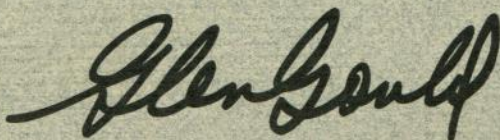




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Saturday, February 1, 1997
8:00 p.m.

The Aldeburgh Connection presents

A Birthday Recital

Honorary Patron: His Excellency Walther Lichem, Austrian Ambassador

Nancy Argenta, soprano
Catherine Robbin, mezzo

with

Malcolm Bilson and Blaise Bryski, piano

Fortepiano by Gottlieb Hafner, Vienna, ca. 1830,
restored in 1993 by Edwin Beunk and Johan Wennink
in Enschede, Holland.

This program of works by Franz Schubert (1797-1828)
is presented in celebration of the 200th anniversary of his birth,
on January 31, 1797.

Tonight's concert will be broadcast on **Radio Concert Hall** and **Encore!**,
CBC Stereo (94.1 FM), at a later date. Check the **Radio Guide** for details.

Producer: Neil Crory
Recording Engineer: David Burnham

programme

Marche Militaire in D major, D. 733/1

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von Collin)

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Intermission

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Der Wanderer an den Mond, D. 870
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(Ludwig Uhland)
(Friedrich Leopold Graf
zu Stolberg-Stolberg)
(Jacob Nicolaus
Craigher)
(Johann Wolfgang von
Goethe)

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Der Musensohn, D. 764

Duet from *Fierabras*, D. 796:
Weit über Glanz und Erdschimmer

(Josef Kupelwieser)

The Performers

Nancy Argenta, soprano

Nancy Argenta has been hailed not only as the supreme Handel soprano of our time, but also praised for performances of works by composers as diverse as Purcell, Mozart, Schubert and Schoenberg. Recent highlights include a tour of Purcell's *King Arthur* with the English Concert, visiting Berlin, Halle, Seville, Helsinki and Buenos Aires, culminating in a concert at the BBC Proms; Haydn's *The Seasons* in Boston; European tours singing Mozart arias with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, and as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with La Petite Bande; as Euridice in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice* with Ivan Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra; appearances in Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Carissimi's *Jepthe* in Salzburg, as well as recitals at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and Lincoln Center. She has sung at numerous important festivals, including the Bruges and Würzburg Festivals with the English Concert, the Turku Festival with The Sixteen, the Bath Mozart Festival with the Bournemouth Sinfonietta and in a televised concert from the 1996 Halle Festival. Her schedule this season includes her début with the Brussels Opera in Pergolesi's *Livietta e*

Tracollo, a tour of Germany with the English Concert under Trevor Pinnock, performances with the St. Louis, Bournemouth and Scottish Chamber Orchestras, concerts with the English Concert at Covent Garden and Amsterdam Concertgebouw and performances of Mahler's *Symphony No. 2* with the Philharmonia Orchestra. Ms. Argenta's discography includes Bach's *St. John Passion*, *B minor Mass*, *Magnificat* and *Christmas Oratorio*, Mozart's *Requiem*, *Don Giovanni* and a live recording of *Così fan tutte*. She has recorded Schubert lieder, Scarlatti cantatas and two discs of Bach solo cantatas. Her recording of Purcell songs and airs, *O Solitude*, was honoured with a 1995 Classic CD Award.



Catherine Robbin, mezzo

Catherine Robbin is an artist of international renown, who appears in concert with leading conductors across North America and Europe. At ease in a wide range of vocal music, her interests and career have encompassed a broad repertoire, from Brahms to Britten, Berlioz and Elgar with conductors such as John Nelson, Edo de Waart, Mario Bernardi and Simon Rattle. Past appearances have included Chausson's *Poème de l'amour et de la mer* with the Belgian National Orchestra in Brussels, Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* and Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* with the Tucson Symphony, Beethoven's *Mass in C Major* here in Toronto and Mahler's *Symphony No. 3* with l'Orchestre Symphonique de Québec, *Messiah* in Boston with Christopher Hogwood and the Academy of Ancient Music, and a televised production of Handel's *Rodelinda* with Nicholas Kraemer and director Jonathan Miller. She took part in l'Orchestre Romantique et Révolutionnaire's performances of Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette*, has sung at New York's Lincoln Center, London's Royal Albert Hall, Covent Garden and the Salzburg Festival, and participated in a tour of Japan with Tafelmusik. This season she appears in Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* with the Vancouver Bach Choir,



Berkeley's *Four Poems of St. Teresa of Avila* and Vivaldi's *Amor hai vinto* with the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, *Messiah* with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and with Tafelmusik, *St. Matthew Passion* with the National Arts Centre Orchestra, in performances with Les Violons du Roy and at the Baldwin-Wallace Bach Festival. Ms. Robbin's numerous recordings have met with wide critical acclaim. Her most recent, released this year by Marquis Classics, is a recording of her 1996 North York recital with British early keyboard specialist Paul Nicholson.

Malcolm Bilson, piano

Malcolm Bilson has been in the forefront of the period instrument movement for over two decades. His performances of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven on replicas and original five-octave late 18th-century pianos have been a key contributor to the restoration of the fortepiano to the concert stage, and have brought fresh insights to the interpretation of the piano works of those masters. He has toured extensively with the major early instrument orchestras, including the English Baroque Soloists with John Eliot Gardiner, the Academy of Ancient Music with Christopher Hogwood and the Philharmonia Baroque under Nicholas McGegan. Since the mid-1980s Bilson's attention has focused increasingly on the piano literature of the 19th century; he has purchased several instruments of that period, one of which is featured tonight. With the New York Chamber Singers and the Monteverdi Choir, he has presented Schubert evenings in New York and London. The works of Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and



Mendelssohn figure prominently in his most recent European and American tours. In 1994 Bilson and six of his former artist-students presented the 32 *Piano Sonatas* of Beethoven in New York City, the première presentation of the entire cycle of works on period instruments. The series will appear in 1997 on the Claves label. He has recorded the complete Mozart *Piano Concertos*, *Piano Sonatas* and *Piano-Violin Sonatas* and the Beethoven *Piano-Cello Sonatas*. In 1994 he began to record all the Schubert *Piano Sonatas* on period pianos for Hungaroton, now about half completed.

Mr. Bilson directs keyboard studies in 18th-century historical performance practice at Cornell University, is adjunct professor at the Eastman School of Music, and has given workshops and master classes at the world's leading music schools.

Blaise Bryski, piano

Blaise Bryski is a graduate of the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and received his Master of Fine Arts degree from the California Institute of the Arts. He was a member for three years of the master class of Aube Tzerko, performed for many years as an accompanist for the UCLA Department of Music, and was a professional pianist in Los Angeles in many styles including rock and jazz. He also performed in such varied venues as the Nakamichi Baroque Festival and the Green Umbrella New Music series.



Mr. Bryski is currently pursuing a doctorate in 18th-century performance at Cornell University, where he studies fortepiano with Malcolm Bilson. At Cornell, he has had the opportunity to perform in numerous concerts on a total of nine different types of fortepiano, reflective of the wide range of compositional styles and instrument construction around the turn of the 19th century. These concerts have included a performance of the Beethoven *Choral Fantasy* with the Cayuga Vocal Ensemble on an 1824 Broadwood. Mr. Bryski has served as artistic director for a festival of the music of Franz Schubert. He maintains an ongoing relationship with the Los Angeles Baroque Orchestra, with whom he performs the chamber music of Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven on period instruments.

About The Aldeburgh Connection

Aldeburgh is the small town on the east coast of England where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. Artistic Directors and pianists Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata have visited and worked there for many summers, as have a large number of the singers appearing with The Aldeburgh Connection.

Dedicated to presenting concerts of music for voice and piano, The Aldeburgh Connection presents two annual concert series in Toronto. In the Sunday Series, at the University of Toronto's Walter Hall, each program is built around a musical, historical or literary theme, linking the music with witty and interesting narrative readings from letters, diaries, newspaper clippings or other sources to set the music within a framework. The Recital Series at Glenn Gould Studio showcases Canada's finest young singers in song-cycles or other exceptional and rarely heard works.



This recital is the second of three concerts in an all-Schubert weekend, celebrating the composer's 200th birthday (January 31, 1797). The third concert, *A Birthday Schubertiad*, will take place on Sunday afternoon, February 2, at 2:30 p.m. in Walter Hall at the Edward Johnson Building, University of Toronto. In this all-Schubert program with readings from letters and reminiscences about Schubert by his friends, we will recreate a musical party in the company of Schubert and his circle. The program, with soprano Kathleen Brett, tenor Michael Schade and baritone Mark Pedrotti, will also include Schubert's hilarious mock-pastoral scena *Der Hochzeitbraten*, about a young couple caught poaching for their wedding supper. Tickets (\$23/\$17) may be ordered by calling (416) 944-2154, or purchased at the Edward Johnson Building box office before the concert.

We are presenting two more Schubert recitals later in the season. On Monday, April 14 we will feature music by Schubert and Brahms, with mezzo Catherine Robbin and baritone Russell Braun; on Thursday, May 8 soprano Ann Monoyios and tenor Benjamin Butterfield will sing songs and duets by Schubert and Britten. These recitals take place at 8:00 p.m. in Glenn Gould Studio. Tickets (\$22/\$16) may be ordered from the box office (416) 205-5555.

Our new CD, *The Britten Canticles*, features tenor Benjamin Butterfield, countertenor Daniel Taylor, baritone Brett Polegato, harpist Judy Loman, horn-player James Sommerville and pianists Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata. It is available in local record stores, or from Marquis Classics (416) 690-7662.

We would like to thank the Ontario Arts Council; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, the City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council; The M.M. Webb Foundation, The Charles H. Ivey Foundation, The George Lunan Foundation, the Jackman Foundation and our many Patrons and Friends for their support of these concerts.

A Birthday Recital

Notes and Translations

As part of our celebration of Schubert's two hundredth birthday, we welcome two very distinguished Canadian singers to perform a recital of his songs, Nancy Argenta and Catherine Robbin. Each has established her credentials as a superlative Schubert interpreter in concert and on disc. Malcolm Bilson (who will share the accompanying with Blaise Bryski) is a leading performer on early pianos; he has brought his own instrument, which dates from the time of Schubert.

The songs on tonight's program are grouped, initially, according to their poets and are framed by two piano pieces: a popular duet, and the grandest and most symphonic of Schubert's Impromptus. A groups of songs by diverse poets is then followed, by way of conclusion, by an operatic duet. One of Schubert's dearest wishes was to become a successful opera composer. He wrote eight complete operas, only one of which was performed in his lifetime; but the sweetness of Italian *bel canto* remains an important constituent of his vocal style.

Mr Bilson's piano was built ca. 1830 in Vienna by Gottlieb Hafner, and was restored in 1993 by Edwin Beunk and Johan Wennink in Enschede, Holland. It is a typical-Viennese instrument of the period, similar to those of the more famous Conrad Graf, whose pianos are almost always associated with Schubert. Beethoven's last piano was a Graf and the Schumanns received one from the builder as a wedding present; that instrument was subsequently owned by Johannes Brahms. The return of earlier style pianos to recordings and the concert stage has taken two distinct directions: the restoration of antiques and the building of replicas. In both areas we are witnessing a veritable explosion of really first-class instruments at the moment, on both sides of the Atlantic. Edwin Beunk and Johan Wennink are the leading restorers in Europe, and the majority of 19th century instruments heard on recordings are from their workshop.

In the vocal part of the program, please reserve your applause until the end of each group of songs.

Marche Militaire in D major, D.733/1

Songs to poems by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Goethe was the poet whom Schubert set most frequently (74 times in all). In about 1814, the young man fell under the spell of the ageing writer who was regarded then, as now, as the supreme German creative spirit. Goethe's poems had only recently been allowed publication in Austria; they burst on the composer's consciousness, therefore, like those of a contemporary — although most of the texts Schubert set had been written many years previously. Schubert's poets seem each to have appealed to a specific aspect of his

artistic character. Goethe, however, can be said to have resonated with every part of his style, by turns naive, sublime, intellectual, mischievous, classical, romantic, erotic. By early 1816, Schubert had composed over 30 Goethe songs, including some of his earliest masterpieces. His friends collected together a number of them (about twenty, especially copied by the composer) and sent them to the poet in Weimar for his approval. Schubert must have been devastated when the songbook was returned without a word of acknowledgement. Some of the greatest of his Goethe settings were still to come, *Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt* (Mignon's song from *Wilhelm Meister*) being the last, in 1826. But poet and composer, who seem to us to have been made for each other, never met.

Liebhaber in allen Gestalten, D.558

A lover in many shapes: I wish I were a fish, so nimble and so fresh. If you came to catch me, I would not fail to take the bait.

I wish I were gold, always at your service. If you bought something I would come running back to you.

But I am as I am, so you'll just have to accept me! If you want a better man you will have to have him made to measure.

An die Entfernte, D.765

To the distant lover: Have I really lost you? Have you forsaken me, beloved? Every word, every inflection still lingers in the familiar way in my ear.

As the traveller's gaze searches the morning sky in vain, when the hidden lark sings high aloft in the blue dome, so do my anxious eyes range back and forth, on field, and grove, and woodland.

All my songs call to you: "Come back to me, beloved; beloved, oh, come back!"

Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt, D.877

Only he who knows what longing is knows what I suffer. Alone, cut off from every joy, I search the sky in that direction. Ah, he who loves and knows me is far away.

My head swims, my vitals burn. Only he who knows what longing is knows what I suffer.

Rastlose Liebe, D.138

Love without respite: Against snow, rain, wind, through the boiling mists of the ravines - on, on! without stop or stay!

Rather would I battle my way through sorrow than suffer so much joy. This attraction of one heart to another, ah, in how strange a manner it becomes pain.

How shall I escape? Flee further into the forest? All in vain! Love, thou art the crown of life, happiness without peace.

Songs to poems by Matthäus von Collin (1779-1824)

Collin is an example of a poet in the composer's immediate circle with whom he had a more reciprocal relationship. He was the cousin of Josef von Spaun, one of Schubert's closest friends and staunchest supporters. Collin was more of a contemporary figure than Goethe, having links with the Romantic movement, notably the Schlegel brothers, who had a considerable influence on Schubert in the early 1820's. Holding professorships of philosophy in Cracow and Vienna, he was intellectual, cultured and a kindly host. Schubert set only five of his poems, but the songs are among his greatest.

For the critic, Alfred Einstein, *Wehmut* was 'the whole greatness and unaffected simplicity of Schubert in a nutshell'. In *Der Zwerg*, the gruesome horror of some of Schubert's early Gothic ballad settings is refined into a subtle ambiguity which is all the more chilling in its effect. Operatic expression is combined with symphonic momentum — the accompaniment evokes both the 'Unfinished' Symphony and Beethoven's Fifth. *Nacht und Träume*, one of Schubert's best loved songs, was published in 1825, perhaps as a memorial to the recently dead poet. With this in mind, Graham Johnson has drawn our attention to Shelley's almost contemporary lines: 'How wonderful is Death./Death and his brother Sleep!'

Wehmut, D.772

Melancholy: When I walk through forest and field I feel such mingled happiness and sadness in my uneasy heart; such happy sadness when I behold the meadows in the fullness of their beauty, and all the joy of spring.

For all that blows and echoes in the wind, all that towers up to heaven, and man himself, so fondly communing with the beauty he beholds, all shall vanish and pass away.

Der Zwerg, D.771

The dwarf: In the grey light the mountains already fade away; the ship drifts on the sea's smooth swell. On board, the queen sails with her dwarf.

She gazes up at the high curving vault, at the far blue distance, woven with strands of light, crossed by the pale band of the milky way.

She cries out: "Never yet have you lied to me, stars. Soon I shall depart. You tell me so. In truth, I'll gladly die."

The dwarf steps towards the queen, to tie the red silk cord about her neck; and weeps, as though he meant to blind himself with grief.

He speaks: "You yourself are to blame for this wrong, because you have forsaken me for the king. Now only your death can kindle joy in me. I grant that I shall hate myself for ever, because I have brought about your death with my own hand; still must you grow pale for an early grave."

She lays her hand on her young heart, and the heavy tears run down from her eyes, which she would raise to heaven in prayer.

"May you reap no anguish from my death," she says. Then the dwarf kisses her pale cheeks, and forthwith her senses fail.

Bemused by death the dwarf gazes upon the lady, and with his own hands commits her to the deep. His heart burns with longing for her. He will never more set foot on any shore.

Nacht und Träume, D.827

Night and dreams: You sink down, holy night, and dreams too float down, like moonlight through space, into the silent hearts of men.

With delight they listen, crying out when day wakes: Come back, holy night! Sweet dreams, come back, come back again!

Songs to poems by women writers

There were several women poets among those whom Schubert set, as there were among those who inspired songs by Haydn and Mozart. Perhaps the climate for such collaboration was more conducive than it became later in the nineteenth century.

Gabriele von Baumberg (1775-1839), in fact, wrote the poem of Mozart's *Als Luise die Briefe*. Her *An die Sonne* is subtitled: 'As I waited in the country for the visit of a friend on the following morning'. The song is another of Schubert's one-page marvels.

Karoline von Klenke's *Heimliches Lieben* gives rise to an entirely appropriate setting, combining erotic passion with Biedermeier grace.

With Suleika's song *Ach, um deine feuchten Schwingen*, the figure of Goethe looms up again. Marianne von Willemer was one of the women with whom Goethe had an intense relationship. Her verses, written in imitation of Persian poetry, which fascinated Goethe at the time, were published with his own poems, with slight amendments and without acknowledgement. The truth emerged only after Goethe's death (and, therefore, well after Schubert's). The setting was probably composed with Anna Milder in mind — she was one of the greatest opera singers of her day, and Schubert cherished the wish that she might appear in one of his own stage works.

Heimliches Lieben (Karoline Louise von Klenke), D.922

Secret Love: When I feel the touch of your lips, desire threatens to ravish my soul; a nameless trembling stirs deep within my breast.

My eyes flame, blushes suffuse my cheeks, my heart beats with an unfamiliar yearning. My thoughts, confused, come stammering from my lips, scarce to be controlled. At such a moment, the thread of life hangs from your soft lips, tender as the rose; enfolded in your beloved arms, I wish almost to die.

Oh, that I cannot escape from life, my soul absorbed in yours; that our lips, aflame with longing, must part! Oh that my being may not dissolve in kisses, my lips pressed so close to yours; and to your heart, which may never dare to beat aloud for me.

An die Sonne (Gabriele vom Baumberg), D.270

To the sun: Sink, friend, sink! Finish your cloudy course, and quickly summon the moon to take your place.

But rise again tomorrow, more splendid and more beautiful, and bring my love with you, friend sun.

Suleika II (Marianne von Willemer rev. Goethe). D.717

Suleika's second song: Ah, west wind, how often I envy you your moist wings, for you can take him news of what I suffer at our parting.

The movement of your wings awakes a silent longing in the breast; flowers, eyes, forest and trees dissolve in tears where you pass.

But your soft, mild breath soothes my sore eyelids; alas, I should die of sorrow if I had no hope of seeing him again.

So hasten to my love and speak softly to his heart; but conceal my sorrow from him, so that he will not be sad.

Tell him, but tell him humbly, that his love is my life, and that his presence will give me happiness in both.

Intermission

Impromptu in F Minor, D.935/1

The Czech composer, Vorisek, introduced to Vienna, the 'Impromptu', a one movement work of improvisatory character. Schubert wrote two sets of Impromptus towards the end of 1827; this is the first piece of the second set. Because of the increased musicmaking of post-Napoleonic Vienna, there was a demand for shorter pieces suitable for domestic use.

This Impromptu, however, has considerable virtuosic demands — in fact, the entire second set was considered too difficult for amateurs, and was not published until 1839.

Songs by various poets

Der Wanderer an den Mond (Johann Gabriel Seidl), D.870

Seidl published his *Lieder der Nacht* in 1826. Schubert seized on them eagerly, and in this song produced another of his miraculous night pieces. It has a spontaneous, folksong-like character to it — one is reminded of the mood and intent of Vaughan Williams's *The Vagabond* (the poem of which, uncannily, is subtitled 'To an air by Schubert').

The wanderer addresses the moon: I on earth, you in heaven, both of us wandering sturdily on; I sad and cheerless, you so gentle and clear, what can our difference really be?

I go as a stranger from land to land, homeless and unknown, uphill, downhill, in and out of the forests, yet, ah, nowhere am I at home.

But you traverse up and down, from your western cradle to your eastern grave, sail in and out of every land, and yet are at home everywhere.

The heavens, endlessly outstretched, are your beloved native land. Happy is he, who, wherever he goes, stands ever upon his native soil!

Frühlingsglaube (Ludwig Uhland), D.686

This is Schubert's only setting of Uhland, whose verses influenced Wilhelm Müller (poet of *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*). The image of the wanderer amid the beauties of nature inspired one of the favourite songs of all time.

Faith in Spring: The gentle breezes are awake, they rustle and stir night and day. O fresh fragrance, new sounds! Now, poor heart, never fear, now everything, everything will change.

With every day the world is lovelier, we feel that anything might yet happen. There is no end to the blossoming. Now, poor heart, forget your torment; now everything, everything will change.

Auf dem Wasser zu singen (Friedrich Leopold Graf zu Stolberg-Stolberg), D. 774

'A barcarolle with vocal *obbligato*, a fascinating synthesis of piano piece and *Lied*' (Graham Johnson). Miraculously, the pianist's right hand evokes wind and water, while the left hand chords seem to keep the boat suspended in the translucent landscape.

To be sung on the water: Amid the glimmer of sparkling waves the swaying boat glides like a swan; ah, the soul glides onward like the boat, on gently gleaming waves of joy. For the sunset glow, shining down from heaven upon the waves, dances round the boat. The rosy light beckons us above the treetops of the western wood; beneath the branches of the eastern wood the reeds whisper in the rosy light; in the reddening glow the soul breathes the joy of heaven, the peace of the grove.

For me, alas, time itself vanishes on dewy wings in the cradle of the waves. Tomorrow time will fly onward on glistening wings, as it did yesterday and today, until I myself escape from time's inconstancy on loftier, more glorious wing.

Die junge Nonne (Jacob Nicolaus Craigher), D.828

'After lunch, Schubert came and brought a new song, *Die junge Nonne*. Later, Vogl came and I sang it to him; it is splendidly composed.' The soprano, Sophie Muller, was quite right. The raging storm and tolling bell so vividly portrayed at the outset are transformed at the move to the major key in verse three: the nun's realisation of the benign force of nature becomes a state of visionary ecstasy and conviction.

The young nun: How the storm rages amid the treetops. The rafters groan, the house trembles, the thunder rolls, the lightning flashes! And the night is dark as the tomb! So too a storm lately raged in me. Life raged, as the storm does now. My limbs trembled as now the house. Love blazed, as now the lightning flashes. And my heart was dark as the tomb.

Now, wild and mighty storm, rage on! There is peace and tranquillity in my heart. The loving bride awaits her groom, cleansed in the proving fire, vowed to eternal love. With longing eyes I am waiting, my Saviour. Come, heavenly bridegroom, claim your bride. Free her soul from its earthly bonds.

Hark! The bell tolls peacefully from the tower. Its sweet song calls me irresistibly to the eternal heights. Hallelujah!

Der Musensohn (Goethe), D.764

This could be a theme song of both Goethe and Schubert. Fischer-Dieskau imagines Schubert feeling 'a certain kinship with this "son of the Muses", above all, when he "excited the young folk" by playing his waltzes, German dances and Landler for hours on end, although he only managed rarely to be driven "far from home" and leave the narrow confines of Vienna'.

The Son of the Muses: Roving through field and forest, piping my song; thus I go from place to place, and the world keeps time to my beat, and moves in rhythm with me.

Scarce can I wait for the first garden flower, or the first blossom on the tree. My songs welcome them, and when winter comes again, I still dream of them in my song.

I sing of them far and wide, up and down the icy world, when winter blooms in beauty.

But this flowering too passes, and new joy is discovered there on the upland farms. For when by the lime tree I chance upon young folk I rouse them at once. The country yokel puffs out his chest, and the prim maiden dances to my tune.

You lend wings to my feet, and drive your darling over hill and dale far from home. Dear kindly Muses, when at last shall I find rest on the bosom of my love?

Duet from *Fierrabras*, D.796: Weit über Glanz und Erdschimmer
(Josef Kupelwieser)

Schubert was commissioned in 1822 to write a grand heroic opera for the Karntnertor Theater in Vienna; the librettist was the brother of his artist friend, Leopold Kupelwieser, and secretary of the theatre. In March of that year, however, Rossini was invited to Vienna to supervise a series of his operas. The subsequent appointment of many Italian singers to the theatre led to the departure of a comparable number of German and Austrian singers (including Michael Vogl). Production plans for *Fierrabras* were eventually abandoned. Elizabeth Norman McKay points out that Schubert was 26 — Mozart's age when he wrote *Die Entführung* and when the best was yet to come. But *Fierrabras* was Schubert's last completed opera, and was not performed until 1897.

The action takes place at the time of Charlemagne. Florinda, daughter of a Moorish Prince, is prepared to leave father and country for the love of a Frankish Prince. She pays no attention to the warnings of her maid, Maragond.

Florinda: Far above the glitter and gleam of earth towers the lofty goal of my desire;
and for every happiness I renounce, the sweet emotion of love repays me.

Maragond: O let not illusion deceive you; treason is already in your thoughts.

Florinda: Only to hear the sound of his voice is the highest compensation for all suffering. O could I but embrace that handsome, beloved image! My ardent longing will never be fulfilled.

Maragond: My heart is filled with bleak, dull dread; ah, never will her longing, her desire, be appeased.



Glenn Gould Studio

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&**

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weekends & holidays**

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**Canadian Broadcasting Centre
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