

Julius Bürger (1897–1995) – A Viennese composer returns (Part II)

By Dr. Ryan Hugh Ross, PhD

©2026. All Rights Reserved.

Citation: Ross, Ryan Hugh. “Julius Bürger - Vertrieben und Wiederentdeckt: Ein Wiener Komponist kehrt zurück (Teil II)”. Program notes- English version. *Julius Bürger: Vertrieben und Wiederentdeckt, Teil II*, Thomas Hampson- Bariton, Josipa Bainac- Mezzosopran, Orchester Divertimento Viennese, Vinzenz Praxmarer, Dirigent, 9 June 2026, ORF Radiokulturhaus-Großer Sendesaal, Wien, AT, p.3-21.

Tonight, we celebrate the composer, conductor, pianist and vocal coach Julius Burger (Bürger). Burger’s storied life and dazzling career intersected with many important figures of 20th century western classical music and he enjoyed success as a conductor and arranger in some of the world’s leading opera and broadcasting houses. However, his true path as a composer was forever altered by the rise of National Socialism. He narrowly escaped the fate of the majority of his family and countless others throughout the Nazi perpetuated Holocaust. Afterward, his career shifted to preparing and performing music by others. However, Burger quietly continued to compose throughout the following decades – producing reams of original music which languished in his New York apartment – waiting for the day when they could be ushered into the world.

The repertoire for tonight’s performance includes an exciting and varied array of pieces, created over a compositional oeuvre spanning more than seven decades. This historic event also includes numerous World and Austrian premieres and is the second instalment in this celebration of the composer’s orchestral oeuvre. Poignantly, it represents the spiritual return of Julius Burger to his rightful home in the City of Music.

About the Composer

Vienna period (1897-1918)

Julius Bürger was born on 11 March 1897 in Vienna’s 2nd District, the fifth child of nine to Josef Bürger – a tailor and Chaje (Clara) Bürger – a homemaker. His early education included attendance at the Kaiserlich Koeniglichen Erherzog Rainer Gymnasium (1908 – 1913) and later, at the Kaiserlich Koeniglichen Maximilian Gymnasium (Wasagymnasium) in Vienna’s

©2026. All Rights Reserved.

9th district until 1916. Maximilian Gymnasium touted illustrious alumni who later became émigrés such as conductor Kurt Adler (1907–1977), composers Hans Gál (1890–1987) and Wilhelm Grosz (1894–1939), conductors Erich Kleiber (1890–1956) and Josef Krips (1902–1974) and writer Stefan Zweig (1881–1942). Zweig detailed his experiences at the Gymnasium in his posthumous autobiographical work *Die Welt von Gestern* (1942).

In the Autumn of 1916, Bürger began formal study at the Faculty of Arts - University of Vienna, attending lectures with renowned musicologists Dr. Guido Adler (1855-1941) and Dr. Egon Wellesz (1885-1974), among others. The following year, he began formal studies in composition and counterpoint with famed Austrian composer Franz Schreker (1878-1934) at the Universität für Musik und Darstellend Kunst, Wien. Bürger's compositional style was defined by this important relationship. During this period, Bürger supplemented his income performing as an accompanist to Moravian tenor Leo Slezak (1873–1946) on concert tour and also, as an accompanist in some of Vienna's early silent cinemas of the day.

Berlin period (1919–1933)

In 1919, Bürger briefly left his studies with Schreker and enrolled at the Hochschule für Musik Berlin to undertake instruction with German composer Engelbert Humperdinck (1854–1921). Due to the composer's continued absence due to illness, Bürger returned to Schreker's Vienna based studio in Spring of 1920. The following Autumn, Schreker assumed the position of director at the Berlin Musikhochschule and was joined at the institution by numerous students from Vienna including Alfred Freudenheim (1898–1941), Alois Hába (1893–1973), Jascha Horenstein (1898–1973), Ernst Krenek (1900–1991), Alois Melichar (1896–1976), Karol Rathaus (1895–1954), Isaak Thaler (b.1902 –?) and Bürger. Their advanced skills developed under Schreker were not lost on the examination committee at the Berlin Musikhochschule which included deputy director Georg Schünemann (1884-1945). He later mused on his first interactions with the gifted students for a 1928 issue of the music journal *Anbruch*.

After completing his composition and conducting studies in 1922, Bürger joined the staff at Karlsruhe Opera as korrepetitor. He came to the attention of conductor Bruno Walter (1876-1972) after successfully stepping in to conduct a performance of Wagner's

Tannhäuser. Shortly thereafter, Walter recommended Bürger for an apprenticeship under conductor Arthur Bodanzky (1877–1939) at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. He remained there for three seasons (1924 to 1927). To financially supplement this valuable experience, Bürger regularly accompanied singers in concert. One such singer was the acclaimed Austrian-American contralto Ernestine Schumann-Heink (1861-1936). Bürger joined her on a concert tour in aid of disabled veterans throughout the United States. A second side project included recording several piano rolls for the American Piano Company's (AMPICO) line of reproducing player pianos with fellow pianist Milton Suskind (1898-1975).

In late 1927, Bürger returned to Berlin where he quickly found employment - serving as assistant to conductor Otto Klemperer (1885–1973) at the Kroll Opera. He also found work in the relatively new medium of radio- serving as a conductor and arranger for the Funkstunde AG Berlin. Amid the Kroll Opera's growing struggles in mid 1930, Bürger left the company and was solely employed at the Funkstunde. Here he had an early compositional success with the broadcast of his symphonic overture *Ozeanfahrt, 1925*. In addition, his friendship with Austro-Hungarian and Romanian tenor Joseph Schmidt (1904-1942) led to two commercially successful compositions including '**Zigeunerlied**' or "Gypsy Song" (1930) and a Johann Strauss inspired aria 'Launisches Glück' (1932). The latter is most readily recognised from the "record shop scene" in the 1933 German film *Ein Lied Geht um die Welt* starring Schmidt.

However, his most successful compositions with the company, and later at the BBC, were in a light entertainment genre he deemed 'Radio Potpourri'. While Bürger did not by any means invent the genre, he is credited with remediating and expanding this traditional form for the medium of radio. One of the earliest examples is the 1932 work *Hallo London, Here's Berlin*. Its 14 November 1932 premiere featured tenor Joseph Schmidt and was conducted by Eduard Künneke (1885-1953) at the Funkstunde in Berlin while simultaneously being broadcast on the BBC in London.

Following the Nazi Regime's seizure of power in 1933, Bürger was forced to resign from his position. Bürger left Berlin for Vienna and, shortly after, married Rosa (Rose) Blaustein on 20 August 1933. The two remained together for the next fifty-six years.

2.3 London period (1934–1939)

After several months of unemployment, Bürger made contact with British entertainer, author and director of the BBC's newly created Variety Department - Eric Maschwitz (1901-1969). He was quickly offered a commission to create a new Radio Potpourri for the fledgling department and Bürger chose the sounds of his beloved home for the work, aptly titled *Vienna* (1933). Bürger's previous work as a composer, arranger and his proficiency in English made him a valuable contributor to the department's programme line-up. In addition, his creative flair helped shape programming with the department well into the 1950s.

While other émigrés at the BBC, such as Walter Goehr (1930-1960), Mátyás Seiber (1905-1960), Berthold Goldschmidt (1903-1996), etc., found security in full-time employment at the Corporation, Bürger's engagement as a 'per contract' composer precluded him from gaining a visa. As a consequence, the Burgers lived a transient existence, drifting between London, Brussels, Vienna and Paris. Correspondence from this period (1934-1941) reveals at least 33 addresses across five countries in Europe and the United States.

Despite this precarious situation, Bürger's career enjoyed success with the BBC which resulted in premieres of at least thirteen Grand Radio Potpourri as well as multiple Miniature potpourri, arrangements and orchestrations during this period. Even during the Second World War, at least six of his Radio Potpourri were included in programming. Despite previous unsuccessful attempts at gaining BBC performances of wholly original works (i.e. *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, *Ozeanfahrt*, 1925 and *Zigeunerlied*) Bürger's orchestral suite ***Five Little Pieces from Vienna*** was successfully performed and broadcast in December 1937 by the BBC Theatre Orchestra in London. This musical love letter to Vienna receives its Austrian premiere and only second known performance tonight.

In early February 1938, the Burgers initiated plans to return to Austria for the first time in several months. According to Bürger, the couple were at a scheduled stopover in France when he noticed a newspaper headline exclaiming "Austrian Chancellor meets Hitler." The couple saw the meeting as a bad omen and immediately abandoned their travel plans. They

instead proceeded to the French Riviera to determine their next course of action. After news had reached the couple of the Anschluss of 12 March 1938, the Bürgers returned to Paris.

After numerous applications to reside in the UK and an additional request from the BBC to the UK Home Office for reconsideration were rejected, the Bürgers were granted a limited extension to remain in the UK while gathering supporting material for an asylum application for the United States. The application was completed with an affidavit of support by the American tenor Charles Kullman (1903–1983) whom Julius had worked with previously in Germany. On 25 March 1939, the Bürgers left England aboard the RMS Aquitania, arriving in New York City six days later. Poignantly, their nationality on the ship’s manifest reads “Stateless”.

2.4 New York period (1939–1995)

Over a decade after leaving New York City, Julius Bürger now returned to the city in drastically different circumstances. The following months were wrought with struggle. In early 1940, he found employment as a freelance arranger with Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS). Work with the company primarily involved arranging for classical middlebrow stalwarts Andre Kostelanetz (1901-1980) and Arthur Fiedler (1894-1979). Two original orchestral pieces stem from this period including ***A Musical Jest with Johann Strauss*** (post 1939) and the Enescu inspired work *Roumanian Fantasy* (1942). In addition, Bürger was still in demand with the BBC and produced additional potpourri including *New World Rhapsody* (1942) and the *Victory Rhapsody* (1945). The latter was premiered on 13 May 1945 on the BBC Home Service as part of its Victory in Europe celebrations.

Throughout the war years, Bürger set upon the momentous task of aiding his immediate family financially while attempting to garner the necessary visa documentation for their safe passage to the US. While his brother Bernhardt and two other siblings (Stefanie and Max) successfully escaped to safety elsewhere, four brothers and his mother, Chaje, were murdered in the Holocaust. The fate of a further brother is still unknown. This massive blow later prompted Burger to dedicate the second Adagio movement of his *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*, to his mother’s memory. A plaque commemorating the Bürger family was

dedicated in 2024 and is installed outside the family home on Obere Donaustraße in the 2nd district.

In May 1944 Julius and wife Rose became US citizens. In line with many émigrés of the period, they chose to anglicise the spelling of their surname and dropped the Germanic umlaut. Later that year, Burger made his debut on Broadway as conductor of the operetta *Song of Norway*, choreographed by George Balanchine (1904–1983). In 1946, he once again assumed the role of conductor for the album version for the Universal Pictures film *Song of Scheherazade*, featuring friend – the tenor Charles Kullman.

In 1949, Burger returned to the staff of the Metropolitan Opera as an assistant conductor surrounded by a collegiate staff largely comprised of émigrés. Burger's responsibilities were numerous and included everything from accompanying at the company's Gala events, aiding in performances from the prompt box to vocal coaching. Prominent examples include coaching African American contralto Marian Anderson (1897-1993) for her 1955 debut as well as the Spanish soprano Victoria de Los Angeles (1923-2005) for her role as Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*.

Despite his full work schedule, it appears Burger had not entirely given up on his compositional career and continued to promote his original works. The successful premiere of his *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra* (in reduced arrangement for cello and two pianos) was held as part of a recital in the New York Town Hall on 2 October 1952. It was performed by Latvian cellist Ingus Naruns (1925-2012) accompanied by Antolijis Berzkalns and Burger on piano. The work received a warm reception but would not be performed in any further capacity until 1991.

Several other works of note stem from the Metropolitan opera period, such as the 1954 one-act ballet in collaboration with ballet master Zachary Solov (1923-2004). **Vittorio** premiered on 15 December 1954 in a double bill with a production of Richard Strauss' *Salome*. Burger's score utilises thematic fragments from ballet sequences and operas by Giuseppe Verdi. Notably, the work's performance represented the Metropolitan's first commissioned ballet since the 1930s and marked conductor Dimitri Mitropoulos's (1896-

1960) debut with company. The collaboration led to a personal friendship between Mitropoulos and the Burgers, lasting until the conductor's death six years later. Tonight- this work receives its European debut and its first performance since January 1955.

In 1956, he was approached to adapt and orchestrate the score for a new production of Jacques Offenbach's opéra bouffe *La Périchole* (1868) by Jean Morel (1903–1975) and Ignace Strasfogel (1909–1994). The production enjoyed fifty-three performances between 1956 and 1971. Its successful reception led to a commercial recording, a live telecast for NBC and its publication with Boosey and Hawkes. Burger later recollected Metropolitan general manager Rudolf Bing (1902-1997) was so impressed by his work that he commented "*Burger has out Offenbached - Offenbach!*"

Burger retired from the Metropolitan Opera in 1969 and returned to original composition. Manuscripts which have been dated from this period (1967 to 1988) reveal a prolific outpouring of new works. In total, Burger composed at least two string quartets (No. 2 and No. 3, both 1968), several orchestrated lieder, numerous arrangements of existing works for voice, solo piano, and instrumental chamber ensembles. In addition, at least eighteen lieder for voice and piano (including two sets of four lieder each, *Lieder des Alters* (1970) and *Vier Heitere Lieder* (1979)) also stem from this late period.

In 1984, aged 87, Burger's orchestral work *Variations on a Theme by Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach* (1945) gained first prize at Indiana State University's Contemporary Music Festival Competition. The work was premiered by the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra on 27 September 1984 in Tilson Music Hall on the university's campus. This marked the first public performance of any of Burger's non-commissioned works in thirty-two years.

After Rose Burger's death in April 1989, Burger made contact with New York probate attorney Ronald S. Pohl, Esq. to settle his wife's estate. Through initial conversations, Pohl was regaled with stories of Burger's life and impressive career and equally, the composer's long-held desire to hear selections from his own large oeuvre before he died. After making contact with professional musicians in New York on Burger's behalf, Pohl initiated the revival of the composer's music with a concert on 3 June 1991 in Alice Tully Hall in the

Lincoln Centre, New York. Other orchestral concerts followed, including performances of orchestral selections with the New Orchestra of Westchester in Purchase, New York; the University of Negev in Beersheba, Israel; the Austin Symphony in Texas as well as a premiere of the choral work *Miserere* (1917; 1969) by the New York Virtuosos Singers in New York City.

Despite ailing health, Burger flew to Berlin in September 1994 to attend recording sessions and a concert performance of his works in Berlin's Jesus Kristus Kirche; his first known visit to the city since leaving in 1933. The concert's repertoire included selections of his orchestral works, performed by Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin and conducted by Simone Young. This was later released on the Toccata Classics label in 2007. More recently, a large portion of his lieder for voice and piano were recorded and released on the Spätlese Musik label.

Julius Burger died in New York City on 12 June 1995, age 98.

Orchestral Selections

Burger's orchestral works and arrangements hold particular importance in his oeuvre and showcase an individualised compositional voice influenced by early-twentieth century Austro-German composers such as Alexander Zemlinsky and Joseph Marx while drawing on the diatonic lyricism of Erich Korngold, Richard Strauss as well as stylistic elements from his former teacher Franz Schreker.

A Musical Jest with Johann Strauss is a lighthearted celebration of one of Vienna's most iconic composers. While the manuscript is undated, Burger's notation on CBS staff paper suggests the composition was most likely written in the months after his arrival in New York City in early 1939. The piece is first mentioned in a letter to BBC conductor Stanford Robinson in May 1943-providing a second clue of its period of origin.

During his London period (1934–1939), Burger pioneered the "Radio Potpourri" genre for the BBC National Service, which showcased his mastery as an arranger. His fondness for Strauss' music is readily apparent in some of the more popular radio works such as the 1933 potpourri *Vienna*, which draws on thematic material from Joseph Lanner and Strauss. A

second example-*Johann Strauss: A Biography in Music* (1936)- is a biographic ode to the composer conveyed through a mélange of Strauss' music.

A Musical Jest with Johann Strauss combines thematic material from Strauss' vast oeuvre with Burger's own original ideas in a homage to the 'King of the Waltz' and their mutual home city on the Donau. The result is a spirited orchestral work that reflects Burger's deep connection to the Viennese musical tradition while displaying his extraordinary ability to reimagine well known standards into a sophisticated composition with his own stylistic flair.

Suite of 5 Little Pieces from Vienna for Symphony Orchestra (1936) is a nostalgic love letter to the city of his birth and was written during his tumultuous period of exile. The work, composed in 1936, takes the listener on a musical journey through the former imperial capital in five colourful vignettes including 'Schubert's Birthplace (I)', a 'Ballet at the Opernring (II)', the 'Changing of the Guard at the Burg-Ring (III)', a music filled heuriger 'In Grinzing (IV)', and onto the 'Carousel in the Prater (V)'. Each movement offers a glimpse at the rich artistic traditions and cultivated allure of Vienna through the eyes of one of its native sons.

While fewer and fewer of Burger's fellow émigrés in late 1930s London found willing organisations to perform their compositions, Burger's "Suite" was successfully premiered on December 14th, 1937 by the BBC Theatre Orchestra, led by Tate Gilder and conducted by Stanford Robinson. Its broadcast on the BBC National Service marks his only non-commissioned work to be aired by the corporation before Burger emigrated to the United States in March 1939. The *Suite of 5 Little Pieces from Vienna* remains a beautiful tribute to the composer's beloved native city and provides a fleeting glimpse of the vibrant capital before the catastrophic years of the 2nd World War.

***Vittorio* (1954)**

In 1954, Metropolitan Opera General Manager Rudolf Bing (1902-1997) approached Julius Bürger and ballet master Zachary Solov (1923–2004) to create a one-act ballet as part of efforts to revitalise the company's dancing troupe. After much consideration and careful planning, *Vittorio* emerged: 45-minute work in three scenes with choreography and storyline by Solov and score by Burger. The work represents the first major ballet

commission by the Metropolitan Opera since John Alden Carpenter's (1876-1951) Jazz-inspired work *Skyscrapers* which premiered on 19 February 1926.

Solov's Libretto is a fictitious Renaissance tale of love and conflict in the impoverished Spanish court of Montefiore. The foundation of Burger's score draws on thematic material from Verdi operas (*Alzira, Aroldo, Battaglia di Legnano, Don Carlo, Giovanna d'Arco, I Lombardi, Luisa Miller, Un Giorno di Regno [Il Finto Stanislao]*) as well as ballet music from within opera (*Don Carlo, Ernani, Il Trovatore, I Vespri Siciliani, Macbeth*). These have been woven together to form a unified mosaic of music reminiscent of the pastiche 'Radio Potpourri' which Burger created for the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS).

Vittorio premiered to great acclaim on 15 December 1954 in a double bill with a production of Richard Strauss' *Salome* and was broadcast live on 8 January 1955 from the opera house in New York. *Vittorio* enjoyed six performances and featured Prima ballerina Mia Slavenska (Principessa), Jean Lee Schoch (La Magalina), Judith Younger (Fiamma), Edward Caton and Yurek Lazowski (character roles) and Zachary Solov in the title role. Equally, the work's premiere represented conductor Dimitri Mitropoulos' (1896-1960) debut with the company.

Tonight's concert performance marks the European Premiere and equally, the work's first performance since January 1955.

Synopsis

Scene One-

A Fiery princess from a remote Isle of Spain has arrived to the court of Montefiore to marry the aged Duke. After a grand welcome, the princess is enraged to find Duke Montefiore senile with age and proceeds to assault him. He succumbs to his injuries as the princess demands to marry his handsome grandson in his stead – Vittorio. Unfortunately for her, Vittorio is in love with the young Fiamma.

Enter the protector of Vittorio- the sorceress, La Magalina. She has had a premonition about the evil princess. La Magalina proceeds to put a curse on the throne while creating a diversion of smoke in which Vittorio, Fiamma and their guards escape-leaving only the Duke's crown. An even more enraged princess rouses a search party to pursue her would-be suitor.

Excerpts for this scene have been drawn from Verdi's *Aroldo* (featured heavily throughout), *I Lombardi*, *Il Trovatore*, *Ernani*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Alzira*. An Interlude follows the first scene to music from *Giovanna d'Arco*.

Scene Two-

The scene opens on a ruined castle - strewn with the remains of ancient finery; complete with ragged tapestries. La Magalina has whisked Vittorio and Fiamma to this nearby ruin and hides the young Duke-in-waiting inside a coffin of the castle's crypt. The entrance of which is hidden behind a tapestry.

The princess and entourage have made their way to the ruins to investigate. In an attempt to throw off them off Vittorio's path, La Magalina, Fiamma and guards partially disrobe – giving the appearance of an erotic rendezvous. This does not dissuade the princess who quickly discovers the entrance to the crypt. Her General and former suitor spies a coffin lid which appears to have been recently disturbed and realizes this is Vittorio's hiding place. He then urges the parties present to dance in the hope Vittorio will soon suffocate in the sarcophagus. Soon after, loud banging begins ringing out from a coffin- frightening all present. The princess, with entourage in tow, scramble to the crypt and eventually free a half dead Vittorio. He is quickly carried off to the palace in preparation for the impending nuptials.

Excerpts for this scene have been drawn from Verdi's *La Battaglia di Legnano*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, *Luisa Miller*, *Alzira*, *Un Giorno di Regno [Il finto Stanislao]*, *Il Trovatore*, *Macbeth*. An interlude follows to music from *I Lombardi*.

Scene Three-

The final scene opens to a dark blue sky over the Great Hall of the Palace of Montefiore. Everything has been prepared for the impending wedding. The court dances uneasily to the thematic material from *Macbeth*. The princess, with bridal party in tow, makes a majestic entrance; Vittorio and his entourage follow suit and both parties take their positions.

Monsignore calls for entertainment and divertissements follow to music from *Il Trovatore*. A

masked La Magalina then enters and dances her own erotic variation- leaving the princess uneasy.

The wedding commences with music from *Aroldo*. Vittorio orders all to leave except the princess- whom he attempts to bribe for his freedom. She refuses. Suddenly La Magalina reappears to thematic music from *Macbeth*. She orders Vittorio to leave and brandishes a sword. The princess follows suit and a duel ensues. After gaining the upper hand- the princess stabs La Magalina through. With her remaining strength- the sorceress removes the sword and hacks the princess to death.

Monsignore opens the doors to reveal a bloody scene as the wedding guests pour into the chamber and proceed to carry the dead away. Vittorio and Fiamma embrace and majestic music from *Aroldo* fills the hall as the youth is crowned Duke. A celebration ensues complete with fireworks as the ballet draws to a close.

Zigeunerlied is a virtuosic work and one of Burger's earliest surviving pieces. The original, with text by Richard Kessler, was composed for the Romanian / Austro-Hungarian Tenor Joseph Schmidt (1904-1942) and orchestral ensemble. It was recorded in Berlin in February 1930 on the Ultraphon label with Lajos Kiss and his Zigeuner orchester. Later, it was reworked as a piece for violin with piano accompaniment and again into the arrangement featured in tonight's performance for violin and orchestra. Burger frequently revisited and reimagined earlier works which makes pinpointing the exact composition dates challenging.

The original version of *Zigeunerlied* (for Tenor and ensemble) was first performed and recorded in Berlin while the violin/ piano arrangement received its chamber concert premiere in New York City in early 1991. Tonight's version for violin soloist and orchestra first received its premiere on 3 June 1991 at Alice Tully Hall- Lincoln Center in New York City with violinist Sergiu Schwartz and the Orchestra of St. Luke's under the baton of Maestro Paul Lustig Dunkel.

As the title suggests, this piece is rooted in Eastern European Romani musical traditions. This is not only evident in its distinct tonality and use of chromaticism but also in the work's

emotive, fiery rhythms and intense melancholic expressions. The style was pervasive in Germanic Romanticism in the 19th and early 20th centuries with central figures such as Brahms (*Zigeunerlieder; Hungarian Rhapsodies*) as well as Dvorak (*Zigeunermelodien, Op.55*) drawing on the unique sound world. The music tradition was well ingrained in the cultural fabric of the Austro-Hungarian empire of Burger's youth and he puts his own mastery of the compositional craft on full display.

Burger's original setting of Kessler's text pours out a melancholic loss in the opening which then gives way to passionate pleading and climaxes into a fiery Csárdás of virtuosity in this show-stopping piece.

Orchestral Lieder

Julius Burger harboured a lifelong affinity for lieder. His oeuvre, spanning 70+ years, is bookended with pieces in the vocal medium. His earliest lied is a 1915 setting of Heine's *Dammernd liegt der Sommerabend* while his final piece, written in the wienerlied tradition, is titled *Goodbye, Vienna* (1988). Nearly all his vocal works draw on texts from the great Germanic poets (von Lessing, Heine, von Goethe, Rilke, Trakl, Mombert, Nietzsche, etc.) with the exception of original poetry and two further works in English.

The orchestral lieder in tonight's performance are arrangements of original works from his late period (1967-1988) with the addition of an orchestrated version of Hugo Wolf's 1888 setting of Eduard Mörike's *Verbogenheit*. Two other orchestral lieder, which appeared in the 2023 Austrian premiere concert, include settings of Christian Morgenstern's *Legende* (1919) and Gottfried Keller's *Stille der Nacht* (1923) [*Two Songs for Baritone and Orchestra*].

Schlummerlied (Orig. Undated; Arr. for orchestra January 1985):

Poem from *Tag und Nacht* (1894) by Alfred Mombert (1872-1942)

This sumptuous lied paints a scene of two lovers in their warm abode as snow slowly falls outside. Burger's gentle setting exudes a lullaby quality and utilises triplets in the accompaniment in its opening to symbolise the gently falling snow. It concludes with the tender phrase "wie schön du schlafen wirst, du junge Frau!".

Venedig (Orig. November 1970-NYC; Arr. for orchestra January 1985)

Poem from *Ecce Homo* by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)

This lied depicts the enchantments of Venedig or “Venice” at night – filled with the iconic imagery of gondolas as they traverse the shimmering canals of the city in moonlight.

Burger’s affinity for Offenbach may have led to the inspiration of this barcarolle.

Throughout, he gives the impression of the gently undulating waters with use of arpeggiated accompaniment. Notably, the work in its original version was performed by the American Soprano Judith Blegen for a 95th birthday celebration in Burger’s honor.

So Tanze, meine Seele! (Orig. 29 May 1968-NYC; Arr. for orchestra - January 1985)

Poem from *Gedichte* (1916) by Adolf von Hatzfeld (1892-1957)

So Tanze, meine Seele! Is a joyous, hymnlike setting of von Hatzfeld’s poem. Burger’s voice leading in this piece is demanding but carefully crafted to illuminate the poetic meaning.

This, combined with the playful, mischievous accompaniment amplifies the euphoric energy of this wonderful piece for Mezzo Soprano. The original setting (along with *Venedig & Schlummerlied*) were first recorded in 2018 by Welsh Mezzo Soprano Siân Màiri Cameron and Dutch / American Baritone Ryan Hugh Ross and released on the Spätlese Musik Label. Tonight, Croatian Mezzo Soprano Josipa Bainac-Hausknecht gives the first performance of this stunning orchestral arrangement!

Verbogenheit (Orig. (1880) by Hugo Wolf (1860-1903); Arr. for orchestra after 1940)

Poem from *Gedichte* (1832) by Eduard Mörike (1804-1875)

Hugo Wolf ‘s lieder are considered by many as the culmination of the Romantic lied artform which was first shaped and nurtured by pivotal composers such as Franz Schubert (1797-1828) and Robert Schumann (1810-1856). Wolf’s innate ability to interpret and illuminate the nuance of poetic text, combined with his unique compositional voice and use of original harmonies, elevate the form to its pinnacle of artistic expression. His setting of Mörike’s *Verbogenheit* is a profound illustration of these strengths - with careful dedication to the poetry’s melancholic introspection and dramatic tension throughout. Likewise, Burger’s own attention to detail and mastery of arranging have been fused into Wolf’s masterpiece of late

Romanticism. Tonight's orchestrated presentations of *Verbogenheit* and *Schlummerlied* are sung by world renowned American Lyric baritone Thomas Hampson.

Julius Burger's oeuvre stands as a masterful testament to the perseverance of the individual and represents a direct connection to a long-neglected generation, suppressed to an extent we may never fully comprehend.

According to close friend Ronald Pohl, Burger considered his compositions to be his children, having no offspring of his own. It is our hope that with this concert, his children will finally step off the faded manuscript pages and into the world - to be appreciated by those who love music.