



Brahms Pilgrimage: Cycling from Basel to Hamburg, Fundraising Appeal

Dear friends, relatives, acquaintances, and students,

In September 2021, I embarked on a bicycle journey from Basel to Budapest, dedicated to my favorite composer, Franz Schubert. One of the many highlights along the way was visiting the Schubert Museum in Zelizovce, which was in Austria/Hungary during Schubert's time and is now in Slovakia. I combined that bicycle journey with a fundraising appeal for the Swiss Foundation for Young Musicians in Basel, which greatly appreciated the generous donation.

This spring, from March 28 to April 12, 2024, I am planning a sequel project: starting again in Basel, with the destination being Hamburg. Hamburg is the birthplace of Johannes Brahms (1833-97), another composer I deeply admire, and I have had numerous sublime moments as a pianist, choir singer, and listener with his music.

I am looking forward to these two weeks in the saddle, especially because Christine will be accompanying me!

Once again, I am connecting this upcoming bicycle journey with a fundraising appeal. The donations will, as before, support the foundation of Isabel Heusser. The concerts organized by this foundation consistently maintain a high standard and exciting programming, just like in my previous fundraising appeal three years ago!

You can contribute in various ways, such as:

a) With a fixed amount b) With an amount per kilometer ridden (the air distance from Basel to Hamburg is 688 kilometers, so it will certainly be more than that ;-)) c) With an amount per meter climbed uphill (Basel is at 245 meters above sea level, Hamburg is at sea level; there will be inclines, but unlike us, we won't be crossing mountain passes)

Please let me know by the end of February if you would like to participate. We appreciate every donation, and Isabel and her foundation do too!

Two listening recommendations regarding Brahms' music:

- Piano Concerto No. 1 in D minor, dramatic and highly virtuosic
- A German Requiem, where Brahms personally selected the Bible texts, creating a work full of wonderful lyricism and solace

And here's a reading tip: Kaspar Wolfensberger's "Die Brahmskommode."

In May or June, I am also planning a house concert featuring piano works by Brahms, and I will inform you in advance.

Finally, a note: Brahms didn't particularly like the bicycles that were very popular in the late 19th century; they startled him when passing by because they were so quiet. However, we hope and believe that he would still be benevolent towards our idea...

Warm regards, and thank you in advance for your support!

Simon Bischof

Basel, January 18, 2024