohemia, Chwatal (1808–1879) was a music teacher, pianist and composer in Merseburg from 1822 to 1835. His setting of the *Marching Song for German Gymnasts* based on the motto of the founder of the German gymnastic movement, Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, "Fresh, free, cheerful, pious" ("Frisch, Frei, Fröhlich, Fromm"), has to be seen as a political credo and leads us to

believe that Chwatal was in personal contact with Jahn who had lived in the nearby town of Freyburg an der Unstrut since 1825. For his advocacy of a unified German state, Jahn had been detained and sentenced to a prison term, but on appeal to the Superior Court of Justice of Berlin the sentence was reversed. The verdict, however, forbade him to stay in Berlin and other university or gymnasium towns. E.T.A. Hoffmann was one of the judges and advocated for his release. But Jahn ignored the conditions and secretly had relations with students and teachers of the gymnasium in Merseburg; in consequence, in 1828 he was intermittently exiled to the Thuringian town of Kölleda. We can only speculate whether Chwatal was part of the conspiratorial activities.

From 1835 until the end of his life in 1879, Chwatal lived as a respected musician, private music teacher and music director in Magdeburg. There, together with the Hummel student Christian Friedrich Ehrlich, he ran the *Institute für gemeinschaftlichen Clavierunterricht* (Institutes for Collaborative Piano Instruction) according to the method of J.B. Loggier. His two piano methods, Opus 92 and Opus 135, enjoyed great popularity in the German-speaking countries. As a prolific composer of piano music for two and four hands, Chwatal published around 250 works in some 700 booklets.

Chwatal's virtuoso work *Introduction et Variations Amusantes... pour le Viola di Gamba et Pianoforte* is a gateway for gambists to the sound world of the nineteenth century and offers the opportunity to experience the viola da gamba as a romantic instrument – as Schumann saw it.

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Translation by Dr. Traute Marshall

<sup>12</sup> i. a. by F. Bosch, C. Czerny, A. von Gautsch, C. Görner, J.F. Kelz, W. Körner, L. Lehmann, H. Wildt.