

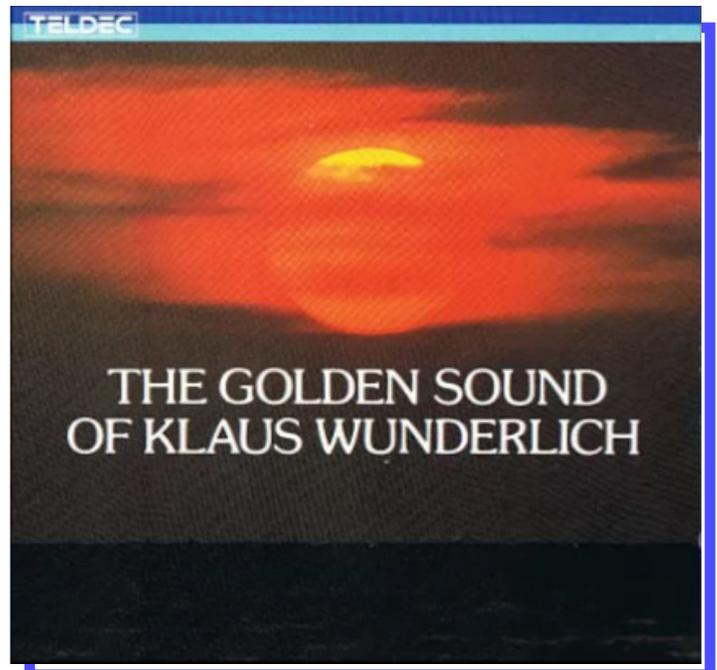
1432. Barcarole

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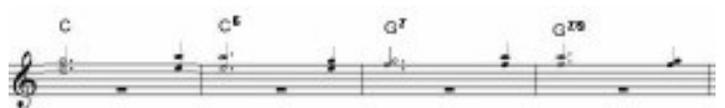
Hoffmann's Stories (Les contes d'Hoffmann) is a fantastic opera in 5 acts by Jacques Offenbach. The libretto was based on a piece written by Jules Barbier and Michel Carré and premiered in 1851. It is based on various stories by E. T. A. Hoffmann, such as Der Sandmann, Rat Krespel and Die Abenteuer der Sylvester-Nacht. At Jacques Offenbach's request, Jules Barbier developed the opera libretto from this play. Hoffmann himself is the hero of the narratives in the opera - in contrast to Hoffmann's literary works, in which the male heroes have different names or are fictitious first-person narrators. Les contes d'Hoffmann was premiered on 10 February 1881 in the Opéra-Comique Paris. Depending on the version/editing, the play lasts between 2 ½ and 3 ½ hours.

Description of the work. Les contes d'Hoffmann has no overture in the actual sense. The opera begins with a few bars of introductory music, the theme of which is not repeated throughout the opera, and leads directly to the first act, in which the muse informs the listener that she intends to distract Hoffmann from his unhappy love life and return him to literature. This explanatory first act is followed by the three middle acts with Hoffmann's narratives independent of each other. The red thread here is the compositional trick of letting the protagonists of the narratives each sing by the same interpreters (the four lovers of Hoffmann, the four adversaries and the four servants). The opera concludes with the fifth act, which follows the first. Here Hoffmann reflects on art and surrenders to the muse.

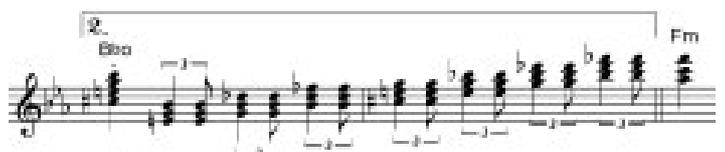
To the music. The fact that Offenbach conceived the work at least for its world premiere as Opéra-comique, i.e. as a number opera with spoken dialogues, shows that most solo pieces are couplets, i.e. arias in stanzaic form with refrain, partly also with parodistic impact like the aria of Olympia Nr. In contrast, moments of expressive drama, such as the change of mood in the Lied by Kleinzack illustrated with a few bars, the finale of the Antonia act or the kaleidoscopic changes of mood and gaze in the Giulietta act, contrast. The suspenseful juxtaposition of caricatured, comic and expressive, tragic elements is characteristic of Offenbach's music - corresponding to the narrative and fable-making art of E. T. A. (Ernst Theodor Amadeus) Hoffmann.



In my "Barcarole" list of MWP's, the Klaus Wunderlich version takes 3rd place. CURT PRINA opened the round dance as MWP no.1068 and presented an interesting bassoon phrase accompaniment. Then there is the MWP-No.1140 by James Last with the almost legendary style accompaniment, which made a furore as "James-Last-Special"-Style. There was also very early processing of Barcarole under MWP-No.266, which however originated in the NON-MIDI-era, probably only as pure teaching material from a standard piano version. "Version Klaus Wunderlich comes from his LP "Golden Sound of..." from the year 1970 and has as special feature the stylization of the first two bars of the introduction as leading motive, as follows:



This barcarole motif runs through the entire, relatively short arrangement of exactly 2:30 minutes and is always played by various accompanying instruments, but mainly by the bell sound. Klaus Wunderlich creates the title high point with the chord cascades of the diminished chord quite unusual and very aggressive:



Special note: The fact that we are celebrating the 200th birthday of JACQUES OFFENBACH in 2019 is pure coincidence - the Barcarole motif from Offenbach is one of the favourite motifs of all classic fans!

German-Fox, T=180

The musical score is arranged in a multi-staff format. The top staff is for Bells, the second for Strings, the third for Guitar (marked 'Advanced'), the fourth for Bass, and the bottom for Drums. The score is divided into two main sections: 'Main 1' (measures 1-4) and 'Main 2' (measures 5-8). The Bells part consists of chords in the treble clef. The Strings part uses a bass clef with chords. The Guitar part is also in a bass clef with chords. The Bass part features a rhythmic line with eighth notes. The Drums part includes a bass drum (BD) and a snare drum (HH-st.) with a dotted rhythm, and a tambourine (Tamb.) with a dotted rhythm.

Programming instruction

What's a "German-Fox"? Actually, the term "FOX" is at first to be equated with "Foxtrot" - but, there are "far-reaching" differences: It is not a "ternary" rhythm, but rather a march with eighths structure - but it sounds almost like a "real" Foxtrot, which is obviously caused by the fast tempo of 180. I could have called it "Marsch-Fox". So "German-Fox" is a "Fanrtasie" name for a fast, but not "swinging", German Foxtrot. So it's also very suitable for the accompaniment of a classic title! And that's exactly the idea of Klaus Wunderlich. This style takes over as "motto" the first two bars of the title introduction with the two typical chord changes C-C6 and G7-G7/9. The Main 1 is the main rhythm - in the Main2 rather a style effect is played only with guitar strings and drums. Only the drums remain unperturbed with a continuous, previously discussed "Marsch-Fox" with a dotted bass drum and a tambourine as a second helping!