

THE
Aldeburgh
CONNECTION



The Old Wizard
of Bayreuth

WALTER HALL
SUNDAY MARCH 15, 1998
2:30 p.m.

The Old Wizard of Bayreuth

LINDA MAGUIRE, mezzo

MARK PEDROTTI, baritone

STEPHEN RALLS and BRUCE UBUKATA, piano



Our sincere thanks go to Roger Moore for sponsoring Linda Maguire, and to Anne and Michael Gough for sponsoring Mark Pedrotti in today's concert.



Today, Richard Wagner, the composer of masterpieces on a gigantic scale, brings us a collection of what, in comparison, are miniatures. Nonetheless, these songs, in their various ways, reflect the musical world and spirit of his music-dramas.

Wagner visits Paris at least twice this afternoon. First of all, he is a composer in search of an identity, trying to establish himself (and make his fortune) as a follower of Meyerbeer and Spontini. This attempt was doomed to miserable failure. Paradoxically, it was only when he had finally returned to his homeland and had succeeded in establishing a truly German type of music-theatre that Wagner's presence became all-pervasive in Paris — and by that time he had no need of visiting the French capital in person. By the end of his life, the salons of the great ladies of French society were beginning to ring with the strains of *La chevauchée des Walkyries* and soon *le Wagnerisme* became *de rigueur*.

We hope we will be forgiven an occasional light-hearted tone in this afternoon's reminiscences. Wagner himself was no stranger to the humorous approach; and, for our own part, our sense of fun (like Chabrier's) gilds an underlying deep reverence and love for the music of the Master.



PART I: MINNA, MATHILDE AND COSIMA

Polonaise in D, Op. 2

Richard Wagner (1813-83)

A simple dance for piano-duet, published in Leipzig in 1832.

Gretchen am Spinnrade (Goethe) Op. 5/6

Wagner

Wagner produced a set of seven pieces inspired by Goethe's *Faust*, and this is one of them. We cannot say whether he was familiar at that time with the more elaborate setting by Schubert.

Gretchen at the spinning-wheel: My peace is gone, my heart is heavy; never, never again shall I find it. When he is not here life is like the grave; the whole world is embittered. My poor head is in a whirl, my poor wits distracted.

If I look out of the window, or leave the house, it is only in the hope of seeing him. His proud bearing, his noble figure, the smile on his lips, the power of his glance; the bewitching flow of his discourse, the touch of his hand, and — ah, his kiss!

My heart yearns for him. Oh, if my arms could enfold him, and hold him, and kiss him as I desire, I should drown in his kisses.

Songs to French texts

Wagner

The first, second and last of these songs were published in Paris in 1840 as *Trois mélodies*. *Les deux grenadiers* was published separately at Wagner's own expense, with an illustrated title page and a specially commissioned French translation of Heine's poem. The composer's gaucheries in setting the French language did not help the songs to find favour with the public.

L'Attente (Victor Hugo)

Anticipation: Squirrel, ascend the towering oak, up to the branch right next to the sky which bends and trembles like a reed. Stork, faithful to the ancient towers, swiftly ascend and wing your way from the church to the citadel, from lofty steeple to mighty keep.

Old eagle, ascend from your eyrie to the age-old mountain peak, whitened by eternal winter. And you, joyous lark, whom in your uneasy nest Dawn never once found silent, ascend into the sky!

And now, from the high tree-top, from the spires of the marble tower, from the great mountain, from the blazing sky, on the horizon, in the mist, can you see a bobbing plume, a hurtling, steaming horse, and then my beloved once again?

Mignonnette (Pierre de Ronsard)

See, Mignonnette, how the rose, which this morning opened to the sun, has by evening lost the folds of its crimson robe, and its rosy blush like your own.

See how, Mignonnette, in such a short time it has lost its beauty. Truly, just as such a flower endures only from morning to evening, Mignonnette, while your youth blossoms in its freshness, pluck it before old age tarnishes your beauty.

Les deux grenadiers (François-Adolphe Loeve-Weimar after Heine)

Two grenadiers were making their way towards France; they had been prisoners in Russia. And when they came to German quarters, they hung their heads. They both heard there the sad news that France was lost, the Grand Army beaten and broken — and the Emperor, the Emperor a prisoner.

The grenadiers wept together at the sad news. One said: What pain I'm in, how my old wound burns. The other said: The game is over, I too should like to die with you, but I have a wife and child at home who will perish without me.

What do I care about wife and child, I have a far better desire; let them go begging if they are hungry — my Emperor, my Emperor a prisoner! Grant me a request, brother: if I should die now, take my body with you to France, bury me in the earth of France.

You must lay my cross of honour with its red ribbon on my heart; put my musket in my hand, and gird my sword around me. Thus will I lie and listen quickly, like a sentry, in the grave, until I hear again the roar of cannon and the trotting of neighing horses.

Then the Emperor may ride over my grave, many swords will clash and glitter; then I shall arise from the grave — to protect the Emperor, the beloved Emperor.

Dors, mon enfant (anon.)

Sleep in my arms, child so full of charm! You do not know cares or tears, you laugh while sleeping; at your sweet smile, my heart breaks. Sleep, oh my child!

Sleep on your dear mother's lap, for jealous heaven has taken away your father; trembling, I guard your fragile infancy. Sleep, my hope, sleep, oh my child!

Sleep and fear nothing; for while you sleep, your guardian angel, your mother, watches over you. Rest falls upon your innocent forehead. Sleep under my guard; sleep oh my child!

Five poems of Mathilde Wesendonk

Wagner

During Wagner's exile in Switzerland, he received considerable financial help from a wealthy silk-merchant, Otto Wesendonk, who was repaid for his pains by the passionate affair which developed between his wife, Mathilde, and the composer. While he was working on Act 1 of *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner set five of Mathilde's poems — originally called *Fünf Dilettanten-Gedichte*. The third and fifth songs actually use music which was later incorporated into the opera — in the Act 3 prelude and the Act 2 duet respectively. The version for voice and piano is the composer's original — only the last song was orchestrated by Wagner himself, as a birthday present for Mathilde in 1857. We shall use it to illustrate Cosima Wagner's description of her own birthday in 1870.

Der Engel

The Angel: In my early childhood days I often heard tales of angels who exchange the sublime bliss of heaven for the sunshine of earth; and heard that,

when a heart in sorrow hides its grief from the world, bleeds in silence, and dissolves in tears, offers fervent prayers for deliverance, then the angel flies down and bears it gently to heaven.

Yes, an angel came down to me also, and on shining pinions bears my spirit away from all torment heavenward.

Stehe still

Be still: Rushing, roaring wheel of time, you measure of eternity; shining spheres in the vast firmament, you that encircle our earthly globe; eternal creation, stop! Enough of becoming, let me be.

You powers of generation, cease, primal thought, that endlessly creates, stop every breath, still every urge, give but one moment of silence! Swelling pulses, restrain your beating; end, eternal day of the will!

So that, in sweet forgetfulness, I may take the full measure of all my joy! When eye blissfully gazes into eye, when soul drowns in soul; when being finds itself in being, and the goal of all hopes is near, then lips are mute in silent amazement, the heart can have no further wish; man knows the imprint of eternity, and solves your riddle, blessed nature!

Im Treibhaus (study for Tristan und Isolde)

In the hothouse: High-arching leafy crowns, canopies of emerald, you children of distant lands, tell me, why do you lament? Silently you incline your branches, tracing signs in the air, and, mute witness to your sorrows, a sweet perfume rises. Wide, in longing and desire, you spread your arms and embrace, in self-deception, barren emptiness, a fearful void.

Well I know it, poor plant! We share the same fate. Although the light shines brightly round us, our home is not here! And, as the sun gladly quits the empty brightness of the day, so he, who truly suffers, wraps round him the dark mantle of silence. It grows quiet, an anxious rustling fills the dark room; I see heavy drops hanging from the green edges of the leaves.

Schmerzen

Torments: Sun, you weep every evening until your lovely eyes are red, when, bathing in the sea, you are overtaken by your early death; but you rise again in your old splendour, the aureole of the dark world, fresh awakened in the morning like a proud and conquering hero!

Ah, then, why should I complain, why should my heart be so heavy, if the sun itself must despair, must go down? And if only death gives birth to life, if only torments brings bliss; then how thankful I am that Nature has given me such torments!

Träume (study for *Tristan und Isolde*)

Dreams: Say, what wondrous dreams hold my soul captive, and have not disappeared like bubbles into barren nothingness?

Dreams that every hour of every day bloom most fair, and with their intimations of heaven float blissfully through my mind?

Dreams that like the rays of glory penetrate the soul, there to leave an everlasting imprint; forgetfulness of all, remembrance of one!

Dreams like the kiss of the spring sun drawing blossoms from the snow, so that to undreamed-of bliss the new day may welcome them, so that they grow and flower, spread their scent as in a dream, softly fade upon your breast, then sink into their grave.



INTERMISSION

during which tea will be served in the Törel Room

with the kind assistance of students
of the Opera Division, Faculty of Music



PART II: PARIS IN BAYREUTH

Souvenirs de Bayreuth — Fantaisie en forme de Quadrille (based on themes from *Der Ring*)

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) & André Messager (1853-1929)

Colette, in her *Journal à Rebours*, describes the famous Wednesday evenings at the salon of Mme de Saint-Marceaux: Fauré and Messager "improvised piano-duets, rivalling each other in their sudden modulations and evasions of the tonic. They both loved these games during which they exchanged attacks like duellists: 'Pull up there! Why are you waiting? Go on, I will catch you up!' Fauré, like a dark-skinned emir, nodded his tuft of silvery hair when giving the signal to use leitmotifs from *The Ring*." Mme de Saint-Marceaux was a prototype of Proust's Mme Verdurin. In 1884, she organized a "weird and wonderful lottery" to help Fauré and Messager attend *Parsifal* at Bayreuth. Fauré later wrote to his benefactress: "If one has not heard Wagner at Bayreuth, one has heard nothing! Take lots of handkerchiefs because you will cry a great deal! Also, take a sedative because you will be exalted to the point of delirium!"

1. Valkyries' call and ride — Siegfried's horn call
2. Tarnhelm — death motif

3. Siegmund's song — Rhine — Nibelungs
4. Magic fire — Siegfried
5. Siegfried's horn call — Brünnhilde — Rhinemaidens

Duet: Pleurs d'or (Albert Samain) Op. 72

Fauré

Fauré, for all his Wagnerian enthusiasm, never speaks without his own individual voice.

Golden tears: tears clinging to flowers, tears lost in streams, in the foam of hidden rocks; tears shed by the autumn, tears of the horns sounding in great doleful forests;

Tears of church bells, of Carmelites, Feuillantines, devout voices of the belfry;

Tears of starry nights; tears of gentle flutes in the blue of a sleeping park;

Pearly tears on long eye-lashes, tears of lovers flowing towards the soul of the beloved;

Tears of ecstasy, sweet laments: fall at night! fall from flowers! fall from these eyes!

Le manoir de Rosemonde (Robert de Bonnières) Henri Duparc (1848-1933)

This song dates from 1879, when Duparc and Chabrier together heard Wagner's operas in Munich. Duparc had met Wagner ten years earlier. and at one point showed himself decades ahead of his time by urging a more symbolic approach to the staging of *Der Ring* — there should be a simple circle of light surrounding Brünnhilde at the end of *Die Walküre*, not a ring of fire.

The manor of Rosamund: With its sudden and voracious teeth, like a dog love has bitten me. If you followed my blood that was shed, you could easily find my trail. Take a horse of good breed, go and follow my arduous road, through pitfalls and lost trails, if the chase will not make you weary! Passing where I have passed, you will see that alone and wounded I travelled over this sorrowful world. And thus I wrought my own death, far, far, away, without discovering the blue manor of Rosamund.

Souvenirs de Munich — Quadrille (based on themes from *Tristan und Isolde*)

Emmanuel Chabrier (1841-94)

In the late 1870's, Saint-Saëns, Massenet, Messager, Duparc and Chabrier comprised what was known as 'le petit Bayreuth'. It was Duparc who took Chabrier to Munich to hear *Tristan* in 1870. This visit was a major factor in persuading Chabrier to resign his government post and devote himself wholly to composition.

1. Pantalon: Sailors' greeting — Tristan's home
3. Poule: Shepherd's happy tune — death song
4. Pastourelle: Kurwenal's song
5. Galop: Sailors' song — Kurwenal — longing for death.

PART III: DEATH IN VENICE

La lugubre gondola (II)

Franz Liszt (1811-86)

This piano piece dates from December, 1882, when Liszt spent time with the Wagners at Palazzo Vendramin in Venice.

Sur les lagunes — Lamento (*Nuits d'été*) (Théophile Gautier)

Hector Berlioz (1803-69)

Like the Wesendonk-Lieder, the *Nuits d'été* were conceived as songs with piano, and were not orchestrated until fifteen years later. Judith Gautier, the daughter of the poet, visited Wagner frequently during the last years of his life, possibly becoming as important for the composition of *Parsifal* as was Mathilde Wesendonk for that of *Tristan*.

On the lagoons: My sweetheart is dead, I shall weep forever. To her grave she carries my soul and my love. She returned to heaven without waiting for me: the angel that took her did not want me. How bitter is my fate! Oh, to go out to sea without love!

Her white body sleeps in the coffin; and everything around me seems to be in mourning. The forsaken dove weeps and broods on the departed one; my heart weeps and feels it has lost a part of itself.

The vast night spreads over me like a shroud; I sing my song that only the sky can hear. Oh, how beautiful she was and how I loved her! Never will I love a woman as I have loved her.

EPILOGUE: 'SOEUR, IL FAUT VIVRE!'

Souvenirs de Munich

Chabrier

2. Été: Love duet themes

THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION CONCERT SOCIETY
FOUNDING PATRON: Sir Peter Pears

HONORARY PATRONS: Nancy Evans, O.B.E.,
Greta Kraus, C.M., O. Ont., Stuart Bedford

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael J. Gough (President)
Carol Anderson
Nicholas Goldschmidt, C.C., O. Ont.
John B. Lawson
Che Anne Loewen

Maja Lutkins
James MacDougall
Iain Scott
Justin Young



There is one concert remaining in this Series — April 26: *Noblesse Oblige*, music by two titled English composers, Sir Hubert Parry and Lord Berners, with **Mary Lou Fallis** (soprano) and **Daniel Neff** (baritone). For tickets (\$24/18), please call (416) 516-1496.

The final concert in our 1997/98 Recital Series in the Glenn Gould Studio will take place on April 15 with baritone **Mark Pedrotti** in a programme including Schumann's *Dichterliebe*, and songs by Duparc, Wolf and Morawetz. Single tickets are available at \$23/\$17 from the Glenn Gould Studio box office at (416) 205-5555.

Copies of our latest CD: *Benjamin Britten: The Canticles* are on sale in the lobby at intermission.

Box office revenues cover only a portion of our operating budget; the rest must be raised through donations, grants and corporate funding. Our supporter categories are: **Benefactor** (\$1000 or more), **Champion** (\$500 or more), **Patron** (\$100 or more) and **Friend** (\$50 or more). Donations may be made by cheque or VISA, and may be made in instalments, if you prefer. You will receive information on our activities, and all donations will be acknowledged with a receipt for income tax purposes. Your support is vital in helping to ensure the continuation of these concerts.

We gratefully acknowledge assistance from:

- The Ontario Arts Council, The City of Toronto through the Toronto Arts Council and the Culture Division
- Anne and Michael Gough
- Roger Moore
- Mrs Muriel Lessmann
- Gwen Grindlay of Statements in Flowers: Bruce Philpott
- Many individual supporters and donors

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 Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata have visited and worked there for many summers, as has a large number of the singers appearing with The Aldeburgh Connection.

Linda Maguire performs on concert and opera stages throughout North America and around the world, singing both mezzo and soprano roles. Engagements this season include Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony* and Peter Maxwell Davies's *Job* with the Vancouver Symphony, Donna Elvira in *Don Giovanni* in Ottawa, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* with the TSO, the title role in *Iphigénie en Tauride* for Opera in Concert, Vitellia in *La Clemenza di Tito* in Dallas, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* in Christchurch, New Zealand, *Messiah* in Houston, and a recital of Wagner's *Wesendonck Lieder* and Strauss Lieder for CBC radio. Earlier highlights include the title role in Rossini's *Ermione* at Glyndebourne, and the title role of Gluck's *Orfeo* with the Stichting National Reisopera in the Netherlands, and Aldridge's *Elmer Gantry* with the Boston Lyric Opera. She performs extensively as a soloist with symphony orchestras and choirs in Canada and the United States, and on CBC radio. Her discography includes Tafelmusik's *Floridante*, a solo CD with the Vancouver Symphony under Mario Bernardi and a recording of music by Gershwin.

Mark Pedrotti has established a well-deserved reputation as an international concert artist of the highest calibre. His international opera and concert appearances have taken him to Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Centre, the Kennedy Centre in Washington, Avery Fisher Hall, to Ireland's Wexford Opera Festival, and to all the major Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Opera companies and orchestras. His most recent appearances were as Count di Luna in Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, for Opera New Zealand, and Rossini's Figaro for Edmonton Opera; scheduled are Marcello (*La Bohème*) for Wellington City Opera and Dandini (*La Cenerentola*) for Opera New Zealand. In Canada, he will perform Brahms's *Requiem* and Bruce Ruddell's *The Spirit of Haida Gwaii* with the Vancouver Bach Choir, and Bach's *B minor Mass* with the Kitchener Waterloo Philharmonic Choir, as well as a much-anticipated solo recital with the Aldeburgh Connection on April 15. His growing list of recordings includes *Carmina Burana* (New York Choral Society, Newport Classics), *An Evening of Rodgers and Hammerstein*, *Bach Cantatas*, *Songs of Oskar Morawetz*, *Romantic Arias and Duets*, and *The Lyrical Art of Mark Pedrotti*, all for CBC Records.

