*Wien, du Stadt meiner Träume* (‘Vienna, you city of my dreams’), is a sentimental 1914 song by the Polish composer, Rudolf Sieczyński, given its classic recording by Elisabeth Schwarzkopf – as Prussian as they came, although her birthplace is in present-day Poland. Nationality is and certainly was complicated, almost beyond belief, not only in the historic Habsburg lands but throughout *Mitteleuropa* (Central Europe).It is an image or an idea many cling to, especially those who have never lived there: the Vienna less of Gustav Klimt, then of Klimt posters adorning student walls; the Vienna less of actual historical coffee-houses, of Schoenberg and Trotsky, than of their sanitised, gleaming imitations in the chain hotels of tourist-trail *Sachertorte*; not the Vienna of Haydn, if ever there were one, but of candlelit, periwigged selections from the Salzburger Mozart, no ‘Austrian’ he, and, yes, the Viennese Johann Strauss II.

Perhaps, though, it is unfair to impute that cheapened Vienna to Sieczyński; it is certainly unfair to Vienna. For dreams are usually anything but comfortable; more often than not, they are nightmares. They are certainly not simple, any more than *Mitteleuropa* ever has been. Ask *Richard* Strauss’s Klyämnestra – or Gustav Mahler. And Vienna is, even the sentimentalists would admit, the city of Freud: which is to say, it is a city, like any other, of fundamental lies, which we human beings, all of us, will do almost anything to prevent being uncovered. It is as much the modern metropolis as Berlin, Paris, London, or New York; Vienna is once again, as it was for the young Arnold Schoenberg, one of the relatively few ‘Viennese composers’ actually to have born there, the multinational capital of *Mitteleuropa*. Vienna is just better than many cities at concealing the truth in plain view.

And so it is with the designations ‘First’ and ‘Second’ Viennese Schools. Yes, it is not unreasonable to speak of the Second, or as Germans and Austrians more often say, ‘modern’ Viennese School. But what of the ‘First’? That seems to be more of an Anglophone conceit. Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven did not come from Vienna; nor did they spend their entire careers working there; Schubert, if we count him, did. In German, the (First) Vienna School refers to something more Viennese and more of a school: their ‘early’ or ‘pre’-Classical predecessors, an alternative to the Mannheim School. One of those Viennese (born) composers, Georg Matthias Monn, wrote a harpsichord concerto Schoenberg rewrote – truly rewrote, unfaithful as only a true composer might dare, or at least succeed – as a cello concerto for Pablo Casals. For infidelity may sometimes prove the greater tribute, at least in art. Similarly, untruths are not always lies; they may be misunderstandings, or simply different understandings. You say Schoenberg; I write Schönberg. I am wrong, if referring to the greater part of his American ‘exile’, or, as he preferred, new life: how proud he was of his new citizenship, previously, on account of Austro-Hungarian nationality laws, Czechoslovak! For Schoenberg officially changed his name – the ‘oe’ spelling is an acceptable alternative in German – since American typewriters had no umlauts. Vienna, Austria, even Germany still decline to follow suit, claiming for their own, not for the first time, one they were less anxious to keep when he actually was.

Speaking of lies, misunderstandings – also misattributions and miscalculations: how many Haydn cello concertos are there? And how many once were there? The composer’s 1805 catalogue lists three. Some later-nineteenth-century editions present as many as eight, practising the old trick of presenting another composer’s music under the name of a more celebrated colleague. Of the two now recognised as Haydn’s, the first was only rediscovered in 1961, precisely 200 years after its composition; the second was long, quite erroneously, suspected, to have been written by the principal cellist in Haydn’s Esterházy *Capelle*, Anton Kraft. Another, long presumed lost, most likely never existed as an independent work. Other concertos are occasionally still performed under Haydn’s name; perhaps, their manifest weaknesses notwithstanding, that does little harm. They are not works by Haydn, though, and will not be heard here.

Like most concertos, Haydn’s were composed with particular soloists in mind. The C major Concerto was most likely written for Kraft’s predecessor, Joseph Weigl, evidence of whose lyrical tone may be heard above all in the ornate, aria-like solo writing of the F major *Adagio*, not dissimilar to the 1763 Symphony no.13’s *Adagio cantabile* (certainly written for Weigl). The first movement takes its place in what HC Robbins Landon called the ‘C major courtly [Eisenstadt] style of the 1760s’, familiar also from the Symphony no.7, ‘Le Midi’, also from 1761, and *Acide*, an *azione teatrale* (opera) from the following year. That style is characterised by strong dotted rhythms, sometimes in reverse (‘Lombard rhythm’), as in the concerto’s opening tutti, and a string orchestra supplemented by oboes and horns (here silent in the slow movement, again as in its Thirteenth Symphony counterpart). The *Moderato* tempo, common to a good number of Haydn’s piano sonatas too, ensures plenty of time for rhythmic detail and its performative articulation, with a witty, supremely inventive give-and-take so typical of the composer at every stage of his career. The *Allegro molto*’s ritornelli remind us both of the concerto genre’s roots in Italian music, both instrumental and vocal, and the crucial importance of Italian music and culture for the Habsburg lands since before they were the Habsburgs’. A finale does not just happen to come last; it concludes, in this case thrillingly so. Talk of style, genre, and structure – all three movements may broadly be understood in terms of sonata form(s) – should not, however, obscure the very particular *formal* dynamism that will only take flight (or not) in per-*form*-ance, just as much in a concerto as in a vocal work.

The D major Concerto was written in 1783. Whilst sounding less overtly strenuous for the soloist, its technical and musical demands are perhaps greater still. It is rarer to hear a Haydn theme that might have been coined by Mozart than *vice versa*, yet here, in the first movement, it is so. If Haydn were still essentially an Eisenstadt composer, albeit not so distant in any sense from Vienna, the erstwhile Salzburg colleague of his brother, Michael, was now firmly ensconced in the Habsburg capital. At any rate, the path the movement takes could only be Haydn’s. The element of ever-developing variation in what we call sonata form in a concerto – perhaps more accurately, as suggested also by the previous work, concerto writing strongly influenced by sonata and symphonic writing – is, as one might expect from a later work, more pronounced, yet also more subtle. Again, the central movement is an *Adagio*; again, it has more than a little of the aria to it. Yet its tonal universe is different, the move from A major to a central section in C major typical of Haydn’s increasingly typical use of relatively distant, often ravishing modulation. The rondo finale concludes relatively briefly, less virtuosically, yet with no less musical satisfaction than its predecessor.

Whether we really can trace everything in those works, in all their melodic and harmonic variety, back to their opening thematic material, it feels in a fine performance, well listened to, that we have done just that. Contrast is, after all, as responsive as repetition, arguably more so; still more so, is the relationship between the two. Such is Viennese Classicism, whether a ‘First School’ or no – and it was a great attraction in such music for Brahms, Wagner, and to Schoenberg, the composer, Arnold Schoenberg, who would try, more or less explicitly, to synthesise and to extend their apparently opposed, even warring Viennese Romanticisms. Wagner was no more a native Viennese than Brahms, yet, by the end of the nineteenth century, both composers’ music was frequently to be heard and passionately argued over in the capital of *Mitteleuropa*. Indeed, Schoenberg was said to have heard all of Wagner’s canonical operas ‘twenty to thirty times’ before 1899, the year in which he, also a cellist of sorts, composed *Verklärte Nacht*,his programmatic, single-movement, multi-sectioned string sextet: that very conception a reconciliation of Mendelssohn, Schumann, and Brahms on one ‘side’, and Wagner, Liszt, even Richard Strauss on the other – and thus of competing understandings of the inheritance of ‘Viennese’ Classicism.

It remains Schoenberg’s most popular work, a response to a poem by Richard Dehmel, which can with equal justice be followed as a piece of ‘absolute’ music and as a musical dramatisation of both the poem’s broad outline and verbal detail. ‘Your poems,’ Schoenberg later told Dehmel, ‘have had a decisive influence on my development as a composer. They were what first made me try to find a new tone in the lyrical mode. Or rather, I found it without even looking, simply by reflecting in music what your poems stirred up in me.’

Five contrasting musical sections follow Dehmel’s five stanzas. The odd-numbered sections present the forest, so long a favoured scene of German Romanticism, literary, visual, and musical, a place of redress and of justice: think of the Brothers Grimm fairy tales. There is certainly sepulchral darkness to the opening, as our (aural) eyes adjust, but also the sense of a gateway to something unknown, dangerous perhaps, yet also exciting, certainly imbued with Fate. The second and fourth sections present the words of a woman and man respectively. Walking through that forest in the moonlight of silvery string music, ethereal harmonics and all, the woman confesses that she had married a man she did not love. Desirous of a child, she had therefore yielded to another, a stranger, whose child she now bears. Transfiguration is a Wagnerian idea if ever there were one, also familiar to Schoenberg from Strauss’s *Tod und Verklärung*. Here it is effected through the man’s nobility of soul, manifested in a violin and cello duet of love, which expresses ‘the warmth that flows from one of us into the other’, transfiguring the child to become the man’s own, and thus also the night itself. Twists and turns in individual lines aurally suggest those of a *Jugendstil* drawing; in their general tendencies, individually and in combination, the leaves, branches, lightness, and darkness of the forest, both material and metaphysical, emerge and transform before our ears. Is it the creature of the man and woman, or *vice versa*? ‘Two people walk through the high, bright night.’

And yet, music that sounds, according to the operetta composer and friend of Brahms, Richard Heuberger, ‘as if someone had smeared the score of *Tristan* while it was still wet’ – not intended as a compliment – is actually tightly constructed in something akin to, or perhaps better, nostalgically reminiscent of, Classical-Romantic rondo form. Heuberger’s friend Brahms might or might not have appreciated that; he had died two years earlier. Developing variation – the term later coined by Schoenberg for Brahms, and which we may traced back to Haydn and beyond – works its distinguishing and combinatory wonders the whole time: new motifs always have their roots in what has been heard before, always have within them the seeds of what is to come. For all the clarity of the work’s sectional division, its marriage of poetic narrative and self-transforming semi-traditional form lies in the connections, the cumulative experience. Schoenberg seems to have drawn that primarily, consciously from Viennese instrumental tradition, Haydn included; yet he must surely, if only subliminally, also have complemented that tendency with the complex relationship between narrative and music Wagner sets forth in his later, ‘symphonic’ music dramas, *Tristan* foremost amongst them. In Vienna, even when one must apparently ‘choose’, one rarely does so exclusively. Truth is never what it seems, and is all the richer for it.