

TESSA MILLER
STEFAN AMMER
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THE FIRM
SERIES 2002

MONDAY **TESSA MILLER** Soprano

STEFAN AMMER Piano

Franz Schubert
Two Ballads

Graham Nye
Three Poems of Byron

Raymond Chapman Smith
Vocal Solo

David Kotovsky
Three Pieces in F# minor

Geoffrey Miller
Three Lieder

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MONDAY JUNE 24, 2002

Franz Schubert (1797 - 1828)

Two Rückert Lieder

Graeme Koehne

Three Poems of Byron (1993)

Raymond Chapman Smith

Mödling Dances (2002)

David Kotlowy

Three Pieces in Pali (2002)

Gustav Mahler (1860 - 1911)

Three Rückert Lieder

Franz Schubert

Das sie hier gewesen Op.59, No.2

Lachen und Weinen Op.59, No.4

Schubert's five settings of Rückert were all composed in 1823 when the poetry was very contemporary. At that time Schubert discovered most of his texts at reading evenings with his friends, during the intellectual portion of occasions which usually concluded with some epic drinking. Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866) was a professor of oriental languages who made important translations from Arabic and Sanskrit. His reputation as a lyric poet is almost entirely due to the lieder settings of Schubert, Brahms and, especially, Mahler.

Das sie hier gewesen (That she was here)

Fragrant breezes drifting,

Scented vapors lifting,

Tell that you were here,

Tell me of your beauty.

If you did not know it,

Flowing tears would show it,

Show that I was here,

Tell you how I love you.

Beauty, love abiding,

Can they keep in hiding?

Fragrance, traces of tears are here,

Traces that reveal them

We cannot conceal them.

Lachen und Weinen (Laughing and Crying)

Laughing and crying, regardless of season,

Come when in love without any good reason.

Why I laugh in the morning,

Yet at night I am weeping,

When it comes time for sleeping,

Turning joy into woe,

Really I do not know.

Crying and laughing regardless of season,

Come when in love without any good reason.

Why I weep in the night,

Yet the next morning after,

I am joyous with laughter,

I have to ask you, my heart.

Graeme Koehne

Three Poems of Byron

One of the extra-musical aspects of Virgil Thomson's influence on Graeme Koehne was to spark an interest in the poetry of Byron (1788 - 1824). The *Three Poems of Byron* reflect on the poet's appreciation of feminine beauty. The second of the poems switches momentarily from the theme of beauty's praise to reflect upon fickleness of woman.

Stanzas For Music

There be none of beauty's daughters

With a magic like thee;

And like music on the waters

Is thy sweet voice to me:

When, as if its sound were causing

The charmed ocean's pausing,

The waves lei still and gleaming,

And the lulled winds seem dreaming

And the midnight moon is weaving

Her bright chain o'er the deep;

Whose breast is gently heaving,

As an infant's asleep:

So the spirit bows before thee,

To listen and adore thee;

With a full but soft emotion,

Like the swell of summer's ocean.

To Woman

Woman! experience might have told me
That all must love thee who behold thee;
Surely experience might have taught,
Thy firmest promises are naught:
But plac'd in all thy charms before me
All I forget but to adore thee.
Oh memory thou choicest blessing
When join'd with hope when still possessing;
But how much curs't by ev'ry lover,
When hope is fled, and passions over:
Woman that fair and fond deceiver,
How prompt the striplings to believe her;
How throbs the pulse when first we view
The eye that rolls in glossy blue,
Or sparkles black or mildly throws
A beam from under hazel brows:
How quick we credit every oath
And hear her plight the willing troth:
Fondly we hope 'twill last for aye,
When lo! she changes in a day:
The record will forever stand,
That 'women's vows are trac'd in sand'.

She Walks in Beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and in her eyes:
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace,
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

Raymond Chapman Smith

Mödling Dances

Mödling is a small town, just outside Vienna - a rural retreat which Beethoven frequented in the early years of the 19th century.

In the years immediately after World War One it was home to Arnold Schoenberg and, just a three minute walk away, his colleague and student, Anton Webern. It was during this period that Schoenberg first announced his invention of the Twelve Tone Method and my set of twelve, brief dances alternate variations on the first tone rows employed by Schoenberg - in his Waltz Op.23, No.5 - and Webern's Op. Post. Piano Piece (Minuet) from 1924.

Mödling also saw the establishment, by Schoenberg and his circle, of the Society for Private Performance, an organisation which was the model for many new music institutions throughout the 20th century and which still finds some resonance in groups like the Firm.

David Kotlowy

Three Pieces in Pali

The Dhammapada is a collection of aphorisms attributed to the Buddha, and written down in Pali, a Sanskrit-related language, during the first century BC. I came across a copy of the Pali texts just one day after finishing a setting of English translations for Ensemble Iona, so these pieces resemble an epilogue to the *a cappella* work.

As Pali culture no longer exists, I decided that the piano part could acquire archeological aspects; Stefan must excavate sounds from the piano's interior rather than producing them through the keyboard. The restricted pianistic techniques highlight vocal lines that are intentionally reminiscent of Indian classical music.

I
Be a light unto yourself and learn wisdom.

II
From meditation comes wisdom
And from lack of it wisdom decays.
These are the two paths;
Walk the path that leads to wisdom.

III
'All is transient.' This is the clear path.
'All is not absolute.' This is the clear path.
'All is unreal.' This is the clear path.

Gustav Mahler

Ich atmet' einem linden Duft
Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder
Liebst du um Schönheit

The composition of Mahler's *Five Songs on Poems by Friedrich Rückert* was intertwined with the creation of the *Kindertotenlieder*, also to Rückert's texts. Contemporary with the Fifth Symphony, all the Rückert settings mark a new point of lyrical refinement and intensity in Mahler's art. The version we hear tonight; with Mahler's clear, if very idiosyncratic piano writing, offers the original conception of these songs which have achieved a lasting place in the repertoire in their later orchestral transcriptions.

Ich atmet' einem linden Duft

I breathed a gentle scent of lime.
In the room stood a lime twig,
the gift of a dear hand.
How lovely was the scent of lime!

How lovely is the scent of lime!
The lime twig you broke off gently.
Softly I breathe the scent of lime,
the gentle scent of love.

Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder

Do not look at my songs before they are finished!
I lower my eyes as though caught in a crime.
Even I myself dare not look on as they grow -
your curiosity is treason.

When bees build their cells
they too let no one look in
and do not look on themselves,
When they have brought the rich honeycombs
to the light of day,
you shall taste them before anyone else!

Liebst du um Schönheit

If you love for beauty, then do not love me!
Love the sun for its golden hair.
If you love for youth, then do not love me!
Love the spring who is young every year.
If you love for treasure, then do not love me!
Love the mermaid who has many bright pearls.
If you love for love - oh then love me!
Love me always as I will always love you!

TESSA MILLER has sung in a wide range of styles, from opera, oratorio and operetta to musicals and popular song, and her focus on music of the Baroque and Classical periods enabled her to pursue this avenue of study in Europe in 1991 with the aid of a Churchill Fellowship. She is also acclaimed by contemporary composers for her astute interpretations of modern works. In 1996 Tessa gave recitals and master classes at Hong Kong's Academy of Performing Arts, where she performed to critical acclaim.

STEFAN AMMER was a professor of Piano at the Freiburg Academy of Music before joining the staff of the Elder Conservatorium, where he was a Senior Lecturer and Head of Keyboard Studies until his retirement in December, 2001. An accomplished concert pianist, he has performed in numerous concerts both as a soloist and chamber musician in many German and European cities. In Australia, he has appeared in concerts for the ABC, the Australian Society for Keyboard Music and the Elder Conservatorium. He has also performed with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. In 2000, together with violinist Florian Ammer, Stefan completed a tour to the United States, Poland and Germany where he performed a programme of works by Australian composers and also gave lecture recitals about Australian music.

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