



CONCERT PROGRAM VI:

# Schubert Forever, 1829–1995

AUGUST 4 AND 5

Tuesday, August 4, 8:00 p.m., Stent Family Hall, Menlo School

Wednesday, August 5, 8:00 p.m., The Center for Performing Arts at Menlo-Atherton

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As our festival nears the end of Schubert's life on Earth, we pause our journey to celebrate his unparalleled posthumous career. A few prominent musicians recognized Schubert's potential during his lifetime (Robert Schumann was one of them), but it fell to composers and performers of later generations to discover and popularize most of Schubert's music. Concert Program VI pays tribute to an array of distinguished composers whose music connects to Schubert in powerful ways—through lyricism, magical harmonies, drama, and, above all, a reverence for the vocal line as the most human element of music. For both Felix Mendelssohn and André Previn, words were not even needed, and for Brahms, the addition of a singing viola part intensified the vocal experience. John Harbison's haunting evocation of Schubert's last days tells the poignant story of the composer, one week from his death, seeking to improve his art by taking a counterpoint lesson. Tributes to Schubert by Fritz Kreisler and Franz Liszt lead to the sublime Piano Quartet by Robert Schumann, the composer who wept the entire night upon hearing of Schubert's death.

## SPECIAL THANKS

Music@Menlo dedicates these performances to the following individuals with gratitude for their generous support:

August 4: Michael Jacobson and Trine Sorensen

August 5: Laurose and Burton Richter

Franz Schubert (1797–1828).  
*Death and the Maiden* manuscript.  
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## FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Selected *Lieder ohne Worte* (*Songs without Words*)

Book 1, Opus 19b, no. 1 in E Major: *Andante con moto* (1830)

Book 4, Opus 53, no. 3 in g minor: *Gondellied* (1839)

Book 2, Opus 30, no. 1 in E-flat Major: *Andante espressivo* (1830)

Gloria Chien, *piano*

## ANDRÉ PREVIN (b. 1929)

Vocalise for Soprano, Piano, and Cello (1995)

Joëlle Harvey, *soprano*; Hyeyeon Park, *piano*; Keith Robinson, *cello*

## JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897)

*Zwei Gesänge* for Voice, Viola, and Piano, op. 91 (1884)

*Gestillte Sehnsucht* (Rückert) (1884)

*Geistliches Wiegenlied* (Lope de Vega) (1863–1864)

Sara Couden, *contralto*; Arnaud Sussmann, *viola*; Gilbert Kalish, *piano*

## JOHN HARBISON (b. 1938)

*November 19, 1828* for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello (1988)

I. *Introduction: Schubert Crosses into the Next World*

II. *Suite: Schubert Finds Himself in a Hall of Mirrors*

1. *Theme*

2. *Écossaise*

3. *Moment Musicale*

4. *Impromptu*

5. *Valse*

III. *Rondo: Schubert Recalls a Rondo Fragment from 1816*

IV. *Fugue: Schubert Continues the Fugue Subject That Sechter Assigned Him*

Gloria Chien, *piano*; Danbi Um, *violin*; Paul Neubauer, *viola*; Dmitri Atapine, *cello*

## INTERMISSION

## FRITZ KREISLER (1875–1962)

*Rosamunde* Ballet Music (arr. of Schubert's *Rosamunde, Fürstin von Cypern*) (1912)

Benjamin Beilman, *violin*; Hyeyeon Park, *piano*

## FRANZ SCHUBERT/FRANZ LISZT (1811–1886)

*Die Forelle* (D. 550), S. 564 (1846)

Gilles Vonsattel, *piano*

## ROBERT SCHUMANN (1810–1856)

Quartet in E-flat Major for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello, op. 47 (1842)

*Sostenuto assai – Allegro ma non troppo*

*Scherzo: Molto vivace*

*Andante cantabile*

*Finale: Vivace*

Gilles Vonsattel, *piano*; Benjamin Beilman, *violin*; Paul Neubauer, *viola*; Laurence Lesser, *cello*

# Program Notes: Schubert Forever, 1829–1995

Notes on the Program by Patrick Castillo

## FELIX MENDELSSOHN

(Born February 3, 1809, Hamburg; died November 4, 1847, Leipzig)

**Lieder ohne Worte (Songs without Words) for Piano: in E Major, op. 19b, no. 1; in g minor, op. 53, no. 3; in E-flat Major, op. 30, no. 1**

**Composed:** Opus 19 Number 1: December 11, 1830; Opus 53 Number 3: March 14, 1839; Opus 30 Number 1: June 26, 1830

**Published:** Opus 19 Number 1: 1833, Bonn; Opus 53 Number 3: 1841, Bonn; Opus 30 Number 1: 1835, Bonn

**Other works from this period:** *Trois fantaisies ou caprices*, op. 16 (1829); Symphony no. 5 in D Major, op. 107, “Reformation” (1830); *Psalm CXV* in g minor, op. 31 (1830); Piano Concerto no. 1 in g minor, op. 25 (1831); Concert Piece in d minor for Clarinet, Bass Horn, and Piano, op. 113 (1832); Symphony in B-flat Major (1838–1839); Cello Sonata in B-flat Major, op. 45, no. 1 (1838); Fugues for Organ in e minor, C Major, and f minor (1839)

**Approximate duration:** Opus 19 Number 1: 3 minutes; Opus 53 Number 3: 3 minutes; Opus 30 Number 1: 4 minutes

Felix Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Worte*, or *Songs without Words*—of which he composed eight volumes comprising six songs apiece over his career—provide an essential snapshot of **Romanticism**. They are, first and foremost, a paean to the sovereignty of melody. They also reference, in an abstract way, the Romantic generation’s preoccupation with poetry, as reflected in the **lieder** of Schubert, Schumann, and others: Mendelssohn’s *Songs without Words* succeed in capturing the clarity and expressivity of sung texts, but they do so relying solely on musical character, without the aid of poetry. Mendelssohn biographer R. Larry Todd writes that the *Songs without Words* “broached in a different way the ability of music to convey extramusical ideas.” Indeed, Robert Schumann surmised that Mendelssohn originally composed them as songs with words and then withdrew the texts. Todd continues: “The new genre, which blurred the lines between the song and the character piece, later enjoyed great success and became synonymous with Mendelssohnism.”

The first of Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Worte*, **Opus 19b** Number 1, in E major, was composed in 1830. The song’s enchanting melody has earned it the popular nickname (not bestowed by Mendelssohn) “Sweet Remembrance.”

The fourth volume of *Songs without Words*, Opus 53, was published in 1841. The third of this set, in g minor and marked *Gondellied*, demonstrates an entirely different character, exchanging tender lyricism for finger-twisting virtuosity and fiery ***Sturm und Drang***.

The set concludes with the eloquent *Lied ohne Worte* in E-flat Major, op. 30, no. 1.

The influence of Schubert on the entire nineteenth-century lieder tradition cannot be overstated: indeed, it is Schubert who transformed the lied into such a vital medium for Schumann, Brahms, Wolf, and myriad others. But beyond specifically placing the art song medium at the center of the Romantic repertoire, Schubert’s lieder provided the Romantic generation with a model of lyricism and expressive immediacy—as attested to by much of the era’s instrumental music, as well. Mendelssohn’s *Songs without Words*, simply put, are unthinkable without the lieder of Schubert.

## ANDRÉ PREVIN

(Born April 6, 1929, Berlin)

**Vocalise for Soprano, Piano, and Cello**

**Composed:** July 18, 1995

**Published:** 1995, Chester Music Ltd.

**First performance:** March 21, 1996 (orchestral version), by soprano Barbara Bonney and the Boston Symphony Orchestra

**Other works from this period:** *Honey and Rue*, a Song Cycle for Soprano, Jazz Ensemble, and Orchestra (1992); Cello Sonata (1993); Violin Sonata, *Vineyard* (1994); *Four Songs after Poems by Toni Morrison* for Soprano, Cello, and Piano (1994); *Sallie Chisum Remembers Billy the Kid* (1994)

**Approximate duration:** 4 minutes

The German-American pianist, composer, and conductor André Previn ranks among the most revered musicians of his generation. Born in Berlin in 1929, Previn left Germany in 1938, traveling first to Paris and then settling in Los Angeles in 1940. He began his music career orchestrating Hollywood film scores, which, as was common practice, he was expected to conduct himself. Subsequent conducting engagements eventually led to a prestigious international career, including posts as Music Director of the London Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and others. Alongside his activities in the realm of classical music, Previn has also toured and recorded extensively as a jazz pianist. He is equally renowned as a composer of music for the concert hall, where the rich lyricism of his musical language has won over audiences worldwide.

Previn composed his *Vocalise for Soprano, Piano, and Cello* with Schubertian speed: the work was completed in one day—July 18, 1995, at the Tanglewood Music Festival—for Sylvia McNair and Yo-Yo Ma. At 6:00 o’clock the following morning, McNair, Ma, and Previn recorded the work in Tanglewood’s Ozawa Hall.

Previn’s deeply affecting vocalise demonstrates the enduring tradition of Romantic lyricism in our own time. As with Mendelssohn’s *Lieder ohne Worte*, the piece can trace its lineage back to the lieder of Schubert; also like Mendelssohn, Previn forgoes words, allowing pure melody to speak for itself.

## JOHANNES BRAHMS

(Born May 7, 1833, Hamburg; died April 3, 1897, Vienna)

**Zwei Gesänge for Voice, Viola, and Piano, op. 91**

**Composed:** I. *Gestillte Sehnsucht*: 1884; II. *Geistliches Wiegenlied*: 1863–1864 (I. Rückert; II. Lope de Vega)

**Published:** 1884

**Other works from this period:** Symphony no. 3, op. 90 (1883); Four Quartets for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, and Piano, op. 92; Symphony no. 4, op. 98 (1884–1885)

**Approximate duration:** 13 minutes

Brahms composed the *Zwei Gesänge (Two Songs)* for Alto Voice, Viola, and Piano, op. 91, over a period of twenty years, between 1864 and 1884; they were intended for the violinist Joseph Joachim and his wife, the singer Amalie Weiss. The set comprises one secular song, *Gestillte Sehnsucht (Stilled Desire)*, and one sacred, *Geistliches Wiegenlied (Sacred Lullaby)*.

The songs were published in the reverse order of composition. Brahms composed the first of the songs, *Gestillte Sehnsucht*, twenty years after the *Geistliches Wiegenlied*. Joseph and Amalie Joachim had

\*Bolded terms are defined in the glossary, which begins on page 94.

at this time recently separated, and Brahms composed the song in the hopes of helping the couple to reconcile. The song sets a text by the German Romantic poet Friedrich Rückert.

The earlier *Geistliches Wiegenlied* was designed as a gift to the Joachims in 1864 as they were expecting their first child. It begins with the viola intoning the hymn tune “Josef, lieber Josef mein” (“Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine”), setting the context of the Virgin Mary singing to the baby Jesus. A gentle rocking to and fro sustains the accompaniment throughout the setting, evoking a tender lullaby.

The Opus 91 songs are unique in their orchestration and in Brahms’s subsequent treatment of forces. The viola and alto voice timbres yield a dark blend, exquisitely suited to Brahms’s mode of expression. The viola line moreover surpasses a mere obbligato role, functioning as a dramatic equal to the singer. Given the earnest involvement of each part, the Opus 91 songs may be more legitimately regarded as among Brahms’s chamber music than as part of his lieder catalogue.

## JOHN HARBISON

(Born December 20, 1938, Orange, New Jersey)

### **November 19, 1828 for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello**

**Composed:** 1988

**Published:** 1989, Associated Music Publishers, Inc.

**Other works from this period:** *The Flight into Egypt* for Choir and Chamber Orchestra (1986); Symphony no. 2 (1987); Concerto for Double Brass Choir and Orchestra (1988); Viola Concerto (1988); Symphony no. 3 (1990)

**Approximate duration:** 16 minutes

### **Composer’s Note**

The “medium” for this tombeau for Schubert is grateful for the generosity of Jim and Marina Harrison, at whose home near Genova the piece was realized. Their library contained a book by Alfred Mann, *Theory and Practice*, in which an account of Schubert’s lesson with Sechter, and the lesson itself, appear. The piece asserts Schubert’s relevance to our present rather than any nostalgia for the past.

*I. Introduction: Schubert Crosses into the Next World*

*II. Suite: Schubert Finds Himself in a Hall of Mirrors*

*1. Theme*

*2. Écossaise*

*3. Moment Musicale*

*4. Impromptu*

*5. Valse*

*III. Rondo: Schubert Recalls a Rondo Fragment from 1816*

*IV. Fugue: Schubert Continues the Fugue Subject (S-C-H-U-B-E-R-T) That Sechter Assigned Him*

*I.* The trumpets of death are heard three times. Schubert begins his journey haunted by sounds which are not his music but pertain to his music in disturbing ways.

*II.* In the hall of mirrors, music sounds in a manner previously unknown to Schubert—everything is played back immediately upside down.

*III.* Emblematic of a storehouse of ideas which are still to be explored, perhaps even in future times, the short fragment which begins this **rondo** is the only one in this piece composed by Schubert in his first life.

*IV.* Shortly before his death, Schubert went to the theorist Sechter to work on a very specific problem pertaining to the tonal answer of the **fugue** subject, important to Schubert in the composition of his masses.

Sechter, well aware that he was teaching the most extraordinary student who ever came for a lesson, concluded by assigning Schubert a fugue subject on his own name. Schubert was unable to undertake the task; he died about a week later, on November 19, 1828.

*November 19, 1828* is a National Endowment for the Arts Consortium Commission, composed for the Atlanta Chamber Players, the Da Capo Chamber Players, and Voices of Change.

—John Harbison

## FRITZ KREISLER

(Born February 2, 1875, Vienna; died January 29, 1962, New York)

### **Rosamunde Ballet Music (arr. of Schubert’s Rosamunde, Fürstin von Cypern)**

**Composed:** 1912

**Published:** 1913

**Other works from this period:** *Caprice viennois*, op. 2 (1910); *Chanson Louis XIII et Pavane in the Style of Couperin* (1910); Gavotte in E Major (arr. J. S. Bach, Partita no. 3 for Solo Violin, BWV 1006) (1913); Caprice in a minor (transcription of work by Wieniawski) (1913); *Apple Blossoms* (operetta) (1919)

**Approximate duration:** 3 minutes

Born in Vienna in 1875, the violinist and composer Fritz Kreisler ranks among the most celebrated virtuosos of his generation. At the turn of the twentieth century, successful appearances with the Vienna, Berlin, and London Philharmonic Orchestras catapulted Kreisler to international stardom. *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* notes: “Kreisler was unique. Without exertion (he practiced little) he achieved a seemingly effortless perfection.”

Kreisler was also an active composer. In addition to a string quartet, an operetta, and other works, his oeuvre includes miscellaneous pieces that he claimed had been written by various popular eighteenth-century composers. Later, he admitted that these pieces were a hoax and that he had written them himself. Some listeners got, and appreciated, the joke; others angrily disapproved.

One of Kreisler’s legitimate transcriptions is an arrangement for violin and piano of ballet music from Schubert’s incidental score to the play *Rosamunde*—the same score which Schubert revisited in his String Quartet in a minor. Kreisler’s transcription, while, naturally, glorifying the violin, equally pays tribute to the irresistible melodic sensibility and disarming character of Schubert’s musical language.

## FRANZ SCHUBERT/FRANZ LISZT

(Born October 22, 1811, Raiding; died July 31, 1886, Bayreuth)

### **Die Forelle (D. 550), S. 564**

**Composed:** 1846

**Published:** 1856, Spina, Vienna; 1846, Diabelli, Vienna (second version)

**Other works from this period:** *Jeanne d’Arc au bûcher* (A. Dumas, trans. M. G. Friedrich), S. 293 (1845–1858); *Grand duo concertant sur la romance de “Le marin”* (I and II) for Violin and Piano, S. 128 and S. 700h (1835–1849); Overture to *Der Freischütz* [Weber], S. 575, R. 289 (1846); *Three Schubert Marches* for Piano, S. 426/R. 251 (1846)

**Approximate duration:** 3 minutes

Franz Liszt was one of the defining figures of the Romantic era. Musicologist Alan Walker writes that Liszt “contained in his character more of the ideals and aspirations of the nineteenth century than any other major musician.” Liszt became, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the most influential composer of the progressive vanguard of

Western music known as the **New German School**, which included Richard Wagner and Hector Berlioz. He developed radical new methods of thematic development and boldly experimented with harmony and form. Among his most significant innovations was the development of the **symphonic poem**, an orchestral form that would become one of the late Romantic period's quintessential genres. In addition to his activities as a composer, Liszt was also the most acclaimed piano virtuoso of his generation; another of his most important contributions lies in his development of piano technique, through his performance and pedagogy, as well as in his compositions for piano.

Liszt transcribed Schubert's *Die Forelle* for solo piano in 1846. It is one of numerous transcriptions he made of Schubert's music—a significant tribute to an early Romantic master, from the composer who famously chided Johannes Brahms as a stuffy traditionalist. And, in fairness, Liszt's Schubert transcriptions are fairly liberal adaptations, unabashed glorifications of keyboard virtuosity, highlighted by the use of the “three-hand effect,” where a pianist seems to possess an additional hand with which to play a melody. But underpinning all the pyrotechnics, the spirit of Schubert's melodic gift still shines through.

## ROBERT SCHUMANN

(Born June 8, 1810, Zwickau, Saxony; died July 29, 1856, Endenich)

### Quartet in E-flat Major for Piano, Violin, Viola, and Cello, op. 47

**Composed:** 1842

**Published:** 1845

**First performance:** December 8, 1844, in Leipzig

**Dedication:** Composed for and dedicated to the Russian Count Matvei Wielhorsky, who performed as cellist in the public premiere, along with Clara Schumann as pianist.

**Other works from this period:** Schumann's Three String Quartets, op. 41; the Piano Quintet, op. 44; *Phantasiestücke* for Piano Trio, op. 88; and this piano quartet all date from 1842, celebrated as the composer's most fertile chamber music year.

**Approximate duration:** 28 minutes

The German composer Robert Schumann stands among the quintessential symbols of the Romantic era. Just as his music exhibited the hallmarks of Romanticism, so did the events of his life. When he was eighteen years old, he traveled to Leipzig to study with the pianist Friedrich Wieck, whose nine-year-old daughter, Clara, was also a gifted pianist. Robert and Clara developed a close friendship that blossomed years later into one of the most intense love affairs of music history. After a protracted legal battle with Clara's forbidding father, the two were married in 1840.

By the mid-1840s, Schumann's physical and mental health both began to decline. He frequently battled bouts of depression, insomnia, and, eventually, psychosis. In his early forties, his mental state reached its nadir, and after weeks of unbearable psychotic episodes, Schumann attempted to kill himself by jumping into the Rhine. Following his suicide attempt, Schumann demanded that he be committed to a mental asylum, for fear of inadvertently harming Clara or their children. He was sent to an asylum in Bonn in 1854 and never saw his children again. He starved himself to death two years later; Clara was not permitted to see her husband until the day before he died.

In his diaries, letters, and critical writings, Schumann often invoked two fictional alter egos: Florestan and Eusebius, archetypes conceived to symbolize two components of Schumann's artistic and psychological world. Florestan represents Schumann the Romantic hero, vigorous and optimistic; Eusebius reflects Schumann's tender, lyrical, and introspective side. Much of Schumann's music likewise derives its élan from the dramatic tension between Florestan and

Eusebius. While Schumann's creation, these metaphors could likewise serve the Romantic period in music as a whole.

Schumann's compositions appear in clusters over the course of his creative career. The 1830s primarily saw the creation of piano works, and 1840 was his year of lieder, followed by a year of symphonic music. In 1842 came Schumann's most significant chamber pieces. Between February and July of that year, he completed his three string quartets, each dedicated to Felix Mendelssohn. In the fall, he composed two companion pieces: first, the Piano Quintet, op. 44, and then a month later, the Piano Quartet, op. 47. Both were composed for Clara Schumann.

The first **movement**, composed in **sonata form**, begins with a slow and sentimental introduction, in which Schumann immediately presents his main **theme**. Following two **variations** on this theme, a second musical idea takes a more aggressive tone.

In addition to Clara Schumann, one of the nineteenth century's most gifted pianists, Robert Schumann had a particular cellist in mind when he composed his Piano Quartet: Count Matvei Wielhorsky, a talented amateur musician. Throughout the quartet, the cello plays a prominent role. The **coda** that ends the first movement features a new melody in the cello.

The second movement **scherzo** begins with the pattern that dominates the movement, introduced in the low register of the piano and cello. The first of two **trio** sections contrasts the mood of the scherzo with lyrical melodic lines. After a return to the scherzo, the second trio section appears, providing even further contrast with its bright blocks of chords alternating between the piano and strings. The scherzo ends with one last glance back at the melody of the first trio.

The breathtaking **Andante cantabile** movement follows. The cello begins with a most lyrical melody, showing Schumann at his most Romantic. The violin follows, and the two sing a beautiful duet.

Schumann uses a unique trick in this movement. As the viola plays the melody, he asks the cellist to detune the instrument's lowest string. At the end of the movement, the cello—whose lowest note is normally C—sits on a deep B-flat, while the rest of the quartet draws to a tender close. Perhaps the most inspired moment of the entire work comes at the end of the slow movement: Schumann fashions a heavenly coda, so transcendently beautiful as to transport the listener to another world. But inside this otherworldly music, Schumann sows a three-note **motif**, out of which springs the exuberant finale.

The fourth movement lies on the opposite end of the spectrum of Romantic extremes. Whereas the previous movement basically dwells on one slow theme, the finale bubbles with energy and erupts in theme after theme. After the poignant end of the slow movement, the music responds with a boisterous note. It opens with a lively theme, which Schumann turns into a fugue. Following this fugue, the cello sings a sweet and fluid line. Next, the piano and viola engage in an animated dialogue. The music flows with magical ease and demonstrates a profound love of life, reminiscent of the works of Haydn and Mozart. With these basic musical ideas, Schumann spins a staggering finale to the Piano Quartet.