

SATURDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 9, 2024, AT 7:30 ▶ 4,485TH CONCERT

Alice Tully Hall, Starr Theater, Adrienne Arsht Stage Home of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center

MATTHEW POLENZANI, tenor GLORIA CHIEN, piano KEN NODA, piano SEAN LEE, violin RICHARD LIN, violin
MILENA PÁJARO-VAN DE STADT,
viola
NICHOLAS CANELLAKIS, cello

# Schwanengesang

## FRANZ SCHUBERT

(1797–1828)

# Schwanengesang for Voice and Piano, D. 957 (1828)

- ▶ Liebesbotschaft
- ▶ Kriegers Ahnung
- ▶ Frühlingssehnsucht
- ▶ Ständchen
- ▶ Aufenthalt
- ▶ In der Ferne
- ▶ Abschied
- ▶ Der Atlas
- ▶ Ihr Bild
- ▶ Das Fischermädchen
- Die Stadt
- ▶ Am Meer
- ▶ Der Doppelgänger
- ▶ Die Taubenpost

POLENZANI. NODA

#### INTERMISSION

# ROBERT SCHUMANN

(1810-1856)

# Quintet in E-flat major for Piano, Two Violins, Viola, and Cello, Op. 44 (1842)

- ▶ Allegro brillante
- In modo d'una marcia, un poco largamente
- Scherzo: Molto vivace
- Allegro ma non troppo

CHIEN, LIN, LEE, PÁJARO-VAN DE STADT, CANELLAKIS

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# ABOUT TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Dear Listener,

Occasionally, music publishers have had good ideas for promoting the works of their composers. The titling of the Schubert songs heard tonight, by their first publisher Tobias Haslinger, bound them into a cycle with a memorable name: *Schwanengesang*, which is commonly used today in its English translation, *Swan Song*.

We hope that some of you may have heard the recent CMS performance of Schubert's *Winterreise* with baritone Nikolay Borchev. If you are familiar with that work, you already know what to expect from *Schwanengesang*: a musical world completely unto itself, like none other. For many, the songs of Schubert are apt to exert a gravitational pull that possesses the listener entirely. We underwent such an experience with *Winterreise*, as the shocking isolation we all experienced at the outset of the COVID pandemic confined us to our home, and provided us the time to edit the recording Nikolay and Wu Han had made the previous summer. It was an eerie experience: Schubert's dismal winter journey resonated almost too perfectly with the reality of that time, and yet, by immersing ourselves in Schubert's world, we found comfort, hope, and beauty in the midst of crisis.

It was reported that when Schumann heard of the death of Schubert, he wept the entire night. The two had never met, yet such was the talent of Schumann that he easily heard Schubert's music in his head from looking at the printed scores. As Schubert's music gradually became known to the world during the 19th century, his fame grew as it never had during his lifetime. Perhaps, when we hear Schumann's passionate quintet on the second half of tonight's program, we can imagine the work's funereal slow movement as Schumann's tribute to a young composer whose music was so beloved by him, and who was taken from the earth far before his time.

Enjoy the performance,

David Finckel ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

# NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

By Jack Slavin

# Schwanengesang for Voice and Piano, D. 957

#### FRANZ SCHUBERT

- ▶ Born January 31, 1797, in Vienna
- Died November 19, 1828, in Vienna

## Composed in 1828

The term "swan song" comes from the ancient belief that swans remain silent their entire lives, only to sing a single, beautiful song just before they die. This poetic image of a final, poignant expression—though utterly inaccurate from a scientific perspective—has long been used to refer to the last works of great artists across various genres.

In Anton Chekhov's play by the same name, the protagonist grapples with his own mortality and claims, "Where there is art and genius there can never be such things as old age or loneliness or sickness." Schubert's genius unfortunately did not protect him from illness toward the end of his life. However, despite being quite unwell due to tertiary syphilis and the treatment thereof, he was incredibly prolific during his final months, completing the last three piano sonatas, the C-major String Quintet, and the songs that would eventually be grouped together and posthumously published as Schwanengesang.

The third of Schubert's song cycles, Schwanengesang is a cycle in name only. It differs from the composer's earlier Winterreise and Die schöne Müllerin in that it lacks a clear narrative arc and contains texts by three different poets: the first seven by Ludwig Rellstab, the next six by

- First CMS performance on March 25, 1973, by baritone Hermann Prey and pianist Leonard Hokanson
- Duration: 50 minutes

Heinrich Heine, and the last one by Johann Gabriel Seidl, added by the collection's first publisher. There is speculation that Schubert intended to publish the Heine and Rellstab settings separately, but the loose theme of a distant beloved has nevertheless been identified throughout both sections.

The rippling notes of the piano introduction of *Liebesbotschaft* (Love's Message) mimic the murmuring brook that the protagonist addresses. The illusion of water is further enhanced with echoes of the vocal line in the piano—though not an uncommon technique in Schubert's *Lieder*, it could be interpreted as the man's reflection staring back at him.

The dotted (short-long) rhythms set the militaristic tone of *Kriegers Ahnung* (Warrior's Foreboding). The music's character shifts abruptly in the second stanza, favoring gently flowing triplets as the soldier describes his dream of his beloved. Rushing sixteenth-notes usher in the final stanza with a jolt of the soldier's anxiety.

In Frühlingssehnsucht (Spring Longing), distinctive, pleading halfsteps mark the questions that close each restless verse, save for the affirmative finale.

The measured triplets of *Ständchen* (Serenade), likely the most widely

recognized song of this collection, establish the wistful mood of the serenade sung below the beloved's window.

The agitated, almost percussive accompaniment in *Aufenthalt* (Resting Place) represents the surging river and roaring forest—a vastly different characterization of such natural elements when compared with earlier songs in *Schwanengesang*.

The despondent, languid vocal line of *In der Ferne* (Far Away) underscores the wanderer's isolation on his journey. Succumbing to his isolation, he sends messages to a beloved through the "whispering breezes."

The final Rellstab setting, Abschied (Farewell), is a respite from the darkness and melancholy of the preceding songs. The wanderer bids farewell to his town with a jaunty tune, while the clicking of his horse's hooves is heard in the rhythm of the piano accompaniment.

The first of Heine's poems in Schwanengesang is written from the point of view of Atlas, the mythological figure doomed to forever hold the sky up above the earth. The ominous left-hand piano part and stark vocal line convey the rage and hopelessness of Atlas's condition.

The piano and voice move in unison in the opening of *Ihr Bild* (Her Portrait), creating a sparse and hollow texture befitting the man who gazes at his beloved's portrait in tears because he has lost her.

A gently lilting **§** meter lends a playful innocence to *Das*Fischermädchen (The Fisher Maiden), in which the narrator tries to capture the attention of a young woman.

The wispy, arpeggiated diminished chords in the piano aptly capture the setting that Heine describes in *Die Stadt (The Town)*: they might represent

fleeting glimpses of the horizon visible through the clouds, mimic the sound of the damp wind, or simulate the rowing motion of the boatman.

The mysterious chords of the opening to *Am Meer* (By the Sea) are forgotten as a sweet, unassuming tune unfolds. The protagonist recalls a moment by the water's edge with a woman, only to reveal in the end that her tears had poisoned him. What initially seems like a break from the sorrow of *Schwanengesang* still carries the haunting undercurrent of lost love.

The piano crawls from chord to chord in the unsettling opening of the penultimate song. The chromatic harmonies intensify as the poet sees his *Doppelgänger*—an apparition that signals death—mocking his grief at the former home of his beloved.

Die Taubenpost (Pigeon Post), added to Schwanengesang by the publisher, is light and endearing-an unexpected conclusion to an otherwise dark song cycle. Its uplifting nature may be the reason it was included, though there is also a potential thematic link. In Seidl's poem, the narrator describes his carrier pigeon, named Longing, which he regularly sends to his beloved, though it brings nothing back in return. Whether the narrative of the distant beloved was intentional on Schubert's part or not, this posthumous addition to Schwanengesang makes for a bittersweet ending.

Robert Schumann said of Schubert: "What a diary is to others, in which they set down their momentary feelings, etc., music paper really was to Schubert, to which he entrusted his every mood, and his whole soul, musical through-and-through, wrote notes where others use words." Schumann's words aptly capture Schubert's unique ability to translate his innermost emotions into music,

particularly within the realm of German art song. Schubert's *Lieder* collection reveals the boundless expressive possibilities inherent in the union of music and poetry—possibilities fully

realized in *Schwanengesang*. It is only fitting, then, that Schubert's final artistic statement, his "swan song," takes the form of the art song genre that he so profoundly transformed. •

# Quintet in E-flat major for Piano, Two Violins, Viola, and Cello, Op. 44

#### **ROBERT SCHUMANN**

- ▶ Born June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, Saxony
- Died July 29,1856, in Endenich, near Bonn

## Composed in 1842

- First CMS performance on November 12, 1971, by pianist Richard Goode, violinists Pinchas Zukerman and Charles Treger, violist Walter Trampler, and cellist Leslie Parnas
- Duration: 30 minutes

Robert Schumann was obsessive in his approach to composition and was known to dedicate extended periods of time to a single genre. The year 1840, in which he produced over 150 lieder, became known as the "Year of the Song," for example. The so-called "Year of Chamber Music," 1842, saw the composition of three string quartets, a piano quartet, and the piano quintet heard on tonight's program.

The combination of piano and string quartet was, at the time, an innovative choice that would have significant impact on the chamber music genre, which had previously been relegated to the domestic sphere. The instrumentation of pieces like the E-flat major Piano Quintet—and the evolution of the piano itself into a larger and more sonorous instrument—afforded musicians the opportunity to perform chamber pieces in bigger concert halls.

The Op. 44 Quintet was well received: Schumann's wife Clara, who was at the piano for the quintet's first public performance, referred to it as "extremely brilliant and effective" and "abounding in strength and esprit," adding that even her father (who did not

think highly of Robert) "was in transports of delight." Nearly two centuries later, the quintet's grandeur and Romantic spirit ensure it remains a mainstay of the chamber music repertoire.

The Allegro brillante begins with emphatic chords and upward leaps of a minor seventh followed by a minor sixth in the violin—a bold, if unusual, opening gesture. This ascending interval turns into the beginning of a lovely melodic fragment, initially appearing in the piano before it is passed around the strings. Reprised at a piano (soft) dynamic and with the addition of a simple grace note, the theme drops the extroverted quality of the opening, opting instead for a poignant espressivo melody that soars in the violin.

The first movement's romance is replaced by a stern, C-minor funeral march. Two contrasting sections distract from the perpetual, marching cadence: a melodic respite in the major mode, and a fiery minor *Agitato* fueled by aggressive triplets in the piano.

Excited scales drive the opening of the third movement, a scherzo with two trio sections. The imitative lyricism of the first trio contrasts with not only the movement's main theme, but also the second trio's frenetic dance, in which one hears hints of the style hongrois—a style that incorporates the musical vocabulary of the Roma people.

The piano introduces the militaristic first theme of the Allegro, ma non troppo over a pulsating accompaniment in

the strings. This austere opening is not indicative of the entire movement, which ranges from the lyrical to the playful. The first movement's opening theme returns in the coda of the finale, completing the cyclical form of the quintet. •

Program notes © Jack Slavin



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# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



#### NICHOLAS CANELLAKIS

Nicholas Canellakis has become one of the most soughtafter and innovative cellists of his generation, praised in the New Yorker as a "superb young soloist." Recent highlights include solo debuts with the Virginia, Albany, Bangor, and Delaware symphony orchestras; concerto appearances with the Erie Philharmonic, the New Haven Symphony, and the American Symphony Orchestra; Europe and Asia tours with CMS; and recitals throughout the US with his longtime duo

collaborator, pianist-composer Michael Stephen Brown. An alum of CMS's Bowers Program, he is a regular guest artist at many of the world's leading music festivals. Canellakis is the Artistic Director of Chamber Music Sedona in Arizona and is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and New England Conservatory.



#### **GLORIA CHIEN**

Pianist Gloria Chien has a diverse musical life as a performer, concert presenter, and educator. She made her orchestral debut at age 16 with the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Thomas Dausgaard. In 2009 she launched String Theory, a chamber music series in Chattanooga, and the following year was appointed Director of the Chamber Music Institute at Music@Menlo by Artistic Directors David Finckel and Wu Han. In 2017, she joined her husband, violinist

Soovin Kim, as Co-Artistic Director of the Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival in Burlington, Vermont. The duo became Artistic Directors at Chamber Music Northwest in 2020, and were named the recipients of the 2021 Award for Extraordinary Service to Chamber Music from CMS. Ms. Chien received her bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees from New England Conservatory of Music. She is an artist-in-residence at Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee; a Steinway Artist; and an alum of CMS's Bowers Program.



## **SEAN LEE**

A recipient of a 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, violinist Sean Lee has performed as soloist with orchestras including the San Francisco Symphony, Israel Camerata Jerusalem, and Orchestra del Teatro Carlo Felice. As a season artist at CMS and an alum of the Bowers Program, he continues to perform regularly at Lincoln Center and on tour. Originally from Los Angeles, Lee studied with Robert Lipsett of the Colburn Conservatory and legendary violinist Ruggiero Ricci before

moving at age 17 to study at the Juilliard School with his longtime mentor, violinist Itzhak Perlman. Lee performs on violins made by Samuel Zygmuntowicz in 1995 and David Bague in 1999, with bows made circa 1890 by Joseph Arthur Vigneron and circa 1910 by W. E. Hill & Sons.



#### RICHARD LIN

▶ Taiwanese-American violinist Richard Lin continues to gain international prominence since his Gold Medal prize at the 2018 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis. He has collaborated with numerous orchestras and performed at celebrated concert venues throughout Asia, Europe, and the United States. He is a laureate of the Sendai, Joseph Joachim, Singapore, and Michael Hill International Violin competitions and is on faculty at the National Taipei University of Education.

In spring 2023, he released a new album with pianist Thomas Hoppe on the Azica label featuring his Carnegie Hall program with works by Vitali, Richard Strauss, John Corigliano, and Frolov. Born in Phoenix, Arizona, and raised in Taiwan, Lin graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music and the Juilliard School, where he studied with Aaron Rosand and Lewis Kaplan, respectively.



#### **KEN NODA**

▶ Ken Noda is Musical Advisor to the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera. After a 28-year tenure, he retired from his full-time Met position as a coach and teacher in July 2019. He is a guest coach at the Carnegie Hall/Weill Music Institute, the Verbier Festival in Switzerland, the Marlboro Music Festival, and the Chamber Music Society at Lincoln Center. From 2020 through 2023, he coached a Mozart/da Ponte opera cycle in Salzburg

conducted by Sir András Schiff that will be repeated from 2026 through 2028 in Vicenza, Italy. He studied piano with Daniel Barenboim and in his first career as a piano soloist, played with the world's top orchestras and conductors. He has collaborated in chamber music with Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman, Lynn Harrell, Nigel Kennedy, Cho-Liang Lin, and the Emerson String Quartet, and as accompanist to many of the greatest vocal artists of our time.



## MILENA PÁJARO-VAN DE STADT

▶ Violist Milena Pájaro-van de Stadt has appeared as soloist with the Tokyo Philharmonic, the Jacksonville Symphony, and the Sphinx Chamber Orchestra, and has performed in recitals and chamber music concerts throughout the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Asia, including an acclaimed 2011 debut recital at London's Wigmore Hall. She was the founding violist of the Dover Quartet, and played in the group from 2008 to 2022. In 2013 the Dover Quartet was the first-prize

winner and recipient of every special award at the Banff International String Quartet Competition, and won the gold medal and grand prize in the 2010 Fischoff Chamber Music Competition. Her numerous awards also include first prize of the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition and top prizes at the Sphinx Competition and Tokyo International Viola Competition. Pájaro-van de Stadt has degrees from the Curtis Institute of Music and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.



#### MATTHEW POLENZANI

American tenor Matthew Polenzani is lauded as one of the most gifted and distinguished lyric tenors of his generation. In the 2024–25 season he will make a role debut as Maurizio in Adriana Lecouvreur at Teatro Real, and bring his acclaimed portrayal of Pinkerton in Madama Butterfly to Gran Teatre del Liceu. Returning to the Metropolitan Opera, he will star as Rodolfo in La Bohème, and will take on the role of Anatol in concert performances of Samuel Barber's Vanessa at the

Kennedy Center with the National Symphony Orchestra under Gianandrea Noseda. This season he also appears in major titular roles, including *Werther* at Wiener Staatsoper, *Otello* at Staatsoper Stuttgart, and *Idomeneo* at San Francisco Opera. On the concert stage, he will offer recitals at the Hungarian State Opera and Oper Frankfurt. Polenzani was the recipient of the 2004 Richard Tucker Award, The Metropolitan Opera's 2008 Beverly Sills Artist Award, and a 2017 *Opera News* Award.

# ABOUT THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS) was founded in 1969 under the leadership and patronage of Alice Tully and the artistic direction of Charles Wadsworth, beginning a new era for chamber music in the United States. Through its many performance, education, and digital activities, CMS brings the experience of great chamber music to more people than any other organization of its kind. The performing artists constitute a multi-generational and international roster of the world's finest chamber musicians, enabling CMS to present chamber music of every instrumentation, style, and historical period. The Bowers Program, our competitive three-season residency, is dedicated to developing the chamber music leaders of the future and integrates this selection of extraordinary early-career musicians into every facet of CMS activities. CMS reaches a growing global audience through a range of free digital media, including livestreams, an online archive of more than 1,700 video recordings, and broadcasts that are distributed to millions of listeners around the world.

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Updated on September 20, 2024

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