



Bisel Classics

Joachim  
**RAFF**  
**LORELEY**  
op. 21

**PIANO  
SOLO**

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## Preface

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By all accounts, 1846 was a very good year for Joachim Raff with a steady stream of fourteen piano works flowing from his pen. *Loreley* was fashioned on the 'Song *without Words*' form popularised by Mendelssohn in his eight '*Lieder ohne Worte*' editions published over fifteen years from 1830 to 1845 and stylistically, *Loreley* exhibits the same consuming passion for a good lyrical line well executed. *Loreley* transcends the compact and elegant simplicity of Mendelssohn's works with an overt virtuoso flourish more akin to Liszt.

The connections are not accidental. Raff had met Mendelssohn not twelve months before and in the ensuing relationship, a plan for Raff to journey to Leipzig to study composition with the master was being formulated. They say that imitation is "the sincerest form of flattery" and while Raff may have been working to evoke the lyrical arc of the *Dichtung* his hands were working a miracle on the keys with passagework so refined that an extended simpler ossia passage had to be included, if only from the point of view of playability by lesser mortals. This owed more to Liszt and two connected events were pivotal in this composition.

The first was Raff's rain soaked arrival at a concert Liszt was giving in Basle in 1844 after walking the 75km to hear Liszt play. This had brought Raff to the virtuoso's attention and with characteristic generosity, Liszt had invited Raff to join his retinue on the rest of his tour through Germany, allowing Raff to work his passage as a concert assistant. Then, after the tour, mindful of the young composer's welfare, Liszt had