

HUMANITIES INSTITUTE  
Jason Zimmerman, MA

## ***Waltzes from Vienna* (1934)**

Alfred Hitchcock

### OVERVIEW

*Director* Sir Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980) is a household name and perhaps the best-known British filmmaker. With over 50 films to his credit, Hitchcock helped to shape the modern understanding of the thriller genre. His best-known films include *The Birds*, *Vertigo*, and *Psycho*, all of which have earned accolades, including preservation by the US Film Registry. In 1960, Hitchcock was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of Fame with two stars for his work in both film and television. He was also the first recipient of the BAFTA Academy Fellowship Award.

*Film* Based on a stage musical of the same name, *Waltzes from Vienna* premiered in March 1934, only three and a half years after the musical's release. Hitchcock said in newspaper interviews that the film gave him many opportunities to work with music in relation to film: "Every cut in the film was worked out on the script before shooting began. But more than that, the musical cuts were worked out too." Despite some small success in British cinemas, Hitchcock would later tell François Truffaut that *Waltzes from Vienna* was the lowest point of his career, and that he only took the project because he needed work. It was the only film Hitchcock would ever base on a musical.

*Background* *Waltzes from Vienna* is relatively unknown outside of Europe, as the musical on which it is based never really took off in America. Similarly, bootleg copies of the film are widespread across Europe, and the only production companies to license official DVD releases are based in the UK and France. Despite the director's own feelings about the film, the British Film Institute still holds and preserves the original negatives alongside several original nitrite film reels. Some film scholars dismiss *Waltzes from Vienna* as a sophomoric cash grab while others note the birth of Hitchcock's unique musical motifs used in the likes of *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Rear Window*, and *Torn Curtain*.

### CINEMATIC NARRATION

*Waltzes from Vienna* is a fairly typical melodrama of the 1930s. A period drama couched in the values of the period, we watch a simple romantic struggle form as Johann Strauss the Younger must choose between his love of music and his love for a woman. Most notable in this film is the use of large crowds. Even early in his career, Hitchcock was skilled at instructing large groups to do as he wished and utilizing clever camera setups and cuts to make the action look seamless. The major events of the film center around large public performances, and—while his own views of the film are self-deprecating—Hitchcock manages to stage several large performances that look natural. In many ways, the film is a triumph, even if the director and many film scholars dismiss it.

### SYNOPSIS

The film begins in Vienna on a comic note with firemen racing to Ebezeder's Café but facing multiple delays including a brass band that cannot hear their ringing bells. When they finally make it to the café, Schani Strauss and his betrothed, Resi, are utterly oblivious to the danger, singing a love duet Schani has written for Resi. This song catches the ear of Countess Helga von Stahl, who shops at a dressmaker next door. Leopold pushes his way up the fireman's ladder to save Resi even though the fire is out, and in his comic rush to rescue her, her skirt is tangled on the ladder, forcing her to duck into the dress shop to find a new one. Schani follows and encounters the countess who offers him patronage to arrange her poetry to music. He accepts.

While working with the countess, Schani lays the foundations for what will become his famed Blue Danube Waltz. The countess makes several amorous advances to Schani, and he struggles to remain true to Resi. Trying to prove his commitment to his fiancé, he begins learning to run the bakery, but even there he finds inspiration for his waltz in the movements of the bakers and the sounds of the machinery. After some time, Schani's waltz is completed and he plays it for both Resi and the countess. Both are given what they believe to be the original score, each dedicated to them. This offends Resi and inspires the countess to create a scheme with the music publisher Anton Drexler to let Schani take over his father's coming performance at a well-loved beer garden.

At the beer garden, Schani promises to work for Resi and her father, but when the countess gives him the opportunity to conduct his new waltz and the crowd begins impatiently chanting for 'Strauss,' Schani takes the stage and stuns the audience. His father appears during the performance and is offended that his son has taken his place, telling him the truth and chiding him. Schani runs home to his apartment and the countess follows to comfort him. There, they share a kiss, but the count is already on his way, convinced his wife is being unfaithful. Resi runs to the apartment and arrives just after the count, cleverly trading places with the countess and defusing the situation. The film ends with the elder Johann Strauss accepting his son's talent, signing his name with the addendum "Senior" in a fan's autograph book.

## CHARACTERS

*Johann "Schani" Strauss, the Younger* – famed composer of the Romantic period

*Resi Ebezeder* – Schani's fiancé

*Johann Strauss, the Elder* – famed composer of the Romantic period, Schani's father

*Countess Helga von Stahl* – a lover of music, Schani's patron

*Prince Gustav, The Count* – the countess' jealous husband

*Ebezeder* – Resi's father, a baker

*Anton Drexler* – a publisher of music and friend to the countess

*Leopold* – a baker at Ebezeder's shop, Resi's jealous friend

## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### Schani

Frequently called by his childhood nickname to differentiate himself from his father, Schani is the younger Johann Strauss of classical music fame, known best for his *Blue Danube Waltz*. Young Schani is trapped in a love rectangle with Resi, the Countess, and music. He seeks recognition for his musical compositions, but his father's pride and Resi's demands hold him back.

*Thoughtless* In a comic contradiction, Schani's thoughtless behavior towards others comes from his deep thought about musical composition. Not only do we see Schani stumble into people on the street while lost in thought, nearly toppling a workman's ladder and overturning a pram, he also creates distance between himself and the Ebezeders by ignoring them while they show him the ropes of the bakery he is to take over. He also often makes extra work for the other bakers, leaving things in the wrong place or eschewing work because he's inspired to write part of his waltz.

*Playful* Schani is childlike in his behavior, especially with Resi. He loves to sing and dance with her. His playfulness comes out in his distaste for work, an area of his life where we never see him smiling. Some of his most playful behavior comes out at the film's end, when he shows up at the beer garden in his finest suit only to steal a baker's hat from a passing worker and claim that he's come to work to prove his love to Resi. His playfulness makes him fickle, and when he's given the opportunity to conduct his *Blue Danube Waltz* with his father's orchestra, he almost immediately gives up working for Resi's father to do so. His penchant for fun and passion is a double-edged sword in his relationship with Resi.

### Resi

Resi is the daughter of a famous baker, Mr. Ebezeder, and an aspiring young singer. She is in love with Schani, and they hope to marry as soon as he has found work. She grows jealous of his passion for music and seeks to drive a wedge between Schani and the countess even before she becomes his patron.

*Cold* Resi, like many of Hitchcock's leading ladies, has a cold temperament. When she's pleased with Schani, she treats him well, but the second she becomes jealous or perturbed by something he says or does, she shuts down and begins giving ultimatums. It doesn't take much for her to turn off the flow of affection, often starting fights with Schani over his deep passion for the arts because she perceives his passion as a threat to their own love. In the end, it's Resi's cold demeanor pushing her to controlling behavior that drives the young couple apart.

*Spiteful* Resi is quick to spit venom. Her first interactions with the countess are loaded with spite, even before the young woman realizes that the rich woman has an interest in Schani. Her spite shows up when she starts fights with Schani about his desire to be a composer time and time again. Because he is unwilling to be a simple baker for the rest of his life, she withdraws and withholds her affections, forcing him to promise that he will give up his dreams for her. Despite her attitude, she swallows her pride at the film's end to help save Schani's life when the count goes to his apartment to challenge him to a duel for the countess' affections. We see that while spite drives a lot of her actions throughout the film, there is a limit to her commitment to these feelings.

### **The Countess**

The countess is married to an Austrian prince and spends her days writing poetry. Her desire to set one of these poems to music leads her to Schani after the elder Strauss refuses to work on an arrangement. She becomes infatuated with the young musician, betraying her marriage to the count.

*Planner* The countess is incredibly forward-thinking, especially when it comes to her pranks. When she cannot convince Strauss the Elder to arrange her poetry to music, she turns to his son, an aspiring songwriter much more malleable to her desires. She uses her planning skills to give Schani a chance to broadcast his new waltz to the tastemakers of Vienna at the beer garden. Tricking Strauss into playing for an influential audience at the count's manor by playing on his pride, she allows Schani a chance to play his new *Blue Danube Waltz* with his father's own orchestra, cementing his fame.

*Witty* The countess has a quick wit. She often has the last word, leaving those around her speechless with frustration or anger when they choose to challenge or insult her. This happens first to Resi, who leaves in a huff when the countess has a retort for everything she says. The count is so enamored with his wife's verses that he puts his reputation on the line trying to get the Elder Strauss to arrange them. Her wit shows in her planning, as she knows just how to manipulate the people around her, playing to Strauss' pride, Resi's coldness, and Schani's passion for music to get what she wants.

### **The Count**

Gustav is an Austrian prince with a penchant for violence who loves the arts. He is quick to anger and even quicker to demand a duel. This behavior puts Schani in danger when the countess meets with him in the privacy of his apartment.

*Angry* The count is quick to anger. He shows this often in the way he treats his servants, kicking and slapping them when he is displeased and shouting abuse at them for simple mistakes or misunderstandings. He also has a reputation for dueling anyone and everyone for every little offense. The count is often seen fighting duels for the countess' honor in his dreams.

*Clueless* Where the countess is shrewd and plotting, the count is utterly clueless. He has no idea that his wife has any romantic interest in Schani until Strauss publicly humiliates him at the beer garden. Even then, he has to have this information confirmed by Mr. Drexler. While his anger drives him to confront and

even beat Schani before challenging him to a duel, the illusion that the countess was never at the young musician's apartment is enough to make him change his tune completely.

## **Johann Strauss**

The elder Johann Strauss was known for his work at the beginning of the Romantic period of classical music. He is Schani's dismissive father, driven to jealousy by his son's talent and passion. His orchestra becomes central to the countess' plot to publicize Schani's *Blue Danube Waltz*.

*Prideful* Strauss the Elder is incredibly prideful, especially when it comes to his son. While many men would be happy to have their son overtake them and carry on the family name in their chosen profession, Strauss becomes wildly jealous when Schani shows a penchant for composition. He accuses his son of trying to outshine him, to make him a footnote. While this fear is somewhat valid given Strauss' age, it is partly comic and partly tragic behavior. It seems short-sighted to give your son your name only to abuse him when he finds interest and success in the same field as you.

*Uncaring* This behavior shows mostly in Strauss' interactions with his son. He is genuinely abusive toward the young man for having a passion for music and composition. Strauss doesn't care that he's driving his son away; in fact, he encourages Schani to leave on multiple occasions, hoping this behavior will drive his son to be more submissive. When his son is triumphant in his direction of the Blue Danube, Strauss responds to the young man by insulting and diminishing him. He doesn't care who he hurts or steps on, so long as his pride and honor are intact.

## **THEMES**

**Love** These two themes intermingle throughout *Waltzes from Vienna* in a way that is difficult to separate. The complexity of romance and love are explored in Schani and Resi's relationship. Resi demands that Schani give up his passion, music and composition, to take a day job at her father's bakery to help preserve her family name. Schani, because he loves Resi so much, promises to do just this. The promise is too much for him to keep. Resi paradoxically despises the passion that allows Schani to write beautiful love songs about her. This feeling intensifies when the countess offers her patronage to the young musician and—afraid that Schani will leave her—Resi overreacts, trying to fight a romance that Schani would not allow to exist. Fearful that she will lose the man she loves, Resi manages to push Schani away, making him feel untrusted and misunderstood. Her attempts to drive Schani's passion for music out of him drive him away from her more: At the end of the film, he admits to the countess that he'd rather be without Resi if it meant he could still write music. There, the passion between them collides. The countess, while she loves her husband, is sick of his overly macho penchant for dueling in her honor, and she has become infatuated with Schani's youthful sensitivity. In the film's last moments, Schani admits to Resi that he still loves her and hopes she'll take him back, but—while she does save him from the count—it does seem that Resi has finally given up on their love. She will never be the first among Schani's passions so long as music exists.

**Pride** We see this theme mostly through Johann Strauss Senior, but it subtly permeates the entire film. Mr. Ebezeder and his daughter are both prideful of their bakery's heritage, although Schani finds four generations an awfully short legacy. The count's pride is so overwhelming that every night he seems to dream of dueling for his wife's honor, though at some times, this is played up as overly macho for comic effect. Strauss' pride is so ever-present that it becomes a frequent conversation between the others: "He'd never allow it" and "No one can make him do anything" are nearly as frequent as "hello." Although he despises his father's jealousy, Schani is willful in his own way. It is a fight with Resi about his passion for music and his desire to live his life as he sees fit that leads to the disintegration of their relationship.

**Music** Based on a musical about classical music legends, *Waltzes from Vienna* often explores music not only in the film's soundtrack but in the more philosophical and cultural sense as well. Hitchcock leans heavily on leitmotif, especially since the *Blue Danube Waltz* is one of the most recognizable pieces of classical composition across the world. This connection with such a popular piece of music makes the memory of the film much more impactful. The characters often discuss music, its value, its legacy, and

how it should and should not be. The film begins with a march blocking the path of a fire carriage, lampooning society's preoccupation with music, especially that which was popular at the time. The idea that Strauss could lose his musical legacy to his son enrages him, but at the film's end, he realizes he will be a part of his son's legacy, finally accepting his role as Strauss the Elder.

**Class** This simple theme arises early, as it is the countess' position and wealth that allow her to attempt to help Schani reach for stardom. The aristocracy of Vienna was rivaled by few in their lavish displays of wealth, while for middle and lower-class people, life was much more simpler. We see this clearly, especially in Schani. While he is not afraid to work, he is often portrayed as unhappy in labor, distracted by the compositions in his head. He is always smiling when he plays the piano or writes his waltz, however, and he most often does this in the homes and offices of the wealthy. We see a yearning for 'the good life' in Schani that he seems at odds about: The love of his life is a middle-class baker while those who support his passion are wealthy and politically powerful. In some ways, class drives the conflict of the film. In the movie's last scenes, the countess apologizes for her meddling, seeing just how much pain and trouble she's put young Schani through and how it has changed him forever. He is no longer the innocent youth that first caught her eye.

**Appearance vs. Reality** This is the slow-burn theme of the film. Everything changes for the characters as the film moves on, and the cracks in the facades of their lives begin to show. Leopold becomes unable to hide his jealousy of Schani. This spurs him to create a situation in which Schani will either earn infamy or die at the hands of the count. Because of this, Schani is trapped in a compromising situation between the count and the countess, and Resi appears to save them. Despite having given up on her relationship with Schani, she doesn't want to see him killed in a duel with the jealous and vengeful count. She trades places with the countess, allowing the countess to pretend like she's just arrived, tricking the count and the crowd of Schani's well-wishers. The reality of the situation is that the Countess was making an advance on Schani: They were locked in a kiss only moments before the count's arrival.

**Conflict** There are many conflicts on screen such as the count and his servants, Strauss' arrogance and fear of his son's talent, and Resi's instantaneous dislike of the countess, but the conflict that drives the plot to its conclusion is Schani's internal conflict. Like many young men, he has many desires, but some are at odds with each other. His plan is to settle down and marry Resi; however, she and her father insist on his taking over the bakery and carrying on the family name. Schani doesn't care particularly for either of these things, but he acquiesces in hopes of keeping Resi happy. Likewise, his dream of becoming an accomplished composer puts him at odds with his jealous father. Strauss would see his son remain subservient, literally playing second fiddle in his orchestra. But like father, like son: Schani cannot tamp down his own pride and passion for the sake of his father. Unlike his father, however, Schani wishes that there could be some compromise in all the conflicts that swirl around him. Unable to find that middle ground, he follows his strongest love to fame with the countess' help.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How does the use of musical motifs compare to their use in Hitchcock's other films?

Hitchcock only shot two biographical films. In what way does *Waltzes from Vienna* resemble *The Wrong Man*? In what ways does it differ?

In what ways does class and aristocracy play into the plot of *Waltzes from Vienna*?

Hitchcock said this film marked the lowest point of his career: What is your opinion?

## PLOT

**Fire Brigade-** A bugle blares as a fire carriage clatters through the streets of Vienna. The driver puffs on his pipe, controlling the horses with one hand. Barely audible over the cacophony, the driver asks, "Where's the fire?" A baker shouts back, "Ebezeder's Café!" He has to repeat himself several times so the driver can hear. Despite the noise and the clatter of hooves, the fire brigade is drowned out by a brass band marching and playing in the street. They can't make it through, so they simply follow. At Ebezeder's Café, workers and patrons scramble to remove tables, chairs, and other items from the café, the owner, Mr. Ebezeder, overseeing the comic affair. The patrons seat themselves and continue their meals al fresco as if nothing has happened. Finally, the fire brigade arrives, flanked by the brass band, and begins setting up to douse the flames.



**Water pressure-** Outside, the fire brigade and café workers struggle with the ladder and other fire-fighting equipment, fighting back a crowd of onlookers. The fire brigade works hard at the pump, lifting and pushing down a long lever. "Stand back," a man with a hose says as he aims it at the café. A pitiable dribble of water emerges before the flow stops. The café workers, who had moved out of the way, move back into the hose's range when a sudden burst of water emerges, soaking Mr. Ebezeder. The baker laughs before scrambling up the nearby ladder to get away from Mr. Ebezeder and rescue Resi upstairs. He surprises Resi and Schani, informing them there's a fire and that he's there to rescue Resi. The woman scoffs, unimpressed, calling him Leopold and crossing the room to look out of the window. Leopold grabs Resi by the waist and begins forcing her out the window.



**Music lesson-** Through the window, Resi, Ebezeder's daughter, and Schani Strauss, his soon-to-be son-in-law, sing a duet, unaware of the commotion outside. Next door, a group of models at a dressmaker's shop stares out the window at the couple in admiration. They chat about how they wish they could be singing with Schani when a well-dressed woman enters the room, asking, "Who is that man?" The girls scramble to look busy, but one stops to answer: "Herr Johann Strauss, m'lady." "He's very handsome," the rich woman says, looking out the window. Back in the upstairs of the café, Resi realizes that Schani has dedicated the song to her, thanking him, before sighing that his songs are never published. Schani replies that he would be more proud to be her husband than to have his songs published.



**In need of a skirt-** Schani puts up a fight, telling Leopold that "if anyone is going to rescue Resi, it will be me." Resi asks them both to stop arguing, telling them to take the stairs together. "No, you've got to be rescued," Leopold says, finally pushing Resi out the window. "The stairs are full of smoke." Schani doesn't believe him and begins to fight again, but Resi insists that he save the sheet music as Leopold drags her down the ladder. "I'd be a lot safer if you'd let me climb down myself!" Resi shouts at Leopold as he struggles to carry her down on his shoulder. As he carries her, her skirt gets caught on a nail in the ladder, and with a firm tug, he pulls the girl free of her clothing. The crowd below laughs as Resi





scrambles into the nearby dress shop after being denied entry into the café by the firemen. "Quick!" she says to the dressmaker, "Give me a skirt, please!" The dressmaker scoffs, offended by Resi's lack of "proper attire," especially in front of the countess. Outside, Schani fights through the crowd to the dressmaker's shop, Resi's skirt tucked under his arm. "The fire is out," the leader of the fire brigade announces from the top window of the café. The crowd cheers and the brass band strikes up a tune as Mr. Ebezeder passes out food to the celebrating crowd.

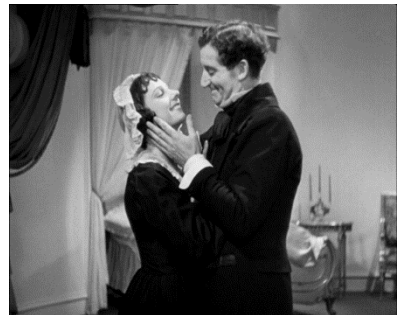
**"So little fire in the world"**- Timidly, Schani makes his way into the dressmaker's shop through a back entrance with Resi's skirt. The models, dressed in their underclothes, giggle as they tease the young man. One girl takes the skirt from him to give to Resi. The dressmaker announces her next model and is surprised when Schani comes darting from the back room. She rushes into the back room to scold the girls, leaving Schani alone with the countess. She asks if he's the one she heard singing in the house on fire. He replies that he is, but the house is no longer ablaze. "Such a pity," the countess says. "So little fire in the world, don't you think?" Schani is confused and she clarifies that she means passion, like the song he was playing, inviting him to sit. Schani complains about his father's low opinion of his music, and the countess asks him to set her poetry to music. Resi emerges from the back room, now dressed, and is struck with jealousy seeing Schani talking with the countess. She exchanges some cold words with both of them before leaving in a huff.



**Morning**- Light music plays as several servants jog around a house in the early morning hours. "Your bath, m'lady," says one as she opens a bedroom door for a parade of servants with a tub and hot water. A man, the count, tosses and turns in bed, muttering "engarde" among other dueling phrases. A servant watches, concerned, but the countess passes by, explaining that her husband is "dreaming he's fighting a duel." He awakes and tells the countess he was fighting for her honor in his dream, proudly proclaiming, "I got my man." Another parade of servants passes through the room with another tub and load of hot water. The count goes through his comic morning routine, lighting a cigar and looking at his tongue in the mirror. Near the mirror, he finds a poem lying on the vanity table.



**"Lovely verses"**- "It is only you that I love?" the count reads in shocked tones, rushing to confront the countess, the poem's author, about what man she was writing such words to. "I was writing about the river Danube," she says from her chambers. "Only turn the page over if you don't believe me." Muttering as he reads, he soon apologizes, adding, "They are lovely verses!" A servant passes, informing the count that his bathwater is getting cold. From their separate baths, the count and countess have a conversation through two servants, who take the moments out of sight of their masters to exchange kisses and embraces as well as relay comic messages. After his bath, the count suggests that Johann Strauss Senior be contacted to set his wife's verses to music.



**Orchestra**- In the basement of an orchestra hall, the count's servant talks with a man about giving the verses to Johann Strauss for arrangement. The orchestra practices in the background. Strauss conducts from a stand while Schani plays second fiddle. He dismisses the orchestra, telling them to return tomorrow for more rehearsal. While the musicians leave, he overhears his son discussing his plans to write a waltz. Strauss challenges his son, repeatedly saying that Schani insults him through his thoughts and deeds. Schani, trying to be a good

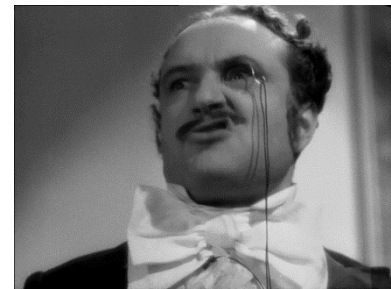


son, denies this, but his father refuses to back down. Their argument escalates, and Strauss challenges his son to play one of his compositions for the remaining orchestra. Schani does, but his father only insults him, saying, "Such masterful contempt for form. March forward indeed." Schani takes his violin, puts on his coat, and storms out of the orchestra pit, saying he's not coming back. A man approaches with the verses sent by the count for arrangement, but Strauss scoffs at them, reading them in a voice laden with contempt.

**Confidence-** In the parlor of the countess' home, Schani plays a working version of the waltz on a grand piano while she stands behind him, listening. Schani stands, saying it's no good; his father's mockery has left him without confidence. The countess asks him to play the song Schani wrote for Resi, using it as an opportunity to help Schani restore his confidence by asking him to play and sing it with her. The scene fades away as they sing, Resi seated on a bench somewhere singing in the countess's voice. The camera returns to the countess' home where she and Schani finish singing the duet together. "I told you it was good, Schani," the countess says, grinning. "When you say things like that, I really begin to believe in myself," Schani says, suddenly energetic. "Now I know I can write your song."



**"No good"**- The count arrives home and addresses a servant, asking, "Her ladyship is at home?" "She has a young man with her," the servant reports before continuing. "Herr Strauss sent this back... Herr Strauss said it was no good." The count is insulted, taking his anger out on the servant. Hearing the commotion on the steps outside, the countess asks Schani to play something. The count charges into the room, throwing his hat at Schani who plays at the piano. The countess now sits across the room. She turns to face her husband, saying, "Gustav! What a surprise. This is Herr Strauss." "That nincompoop!" the count replies, turning to see Schani. "Oh, I beg your pardon. You are not Strauss, the bandmaster?" "Bandmaster!" the countess giggles. "His father would like to hear that." The count is overjoyed to learn that the name 'Strauss' will still appear on the song bearing his wife's verses.



**Future plans-** Lost in his compositions, Schani makes his way to Ebezeder's Café, bumping into people and objects all the way there. Inside, Resi greets him passionately, rushing to embrace him. "Aren't you going to kiss me?" she asks coyly. Schani asks if anyone is watching. "Even I have my eyes closed," Resi replies. Schani leans in to kiss her lips and the women washing the floor rise to look in comic unison. "I've told Father we're in love with each other," Resi says excitedly after the kiss. "He asked how you were going to support me." "I can start off in bread and milk, same as he did," Schani jokes. They begin discussing the future and how passing the bakery on to Schani would be a very serious thing. During the conversation, Schani is distracted by how to arrange the countess' poem. He shows the words to Resi, who recommends that he use a musical phrase from a waltz he was composing before that she liked, humming the recognizable rising melody of the *Blue Danube Waltz*. Schani reacts happily, pulling Resi into his arms and kissing her.





**Scolding-** At that moment, Mr. Ebezeder enters the room, saying, “So this is what you call work.” He bids the couple to come to him before scolding his daughter for her immorality. He then insults artists and musicians to Schani’s face. Mr. Ebezeder tells Schani to leave, but Resi says he’s come to visit the bakery as he plans to take it over after marrying Resi. Mr. Ebezeder’s mood changes and he excitedly offers to give Schani a tour. Schani begins to complain, but Resi speaks up, saying Schani’s been too bashful to ask before shoving him after her father. With a nervous look back to Resi, Schani follows Mr. Ebezeder into the basement bakery.



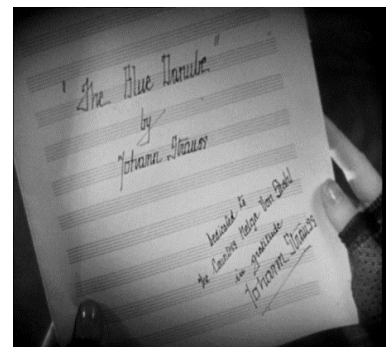
**Bakery tour-** Bakers rush to and fro, carrying trays of baked goods and sacks of flour. Mr. Ebezeder leads Schani around, showing him the activities and different stations, but the young man’s mind is still on his music. The first notes of the *Blue Danube Waltz* play while Schani conducts with a finger, deep in thought. Ebezeder shows him the products, but Schani’s attention is grabbed repeatedly by the workers throwing bread into sacks and working with machines, their rhythm inspiring him to continue the composition in his mind. Slowly but surely, the full composition of the *Blue Danube Waltz* comes together, played instrument by instrument until the spinning of the dough mixing machine inspires him enough that we hear the full orchestra playing the waltz at speed, Schani singing the words to himself.



**“All arranged”-** Schani dances up the stairs to the café where he tells Resi, “It’s all arranged!” “Our marriage?” she asks. “No!” Schani replies. “The song! I’ve arranged the verses, all of them!” He begins to sing the verses for her, but she tells him he mustn’t sing in the café. When Schani tries to lead her outside, she pulls back, saying she can’t leave the shop. “What does the shop matter?” Schani asks. “Well, it matters as much as your old song,” Resi quips. Schani turns to leave, saying he’s going back to the “man who wrote the verses.” The scene fades to black on Resi clutching her hands in distress: Is she losing the man she loves?



**Dedication-** The countess stands next to Schani at the piano as he plays the recognizable final notes of the *Blue Danube Waltz*. Finished, he looks up at her expectantly, and she surprises him, giggling as she pulls him into a kiss. “Oh dear,” she says immediately. “I suppose I shouldn’t have done that. It’s your wonderful music. I hope you didn’t mind.” Schani smiles, saying that he doesn’t. She asks him to play more and he begins the second movement. The scene fades out and back in, Resi now in the countess’ position. “This is the best song you’ve ever written!” she says, pulling Schani close to her by his shoulders. Since she was the one who gave him the first melodic line, she asks him to dedicate it to her. When his response is flat, she wonders why. She crosses the room to retrieve a quill, passing it to Schani and smiling as he dedicates the song to her. With a swipe, the scene changes to the countess’ abode where the same sheet music is now dedicated to the countess. She rolls the music and tucks it under her arm before being replaced by Resi once again, who tucks her own version of the *Blue Danube* under her arm as she leaves her home.



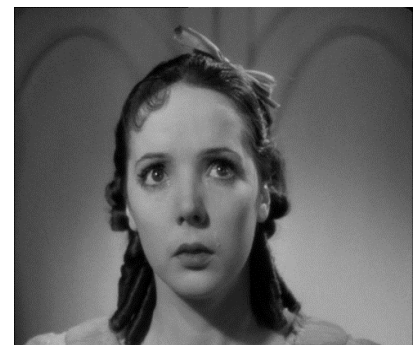
**A clever plan-** At the offices of Anton Drexler, music publisher, the countess and Drexler stand, discussing Schani's waltz. "I will publish it, of course, if you ask me to," Drexler says. The countess demands more, saying he must get Schani's father to play it. "My lady," Drexler replies, "you know to what lengths I would go for you and his excellency, but no man living can make Strauss do anything." Realizing it's Strauss' vanity, not Drexler's effort, that makes the request impossible, the countess begins dreaming up a scheme to allow Schani to conduct the *Blue Danube Waltz* with his father's orchestra. Drexler comments that he's heard rumors of the countess being a dangerous woman and they share a laugh. "Not to you, Drexler," she says with a smile.



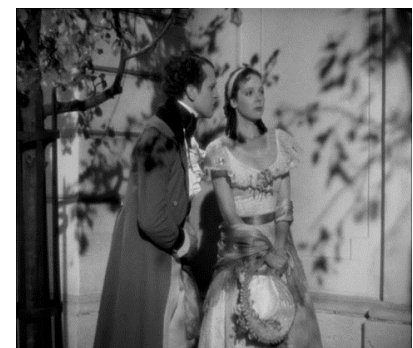
**A plea to Strauss-**In the rehearsal hall just a room away from the countess, Strauss leads his orchestra. In the nearby doorway waits Resi, the *Blue Danube* clutched in her hands. A man approaches her and asks to take the sheet music to Strauss instead of her, but she insists she be the one to deliver it. The man leaves the room and runs into Schani as he ascends the stairs. "Have you come to see your father?" the man asks, and Schani says he's come to meet with Mr. Drexler and the countess. In the rehearsal hall, Resi rushes forward to hand Strauss the waltz when it appears he's done. Instead, he begins conducting double time. He reaches back to pull a handkerchief from his pocket, and Resi tries to slip the song into his hand, failing. The violinists grin at her antics, and Resi stops, growing serious. Strauss notices the strange behavior of his musicians and turns to face Resi. "What is it you want?" he says, gruffly. Resi asks him to play the waltz with his orchestra. Strauss insults his son before calling the waltz rubbish, and Resi reacts by throwing the master score on his stand into the air. As if making a point, Strauss begins conducting again without the score and Resi rushes from the hall.



**"My song"-** In the next room, tears in her eyes, Resi tilts her head: A woman sings the *Blue Danube* while someone else plays the piano. "My song..." Resi says, crossing the hall to the door from where the music emanates. She enters to find Schani and the countess. They stop playing and singing, looking at Resi. "I see the countess has to look over your shoulder," Resi says, spite tinting her voice. She crosses the room and throws her copy of the waltz in front of them, saying, "Perhaps another copy would be more convenient?" The countess notices the different dedications, spurring Resi to look at the copy Schani is playing from. It bears the countess' name in its dedication. Resi leaves, and after speaking quickly with the countess, Schani follows. Drexler enters the room and the countess complains about the young couple's foolishness before sitting down to play the waltz for Drexler before she "puts it on the fire."



**"Resi, please"-** On the streets outside, Schani catches up with Resi, begging for a chance to explain. She brushes him off and walks away, but she stops when Schani promises to give up music for her. "You mean more to me than ambition or anything," he continues. "Schani," Resi says, gripping the breast of his coat, "I love you so much. I've been so miserable." She pulls him close and they kiss. After, Schani says they should go tell her father. Back at Drexler's, the countess plays the final notes of the waltz. "My dear lady," Drexler says resolutely, "you cannot burn that."



**A note from the countess-** Sometime later, a woman enters the café with a note for Schani. Resi takes it, asking who it's from. "My lady asked me not to mention her name," the woman says haughtily. Resi knows it must be the countess. She insults the woman before taking the note to Schani who enters the café with a tray of pastries on his head. Schani opens the note and begins to read it to Resi, but she says she doesn't care what it says. Schani tucks the note into his belt without a word and Resi spits, "Oh, so it's all a big secret?" Sighing, Schani says that it's not a secret and tells Resi the countess would like him to attend the St. Steven's festival: "She says she has a wonderful surprise for me." Resi gives him an ultimatum, saying if he goes, she'll never speak to him again. "Until you said that," Schani replies, "I had no idea of going. I won't be dictated to." Resi starts causing a scene and Schani leaves with a sigh. Mr. Ebezeder enters and informs his daughter they've been hired to cater the St. Steven's festival.



**Tea-** The count snores on a nearby sofa while the countess takes tea with Mr. Drexler. He comments that he believed she'd given up on Schani, but the countess says she refuses to let his talent go to waste. He makes a joke about how she's jealous about the young man wasting his talents on "a confectioner's daughter," and the countess takes offense. He explains that he was joking, continuing, "If I did think so, I should keep it to myself. It would be no help to the young musician to be shot by a jealous Prince Gustav." "You've given me an idea," the countess says. "The Prince shall help us with our scheme. He's taken a violent dislike to old Strauss. He'd love to join in a joke against him." She rouses her husband and invites him in on her little conspiracy, the camera pulling away as the sound of conversation drones.



**"Forty minutes to spare"**- "Hello, Johann," Mr. Drexler says to Strauss sometime later. He responds happily, glad to see his old friend. They make small talk about the weather before Drexler says he's come to drive Strauss to Prince Gustav. Strauss says he's not interested, turning to don a coat. Drexler deftly grabs Strauss's pocket watch, turning the hands back while saying, "You've got plenty of time! Why it's only half past seven!" Still uninterested in seeing the count, Drexler sweetens the pot, saying that Prince Gustav wants to speak about a special order from the emperor. Hearing this, Strauss changes his tune. "Very well, we've got forty minutes to spare. At the count's manor, a butler leads Strauss upstairs. When he's gone, the countess appears and leads Drexler to her carriage.



**Beer garden-** The beer garden is awash with activity and light as the high society of Vienna prepares to hear Strauss' new march. The camera pans in a perfect circle, showing us everything. A young woman approaches the bandstand and asks the man there if he's Mr. Strauss: She's looking for an autograph. He tells her he's running late. Behind the service counter, Mr. Ebezeder celebrates the amount of beer they've sold while Leopold and Resi clean beer mugs. Resi asks Leopold if he's seen Schani, and responds spitefully. Resi smiles and tells him he'll find a girl someday. Leopold responds that if he hasn't got a chance with her, he doesn't have a chance with anyone else. Soon, the countess arrives, saying that she'll look for Schani to Mr. Drexler.





**To work-** Back at the count's manor, a woman asks Strauss to play a waltz. Strauss declines, but changes his mind when the count whispers, "She has great influence with the emperor!" He sits and begins to play. Back at the beer garden, the orchestra begins seating and Schani arrives. Resi drops a stack of plates when she sees him. Stooping to pick them up, Schani approaches her. "I can manage, thank you," she says coldly. "But I've come to help you!" Schani says, smiling. He claims that he's come ready to work and show his devotion to her. To prove it, he steals a chef's hat from a passing baker and puts it on his head. Resi apologizes to him and he promises to keep away from the countess. Mr. Ebezeder confronts Schani and Resi says he's finally made up his mind before instructing Schani to pick up some dirty dishes from a nearby table.



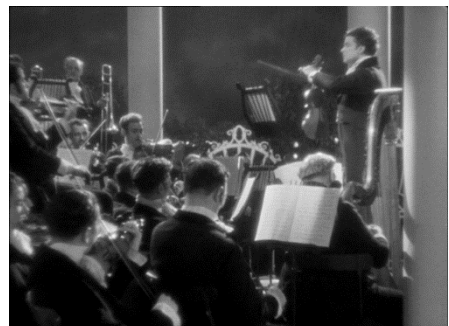
**Music or confectionery-** "I've never seen the master so late before," a musician comments to a bassist in the orchestra, "and I've been with him over twenty years." "Where's Strauss?" someone says in the audience. "I didn't come here to drink all evening." At the count's manor, Strauss sits at the piano, playing a waltz for the party. He looks at his watch, concerned. The complaints at the beer garden become louder, and the countess looks at Drexler, nervous: Has their plan backfired? Drexler calls Schani over, and the countess explains the situation partially. "This is *the* moment of your life," she says. "You're to go at once and conduct your Blue Danube." She lies, saying his father is giving him a chance. Mr. Drexler says he's rehearsed the Blue Danube with Strauss' orchestra.



**"We want Strauss!"-** The patrons of the beer garden begin banging on the tables and chanting "We want Strauss!" The countess and Drexler try to convince Schani to take the bandstand. "I must speak to Resi first," Schani says. Resi looks across the garden and sees Schani talking to the countess. She smiles, but it fades quickly as Schani reaches up and dramatically removes the chef's hat before walking briskly to the orchestra. Resi runs after him, but the countess stops her, saying, "Don't go after him now!" "From the very beginning," Resi says, "you've made up your mind to take him away from me." "Yes, I would like to take him away from you," the countess responds, "But not in the way you mean. If he listens to you now, he'll never amount to anything." "You needn't worry," Resi spits back. "After tonight, I'm finished with him. You can have him. His music, his love. Everything."



**Blue Danube-** On the bandstand, Schani begins conducting the Blue Danube. As the song begins, the audience seems to lean in, entranced by the music. All is silent as the music pauses before the first movement begins. The countess and Drexler smile from their table. Somewhere in the crowd, Resi watches with tears in her eyes. Slowly, she begins to smile instead. Standing by the dance floor, a crowd of couples sways to the rhythm. Eventually, a pair takes to the floor, spinning. One by one, more couples follow until the entire dance floor is a sea of movement. As the final movement begins, Strauss arrives and is shocked to see Schani standing in front of his orchestra. Schani lowers his arms and faces the crowd. They explode in applause, giving him a standing ovation. Schani invites the orchestra to stand and bow before walking out into the adoring crowd. His father watches from the wings, disapproving.



**"They're not calling for you"**- Schani reaches Resi.

"Congratulations," she says coldly before walking away. Schani stops her and confronts her about her tone, and she responds, "Tonight I've learned what I should have known all along: That your way and mine can never be the same... Go back to her... She can make you a great man." "Strauss! Strauss!" the crowd chants as Schani's father enters the shot. "Who planned this with you?" he demands of his son. "They told me it was arranged with your permission," replies Schani, but his father refuses to believe him. Drexler approaches and tells Schani the crowd wants to hear the waltz again. Not wanting to offend his father any further, Schani simply shakes his head. Strauss whips around to face Drexler and says, "That is still my orchestra! Listen to the people calling for me." "I beg your pardon, Herr Strauss," Drexler says somberly, "They're not calling for you." Cries of "We want Strauss" grow clearer in the temporary silence. "They're for your son," Drexler concludes. The elder Strauss begins complaining about being overtaken by Schani. "The *late* Strauss and his *illustrious* son," he says before storming away. "Play for them, then, the brainless idiots! I won't!"



**Gossip**- Conflicted, Schani begins to make his way back to the bandstand, but he pauses in front of the service table where Leopold nurses a beer. They lock eyes, and Schani asks, "Where's Resi?" "Gone," Leopold replies. "Home." After Schani rushes off, another worker comments to Leopold, "Resi hasn't gone home." "Well, I know that," Leopold says, a drunken edge to his voice. Drexler intercepts Schani by the gate and invites him back to his office, but Schani is set on finding Resi and trying to work things out between them. He leaves, prying himself from a crowd of adoring fans. In Drexler's office, the countess asks where Schani lives, but Drexler doesn't know. She gets his address from Leopold and rushes off to find Schani. After she's gone, Resi approaches Leopold. "You'd better go and join them," he says, tauntingly, "Schani and the countess." Resi says she doesn't care. The count finally arrives with his entourage. Strauss approaches and, as politely as possible, complains about being tricked by the countess. His facade drops when he says, "Her greatest masterpiece is the way she's made a fool out of you." He tells the count that she's gone to visit Schani.



**Racing home**- After Drexler confirms what Strauss has said about the countess and Schani, the count confronts Leopold, grabbing him by the front of his shirt and demanding to know where his wife is. Leopold makes the mistake of taunting the count: "Are you sure you want to know?" The count throws him and demands to know Schani's address. Resi appears, begging Leopold not to tell the count, but Leopold tells him what he knows. Resi slaps him while the count walks away. "I'll never forgive you! Never!" she shouts before running away. The count barks orders to his carriage driver before jumping inside the carriage. A montage follows: The countess is welcomed into Schani's apartment, the count's carriage speeds down the empty roads, and Resi rushes to warn Schani about the count's arrival.





**The countess' apology-** At Schani's apartment, the countess sits, fiddling with a handkerchief. "I had to come here to tell you how sorry I am," she begins. "I meant to help you. But instead, I've only hurt you, haven't I? Would you forgive me?" Schani counters the apology with his own, saying it's ungrateful for him not to thank her. "I shouldn't have interfered," the countess interrupts. "You were quite happy, working in your bakehouse." "I wasn't really happy," Schani replies. He admits to loving music "too much" before explaining that Resi is no longer interested in him. On the streets, the count's carriage rushes down the streets, and Resi runs as fast as she can. The countess calls Schani "young and unspoiled," musing that he'll be famous when he wakes up tomorrow morning. She then laments that she helped assure he'd never be the same again. Schani thanks her again, kissing her hand. The countess pulls him closer, kissing him passionately.



**The count arrives-** The count jumps from his carriage, barking at the driver to wait for him. The countess and Schani cross to the window after hearing the clatter of horse hooves on the street below while the count climbs the stairs to Schani's apartment. The countess retreats into the bedroom and closes the door just as the count begins beating on the door. Schani begins whistling nonchalantly and approaches the front door, opening it. The count bursts in, asking, "Where is she?" Schani claims he doesn't know what he's talking about, saying that if the count must defend the countess' honor, he must make a formal declaration. The count sits down to mull over how he would like to duel when he notices the countess' scarf. He picks it up and pushes past Schani to run to the bedroom door. Schani puts himself between the count and the door, and a fight breaks out. In the bedroom, the countess cowers. Resi, arriving at the same time as a crowd of well-wishers singing the *Blue Danube Waltz*, climbs the stairs and sees the count struggling with Schani. Thinking quickly, she gets a ladder and trades places with the countess in the bedroom.



**"I thought I'd lost you"**- Hearing the well-wishers growing closer, the count charges out the front door and threatens the crowd with one of Schani's broken chairs. Inside, Resi exits the bedroom and looks at the count, who says, "I beg your pardon." At the same time, the countess climbs up Schani's front steps. "Why Gustav!" she says in mock surprise. "You got here ahead of us. I hope you have offered Mr. Strauss the hearty congratulations he deserves." Away from the others, Resi asks if Schani is alright. He nods timidly. "I'm so glad," she says, grabbing his hand. "All that's happened to me tonight has meant nothing, because I thought I'd lost you," Schani says softly.



**Senior-**The scene cross-fades to Schani's father walking among the empty tables at the beer garden. The girl from before approaches and asks for his autograph. Herr Strauss quickly signs the book and hands it back with a smile, but when the girl turns to leave, he asks for the book again. Opening to his signature, he adds, "Senior." The last notes of the *Blue Danube Waltz* play triumphantly as he leaves and the camera focuses on the empty bandstand.

