

11 BASSOON RECITAL PIECES

from Tone and Performance Studies

by Julius Weissenborn

Edited by

ROBERT WILLIAMS



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MUSIC

Piano

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Foreword

Julius Weissenborn is best remembered today for the teaching material written for use at the Leipzig Conservatorium where he taught bassoon from 1882. His two famous "tutor" books are still the most popular bassoon etudes in use today, well over 120 years after they were written. This anthology represents the first-ever publication that contains all 11 of the extant full recital pieces for bassoon and piano that Weissenborn envisioned as the third part to this tutor in a single volume. Southern Music is proud to present this fine collection of "Tone and Performance Studies" to players of all levels, edited by veteran Principal Bassoonist for the Detroit Symphony, Robert Williams.

Performance Notes by Robert Williams

ADAGIO, NO. 12 (op. 9 no. 3): This beautiful work in Ab major starts with a fairly simple melody that comes back towards the end of the work ornamented by Weissenborn. It should be played in a true *adagio* tempo so the ornamented notes never sound rushed and in a *dolce espressivo* style throughout the work. Be sure to use a very small half-hole and the whisper key on the middle Ab for best intonation. Enjoy the simple beauty of this lovely solo.

ARIOSO, NO. 3 (op. 9 no.1) is the earliest and least difficult of the works in this collection. It is a beautiful piece and a very good study in the use of the half-hole notes just above the open F of the bassoon. I try to use the little finger F# if possible with a large half-hole for best intonation and response. The half-hole G tends to be a very sharp note on the bassoon, so I try to use the Db (or Eb if you have trouble reaching Db) key to lower the pitch on this note. The very last note of the work, G#, requires a very small half-hole. You should use the whisper key on all of these notes as it helps to center the sound and lower the pitch. The work should be played very *legato* throughout in both the bassoon and piano.

BALLADE, NO. 15 (op. 9 no. 6) is a unique work in the collection in its folk-like quality. The piano introduction marked *Allegretto* contrasts with the slower *Andante* when the bassoon is first introduced. The repeat at the end of the work can be considered optional, but the work is very short without it. The grace notes should all be played before the beat and the trill in m. 17 can be played as a turn. The E to F# mordent in m. 7 can be played by picking up the second and third fingers in the right hand from the full high E fingering, and the F# octave slurs in measures 13 and 14 can be facilitated by fingering the F# using the second finger and Eb key only in the left hand and a Bb fingering in the right hand.

CAPRICCIO, NO. 17 (OP. 14) is the technical tour de force of this collection. It should be played as quickly as possible with the notes under control. All the repeats should be taken for musical symmetry. Though written in 3/4 time it actually feels more like 9/8 in three bar sections and it is measured this way in this publication. The tempo should remain steady throughout the work. Weissenborn varies the feel of the work by going from quick quarters and eighth notes at the beginning and end to a dotted half note feel at m. 100 to a duple feel at m. 292 but the pulse of the work should remain constant. I usually put in a slight acceleration from m. 547 to the end for a bravura finale.

ELEGIE, NO. 10 (op. 10 no. 3) opens with a very slow bassoon recitative that should be played very freely and slowly as marked. The tempo marking *Grave* should be followed throughout with absolutely no rushing, especially in the passages of measures 10 and 12. The haunting melody that starts in m. 18 and repeats later at m. 42 should be steady, slow and never rushed. Be very careful to follow the dynamics Weissenborn has put into this miniature masterwork.

HUMORESQUE, NO. 11 (op. 9 no.2) is a work that shows off the bassoon's lighter side. The use of groups of two slurred notes with the second one with a *staccato* marking emphasizes the humor of the work and should be brought out. The second note should be short but still sound clearly. It is important to make the tempo changes as indicated for best effect. The beginning *Commodo* (easy, leisurely) tempo should not be too fast, so that the *Animato* at m. 17 can be clearly faster. The *accelerando* at m. 45 should continue to the *ritenuto* two before 53 and the last two measures should be played as to end the work with exuberance.

NOTTURNO, NO. 13 (op. 9 no. 4): The first part of this work, *Andantino, alla recitative* should be played very freely and unhurried in a beautiful *dolce* style. Try to make a clear dynamic contrast between the forte in measures 15 and 17 and the piano in measures 16 and 18. The *Larghetto* at m. 27 should not be rushed so that there is a clear difference in tempo with the *Animato* at m. 53. The work returns to the *Larghetto* tempo at m. 79 to the end. In last three measures of the work, you may want to use the pp Eb fingering (whisper key, first and third fingers left hand, first finger and thumb Bb key right hand) for a secure, in-tune ending.

ROMANCE (1), NO. 16 (op. 10 no. 2): This is my favorite work of this collection. From the simple but beautiful piano introduction to the last chord this is a gem of a composition. The legato A's in the beginning bassoon solo should be played as long as possible, using the A speaker key to vent or flick so the attack comes out cleanly and equally on all the notes. There are three basic tempos in this work. The beginning *Andante con moto*, the *Un poco animato* at measures 21 and 119 and the *Più mosso* at m. 47. They should be progressively faster. Tempo I is always the beginning *Andante* tempo.

ROMANCE (2), NO. 18 (OP. 3): This is a beautiful, romantic work that should be played with careful attention to all of Weissenborn's instructions. From the first *dolce* at the pickup to m. 13 to the final high Eb, the performer should try to play with as much feeling as possible. Weissenborn's mention of *espressivo, mit Wärme, con molto espressivo* makes his intentions clear. I use a very good high Eb fingering for the last note using left hand second and third fingers, thumb C# and low D key and little finger Eb key, right hand second finger and thumb F# key. In measures 62 through 69, a few notes have been transposed enharmonically to eliminate double flats.

SCHERZO, NO. 14 (op. 9 no. 5): The **Scherzo** and **Capriccio** are the only quick works in this collection of solos. The beginning *Vivace* should be felt with one beat to the bar and this tempo holds until the *Un poco meno mosso* at m. 57 that should be in a slightly slower tempo. The grace notes should always be played quickly before the beat.

SONG WITHOUT WORDS, NO. 9 (op. 10 no.1): This poignant yet simple work starts with a five-measure introduction and then the songlike melody starts with the pickup to m. 6. There should be a feeling of *crescendo* and increasing intensity from this point to the *ff* at m. 28, and then a feeling of *diminuendo* and relaxation to the end. It should be played with full note values and no sense of rushing. This is a fairly short work and I recommend that the repeat be taken.

ADAGIO

for Bassoon and Piano
Tone and Performance Studies No. 12
formerly Op. 9, No. 3

Julius Weissenborn (1837-1888)
edited by Robert S. Williams

Bassoon

Adagio

Piano

p

dolce p

6

9

12

14

espress.

*Red. **

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15

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

18

cresc. dim.

Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. * Red. *

21

dolce

22

p

Red. * Red. *

24

27

dim.

Red. *



JULIUS WEISSENBORN (1837-1888) is best remembered today for the teaching material written for use at the Leipzig Conservatorium, where he taught bassoon from 1882 until his early death six years later. His tutor and two books of etudes have remained in print ever since they were first published, being the best-known works of their kind. It appears that he had originally conceived these to form the first parts of a large and comprehensive bassoon tutor, while planning a set of tone and performance studies with piano accompaniment to form the third part. This plan was never carried out, however, for reasons unknown to us today. Most of the material was instead published separately at the time by different local publishers.

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About the Editor

ROBERT WILLIAMS has been the Principal Bassoonist of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra since September of 1974. Prior to that, he was Principal Bassoonist of the Winnipeg Symphony, Winnipeg CBC Orchestra, Colorado Philharmonic and Tucson Symphony. He has also played engagements with the Minnesota Orchestra and Boston Symphony.

In addition to his duties at the Detroit Symphony, Robert plays in the DSO Bassoon Quartet, the DSO Woodwind Quintet and the Bellingham Festival of Music. He teaches at Wayne State University and has been on the music faculties of the Aspen Music School and Festival, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the Grand Teton Orchestra Training Institute, Claremont Music Festival and the Utah Music Festival

Robert has been a featured guest artist throughout the United States. He can be heard on all of the DSO recordings conducted by former Music Director Antal Dorati, including the award-winning Rite of Spring and on the Chandos recordings led by Neeme Järvi. Fox Products released his Neo-Bubonic Bassoon Quartet recording in 2003 and his CD of the Works of Julius Weissenborn for bassoon and piano was released in 2006.

A native of Tucson, AZ, Robert graduated with honors from the University of Arizona and did post-graduate work at the University of Southern California. His major bassoon teachers included Wendal Jones, Leonard Sharrow, and Norman Herzberg. Robert lives in Northville with his wife, former DSO English Hornist, Treva Womble.

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