

Joseph Kaspar Mertz: *Bardenklänge*, op. 13 - data and contexts

Life and works contexts

The period when *Bardenklänge* appeared 1846 – 1847 can be confidently regarded as one of most difficult times in composer's life. His artistic development, which had previously been mainly associated with concert performances and teaching in Vienna, was almost fatally interrupted by serious health complications. He contracted neuralgia of the face (inflammation of the trigeminal nerve). An extremely painful disease was to be treated with strychnine. However, Mertz's wife, Josephine Plantin, mistakenly administered the entire dose at once, causing severe poisoning, and "he was only with great difficulty saved from death".¹

The consequences of the poisoning troubled Mertz throughout 1847, and the couple retreated to the suburbs of Vienna, where Mertz slowly recovered. Josephine continued in work traveling to Vienna, and her mother and sister took care of the composer. These unfortunate events, however, gave the composer time that he could dedicate to study and composition, which undoubtedly reflected in the quantity and quality of the works published between 1847 and 1852.

A significant impact on the Mertz family had the social turmoil associated with the March Revolution in 1848. They lost students from the Viennese aristocracy, concert life stagnated, and under the threat of Mertz being called up for military service, the couple temporarily moved to nearby Brno². Their professional life returned to little better in 1851³. Although their concert activity has grown, it has never quite returned to its previous level.

By the beginning of 1847, Mertz had already published dozens of works with Haslinger in Vienna, including 15 volumes of virtuosic fantasies on opera themes (*Opern-revue*, Op. 8), arrangements of Schubert's songs for solo guitar (*6 Schubert'sche Lieder*, 1845), and the first six volumes of the series *Beliebte Gesänge mit Begleitung der Gitarre* (1847).

It was precisely the arrangements of Schubert's songs that directly preceded the creation of the *Bardenklänge* cycle. Moreover, the song cycle with guitar accompaniment is marked with the same opus number 13. Stempnik considers this an incorrect opus number assignment for the first volumes of *Bardenklänge*⁴. She solved the problem with addressing the issue in her catalog by labeling them as Op. 13/II. Salvoni, on the other hand, keeps Op. 13 for Mertz's solo cycle and assigns Op. 13/b to his arrangements of Schubert's songs⁵.

¹ STEMPNIK, Astrid: *Caspar Joseph Mertz: Leben und Werk des letzten Gitarristen im österreichischen Biedermeier, Eine Studie über den Niedergang der Gitarre in Wien um 1850*. [PhD Thesis.] Berlin: Freien Universität Berlin, 1989.

² STEMPNIK, c. d., 1989, s. 76.

³ STEMPNIK, c. d., 1989, s. 93 – 94. 6 concerts in Vienna, concert in Pressburg

⁴ STEMPNIK, c. d., 1989, s. 74.

⁵ SALVONI, Graziano: *Caspar Joseph Mertz: L'ultimo Pionierre della Chitarra a Vienna – La Vita, I Concerti, Le Opere*. Lulu.com, 2021, s. 479.

The *Wiener Zeitung* advertised further volumes of Mertz's *Opern-Revue*, Op. 8, Nos. 16-19 by the end of 1847⁶. His *Schule für die Gitarre* was published in March 1848, and between the years 1849 and 1852 Mertz enriched the guitar repertoire with nearly three dozen new compositions and arrangements⁷. All of this suggests that Mertz spent his year of recovery focusing intensely on study and composition.

Bardenklänge datas

The Mertz cycle *Bardenklänge* (Bardic sounds) is known today in the form of 15 books, containing a total of 30 compositions. The title pages of the individual editions indicate the subtitle *Original-Compositionen für die Gitarre* [Original compositions for guitar] and has indication *13tes Werk*, Its design does not change except for the numbering.

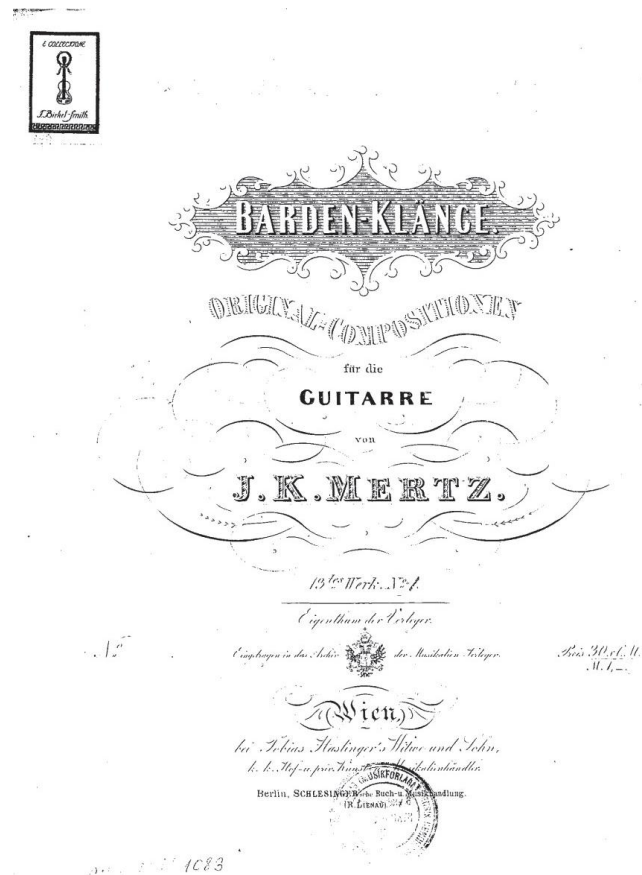


Fig. 1: Title page of the Bardenklänge - Book I

⁶ In: *Wiener Zeitung*, 2. 12. 1847. Accessed: <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=18471202&seite=7&zoom=33>

⁷ STEMPNIK, c. d., 1989, s. 156 – 157.

The first ten books were published in 1847 by the Viennese publisher Tobias Haslinger. Books I – IV were advertised as a novelty of the publisher in the *Wiener Zeitung* newspaper on May 12, with the price of one set at 30 kreutzers.

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Kunst und Literatur.

Ankündigung Nr. 2013.

Im Verlage der k. k. Hof- u. priv. Kunst- und Musikalienhandlung
Tobias Haslinger's Witwe & Sohn,
sind neu erschienen:
Barden-Klänge.
Original-Compositionen
für die
Gitarre,
von
J. K. Mertz.
13tes Werk, Heft 1–4. Preis à 30 fr. Conv. Münze.
(Eigenthum der Verleger).

In der

[1] [7072] **F. B. Haslinger**
Universitäts-Buchhandlung in Wien,
Bischhofgasse Nr. 638,
im von Grillparzer Stiftungshause, ist zum Verkauf
zu haben:
**Humoristische
Erzählungen**
von
F. B. Haslinger.
Stuttgart 1847, geb. 30 fr. 4. W.
Von demselben Verleger erschienen früher:
Das Soldatenleben im Frieden. 3te Aufl.
Stuttgart 1846, geb. 30 fr. 4. W.
Wachstaben-Abenteuer. Stuttgart 1846,
geb. 30 fr.
Reicher und sehr werthvoll:
Auerbach, H. Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten.
3te Aufl. Mannheim, geb. 1 fl. 30 fr.
Dumas, A. Der Graf von Monte Christo. Weber:
fest von J. H. Rothammer. 10 Bde. Pesth 1847,
geb. 4 fl.
Gröb, J. Freib. v. Der Dorfseiler. Aus
dem Ungarischen überlegt von Grafen J. Mailich.
3 Bde. Pesth 1846, geb. 3 fl. 40 fr.
Kiesheim, A. Freib. v. Schwarzkopf auf'n
Wanerswald. Gedichte in der ägypt. Weltmannsdart.

Fig.2: Advertisement in the *Wiener Zeitung*, 12 May 1847, for the publication of the Bardenklänge J. K. Mertz
Wiener Zeitung, 12.5.1847 <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wrz&datum=18470512&seite=6&zoom=33>

The same newspaper advertised Books I – X on November 3. Next books were published later in the years 1851 (XI) and 1852 (XII – XIII), now as published by Carl Haslinger. The last books that are now associated with the cycle were published posthumously in 1899 by the Berlin publisher Schlesinger-Lienau.

An examination of periodicals reveals the same publishing concept for books I – XIII, which consistently maintains 7 score pages per book, despite the varying number of compositions depending on their length. Only the books published more than half a century later had only 5 (XIV) or 3 (XV) pages. Given this significant time gap and the absence of relevant connections with books I – XIII, it can be assumed that the successor Berlin publisher took advantage of the cycle's popularity and arbitrarily assigned previously unknown Mertz works to *Bardenklänge*.

The contents of the individual books range from one to three compositions by Mertz (books I – XI, XIV – XV) and arrangements of 7 *Polonaises* by Michał Oginski (booklets XII – XIII). From this, it follows that the Mertz cycle *Bardenklänge*, op. 13, contains 21 original compositions, 7 arrangements, and 2 original works posthumously assigned to the cycle without the author's knowledge.

Book No.1

An Malvina / To Malvina, G dur (Maestoso – Moderato quasi Allegretto)
Romanze, e mol (Introduction. Andante – Cantabile)

dedication: *Á mon ami Charles Haslinger*

publishing details:

Wien, T.H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,411

WZ (Wiener Zeitung) 12. 5. 1847,MM (Musikalische Monatsbericht) Sept. 1848.

Book No. 2

Abendlied / Evening song, A dur (Andante)
Unruhe / Restlessness, a mol (Piú Allegro)
Elfenreigen / Dance of the Elves , D dur (Presto)

dedication: *Á monsieur le Colonel Chevalier de Munnageta*

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,412

WZ 12. 5. 1847,MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 3

An die Entfernte / To My Distant One, C dur (Adagio)
Etüde / Study, G dur (Piú Allegro)
Capriccio, d mol (Presto)

dedication: *Á Monsieur M. Diry*

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,413

WZ 12. 5. 1847,MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 4

Gondoliera, G dur (Introduction. Andantino – Moderato)
Liebeslied / Lovesong, C dur (Adagio espressivo)

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,414

WZ 12. 5. 1847,MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 5

Fingals-Höhle / Fingal's Cave, e mol (*Maestoso*)
Gebeth / Prayer, F dur (*Andante religioso*)

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,415
WZ 4.11. 1847, MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 6

Tarantelle / Tarantela, a mol (*Più Allegro – Presto allegramente*)

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,416
WZ 4.11. 1847, MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 7

Variations mignonnes / Mignon variations, a mol (*Introduction. Maestoso – Romanze. Andantino – Var. 1 – Var. 2 Var. 3 Allegretto*)

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,417
WZ 4.11. 1847, MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 8

Kindermärchen/ Detská rozprávka, D dur (*Andantino quasi Allegeretto*)

dedication: *A Monsieur J. Sandhász*

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,418
WZ 4.11. 1847, MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 9

Rondino / Little rondo, a mol / A dur (*Tempo di Marcia, maestoso – Grazioso*)

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,419
WZ 4.11. 1847, MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 10

Romanze, e mol (Moderato)

Scherzo, A dur (Moderato)

Sehnsucht / Longing, F dur (Più lento)

Wien, T. H.'s Wwe. u. Sohn, Pl. Nr. 10,420

WZ 4.11. 1847, MM Sept. 1848

Book No. 11

Lied ohne Worte / Song without words, A dur (Andantino)

Mazurka, D dur (Moderato quasi Andantino)

Wien, C. H. qdm. Tobias, Pl. Nr. 11,277

WZ 3.8.1851, WZ 8.8.1851, WZ 12.8.1851, WZ 1.11.1851, MM November. 1851

Book No. 12

Polonaises favorites du Prince M. Oginski

1. D dur (*Moderato – Trio*)

2. a mol / A dur (*Poco Adagio – Trio*)

3. a mol / A dur (*Andante – Trio*)

4. D dur (*Moderato – Trio*)

Original: *Douze Polonaises favorites pour le Piano-Forte par le Prince M. Oginski.*– Wien, T. H Pl.[1828],

Wien, C. H. qdm. Tobias, Pl. Nr. 11,459

WZ 4. 4. 1852, MM Jún 1852

Book No. 13

Polonaises favorites du Prince M. Oginski

5. a mol (*Andante molto – Trio*)

6. d mol (... – *Trio*)

7. G dur (*Moderato – Trio*)

Original: *Douze Polonaises favorites pour le Piano-Forte par le Prince M. Oginski.* Wien, T. H Pl.[1828]

Wien, C. H. qdm. Tobias, Pl. Nr. 11,460

WZ 4. 4. 1852, MM Jún 1852

Book No. 14

Romanze a mol / A dur (... – Allegretto – Finale. Allegro)

Berlin, Schlesinger-Lienau vorm. C. H Wien, Pl. Nr. 15,138

MM September **1899***

Book No. 15

Walzer im Ländlerstyl D dur, G dur, C dur, G dur, D dur (Introduction. – Walzer. Moderato)

Berlin, Schlesinger-Lienau vorm. C. H., Wien, Pl. Nr. 15,138

MM September **1899***

Books 14 and 15 were added to the cycle in 1899 – 43 years after composer's death.

Datas are based on the article

KRAJČO, Martin: *Bardenklänge – ossianovský gitarový opus J. K. Mertza*. In: Slovenská hudba 2024/4

u. fond
na podporu
umenia

Článok bol realizovaný ako súčasť výskumného projektu *Joseph Kaspar Mertz – gitarista a skladateľ európskeho významu*. Realizáciu výskumu podporil z verejných zdrojov formou štipendia Fond na podporu umenia.