

***Rosen aus dem Suden, Op. 388* (1880)**

Johann Strauss Jr. (1825 – 1899) arranged by Arnold Schoenberg (1874 – 1951) in 1921

Strauss' popularity in Vienna was so high that every piece he wrote was immediately (sometimes that night) performed for enthusiastic listeners and dancers and published soon after. He often produced dance music quickly by setting up a "composition factory" in his home where he would write the melodies and pass them on to his assistants (also in his orchestra) to be harmonized, scored and parts copied. The music would then be taken with them as they dashed off to jobs that night where the new music would be sight-read to adoring crowds. Strauss would often make appearances at several different locations in one evening to play with the groups he had put together to cover the dances. Strauss was also capable of sitting down and taking time on a work when deadlines were not looming. This was possibly the circumstance for *Roses From the South*. Whatever the situation, Strauss was known for his ability to write melodies. Johannes Brahms, a good friend of Strauss, often said that he wished he could write great melodies as quickly and effortlessly as Strauss.

Strauss took melodies from his operetta *The Queen's Lace Handkerchief* to compose the waltz *Roses From the South*. Today it is now one of his most familiar waltzes due, in part, to its use in television, movies and video games. Strauss waltzes are actually collections of several waltz tunes: in this case, four. One of the melodies comes from the act two romance of the operetta entitled *Where the Wild Rose Blossoms*, thus inspiring the title of the waltz. *Roses From the South* was first performed in a Sunday concert at the Musikverein in Vienna. This tradition is still followed every New Year's Day when the Vienna Philharmonic performs its annual, wildly popular New Year's Concert at the Musikverein, one of the great concert halls in the world.

Arnold Schoenberg, leader of the atonal 12-tone school of composition, and his students wrote numerous arrangements of works by other composers. These arrangements were often reductions from large orchestra to small chamber ensemble. These chamber ensemble arrangements would then be performed at Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performance where both professional and serious amateur musicians would gather to listen and discuss music. The quality of music recording at this time could not come close to competing with live performance, even if the pieces were not being played by the forces originally called for. These arrangements gave creative minds such as Schoenberg the opportunity to show what they thought was significant in the music, thus leading the listeners to a new understanding of the music unencumbered by familiarity. A few of these arrangements such as that of Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* are still performed. Most of them, however, were used for the intended event and then shelved.

This arrangement of *Roses From the South* was created for a benefit concert for the Society for Private Music Performance. Alban Berg and Anton Webern, Schoenberg's students, also created arrangements of music by Strauss and all three men performed. This arrangement was scored for piano, harmonium and string quartet. Berg commented on their efforts to create arrangements of orchestral music: "In this manner it is possible to hear and judge modern orchestral works stripped of all sound effects that an orchestra produces and all of its sensory aids."