

09. Quartett für 4 Waldhörner, Op. 107, No. 4

Ernst Julius Otto

(1804-1877)

arr. Friedrich Gumpert, ed. William Melton

Otto, Ernst Julius

(born 1 October 1804 in Königstein near Dresden; died 5 March 1877 in Dresden)

Julius Otto attended Dresden's celebrated Kreuzschule from 1814-1822 as a pupil of Christian Theodor Weinlig, the Cantor of the Kreuzkirche (and later of the Thomaskirche in Leipzig) whose students would also include Clara Wieck and Richard Wagner. From 1822-1825 the young man studied in Leipzig with the former Gewandhaus Kapellmeister and current Thomaskirche Cantor Johann Gottfried Schicht. While still in his twenties, Otto himself became Cantor of the Kreuzkirche, a post that he would hold for the next forty-five years. As he was subsequently named Cantor at the two other largest Lutheran churches in Dresden, it is not surprising that the list of his own sacred compositions was extensive, and included three oratorios, numerous cantatas, Psalms and motets.

Otto's reputation as a master conductor netted him the directorship of further choruses in Dresden, among them the renowned *Liedertafel*. He composed a large body of secular works including what Alfred Remy called 'immensely popular cycles for male voices' as well as two operas, four comic operas, piano works and Lieder. A major cultural force in the city, Otto managed to prevent the dissolution of the Municipal Music Corps, an ensemble that would later evolve into the Dresden Philharmonie. Awards accumulated as he was named an honorary member of over fifty choruses across Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the United States (in New York, Baltimore and Cincinnati) and he was received into the Swedish Royal Academy of Music. Shortly before his death a 'Julius Otto Society' was established, which by 1912 included seventeen choruses numbering 1,155 singers. A biography by Alwin Richard Scheumann, published in 1904 to mark the centenary of Otto's birth, summed up the composer's meaning bluntly: 'Julius Otto was the mentor of the male chorus in Germany in its infancy, its formative years...he was much like a king in his kingdom, though in place of a scepter

he held a quill pen and wrote melodies that conquered the entire German musical world'.

Otto's *Sechs Quartette* for male chorus, Op. 107 were written *a cappella* with the exception of a single piece with horn quartet accompaniment: No. 4, 'Es rauscht dem Jägersmann der Wald', to a text by August Schrader. Published by Carl Merseburger in Leipzig about 1854, it came to the attention of Leipzig Gewandhaus solo hornist Friedrich Gumpert (1841-1906), whose arrangement of the piece minus chorus was issued by Merseburger newly christened as *Quartett für 4 Waldhörner*.

Text by William Melton