

# *HAMBURG* *PIANOBOOK*

classic romantic modern jazz pop

edited by  
Walter F. Zielke

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## Preface (without footnotes)

The HAMBURG PIANOBOOK introduces pianists to lesser known composer from Hamburg, filling a critical gap in music history. Well-known piano composers associated with Hamburg such as C. Ph. E. Bach, G. Ph. Telemann, J. Brahms and the Mendelssohn siblings, are virtually excluded in this edition, because their piano works are widely accessible in numerous new editions. Of the Romantic and contemporary piano artists, too, unfortunately only a small part could be included. Other important Hamburg piano composers were and are:

Jörn Arnecke, Hermann Berens, José Manuel Jiménez Berroa, Otto Beständig, Gottfried Böttger, Hermann Dräseke, Oscar Fetrás, Nils Frahm, Günter Friedrichs, Ilse Fromm-Michaels, Fritz Glamann, Julius Goltermann, Carl P. G. Grädener, Sofia Gubaidulina, Philipp Jarnach, Ernst-Gernot Klussmann, Emil Krause, Felicitas Kukuck, György Ligeti, Francesco Paolo Neglia, Rudolph Niemann, Peter Ruzicka, Hugo Rüter, Alfred Schnittke, Wolfgang-Andreas Schultz, Joachim Schweppe, Klaus Hinrich Stahmer, Manfred Stahnke, Manfred Trojahn, Vince Weber, Joja Wendt and Axel Zwingenberger.

Hardly any other German city has produced such a large number of important piano composers as the Hanseatic city. Already prior of Brahms, who famously turned his back on his hometown, Hamburg already had the most important organists and clavier players in its ranks during the Baroque period. They are regarded in music history as the North German Organ School. The large and representative baroque organs of the time demanded artists who could play them. From 1721 onwards, the Hamburg era of Georg Philipp Telemann began, who had a lasting influence on musical life. In 1768, he was succeeded in this post by his godson **Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach**, whose compositional focus was on works for the clavier (=clavichord/organ/harpsichord). His most famous and shortest piano piece *Solfeggietto*, in combination with the preceding and tonally adapted 2nd movement *Andante / Rondo espressivo* from the 3rd Sonata, of the *6 Sonaten für Kenner und Liebhaber*, is a work rich in contrast and all the more effective

With the Age of Enlightenment, the organist and pianist **Carl Heinrich Zöllner**, who until then had been travelling throughout Europe, entered Hamburg's music stages and organ lofts. He moved to Hamburg in 1830 until his premature passing on 2 July 1836. As a result of "dissolute living and drunkenness", Zöllner gave his last public performance in Hamburg on 22 September 1835. In March 1826 his opera *Kunz von Kaufungen* was premiered at the *Theater an der Wien* and in the same year his piano sonata was published, of which the first movement is printed here; We read about it:

"Karl Heinrich Zöllner [...] who indisputably deserves to occupy one of the first places among the living, both because of the three works at hand and because of his other works. He proves himself everywhere to be a master who has penetrated the deepest essence of art. He towers over the field of harmony and lacks neither imagination nor insight. [...] The sonata is a masterpiece of all the conditions that are necessary to give a piece of music the stamp of classicism and, with it, timelessness. It is rich in harmony and melody, of beautiful and noble feeling, full of deep emotions, and worked with a rigour in composition and development that has unfortunately become so rare in modern times and which proclaims the master and the genius at the same time. It is dedicated to Karl Maria von Weber and completely worthy of him. It is of lesser merit to the sonata that each individual passage is beautiful and good in and of itself, for as much as what has been said contains, the greater praise is due to it that the whole is written externally and internally in one cast, and that a unified character prevails in all parts. [...]"

**Eduard Marxsen** worked as an organist in Nienstedten (at that time still part of the German-Danish Duchy of Holstein). As theory and composition teacher to Johannes Brahms and Ferdinand Thieriot, he was instrumental in the early promotion of these two composers. His Piano Sonata Opus 8 unmistakably still breathes the spirit of Viennese Classicism. The *Rondo* printed here is the 3rd movement of this sonata. Marxsen's later works are in turn strongly influenced by Liszt's piano works, such as his Opus 47.

**Theodor Kirchner** was already completely rooted in Romanticism. He is considered an aphorist of piano miniatures. His considerable oeuvre for the piano alone comprises of about 1000 works. In April 1865, he also impressed the Hamburg concert audience as a virtuoso with Schumann's Piano Concerto. The *Mazurka* in G minor is entirely indebted to his friend and patron Johannes Brahms and is a typical work of the expressive miniatures.

**Carl Reinecke**, a composer and pianist who was highly regarded during his lifetime, mastered his craft perfectly. His Waltz Opus 36 is a playful work of elegant nobility. Stylistically and technically, this work stands between Chopin and Schumann, all of whose works he knew well and also played. As early as 1843, Robert Schumann attested to him: "Reinecke, oh, he knows my works by heart even before I have composed them". In honour of this great (Hamburg)-Altona composer, a commemorative plaque was erected at Palmaille 2 in March 2022.

**Ferdinand Thieriot** [*tjeeroh*] - considered by Brahms to be — „one of the most respected composers to emerge from Hamburg" — returned to his native city after studying and working. Like his childhood friend Johannes Brahms, he spent his most creative and important years in Austria. Thieriot worked as *Artistic Director* and teacher at the *Steiermärkischer Musikverein* in Graz. The piano piece *Fughetta scherzanda* printed here was probably written during the Graz era but was not published until later. *Farewell* is an unusually emotional piece. The use of chromatic bass clichés makes it seem like a soundtrack for a film. Thieriot served on the presidium of the Leipzig Bach Society and was chairman and honorary member of the Hamburg Society of Musicians. In 2016, Thieriot-Strasse in Leipzig was named after him and his family.

**Cornelius Gurlitt** was also extraordinarily productive and versatile as a composer. He composed, among other things, numerous songs, operettas, an opera, symphonies and chamber music. His numerous piano compositions, especially the easier instructional works and etudes, can still be found in beginner's volumes for piano all over the world. *Stromfahrt* from Opus 189 is a sonorous and at the same time easily playable setting of the river Elbe. He was good friends throughout his life with Carl Reinecke, from whose father Rudolph he learned to play the piano as a boy, as well as with Nils Gade.

**Arnold Krug** was a student of Cornelius Gurlitt in Altona and C. Reinecke in Leipzig. He was awarded numerous music prizes and titles. He was a teacher of composition at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin. In 1902 he was awarded the title of professor for composition ("Comp. Prof.") in Hamburg. Krug was the director of the Altona Singakademie until his sudden death in 1904 and the predecessor of Felix Woyrsch in this post. His extensive piano works are currently no longer available in sheet music editions. This enchanting first *Nocturne* was first published in 1899. The 2nd *Nocturne* in F is dedicated to his pupil and later second wife.

**Felix Woyrsch**, composer of the Altona Hymn, was known and appreciated during his lifetime as a conductor, choirmaster, organist, composer and professor h. c. (*Akademie der Künste*, Berlin) not only in Northern Germany. His complete piano works were recorded by Rolf Plagge, including this *Praeambulum* in D minor. The historicising title can be understood as a homage to the *Norddeutsche Orgelschule*, also in view of the fact that an adaptation of the *stylus phantasticus* into the Romantic period, is unmistakable in this virtuoso piece. His extensive musical legacy is kept alive by the *Pfohl-Woyrsch-Gesellschaft*. The Woyrschweg in Hamburg-Bahrenfeld is named after him.

**Johannes Brahms'** lullaby *Guten Abend, gut' Nacht* is known worldwide. This jazz arrangement by **Walter F. Zielke** was composed and performed on the cruise ship *MS Berlin* in July 1991.

**Ferdinand Pfohl** is still to this day highly respected as an author on music. His countless writings and essays are still considered the benchmark for witty music criticism in their own right. His lively correspondence with well-known composers and conductors attest to the high esteem in which he is held. The *Idyl of the Heath* printed here was taken out six years later by the composer for his orchestral movement *Friesische Rhapsodie*. Compared to the first printed version, the composer's later, minor corrections from the orchestral movement were adopted in the piano version printed here. His piano works appeared on CD, performed by Jamina Gerl.

**Emil von Sauer** wasn't only a brilliant and subtle pianist, but also composed, among other things, two demanding piano concertos, numerous pieces of similar piano music and also lighter salon music. He was a pupil of Franz Liszt and Anton Rubinstein. In 1917 he was ennobled in Austria for his successes. As an editor of classical piano music, Emil von Sauer was the best-known author for many decades. After Brahms, he is, together with Walter Niemann, the most important representative of Hamburg's late Romantic piano music. The complete piano works were recorded by Oleg Marshev. A street in Hamburg is named after him. The *Gavotte* from his *Suite moderne* is a bow to the old suite form.

**Walter Niemann** also nodded to the old suite form in his opus printed here, albeit decades later. His piano oeuvre comprises over 250 works. Stylistically, he was firmly rooted in the conservative camp. In today's world, his piano pieces have unfortunately been almost completely forgotten, in contrast to his numerous music books, some of which are still standard literature today. Niemann died in 1953, impoverished and lonely in his Leipzig flat.

**Heinrich Sthamer** is the "great unknown" of Hamburg's music history: his symphonic oeuvre alone, consisting of thirteen substantial and highly complex symphonies, must be discovered and performed in the future, alongside works of all genres. During the war years and afterwards, Heinrich Sthamer composed extensively, driven by an unknown, irrepressible energy. Only a few house concerts in the Curschmann street flat have been handed down through word of mouth. His relationship to his father-in-law, the legendary conductor of the *NDR Choir* Helmut Franz, is also completely unresolved; after all, Sthamer also wrote numerous demanding and high-quality choral works, operas and the like, none of which were ever performed, as far as we know today. The piano piece *Janusgleich* (Like a Janus), composed in 1920, is based on the musical representation of a Janus head (god in Roman mythology, head with two faces), which is impressively and mystically realised through complementary rhythms and diametrically opposed voice leading.

**Claus Bantzer** has been a shining light of the Hamburg music scene since the 1980s. His improvisations on the organ and piano attracted countless visitors to his concerts and musical services. He was one of the first in Hamburg to initiate and perform crossover projects. His artistic collaborations with Michael Naura (NDR), international musicians, actors and choreographers thus opened up new, tonal horizons. He has received numerous awards and honours, including the *Filmband in Gold* in the category of film music in 1987. From the soundtrack *Cherry Blossom-Hanami*, the *Family Scene* is a short but all the more intense piece of piano music, as is his *Children's song*, an intimately ballad with elements of minimal music.

**Peter Michael Hamel** has developed minimal music and the music of non-European cultures into an integrative musical style. He holds an honorary doctorate from the *HfMT Hamburg*, where he was professor of composition and music theory from 1997 to 2012. Numerous prizes and honours underline his outstanding importance as a contemporary composer and ethnomusicologist. In his piano piece *Joy for Beethoven*, the composer combines various Beethoven quotations, including the famous "Joy" theme, with Indian raga rhythm, in this case a 7/8 time. The acclaimed piano piece was commissioned for the major Bonn event *250 piano pieces for Beethoven* in June 2019.

**Andreas Willscher** studied at the *HfMT Hamburg* and is one of the most frequently performed composers of contemporary organ music in Germany. His oeuvre, which probably now numbers over a thousand works, also includes many other forms of instrumentation such as chamber music, opera, choir, songs and orchestral music. He has won several composition prizes. His piano piece *Papillons* is the 1st movement from his Piano Sonata, which was premiered by the dedicatee in Hamburg on 4 November 2015 to mark the composer's 60th birthday. As a grandson student of Olivier Messiaen, Willscher is very familiar with Messiaen's tonal language and style. In *Papillons*, Willscher uses Messiaen's colourful tonal language without simply copying his compositional technique.

**Ulrike Haage** is a composer, pianist, director, script writer and producer. She is considered one of the most distinguished jazz pianists in Germany. After studying at the *HfMT Hamburg*, she taught orchestral conducting and piano improvisation there. In 2003, she was the first woman and youngest prize-winner to date to receive the *Deutscher Jazz Preis* (*Albert Mangesldorff Preis*), in 2021 the *12. Deutscher Musikautorenpreis* and in 2022 the *Günther Eich Preis*. The composition *Eismeer* from the album *Himmelsbaum*, released in 2020, impressively shows her own and distinctive personal style. *Dinner in Minamisōma* is the best-known piece from the film *Grüße aus Fukushima* (2016).

**Stephan Sieveking** was born and raised in Hamburg. The pianist and musician has been arranging, conducting and performing for over 25 years in Germany and Austria for the biggest musical productions such as: *Cinderella*, *Buddy Holly*, *Cabaret*, *Cats*, *The Lion King*, *Rocky Horror Show*, *Shoe of the Manitou*, *Dance of the Vampires*, *Tarzan*; together over 40 productions so far. He was also a regular guest pianist in Roger Cicero's (†) big band. *The other day - In the Lunch Break* is a whimsical funk-pop-rock-blues rondo for advanced pianists.

**Jan Simowitsch** is a music officer in the *Nordkirche* since 2016. In his hometown of Rostock, he studied piano at the local conservatoire. His musical range is his trademark and is reflected in the numerous publications and performances of his musicals, pop oratorios, cantatas and other works. The two piano miniatures are travel images of the composer: Jūrmala is an idyllic seaside resort in Latvia, not far from the capital Riga, Humlebæk a village on the Danish Øresund coast.