

**JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)****Wiegenlied - Cradle Song**

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) was a true Romantic in his song style. This very famous cradle song is openly sentimental and this can be explained by the fact that Brahms composed it for close friends in Vienna on the birth of their second child. The 'B.F.' of the dedication is the child's mother, Bertha Faber. As a further tribute to Bertha Faber, an Austrian folksong she used to sing to Brahms when they first met in Hamburg, where Brahms was at the time conducting a female choir, is woven into the piano part.\*

The first verse of the text is a very old traditional German lullaby, while the second verse was adapted by Brahms from a different collection of folksongs, edited by Georg Scherer.

The setting is strictly 'strophic', i.e. each verse is set to exactly the same music. The technique of gentle syncopation in the piano accompaniment, where the bass notes follow a quaver after the treble notes throughout the song, gives a lulling effect, almost like floating in a boat or free in the air.

This song must be one of the most frequently sung of all songs. There are also arrangements of it for all kinds of instruments, and it is a favourite tune in musical boxes.

\* Details in Eric Sams: 'The Songs of Johannes Brahms' (Yale 2000).

*Guten Abend, gut Nacht,  
Mit Rosen bedacht,  
Mit Näglein besteckt,  
Schlupf unter die Deck:  
Morgen früh, wenn Gott will,  
Wirst du wieder geweckt.*

*Guten Abend, gut Nacht,  
Von Englein bewacht,  
Die Zeigen im Traum  
Dir Christkindleins Baum:  
Schlaf nun selig und süß,  
Schau im Traum's Paradies.*

*Traditional, arr. Scherer*