

Sunday, March 4, 2012, 3pm
Hertz Hall

Wolfgang Holzmaier, *baritone*
Russell Ryan, *piano*

PROGRAM

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) Winterreise, Op. 89, D. 911 (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. Holzmaier and Mr. Ryan will perform Winterreise without intermission.

Funded by the Koret Foundation, this performance is part of Cal Performances' 2011–2012 Koret Recital Series, which brings world-class artists to our community.

Cal Performances' 2011–2012 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Winterreise (“Winter Journey”), D. 911

Composed in 1827.

On January 31, 1827, Franz Schubert turned 30. He had been following a bohemian existence in Vienna for over a decade, making barely more than a pittance from the sale and performance of his works, and living largely by the generosity of his friends, a devoted band of performers and music-lovers who rallied around his convivial personality and exceptional talent. The pattern of Schubert’s daily life was firmly established by that time: composition in the morning; long walks or friendly visits in the afternoon; companionship for wine and song in the evening. The routine was broken by occasional trips into the countryside to stay with friends or families of friends—he visited Dombach, near the Vienna Woods, for several weeks in the spring of 1827, and Graz in September. A curious dichotomy marked Schubert’s personality during those final years of his life, one that suited well the Romantic image of the inspired artist, rapt out of quotidian experience to carry back to benighted humanity some transcendent vision. “Anyone who had seen him only in the morning, in the throes of composition, his eyes shining, speaking, even, another language, will never forget it—though in the afternoon, to be sure, he became another person,” recorded one friend. The duality in Schubert’s character was reflected in the sharp swings of mood marking both his psychological makeup and his creative work. “If there were times, both in his social relationships and his art, when the Austrian character appeared all too strongly in the vigorous and pleasure-loving Schubert,” wrote his friend the dramatist Eduard von Bauernfeld, “there were also times when a black-winged demon of sorrow and melancholy forced its way into his vicinity; not altogether an evil spirit, it is true, since, in the dark concentrated hours, it often brought out music of the most agonizing beauty.” The ability to mirror his own fluctuating feelings in his compositions—the darkening cloud momentarily obscuring the bright

sunlight—is one of Schubert’s most remarkable and characteristic achievements, and touches indelibly upon the incomparable series of works—*Winterreise*, the “Great” C major Symphony, the last three Piano Sonatas, the String Quintet, the two Piano Trios, the *Impromptus*—that he created during the last months of his brief life.

Early in 1827, Schubert, always alert for poetry that he could wrap with music, discovered a four-year-old copy of the Leipzig periodical *Urania* that contained twelve poems collectively titled *Die Winterreise*—“The Winter’s Journey”—by Wilhelm Müller, whose *Die schöne Müllerin* (“The Beautiful Maid of the Mill”), a narrative poetic cycle about youthful love turned tragic, he had set in 1823. Müller, born in 1794 into the family of a tailor in Dessau, studied linguistics and history in Berlin and volunteered for the Prussian army in 1813 to fight Napoleon. Late the following year he returned to Berlin, where he resumed his studies and made his way into some of the city’s most fashionable salons with his charm and literary talents. In 1817, he set off on an extended tour around the Mediterranean, developing a deep love for the civilizations of southern Europe before returning to his native Dessau in December 1818 to teach classics and work as a translator, editor, critic and poet. He was appointed court librarian by Duke Leopold Friedrich of Anhalt-Dessau in 1820 and privy counselor four years later, but his rising success was abruptly terminated by his sudden death on October 1, 1827. In 1815, he confided to his diary, “I can neither play nor sing, and my verses lead but half a life until music breathes life into them. But courage! a kindred soul may yet be found who will hear the tunes behind the words and reflect them back to me.” Müller could have found no better a “kindred soul” than Schubert, who not only brought his poems fully to life but also established the integrated song cycle as a viable musical form with *Die Schöne Müllerin*.

Die Winterreise, with its nameless character’s hopelessly lost love, his frigid emotional world and his welcome acceptance of his own mortality, struck Schubert as deeply as any words that he ever put to music. Though only 30, and with a

growing confidence in his own creative abilities and a reputation quickly spreading beyond his native Vienna, Schubert had already begun considering closely the subject of death. His own health had by then been seriously undermined by the complications of syphilis—*Die Schöne Müllerin* was largely composed during a hospital stay—and he was much disturbed by reports that Ludwig van Beethoven, whom he admired immensely as both a composer and an exemplar of the creative artist, was near death. (Schubert visited him on March 19, 1827, a week before Beethoven died; it was the only time they ever met. Schubert was one of the 36 torchbearers in Beethoven’s funeral procession.) In February, Schubert composed the dozen *Winterreise* poems, and performed them for some friends. “Schubert had been gloomy for some time and seemed strained,” Joseph von Spaun recorded, “and he told me, ‘Well, you will soon hear and understand. I will sing a cycle of somber songs to you. They have moved me more than any other songs I have done.’ With great emotion he sang *Winterreise* to us. We were all amazed at the melancholy mood of these songs.” When Schubert accompanied the baritone Johann Michael Vogl in the cycle that summer, they had to stop the performance because all of the auditors, men and women alike, had been reduced to tears. (*Winterreise* had a similar lachrymose effect on the veteran composer and pianist Johann Nepomuk Hummel and on the young Franz Liszt, who transcribed the complete cycle for solo piano in 1839.) In September, Schubert discovered the remaining twelve poems of Müller’s cycle in the 1824 complete edition of the work (dedicated to Carl Maria von Weber), and he set them the following month. The Viennese firm of Tobias Haslinger published the first twelve songs of *Winterreise* in January 1828 (Schubert dropped the definite article from his title), and the balance of them in December, a month after the composer had died. Correcting the latter edition’s proofs in his sick bed was the last substantive work that Schubert did.

Winterreise, unlike *Die schöne Müllerin*, does not tell a story. It is instead a series of two dozen contemplations of despair and longing

for death through evocations of frozen nature, of loneliness, of lost love, of pointless wandering, of vain hope, of painful memory. At the end of this motionless journey, after the poet-singer has inquired about a place in a cemetery (*Das Wirtshaus*), mocked hope (*Mut*) and wished for the extinction of the third sun that lit his way (*Die Nebensonnen*, representing love, hope and life itself), he is lured by the poignant drones of *Der Leiermann* to try his songs in the uncertain next world. “On paper,” Brian Newbould wrote in his biography of Schubert, “*Winterreise* looks too gloomy, too monochrome, too doom-laden by half. In the best of performances, however, a spell is cast and maintained through more than an hour of music, music which—however one responds to the unrelieved self-obsession of the poetry—achieves immense expressive power, as much by context and accumulation as by the potent yet simple inventiveness of each individual song.” In a review of Part I of *Winterreise* on March 29, 1828, the critic for Vienna’s *Theaterzeitung* wrote, “Schubert’s spirit soars so boldly that he carries along all who approach him and are borne through immeasurable depths of the human heart into worlds beyond, where the promise of the infinite opens up longingly in the radiance of the setting sun, but where also the gentle confining hand of the present joins with the fearful bliss of an inexpressible premonition to define the boundaries of human existence.”

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WOLFGANG HOLZMAIR was born in Vöcklabruck, Austria, and studied at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Art with Hilde Rössel-Majdan (voice) and Erik Werba (*lied*). He performs in recital throughout the world, including in London, Lisbon, New York, Washington DC, at the Risør Festival in Norway, the UK Bath Festival, the Menuhin Festival in Switzerland, Bregenz Festival and Carinthian Summer Festival in Austria, as well as in Amsterdam, Cambridge, Liverpool, Oxford, Linz and Vienna, where he curates and sings in a Mahler project. Alongside his outstanding artistic relationship with the British pianist Imogen Cooper and his collaboration with a number of well-versed accompanists, he performs with some of the leading pianists of our time, most recently with Andreas Haefliger.

Mr. Holzmair is also active in the opera world. He has appeared as Papageno and Eisenstein in *Die Fledermaus*; Faninal in *Der Rosenkavalier* in Seattle under Asher Fisch and in Hong Kong under Edo de Waart; Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte* in Lyon under William Christie and in Toronto; the Music Master in *Ariadne auf Naxos* in Madrid under Jesús López-Cobos; Wolfram and Demetrius in Britten's

A Midsummer Night's Dream; and the Father in *Hansel and Gretel* on a Japanese tour under Ozawa. In 2010–2011, he sang Masino in Haydn's *La vera costanza* in performances in Cologne. Future plans include Agamemnon in Wagner's version of Gluck's *Iphigénie en Aulide* in Bayreuth.

Equally in demand on the concert platform, Mr. Holzmair has sung with leading European and American orchestras, such as the Israel Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Cleveland and Concertgebouw orchestras, and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and under such eminent conductors as Blomstedt, Boulez, Chailly, Frühbeck de Burgos, Haitink, Harnoncourt, Kreizberg, Norrington and Ozawa. This season's concert appearances include Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* with the Klangforum Wien in Vienna and Amsterdam; orchestrated Wolf songs with the Budapest Festival Orchestra under Iván Fischer in Budapest; and Brahms's Requiem under Yutaka Sado at the Teatro La Fenice, Venice.

Mr. Holzmair has an extensive discography, which has received critical acclaim: Clara and Robert Schumann's *Lieder*; Eichendorff songs by various composers, all with Imogen Cooper; various Schubert recordings with Gérard; the Austrian Pasticcio Award-winning *Songs from the British Isles* with Trio Wanderer; Wolf songs with Imogen Cooper; *Pelléas et Mélisande* with Haitink and the Orchestre National de France; and Brahms's Requiem with Herbert Blomstedt, which won a Grammy Award. For years, he has also been a committed advocate of works, especially *lieder*, by such formerly persecuted composers as Křenek, Mittler, Zeisl and Schreker.

Since 1998, he has taught *lied* and oratorio at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and given master classes in Europe and North America. He is also a visiting professor and fellow of the Royal College of Music in London.



Born in North Dakota, **Russell Ryan** received his first piano lessons at six. He was a prize-winner several times at the San Francisco Junior Bach Festival and performed as a soloist for four consecutive years. After comple-

tion of his piano studies under Paul Hersh at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, he participated in master classes at the Juilliard School and subsequently moved to Austria, where he studied piano and chamber music under Georg Ebert at Vienna's University for Music and Performing Arts, graduating with honors.

In 1985, Mr. Ryan became a member of the staff of the vocal department at Vienna's University for Music and Performing Arts where, as of 1991, he worked as assistant in the *lied* class of Edith Mathis. For several years, he was also accompanist of the Wiener Singverein and frequently gave master classes for *lied*, opera and musical theater at such international festivals as the Jugendfestival Bayreuth, the Wiener Meisterkurse, the Gino Bechi Festival in Florence, the Oslo Music Academy, and the Austrian Cultural Forum. In 2008, he received a professorship of practice for collaborative piano at Arizona State University and is guest instructor at the Institute for the International Education of Students in Vienna, where he is in-charge of the vocal performance class. He also is a guest artist at the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival and Middlebury Summer Program.

Mr. Ryan performs regularly as a soloist and collaborative artist throughout China, Europe, Israel, Japan and the United States. He has appeared in many radio and television broadcasts, recorded several CDs, and successfully concertized in the Wiener Konzerthaus, Wiener Festwochen, the Menuhin Festival Gstaad, the Grieg festivals in Oslo and Bergen, Lincoln and Kennedy centers, Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival in Germany. In addition, he performed at Carnegie Hall, accompanying Hugo Wolf's major song-cycles on several evenings.