



Schubertiade II

JULY 24

Friday, July 24, 8:00 p.m., Stent Family Hall, Menlo School

Schubertiades feature an intermission reception hosted in partnership with Ridge Vineyards.

SPECIAL THANKS

Music@Menlo dedicates this performance to the memory of Michael Steinberg and also to Karen and Rick DeGolia with gratitude for their generous support.

Moritz von Schwind (1804–1871).
Study for *An Evening at
Baron von Spaun's*, 1868.
Art Resource, NY

FRANZ SCHUBERT (1797–1828)

Sonatina in a minor for Violin and Piano, op. posth. 137, no. 2, D. 385 (March 1816)

Allegro moderato
Andante
Minuetto e trio: Allegro
Allegro

Sean Lee, *violin*; Juho Pohjonen, *piano*

Auf den Tod einer Nachtigall, D. 399 (Hölty) (May 13, 1816)

Abschied von der Harfe, D. 406 (Salis-Seewis) (March 1816)

Frühlingslied, D. 398 (Hölty) (May 13, 1816)

Die Knabenzeit, D. 400 (Hölty) (May 13, 1816)

Nikolay Borchev, *baritone*; Hyeyeon Park, *piano*

Sonatina in g minor for Violin and Piano, op. posth. 137, no. 3, D. 408 (April 1816)

Allegro giusto
Andante
Minuetto e trio
Allegro moderato

Sean Lee, *violin*; Juho Pohjonen, *piano*

INTERMISSION

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Im Frühling, D. 882 (Schulze) (March 1826)

Nikolay Borchev, *baritone*; Wu Han, *piano*

Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959 (September 1828)

Allegro
Andantino
Scherzo: Allegro vivace – Trio: Un poco più lento
Rondo: Allegretto

Wu Han, *piano*

Program Notes: Schubertiade II

Notes on the Program by Dr. Richard E. Rodda

FRANZ SCHUBERT

(Born January 31, 1797, Vienna; died November 19, 1828, Vienna)

Sonatina in a minor for Violin and Piano, op. posth. 137, no. 2, D. 385

Composed: March 1816

Approximate duration: 23 minutes

Sonatina in g minor for Violin and Piano, op. posth. 137, no. 3, D. 408

Composed: April 1816

Other works from this period: 1816: Eight *Ländler* in B-flat Major for Piano, D. 378; String Quartet in E Major, op. posth. 125, no. 2, D. 353; Adagio and Rondo concertante in F Major for Piano Quartet, D. 487; String Trio in B-flat Major, D. 471

Approximate duration: 15 minutes

For further information on *Sonatina no. 2* and *no. 3*, please refer to the program notes for *Schubertiade I*.

The three sonatinas of 1816 show Schubert's devoted study of Mozart's works but move beyond those "piano **sonatas** with the accompaniment of violin" in the independence of their instrumental parts. The relationship between the two partners is demonstrated by the beginning of the *Sonatina no. 2* in a minor, in which the piano alone presents the slow, arching main **theme** and then retreats to an accompanimental role when the violin takes over the melody. A similar alternation—piano then violin—is used for the flowing second theme. The **development** section consists of just a few **phrases** spun from the arching melody before the piano again takes up the principal theme to start the **recapitulation**—but in the key of d minor rather than in the expected a minor, a technique with which Schubert experimented in several works of those years (Symphonies nos. 2, 4, and 5 and the "Trout" Quintet) to broaden the range of harmonic and instrumental colors of his instrumental compositions. The songful *Andante* shows the manner in which Schubert transferred the lyrical gifts that blossomed so abundantly in his songs into his instrumental creations. The piano, soon joined by the violin, presents the lovely melody upon which the first and last of the **movement's** three formal paragraphs (**A–B–A**) are built; the central section, more animated in character, is marked by the delicate chromatic harmonies that give Schubert's music so much of its touching expression. The *Minuetto*, with its surprising dynamic shifts and its melancholy minor key, is pleasingly balanced by the brighter tonality and smooth rhythms of the tiny central **trio**. The finale is a **rondo** based on the simple, tender main theme of mostly scale steps announced by the violin at the outset. The episodes separating the returns of the theme provide contrast with two livelier **motives**: one, started by the piano, uses wider melodic intervals and a few dotted rhythms; the other, assigned alternately to both participants, incorporates running **triple**t figurations.

The *Sonatina no. 3* in g minor begins with a theme that not only resembles the opening of Mozart's Violin and Piano Sonata in the same key (K. 379) but also demonstrates how Schubert incorporated Mozartian procedures into his own style. The main theme comprises three four-measure phrases, contrasted and balanced much as Mozart might have done. The first phrase, given in unison by the violin and piano, states a leaping, dotted-rhythm motive in a stern, dramatic manner. The second and third phrases, for piano alone, transform the dotted-rhythm motive into something quiet, lyrical, and tinged with sweet melancholy. These two expressive states, both grown from the same musical germ, are played against each other

as the movement unfolds and are used to help guide the listener through its sonata form. Brief, loud gestures mark the arrival of the formal second theme in the **exposition** and recapitulation, as well as the beginnings of the development and the recapitulation. The rest of the movement is given to quiet melancholy. Mozart and Schubert, each in his own characteristic way, were both masters at creating distinctive emotional states, subtly transforming them through variations of harmony and sonority and thematic elaboration and drawing these varied pieces into a logical and satisfying formal shape. The *Andante*, tender and melodic, passes through some richly expressive harmonic areas in its central section. Schubert composed well over four hundred dance pieces for practical use, and the spirited *Minuetto*, nicely complemented by a lilting central trio, brings some of the youthful joy of that convivial music into this concert work. The finale, a sonata form with a mere wisp of a development section, starts in the sonatina's doleful nominal key of g minor but perks up for a sunny G major close.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Auf den Tod einer Nachtigall, D. 399 (Hölty)

Composed: May 13, 1816

Abschied von der Harfe, D. 406 (Salis-Seewis)

Composed: March 1816

Frühlingslied, D. 398 (Hölty)

Composed: May 13, 1816

Die Knabenzeit, D. 400 (Hölty)

Composed: May 13, 1816

Other works from this period: March–May 1816: At least thirty-five songs, including *Abschied von der Harfe*, D. 406; *Die Herbstnacht*, D. 404; and *Der Flüchtling*, D. 402; *Sonatina in D Major for Violin and Piano*, op. posth. 137, no. 1, D. 384; *Zwölf deutsche Tänze* for Piano, D. 420; *Die Bürgschaft*, Opera in Three Acts, D. 435

Approximate duration: 7 minutes

Im Frühling, D. 882 (Schulze)

Composed: March 1826

Other works from this period: 1826: *Rondo brillant* in b minor for Violin and Piano, op. 70, D. 895; Piano Sonata in G Major, op. 78, D. 894, "Fantasy"; Six Polonaises for Piano, D. 824; *Grande marche héroïque* in a minor for Piano Duet, D. 885 (for the coronation of Nicholas I of Russia)

Approximate duration: 4 minutes

Ludwig Christoph Hölty (1748–1776) was a founder and leader of a group of young writers at Göttingen University, the Göttinger Dichterbund, who dedicated their work to the emerging Romantic ideals of love, nature, lyricism, and sentiment. Hölty's gentleness, wit, and simplicity appealed strongly to Schubert, and he set two dozen of Hölty's poems, all but one in 1815 and 1816. In 1816, Schubert set Hölty's *Auf den Tod einer Nachtigall* (*On the Death of a Nightingale*), a reflection on the passing of a valued woodland songstress and some of the sylvan scenes evoked by her songs. *Frühlingslied* (*Spring Song*), another Hölty setting, is one of Schubert's most charming evocations of the vernal season. *Die Knabenzeit* (*Boyhood*) is a playful reminiscence of his recent youth by the nineteen-year-old Schubert.

Abschied von der Harfe (*Farewell to the Harp*) is one of fifteen settings Schubert made of poems by the Swiss writer and military officer Johann Gaudenz von Salis-Seewis (1762–1834), who counted Goethe, Herder, and Schiller among his friends. The harp figures in a number

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

of Schubert's songs and here it might well stand for the life-renewing power of music itself.

Ernst Konrad Friedrich Schulze lived, and made poetry, at the far edge of German **Romanticism**. Born in Celle in 1789 into a family of lawyers and booksellers, he was a difficult and uncommunicative child who retreated into literature and his own roiling feelings, which he began to shape into despairing, spectral, often cynical poems by the age of fifteen. His sexual awakening two years later, when he went to Göttingen to begin his university studies, led to an obsessive focus—"stalking," Susan Youens called it in her study of *Schubert's Poets*—on two sisters: first Cäcilie Tychsen and, after she died of tuberculosis in 1812, then her older sister, Adelheid. Schulze volunteered to fight against Napoleon in 1814, but his fragile health quickly forced him out of active duty. He died of tuberculosis in 1817; he was twenty-eight. Schulze recorded his intense feelings in enormous diaries and long poems throughout his brief life, a number of which were published posthumously in 1822 as the *Poetisches Tagebuch (Poetic Diary)*. Schubert came to know this publication early in 1825—he had considered making an opera of Schulze's *Die bezauberte Rose (The Enchanted Rose)* the year before, but nothing came of the idea—and he set ten of the poems during the following months. Schulze expressed his unrequited love for the Tychsen sisters in the German Romanticists' traditional natural metaphors in *Im Frühling (In Spring)*, of which Schubert made a poignant setting in 1826.

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Piano Sonata in A Major, D. 959

Composed: September 1828

Other works from this period: 1828: Mass no. 6 in E-flat Major, D. 950; Rondo in A Major, op. 107, D. 951, "Grand Rondo"; Quintet for Strings in C Major, op. 163, D. 956; *Schwanengesang*, D. 957; Piano Sonata in c minor, D. 958; Piano Sonata in B-flat Major, D. 960; *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*, op. posth. 129, D. 965

Approximate duration: 38 minutes

In the hall of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Vienna on March 26, 1828, immediately after completing his magnificent C Major Symphony (justifiably dubbed "The Great" by later generations), Franz Schubert gave the only public concert entirely of his works held during his lifetime. The event, prompted and sponsored by his circle of devoted friends, was a significant artistic and financial success, and he used the proceeds to celebrate the occasion at a local tavern, pay off some old debts, acquire a new piano, and buy tickets for Nicolò Paganini's sensational debut in Vienna three days later. Despite the renewed enthusiasm for creative work that the concert inspired in him and the encouraging signs that his music was beginning to receive recognition outside of Vienna, Schubert's spirits were dampened during the following months by the perilous state of his health. His constitution, never robust, had been undermined by syphilis, and by the summer of 1828, he was suffering from headaches, exhaustion, and frequent digestive distress. In May, he received invitations from friends to summer in both Graz and Gmunden in order to refresh himself with the country air, but he had to refuse his hosts because he lacked money to pay for the transportation. He settled instead for a three-day excursion in early June with the composer-conductor Franz Lachner to nearby Baden, where he wrote a Fugue in e minor for Organ, Four Hands (D. 952, his only work for organ), which he tried out with his companion on the instrument in the twelfth-century Cistercian abbey at neighboring Heiligenkreuz on June 4th. Between his return to the city a few days later and August, he composed the Mass in E-flat, made a setting in Hebrew of Psalm 92 for the City Synagogue of Vienna, created a number of short pieces for piano, wrote all but one of the thirteen songs published after his death in the collection *Schwanengesang (Swan Song)*, did extensive work on what

proved to be his last three piano sonatas (D. 958–960), and began his C Major String Quintet.

At the end of August, Schubert felt unwell, complaining of dizziness and loss of appetite, and his physician advised that he move for a time to a new house outside the city recently acquired by the composer's brother Ferdinand. Though Ferdinand's dwelling was damp and uncomfortable and hardly conducive to his recovery, Franz felt better during the following days and was able to participate in an active social life and attend the premiere of a comedy by his friend Eduard von Bauernfeld on September 5th. Schubert also continued to compose incessantly, completing the three piano sonatas on the 26th and performing them at the house of Dr. Ignaz Menz the following day. The C Major Quintet was finished at that same time; it and the sonatas were the last instrumental works that he completed. On October 31st, Schubert fell seriously ill, his syphilitic condition perhaps exacerbated by the typhus then epidemic in Vienna, and he died on November 19, 1828, at the age of thirty-one. He had originally intended that the three sonatas be dedicated to Johann Nepomuk Hummel, a pianist, composer, and student of Mozart's who was an important supporter during his last years, but when Diabelli published them in 1838 as "Schubert's Last Compositions: Three Grand Sonatas," Hummel was already dead, so the pieces were instead inscribed to another champion of Schubert's music, Robert Schumann.

"All three of the last sonatas are works in which meditation, charm, wistfulness, sadness, and joy are housed in noble structures," wrote George R. Marek. Though each follows the traditional four-movement **Classical** pattern of opening **sonata-allegro**, lyrical slow movement, **scherzo** (minuet in the c minor Sonata), and lively finale, this is music less concerned with the titanic, visionary, long-range formal structures of Beethoven (whom Schubert idolized) than with the immediately perceived qualities of melody, harmonic color, piano sonority, and the subtle balancing of keys—what Hans Költzsch in his study of Schubert's sonatas called "the nascent present." This characteristically Schubertian predilection is particularly evident in the development sections of the opening movements, which eschew the rigorous thematic working-out of the Beethovenian model in favor of a warm, even sometimes dreamy lyricism whose principal aims are to examine fragments of the movement's melodies in different harmonic lights and to extract the instrument's most ingratiating sonorities.

The A Major Sonata begins with a heroic gesture immediately balanced by airy falling **arpeggios**—the opposed states of vigor and languor are juxtaposed throughout much of the movement. The **Andantino** is the most dramatic movement in the last three sonatas. Its outer sections exude barren bleakness, an uncommon emotion in Schubert's music but one he had distilled perfectly the year before in his stunningly desolate setting of Wilhelm Müller's *Der Leiermann (The Hurdy-Gurdy Man)*, the closing song of the cycle *Die Winterreise (The Winter's Journey)*; the movement's central portion rises to peaks of true passion. The sonata is rounded out by a gentle scherzo and a supple rondo.