





by your Allmers, which I would like you to give him or sing for him yourself” (from the *Brahms Briefwechsel* III No. 61, Tutzing 1974). Brahms is said to have informed his biographer, Max Kalbeck, that the poet (who also did some composing) was not in the least enthusiastic about the musical setting, which seemed to him “too affected and pretentious.” As Kalbeck further reports, Allmers even assisted in putting “through an appeal to the public, another, extremely dilettantish composition into print” (from Kalbeck *Johannes Brahms III*<sup>2</sup> p. 341, Tutzing 1976). To his close friends, Brahms had sent the Opus 86 *Lieder* in manuscript form prior to publication. Julius Stockhausen, whom Brahms held in highest regard as a singer, had already “sung the songs splendidly” on the 14th of December, 1881, in Strasbourg (*Billroth und Brahms im Briefwechsel* No. 150, Berlin und Wien 1935). Heinrich and Elisabet von Herzogenberg, as well as Theodor Billroth, became acquainted with them in April 1882, and Elisabet von Herzogenberg wrote, full of enthusiasm, on the 26th of April: “. . . I am constantly thinking of the one in F, especially in connection with Stockhausen who alone can sing it, above all others; the passage



draws my very soul out of my body” (*Brahms Briefwechsel* I No. 110, Tutzing 1974).

Before the *Lieder*, Opus 86, appeared in print, Brahms also sent the manuscript reproduced here in facsimile to the dedicatee – the banker, Wilhelm Lindeck of Mannheim, who had managed a deposit account for Brahms at the Ladenburg Bank. Already in 1880, Brahms had more or less closed this account. Now, early in 1882, he arranged for the entire

deposit to be transferred to the Berlin Reichsbank, and, feeling somewhat obliged to the banker, he wrote in March 1882: “How I shall really thank you, I cannot imagine! One day I must come by way of M[annheim] expressly to ask for advice! Unfortunately, the city has disappeared completely from my geography; everywhere else I am invited, but not there. And yet not once have I even written you an aria – but then again, so far as I can recall, I have never heard you sing and do not know how deep and high your bass goes! However, you will certainly be able to imagine my embarrassment in continuing to take advantage of your great kindness under these “silent” circumstances, and that it will relieve me of this burden – just by thanking you for what you have done in the past.”

The answer from Lindeck, who evidently sang opera arias with a passion, is unfortunately no longer extant. But it must have caused Brahms to be relieved of his burden through the presentation of the “Feldesamkeit” manuscript. In his (undated) accompanying letter he wrote: “Here is a little something to try out with your voice – but I can well imagine how a bass singer will look askance at anything that is not an aria. Well, maybe it will come yet.”

Aside from the voice part’s having been written in the bass clef in order to adapt it to the vocal register of its dedicatee, the manuscript hardly deviates from the first edition or from the original copy of the manuscript which is now preserved at the Hermann Allmers-Haus (Heimatmuseum) in Rechtenfleth, near Bremerhaven. Brahms gave the latter manuscript to the poet on the occasion of his 70th birthday, in response to a request made by Allmers’ friends. It is to be hoped that in the meantime Allmers had changed his opinion and come to appreciate the song as much as have both his contemporaries and all the lovers of Brahms’ *Lieder* down to the present day.

ERNST HERTTRICH