

# C R A D D L E S O N G

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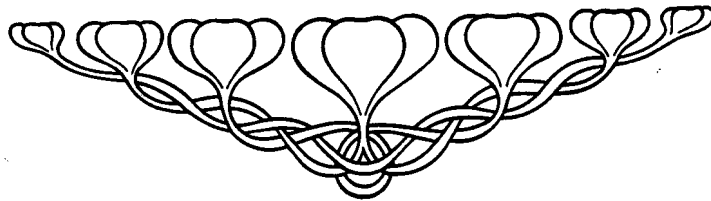
(Wiegenlied)

Op. 49, No. 4

By

**JOHANNES BRAHMS**

*Transcribed for Piano Solo by Leopold Godowsky*



Saint Louis

No. 626

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH AND GLOSSARY

GENERAL INFORMATION AND  
SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY AND INTERPRETATION

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## CRADLE SONG

(Wiegenlied)

Biographical Sketch—Johannes Brahms

*Born at Hamburg, Germany, May 7, 1833*

*Died in Vienna, Austria, April 3, 1897*

JOHANNES BRAHMS grew up in a household where good music and good books were part of everyday living. His father was a theatre musician who was delighted to discover signs of talent in his little son, and who arranged for him to study piano and theory with the best teacher in Hamburg.

Brahms was just twenty years old when he was engaged as accompanist by Eduard Remenyi, a popular Hungarian violinist. Once, when Remenyi was scheduled to play Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata* at a concert, it was discovered at the last minute that the piano was tuned a half-step too low. Brahms saved the day by transposing, from memory, the entire piano part from C minor to C-sharp minor—a feat which he considered in no way remarkable, since his piano teacher had required him to transpose to all keys the Preludes and Fugues in Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*.

Through Remenyi, Brahms met a number of the most eminent musicians in Europe, and Schumann, after examining some of his compositions, published a complimentary article about him which attracted a great deal of attention. Somewhat embarrassed by Schumann's extravagant praise, Brahms continued to study the classics, to compose, and occasionally to play the piano or conduct in public.

After 1869, Brahms made Vienna his permanent home. He lived simply, and in his later years he refused all public appearances and devoted himself exclusively to composition. The statement has been made that Brahms achieved in his music an almost perfect balance between Classicism and Romanticism. In his symphonies, concertos, and chamber music, he displayed a mastery of classical form not even surpassed by Beethoven. Yet his songs and short piano pieces are truly romantic in their expression of strongly personal emotions.

**General Information:** The *Cradle Song*, which is the best known and best loved of all the Brahms songs (approximately 200 in number), was composed in 1868. The words of the song were written by Karl Simrock in the German language. They are as follows:

Guten Abend, gut' Nacht, mit Rosen bedacht,  
mit Näglein besteckt, schlüpf unter die Deck':  
Morgen früh, wenn Gott will, wirst du wieder geweckt,  
morgen früh, wenn Gott will, wirst du wieder geweckt!  
Guten Abend, gut' Nacht, von Englein bewacht,  
die zeigen im Traum dir Christkindlein's Baum:  
Schlaf' nun selig und süß, schau' im Traum's Paradies!  
schlaf' nun selig und süß, schau' im Traum's Paradies!

A free translation of the German words is given below:

Lullaby and goodnight, with roses bedight,  
Creep into thy bed, there pillow thy head.  
Please the Lord, thou wilt wake, when the morning shall break.  
Goodnight then, once more, by angels watched o'er,  
In thy dreams thou shalt see a fair Christmas tree.  
Go to sleep, close thine eyes, thou shalt see Paradise.

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## CRADLE SONG

**Study and Interpretation:** Begin your study of this composition by learning to sing the melody. The song consists of two stanzas, the same melody being used for both, in folk-song style.

When you can sing the melody from memory, the next step is to practice the right-hand part of the piece, alone. The right hand, throughout, carries the melody and at the same time plays a syncopated accompaniment. "Sing" the melody with your fingers, and keep the accompaniment, at all times, a little softer than the melody.

You will notice that in the first stanza (meas. 3-18), the melody lies above the right-hand accompaniment, while in part of the second stanza (meas. 21-36) the melody is below the accompaniment. It is very important, in your practice of the right-hand part, to use the marked fingering, and to give every note its full time value.

Although the left-hand part has no voicing problem (except in meas. 13, 17, and 31-32), it should be carefully practiced. In the measures just specified, take pains to bring out the little counter-melody indicated by the up-stems.

When each hand alone has been sufficiently practiced, begin your practice with hands together. Keep the melody "singing" and the cradle gently rocking. The entire composition is heard over a tonic pedal-point, the low G in the left-hand part being sounded at the beginning of every measure. Touch this key firmly, but take care not to stress it too heavily.

Note that the soft pedal is to be held down throughout the piece, while the damper pedal is employed, as usual, to sustain and color the tones. When the marked pedaling is followed, the slight blurring in each measure produces a dreamlike effect. Judicious breaking of the long pedals through the use of half-pedaling will keep the low G humming while clearing the melodic line. It is always well to remember that the ear is the most reliable guide to artistic pedaling, and that the printed marks can never indicate the finer nuances.

### Glossary

Johannes Brahms	pronounced	Yō-hän'-nēs Bräms	
<i>andantino</i>	"	än-dän-tē'-nō	(rather slowly)
<i>a tempo</i>	"	ä tēm'-pō	(in time)
<i>con moto</i>	"	kōn mō'-tō	(with motion; not dragging)
<i>dolce</i>	"	dōl'-tshā	(sweet)
<i>piu</i>	"	pē'-oo	(more)
<i>rallentando (rall.)</i>	"	räl-lěn-tän'-dō	(gradually slower)
<i>sempre</i>	"	sēm'-prāy	(always; continually)
<i>una corda</i>	"	oo'-nä kōr'-dä	(use the soft pedal)
<i>wiegenlied</i>	"	vē'-gěn-leet	(cradle song)

# Cradle-Song.

JOHANNES BRAHMS  
Op. 49, No. 4.

Adapted and edited by Leopold Godowsky.

Andantino con moto.  $\text{♩} = 88 - 100.$

*p dolce*

*sempre una corda.*

*rall.*

*a tempo*

*piu p*

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17 18 19 20 *p*

21 22 23 24 *p*

25 26 27 28 *rall.*

29 *a tempo* 30 31 32 *piu p*

33 34 35 *rall.* 36 *p*