

Sunday, March 21, 2010, 3pm  
Zellerbach Hall

Ian Bostridge, *tenor*  
Julius Drake, *piano*

PROGRAM

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Winterreise, Op. 89, D911 (1828)

1. Gute Nacht
2. Die Wetterfahne
3. Gefrorene Tränen
4. Erstarrung
5. Der Lindenbaum
6. Wasserflut
7. Auf dem Flusse
8. Rückblick
9. Irrlicht
10. Rast
11. Frühlingstraum
12. Einsamkeit
13. Die Post
14. Der greise Kopf
15. Die Krähe
16. Letzte Hoffnung
17. Im Dorfe
18. Der stümische Morgen
19. Täuschung
20. Der Wegweiser
21. Das Wirtshaus
22. Mut
23. Die Nebensonnen
24. Der Leiermann

Please note that Mr. Bostridge and Mr. Drake will perform the song cycle without intermission.

This afternoon's performance is made possible, in part, by Patron Sponsors Linda and Will Schieber.

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**Schubert's "Real Swansong":**  
*Winterreise*, Op. 89, D911 (1828)

**Schubert and the *lied***

The genre of the *lied*—that particular kind of song whose genesis is inextricably linked to the poetry of German Romanticism with its themes of lost love, death and angst—was central to the creative output of the Viennese composer Franz Schubert (1797–1828). His first surviving *lied* dates from his 15th year, and Schubert scholar Robert Winter surmises that he wrote the last of his more than 600 completed songs only a few weeks before his premature death at the age of 31. Schubert had a lifelong passion for poetry, and his first encounter with Goethe led him to more than 150 poets over a 17-year career as he diligently sought out verses that he could set to music. Some two-thirds of Schubert's works are *lieder*, and it was through these that he became famous in his lifetime. Legend has it that, on his deathbed, Beethoven read through some manuscripts of Schubert's *lieder* and remarked "truly, in Schubert there is a divine spark!" Schubert's unique contribution to the genre was described by one of his closest friends, Joseph von Spaun:

In *Lieder* he stands unexcelled, even unapproached.... Every one of his songs is in reality a poem on the poem he set to music.... Who among those who had the good fortune to hear some of his greatest songs does not remember how this music made a long familiar poem new for him, how it was suddenly revealed to him and penetrated to his very depth.

**The genesis of *Winterreise***

How the work of the disregarded Prussian poet Wilhelm Müller (1794–1827) came to Schubert's attention is unknown, but both of the composer's song cycles—*Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*—are settings of Müller's poetry: whatever the reason, in February 1827 Schubert became preoccupied with the melancholy cycle of poems entitled *Die Winterreise*. Its deeply inner drama,

a two-part tale of a young man, unlucky in love, wandering across a winter landscape had parallels with *Die schöne Müllerin* of four years earlier, but Müller's new poems elicited even greater pathos from Schubert's pen. It seems likely that the circumstances of Schubert's own life lent him particular empathy with Müller's poetic monodrama. Enough was known about the terminal stages of syphilis in the 1820s for him to realize that he was confronting his own fate: from the onset of his illness in early 1823, Schubert had lived with physical impairment and chronic anxiety. As he approached the fourth anniversary of his illness, he had grappled repeatedly with depression and despair but maintained extraordinary resolve in the knowledge that this illness usually ended in dementia and paralysis. Müller's monodrama of physical and emotional separation must have been deeply resonant. Joseph von Spaun recalled the gathering at which Schubert previewed *Winterreise* ("Winter Journey" or "Winter's Journey") for a small circle of friends:

For some time, Schubert appeared very upset and melancholy. When I asked him what was troubling him, he would say only, "Soon you will hear and understand." One day he said to me, "Come over to Schober's today and I will sing you a cycle of horrifying [*schauerlicher*] songs. I am anxious to know what you will say about them. They have cost me more effort than any of my other songs." So he sang the entire *Winterreise* through to us in a voice full of emotion. We were utterly dumbfounded by the mournful, gloomy tone of these songs, and Schober said that only one of them, "Der Lindenbaum" ("The Linden Tree"), had appealed to him. To this Schubert replied, "I like these songs more than all the rest, and you will come to like them as well."

It is not surprising that Schubert's friends were puzzled by the gloomy tone given the predominance of minor keys and declamatory vocal lines in a narrow range replacing the spontaneous, lyrical melodies characteristic of his earlier *lieder*. The songs represent the voice of the poet as lover, and

form a distinct narrative and dramatic sequence in which the poet, whose sweetheart has broken his heart, takes leave of her house as she sleeps, and begins his long journey through the frozen winter night—walking along the river-bank and up a steep path to a remote village where he falls into an exhausted dream of love and springtime. Upon waking, he feels reconciled to his loneliness and continues on his way through the cold, the dark, and the barren winter landscape which serves to intensify his heartache. Along the way, he encounters the various people and things which appear in the songs. The work is an allegorical journey of the heart—and yet, the poet-singer's first words, “*Fremd bin ich eingezogen, Fremd zieh' ich wieder aus*” (“I came here a stranger, I depart a stranger”), hint at what the scholar of Schubert *Lieder*, Susan Youens, has described as “an existential dilemma beyond sorrow over lost love, as wrenching as that is; thereafter, over and over again, he asks himself variations on the fundamental question, ‘Why am I always a *Fremdling*, a stranger to others and to myself?’”

Yet Schubert's personal tragedy did not produce uniformly “gloomy” music. As the composition of *Winterreise* progressed, he completed many other works, including (in February) the Piano Sonata in A minor, D784, with its explosive emotional range and novel keyboard techniques, the convivial Piano Trios in B-flat major (D898) and E-flat major (D929), the marvelously wide-ranging impromptus for piano (D899, D935), Eight Variations on a theme from Hérold's opera *Marie* for piano duet (D908), the Fantasia in C major for violin and piano (D934), and songs on texts by Leitner, Metastasio, Rochlitz and Schober. These, along with the publication of almost 30 further works, made 1827 an astonishing year. But Spaun recalled that the songs of *Winterreise* “were his real swansong. From then on he was a sick man, although his outward condition gave no immediate cause for alarm.”

### Music and poetry fuse in *Winterreise*

Performance of this monodrama demands the kind of close partnership between singer and pianist that Ian Bostridge and Julius Drake have

developed over nearly two decades of musical friendship. Indeed, it is something of an irony that, while Schubert's reputation as a song composer was formed and sustained by his undeniable gift for lyrical melodies, the melodies of few *Lieder* composers depend as heavily on their piano accompaniments for their effect as do Schubert's. In *Winterreise*, perhaps even more than in his earlier, more lyrical songs, Schubert uses a variety of musical ideas in the piano to convey the moods and images of the poetry including, at times, the innermost feelings of the poet-singer.

The cycle opens with the piano's steady walking rhythm of eighth-notes which are emblematic of the dark journey upon which the poet is setting-out in the first song, *Gute Nacht*, as he leaves for ever his sleeping beloved (how different from the happy, upbeat “wandering” of the miller that the piano conjures in the opening song of *Die schöne Müllerin!*).

In *Wetterfahne* (2), the hollow octaves of the piano, outlining arpeggios and chilly trills, invoke the blustery wind whistling through the weather-vane on her roof. The once-lyrical voice takes on a sharp edge wrought by the bitterness of betrayal, and ends with the satirical bravado of “*eine reiche Braut*” (“a rich bride”). A sharp break of tonality separates this from the next song whose opening staccato chords in the piano symbolize the “frozen tears of ice” that the lover finds are falling from his cheeks.

*Der Lindenbaum* contrasts the young man's pleasant memories of a linden tree with the current reality. In warmer times, he lay dreaming beneath the tree and carved loving words in its bark, but now the rustle of its leafless boughs in an icy wind calls him back to a rest that can only mean death. The piano's fluttering triplet figuration in E major which opens the song evokes the gentle breezes and whispering leaves of summer: the figure returns later, altered with chromatic harmonies, to depict the cold wind and eerie rustling of the tree in winter, and the young man's growing sense of delusion.

In *Wasserflut* (6), a single chromatic melisma painting the word “Weh” (woe), signals the poet-singer's increasing anguish. *Auf dem Flusse* (7) and *Rückblick* (8) are central to the monodrama, for it is through them that the young man's sense of

alienation becomes painfully clear. Exhaustion pervades the musical atmosphere of *Irrlicht* (9), with its strange intervals and the yearning quality of its wide-ranging melodic lines, and still more of *Rast* (10). Here the piano's left hand repeats an ostinato figure (eighth-note to quarter-note rhythm) that suggests the weary traveler trudging by with a heavy burden of sorrow.

In *Frühlingstraum* (11), sleep works its deception through the piano's sweet, major-key lulling figuration. But the dreamer faces his desolation in the final couplet when he finds his heart still beating warmly after his dream: “*Die Augen schless' ich wieder, Noch schlägt das Herz so warm*” which is accompanied by a right-hand gesture in the piano suggestive of the heartbeat. The piano's response to his final question, devastating in its eloquent finality—“when will you, leaves, at the window be green again? When will I hold my darling in my arms?”—is a desolate A-minor chord, whose atmosphere pervades the final song of the first part, *Einsamkeit* (12).

Songs 13 to 24 are settings of poems that Schubert found published after he had finished setting the first part. In *Die Post*, the sound of the post horn brings news from the town in hopeful strains of E-flat major, soon quashed by the realization that there's no news for the exiled lover. *Der Greise Kopf* (14) reveals that the wanderer who yearns for death, who walks with a staff, whose hair is whitened by the frost, is a young man—just like both poet and composer who were almost exact contemporaries: Schubert had just turned 30, while Müller was not even 30 when his poems were published.

*Letzte Hoffnung* (16) opens with a disorienting piano prelude, suggestive of the poem's falling leaves, but also of the failing of the man's mind as he gazes at a single leaf, hanging his hopes on it.

In *Der Wegweiser* (20), we hear the death of melody, as the wanderer, unutterably weary and depressed, resorts to bleak, almost monotone, recitation to question why his journey—his life—is so different from other people's and what compulsion drives him on. A metaphorical signpost crosses his path, pointing the way to “one road I must travel, by which no one ever came back.”

But death rejects him decisively in *Das Wirtshaus* (21)—in spite of the funeral march rhythm that permeates the piano prelude and invokes the “path...that has led me...to a graveyard.” For he finds no room at this “Inn of death,” and discovers that he is not to have a “lovely and soothing death” but is condemned to a living death as a poet-singer irrevocably set apart from society. So, he sings, “...lead me onward, only onward, my trusty staff!” and, buoyed by the piano's heroic dotted rhythms and rising figures that open *Mut* (22), we hear a few fleeting moments of vocal courage.

The rich major chords of the subdominant-inflected *Die Nebensonnen* (23) conjure up the glowing hues of a sunset, but it is a heartbreaking sight. The wanderer sees two phantom suns on either side of the sun; like these illusory globes of light in the sky, his sweetheart's eyes shone on him and then vanished. *Lieder* pianist Graham Johnson describes this triple meter song as “dance music in slow motion,” and he perceptively remarks that “Schubert's music encouraged romantic embraces from which he himself was excluded” in the sense that Schubert felt himself to be the outsider, on the outside looking in, and thus “many of his dances are suffused with an almost physical sense of longing.”

The final song, *Der Leiermann* (“The Organ Grinder”), is a heartrending end to the cycle. The left hand of the piano plays an ostinato of open fifths throughout, conjuring up the drone of the hurdy-gurdy—a chromatic grace-note even suggests the creaking of the instrument. Over this, the right hand plays the hurdy-gurdy's plaintive melody that invokes the desolate scene of the barefoot old man, shunned by all, his fingers numb, and the dogs growling at his feet. In the tremendous final moments the wanderer, for the first time since he bade goodbye to his false lover, speaks with a human being, entreating this Wonderful Old Man, “*Wunderlicher Aler, shall I go with you?*”: the melody is inflected upwards on “Alter.” And the anguished final enquiry, “When I sing my songs, will you play your hurdy-gurdy too?” in the highest register of the voice, is refused any consolatory answers; the piano postlude ends with the dying away of the hurdy-gurdy's drone.

### An opera in scope and effect

In his introduction to the Peters Edition of *Winterreise*, Professor Max Müller, son of the poet, remarked that Schubert's two song cycles have a dramatic effect not unlike that of a full-scale tragic opera; this is particularly true when they are performed by great *lieder* singers and pianists. Like *Die schöne Müllerin*, Schubert's *Winterreise* is not merely a collection of songs upon the theme of lost or unrequited love, but is in effect a dramatic monologue, lasting over an hour in performance. Although individual songs are sometimes sung out of context in recitals (e.g., *Gute Nacht*, *Der Lindenbaum* and *Der Leiermann*), it is a work which should be performed and heard in its entirety, as in today's program. The intensity and the emotional inflections of the poetry and its musical setting are carefully built up to express the sorrows of the lover, and are developed to an almost pathological degree from the first to the last note. David Alden brings out the interior drama of the work in a film he recently directed for British television of *Winterreise* in which Ian Bostridge "delivers the most riveting, heart-wrenching portrayal of the protagonist" with Julius Drake at the piano.

Josef von Spaun, who visited Schubert during his last days in the autumn of 1828, reported periods of delirium during which Schubert "sang ceaselessly," alternating with periods of lucidity during which he corrected the proofs for part 2 of *Winterreise*. On the 18th of November the young composer had to be restrained in his bed, and by 3 o'clock the next afternoon, at the age of 31, he was dead, mercifully freed from the Wanderer's fate.

*Dr. Nalini Ghuman*



**Ian Bostridge** was a post-doctoral fellow in history at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, before embarking on a full-time career as a singer. His international recital career includes the world's major concert halls and the Edinburgh, Munich, Vienna, Aldeburgh

and Schubertiade Festivals, including artistic residencies at the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Barbican Centre and his own *Perspectives* series at Carnegie Hall and in 2008 at the Barbican, London.

In opera, he has sung Tamino, Jupiter (*Semele*) and Aschenbach (*Death in Venice*) at English National Opera; Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*), Vašek (*The Bartered Bride*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*) and Caliban (*The Tempest*) for the Royal Opera, Don Ottavio in Vienna and Nerone (*L'Incoronazione di Poppea*), Tom Rakewell (*The Rake's Progress*) and Male Chorus (*The Rape of Lucretia*) in Munich. He has sung Aschenbach in Brussels, Amsterdam and Luxembourg and will also sing the role at La Scala in Milan.

His many award-winning recordings include Schubert with Graham Johnson (Gramophone Award, 1996); Tom Rakewell with Sir John Eliot Gardiner (Grammy Award, 1999); Schumann with Julius Drake (Gramophone Award, 1998), *The Turn of the Screw* with Daniel Harding (Gramophone Award, 2003) and *Billy Budd* (Grammy Award, 2010).

His concert engagements include the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Boston Symphony, London Symphony, London Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, New York Philharmonic and Los Angeles Philharmonic orchestras under Sir Simon Rattle, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Andrew Davis, Seiji Ozawa, Riccardo Muti, Mstislav Rostropovich, Daniel Barenboim, Daniel Harding, Donald Runnicles, James Levine and Antonio Pappano. In January 2010, he sang the world premiere of Hans Werner Henze's *Opfergang* with the Accademia Santa Cecilia in Rome under Antonio Pappano.

He was created a CBE in the 2004 New Year's Honours.



The pianist **Julius Drake** lives in London and specialises in the field of chamber music, working with many of the world's leading artists, both in recital and on disc.

He appears at all the major music centers: in recent seasons, concerts have taken him to the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Munich, Schubertiade and Salzburg festivals; Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center, New York; the Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, and the Philharmonie, Cologne; Théâtre du Châtelet and Musée de Louvre, Paris; La Scala, Milan, and Liceu, Barcelona; Musikverein and Konzerthaus, Vienna; and Wigmore Hall and BBC Proms, London.

Mr. Drake's passionate interest in song has led to invitations to devise song series for, among others, the Wigmore Hall, the BBC and the Concertgebouw. A series of song recitals—*Julius Drake and Friends*—in the historic Middle Temple Hall in London, has featured recitals with many outstanding artists.

He was appointed artistic director of Leeds Lieder 2009 and the Machynlleth Festival in Wales in 2009–2011.

Mr. Drake's many recordings include Sibelius songs and Grieg songs with Katarina Karneus (both Hyperion); French sonatas with Nicholas Daniel (Virgin); Spanish songs with Joyce Didonato (Eloquientia); Mahler songs and Tchaikovsky songs with Christianne Stotijn (both Onyx); and Schumann *Lieder* with Alice Coote (EMI).

His live recordings from recitals at Wigmore Hall for the Wigmore Live label have included concerts with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Joyce Didonato, Christopher Maltman and Gerald Finley. He has made an award-winning series of recordings with Ian Bostridge for EMI, including discs of Schumann, Schubert, Henze, Britten, *The English Songbook* and *La Bonne Chanson*. His recent series of recordings with Gerald Finley for Hyperion has been widely acclaimed, and their Barber songs and Schuman *Heine Lieder* have won both the 2008 and 2009 Gramophone Awards.