



Werner Gura, tenor

Jens Fuhr, piano

Thursday 11 July 2019 20:00

Hindsgavl Festival

Franz SCHUBERT (1797-1828)

Winterreise

1. *Gute Nacht*
2. *Die Wetterfahne*
3. *Gefror'ne 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 stürmische Morgen*
19. *Täuschung*
20. *Der Wegweiser*
21. *Das Wirtshaus*
22. *Mut*
23. *Die Nebensonnen*
24. *Der Leiermann*

Winterreise

Wanderings towards death or the Romantic artist's conditions of life?

He had already composed big symphonies and masses, but by now the Viennese mostly knew the 30-years old Franz Schubert as the centre of the musical gatherings where his songs and chamber music were performed. But during the year 1827 the normally sociable and cheerful composer had become sad and introverted.

One of his closest friends, Joseph von Spaun, remembered years later how Schubert reacted on his friends' concern:

"Come over to Schober's today, and I will sing you a cycle of horrifying songs. I am anxious to know what you will say about them. They have cost me more effort than any other of my 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, "Der Lindenbaum" 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."

One of the most prominent performers of Schubert's two song-cycles, Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, has called them "Lied Stories". Die schöne Müllerin and Winterreise are both two stories about unhappy love. But where the first one has a clear epic course, in Winterreise we feel something darker and more abstract taking place. It seems that the story has already been taking place for the narrator. Who is he, and where is he going? We don't know, but already in the first song we get to know the narrator's situation.

The wanderer has to leave his beloved, and he turns away from the town and its population. He roams around in the frozen landscape and wanders deeper and deeper into his distorted imaginary world. The sense impressions that he gets on the way are torn from their context and enlarged beyond

recognition. The songs keep returning to the heart, the snow, the linden tree, the frozen river, the town, the old man, the crow and the barking dogs. As long as he's able to find the words for these things, he's not lost. A signpost points to the place "from where no one returns".

But to where the narrator actually is going remains ambiguous, because not even at the churchyard is there room for him. The last song asks the question: What does Schubert's Winterreise actually mean? We are left with the final perfect 5th: Will he join the mysterious organ grinder, Death in disguise? Or are we to interpret the scene as Schubert's romantic vision of the artist choosing the risky way, leaving the safe, well-known world in order to sing his songs together with the organ?

Maybe Franz Schubert saw a part of his own fate in Wilhelm Müller's poems, the texts which inspired him to write some of his most gripping music. Winterreise, in two parts, each consisting of 12 songs, shows the composer's extremely subtle treatment of minor and major in the almost naked melodies, where certain passages in major actually feel like the saddest. The pianist isn't just an accompanist, but very much an equal companion in the interpretation together with the singer. Winterreise is also a modern, avant-garde work, characterized by ambiguity and a persistent search, anxiety and longing.

In the last years of his short life, Schubert reached his zenith as a composer, but he was also a man full of doubt on his way towards unknown goals. "When I wanted to sing about love, it turned into sorrow, and when I wanted to sing about sorrow, it turned into love", Schubert wrote in a candid moment. In Winterreise we experience Romantic art's eternal alternation between love and pain, from the hope of finding happiness again to the memory of the loss.

Text: Jeppe Priess Gersbøll

English translation: Susanne Lange

WERNER GÜRA

German tenor Werner Güra, born in Munich, received his musical training at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and completed his vocal studies with Professor Kurt Widmer. Furthermore, he was coached by Nicolai Gedda, Professor– Margreet Honig in Amsterdam and Professor Wessela Zlateva in Vienna.

After guesting at the opera houses of Frankfurt and Basel, he joined the ensemble of the Semperoper Dresden in 1995, where he sang the important Mozart and Rossini parts of his Fach. Daniel Barenboim invited Werner Güra for various productions at the Staatsoper Berlin. He continued as guest in Dresden and also sang his highly acclaimed Mozart roles Tamino, Ferrando and Don Ottavio at Teatro Carlo Felice in Genova, Opéra de Lille, La Monnaie in Brussels and the Opéra National de Paris, at the Innsbruck Festival of Early Music and in Baden-Baden. After a long period appearing in concerts only, Werner Güra decided to take part in a new production of IL RITORNO D'ULISSE IN PATRIA at the Zurich Opera in May/June 2014.

Werner Güra is highly appreciated as Lied interpreter, regularly giving recitals amongst others at the Wigmore Hall London, Concertgebouw Amsterdam, Lincoln Center New York and the Schubertiades Schwarzenberg and Barcelona.

In autumn 2000, Schubert's DIE SCHÖNE MÜLLERIN was released as Werner Güra's first solo recording on Harmonia Mundi, followed by Schumann's DICHTERLIEBE and LIEDERKREIS OP. 39 as well as Hugo Wolf's MÖRIKE LIEDER, all with pianist Jan Schultz. Latest releases on Harmonia Mundi with pianist Christoph Berner are Schöne Wiege

meiner Leiden, featuring songs by Clara & Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms as well as Schubert's SCHWANENGESANG, WINTERREISE and Mozart Lieder. All these solo recordings received the 'Diapason d'or' and were elected Editor's Choice in Gramophone Magazine. For his WINTERREISE, Werner Gura received the BBC Music Magazine Award in the category 'Vocal' in 2011. For his latest Schubert-CD Willkommen und Abschied, he was awarded the prestigious German ECHO-Klassik prize in 2012. His latest recording features Beethoven Lieder and Bagatellen.

Werner Gura has been teaching at the Zurich University of the Arts since 2009.

Machreich Artist Management, Wien

JENS FUHR

Jens Fuhr holds a master's degree as Lied accompanist. He studied in the masterclass for „Lied“ accompaniment with Irwin Gage in Zurich where he graduated with honors.

He accompanied at recitals of Musikverein Wien, Opera Zürich, Liceu Barcelona, Opéra National Montpellier, Istituzione Universitaria dei Concerti in Rome, Slovenska filharmonija Ljubljana, at Freunde des Lieds Association Zurich, Hugo Wolf Association Stuttgart e.a.

Together with the baritone Markus Eiche, Jens Fuhr appeared in a staged version of Schubert's Winterreise, a Co-production of Liceu Barcelona and the National Theatre Mannheim.

Jens Fuhr's solo appearances include music festivals in Kassel, Retz and Pegnitz. Radio recordings and CD recordings with Stephanie

Pfeffer, Markus Eiche and Silke Kaiser complement his artistic work.

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