

Matthias Goerne and *Winterreise*

TUESDAY
21

JULY
8 P.M.

ÉGLISE DE
MASCOCHE

PROGRAM

➤ **FRANZ SCHUBERT** (1797-1828)

Texts by

➤ **WILHELM MÜLLER** (1794-1827)

DIE WINTERREISE, D. 911 – 70'

1. GUTE NACHT (Good night)
2. DIE WETTERFAHNE (The Weathervane)
3. GEFRORENE TRÄNEN (Frozen Tears)
4. ERSTARRUNG (Numbness)
5. DER LINDENBAUM (The Linden Tree)
6. WASSERFLUT (Flood)
7. AUF DEM FLUSSE (On the River)
8. RÜCKBLICK (A Backward Glance)
9. IRRLICHT (Will-o'-the-Wisp)
10. RAST (Rest)
11. FRÜHLINGSTRAUM (Dream of Spring)
12. EINSAMKEIT (Loneliness)
13. DIE POST (The Post)
14. DER GREISE KOPF (The Grey Head)
15. DIE KRÄHE (The Crow)
16. LETZTE HOFFNUNG (Last Hope)
17. IM DORFE (In the Village)
18. DER STÜRMISCHE MORGEN (The Stormy Morning)
19. TÄUSCHUNG (Illusion)
20. DER WEGWEISER (The Signpost)
21. DAS WIRTSHAUS (The Inn)
22. MUT (Courage)
23. DIE NEBENSONNEN (The Three Suns)
24. DER LEIERMANN (The Hurdy-Gurdy Man)

Presented by

 Desjardins

Matthias Goerne, baritone
Tamara Stefanovich, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

In 1827, Schubert is gravely ill and passing through depressive phases. He then withdraws into himself within the poetry of Wilhelm Müller (1794–1827) to compose the cycle *Winterreise*—a dark narrative in 24 lieder—which draws us into a terribly pessimistic psychology, where the dream of happiness is set against the longing for a liberating death. Schubert stages a traveller wandering through the world and through his own thoughts. The composer's psychic identification with this figure is total: the refused love, the bitter solitude, the yearning for release from suffering are his own. On Müller's poems he builds a living tableau, an imaginary journey on the sublimation of feelings of loss and separation.

Good Night contrasts the happy memories the lover keeps of the young woman with images of the road buried under winter, the darkness of the cold night, the tracks of wild beasts on the snow... The tragedy of love has already taken place. The *Weather-vane* whistles and frets on the roof of the beloved's house, creaking and turning upon itself without rest. The *Frozen Tears* “fall from my cheeks,” in a brief, hammered lied in duple time—an unsettling, broken march. Numbness is monotonous and hypnotic with its triplet eighth-notes: “In vain I search the snow for the trace of her steps.” His burning love is condemned to vanish! The *Linden Tree* is an illusion. He thinks he hears the tree speaking to him, but it is nothing of the sort. *Flood* is of an immobile mood, before the torrent. In the traveller's haunted mind, the thawing of the brook is caused by his own burning tears... On the *River* is a funeral march over the ice, and at the end the declamation becomes heart-rending. A *Backward Glance* is a headlong flight, a breathless race out of the town. *Will-o'-the-Wisp* is an emanation of the dead to lure its prey toward the vaults—tragic human destiny! Rest was meant to bring repose, but produces only new death-bound thoughts. *Dream of Spring*: amid these ruins, the traveller drifts into a fleeting reverie of colourful flowers, lute-like sounds, springtime birds. Illusion once more! Loneliness is another

funeral march, beneath the grey clouds, showing the isolation of the despairing man despite the happiness around him.

The *Post* seems positive, with the cavalcade of its mail-coach and the eager call of the postillion's horn, but alas everything is soon shattered by doubt and depressive feelings. For him, the affair of love is over. With *The Grey Head* comes the frost in the hair, a bleak deserted place, a confrontation with nothingness. The *Crow* is the bird of death that accompanies the traveller toward his final rest. *Last Hope* is a modern, disconcerting lied, with its irresolute tonality and its unpredictable rhythms. In the *Village* is a mocking lied, bitter and critical of the surrounding pettiness, heavy in mood for this definitive renunciation of life in society. The *Stormy Morning* smashes everything in its path; it is the vehement winter wind, powerful, raging, in D minor—in reality, it is the traveller's very soul. And since no respite is possible, he bitterly salutes this devastation. Illusion shows a traveller who is carried away by each thought that crosses his mind. His world whirls like an empty waltz. The *Signpost* is the decisive moment on the meaning of this journey: “I must take a road from which no one has ever returned.” The *Inn* is a slow, painful chorale, a kind of Requiem, for even at the inn there is no place for him! In *Courage*, the traveller tries to pull himself together: a fleeting march of excessive willpower, an ironic burst of defiance in the face of despair. The *Three Suns* is the ecstatic climax of the journey: a slow, stripped-bare chorale-lied in which the voice is at first static, then increasingly declamatory. A hallucination multiplies the images of the sun to illustrate the metaphysical illusion of existence. Only death remains to be met. The *Hurdy-Gurdy Man*: here is death—a lugubrious old man playing the hurdy-gurdy, a grinding instrument without soul or colour. Monotone, the voice unwinds its alienated lament, in the traveller's final vision: absolute solitude, loss and separation... the primordial and ultimate experience before the grave.

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