

Liebeslied

Brahms' morning-star was slow to rise
-Vienna had its slights:
His little wick of flame was dimmed
By Wagner's acolytes.

He won his first esteem as a
Piano virtuoso;
But soon his songs — as well as hands —
Were known, and maybe more so.

Some say he had affairs of heart
-If not, he'd not be human.
(One hopes he helped to dry the tears
Of Mrs. Robert Schumann.)

He must have viewed his times askew:
Among his legacies
Are triplets over bars in two
And duplets over threes.

Forever probing after Form,
By nature and upbringing
His large designs all sheltered first
The song and then the singing.

And so Vienna grew to love
His walks and habitats;
And even folk across the street
Would nod, and tip their hats.

And we who love his *Requiem*
Confess it and concede here:
The final Brahmsian pilgrimage
Still takes us to his *Lieder*.

With thanks for NYC/ASOC/1980
— and rehearsal last night —

R
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