

# *Ensemble for the Romantic Century*

presents

## ***Schubert's Dream***

Thursday, 3 June 2010, 8:00 PM; pre-concert lecture at 7:00 PM

Leonard Nimoy Thalia at Peter Norton Symphony Space  
2537 Broadway at 95th St.

Written by *James Melo*

Schubert's short story *Mein Traum* is presented in a translation by Otto Deutsch

*Michael Lewis* as Schubert

*Max Barros*, piano  
*Austin Hartman*, violin  
*Rebecca Patterson*, cello  
*Randall Scarlata*, baritone

Directed by *Donald T. Sanders*

Production and Costume Design by *Vanessa James*  
Lighting Design by *Judith M. Daitsman*

**Eve Wolf** and **Max Barros**, Artistic Directors  
**James Melo**, Musicologist in Residence  
**Donald T. Sanders**, Director of Theatrical Production

### **Special thanks to**

Susan Winokur and Paul Leach for making this series possible

Mt. Holyoke College Department of Theatre Arts for the use of properties and costumes

Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie for her continuing support of ERC's activities at  
CUNY Graduate Center

This program is supported in part by public funds from the  
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) in partnership with City Council,  
and the  
New York Council on the Arts (NYSCA), a State Agency

Cover design by James Melo

**FRANZ SCHUBERT**  
(1797-1828)

*Der Leiermann*, from *Die Winterreise*, D.911

*Ständchen*, from *Schwanengesang*, D.957 - arr. for violin and piano

Piano Trio no. 1 in B-flat major, D.898 B Scherzo: Allegro

Piano Trio no. 2 in E-flat major, D.929 B Andante con moto

*Frühlingstraum*, from *Die Winterreise*, D.911

*Der Atlas*, from *Schwanengesang*, D.957

INTERMISSION

*Auf dem Strom*, D.943

Piano Trio no. 2 in E-flat major, D.929 B Allegro moderato

*Der Leiermann* B piano transcription by Franz Liszt

[*Mein Traum*], part I]

*In der Ferne*, from *Schwanengesang*, D.957

[*Mein Traum*], part II]

*Nacht und Träume*, D.827

## PROGRAM NOTES

*Schubert composes like a sleepwalker... He puts us into a dream.*  
(Alfred Brendel)

In the introduction to a special issue of the journal *Nineteenth-Century Music* devoted to the life and works of Franz Schubert (1797-1828), Lawrence Kramer thus summarized the position of the composer within the history of Western music:

Schubert is one of the best loved and least known composers in the Western canon. For all his familiarity, he remains a shadowy figure. His writings are neither many nor highly articulate nor idiosyncratic; he left no programmatic statements about his aesthetic intentions; and he lacked the charismatic public persona that forms the stuff of legend. There is, of course, a familiar kitsch version of Schubert that retains some popular appeal: the cozy, naive little *Schwammerl* ["Little Mushroom"], the unselfconscious genius of the coffeehouse... No less fictitious are images of Schubert tailored to fit a pair of nineteenth-century stereotypes that still flourish today. The first is that of the artist as alienated visionary, the enemy of banality and convention, whose originality goes unrecognized in his lifetime except by a small coterie of supporters. The second is that of the artist as martyr, a figure whose triumph in art grows from, compensates for, even depends on, his failure in life. (*Nineteenth-Century Music*, XVII/1, 1993).

The mystique that often develops in connection with the creative artist has been an important component of aesthetic response, sometimes even creating the belief that works of art represent an objective translation of the artist's inner life. As a consequence, the allure of biography, anecdote, and legend is never entirely absent from the critical and interpretive heritage accrued by artworks over time. In the history of Western music, several archetypes have been invoked to account for particularities and idiosyncrasies of a composer's creative personality, a process that reached its high point during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the concept of *genius* became synonymous with transcendent creativity. Beethoven springs to mind as an example of the artist possessed by a telluric, almost demonic creative force; Mozart is often seen as the divinely inspired prodigy, an angel on earth dispensing his sublime music; there is the megalomaniacal Wagner, almost Promethean in his sweeping projects of operatic reform; some are devilish virtuosos, like Liszt and Paganini; others create bombastic public personas, as did Berlioz and Rossini.

Schubert has no place in this inventory of the grandiose and the extreme. His career unfolded in a rather unprepossessing manner, even though he was able to earn a decent income from the publication of his songs and shorter piano works, mostly dances and music for piano duet. A substantial part of this repertory was also heard in several of the "Schubertiades," informal gatherings of Schubert's extensive network of friends, during which the composer presented new works and participated in a variety of activities including dramatic performances, recitals of poetry, singing and, of course, piano playing. It was primarily in this milieu that Schubert's music was regularly performed, and it is from the voluminous recollections of his friends that we know most of the essential facts about his life and personality. In a short career spanning roughly 15 years, Schubert produced an overwhelming number of works in virtually all the genres cultivated at his time, but it remains a matter of great wonder and regret that the majority of his contemporaries never heard his last piano sonatas, the C-major String Quintet, the mature symphonies and operas, and many of his supreme compositions. Part of the blame lies with Schubert himself, who often pointed out that he was too shy to pursue a career with the zeal that his friends urged him to.

This same reticence extended to his personal life, which remains incompletely understood. Schubert left very few records documenting his daily life, and even fewer fragments affording a deeper glimpse into his psychological make-up. It is all the more important, therefore, to understand the nature and personal implications of Schubert's relationship with his many friends. In the history of Western music, there is hardly any other circle associated with a composer that has elicited so much commentary and attention as that connected with Schubert. Their relationships were truly out of the ordinary, even when interpreted against the background of close male friendships characteristic of the time. Many of his friends pointed out that Schubert had a dual nature, capable of the most sublime flights of imagination but also comfortable about embracing a compulsive hedonism that brought him, in the words of one his friends, "close to the squalor of life." Recently, diary entries by Schubert's friends, as well as letters exchanged with the composer and among the friends themselves, have been reinterpreted in light of the vexing question of Schubert's sexuality. This issue may seem tangential to the understanding and appreciation of his music, but only if one subscribes to the outmoded notion of the complete autonomy of the artwork, dissociated from the personal and cultural determinants that went into making it what it is.

The suggestion that Schubert may have been homosexual has sent tidal waves through the musicological community since the publication of Maynard Solomon's article "Franz Schubert and the Peacocks of Benvenuto Cellini" (*Nineteenth-Century Music*, 1989). The article centers on Solomon's interpretation of a diary entry by Schubert's friend Eduard von Bauernfeld (1802-1890) in which he says that "Schubert is out of sorts (he needs "young peacocks", like Benvenuto Cellini.)" Cellini, whose homosexual orientation was widely known, used the word *peacock* to indicate "a beautiful youth in extravagant or feminine dress." In addition to probing the meaning of this metaphor as applied to Schubert, Solomon also pointed out that, while Schubert addressed his male friends in strongly affectionate words (he also lived with some of them), there is no evidence of a sustained relationship between him and any woman. Even though the names of Caroline von Esterházy and Therese Grob surface on many occasions in connection with Schubert's attachment to them, none of these relationships came to full fruition. Solomon's article has generated a flood of responses, for and against his arguments, and the debate is far from over. It is important to call attention to this ongoing controversy, as it may affect the understanding of the historical position of the composer and the cultural meaning of his music. While such issues could be brushed aside 50 years ago, this is no longer the case in an increasingly multidisciplinary climate. The question of Schubert's sexual practices is also important because it was through them that he contracted the disease that would eventually kill him.

On 1 September 1828, Schubert moved into his brother Ferdinand's apartment in the suburbs of Vienna, hoping to recover from the complications of syphilis. He certainly believed that he would soon return to Vienna and resume his normal life, as some of the arrangements he made with his friends suggest. As it turned out, his brother's apartment became his last residence: After his illness intensified in the first weeks of November, he died on the 19<sup>th</sup> of that month. According to the testimony of his close friend Josef von Spaun (1788-1865), Schubert died painlessly and his face remained unchanged. Thanks to the meticulous records kept by his father, it was possible to ascertain that, at the moment of his death, Schubert's age was 31 years, 9 months, 19 days, and one and a half hours. The inventory of his possessions, as well as references to relatives and family members in the official obituary, seem to encapsulate a life that, except for the magnificent musical legacy, was as ordinary as any other at the time:

*Name of the deceased:* Herr Franz Schubert.  
*Occupation:* Musician and composer.  
*State:* Single, 32 years of age.  
*Widowed spouse:* [blank]

*Orphaned children:* [blank]

*Whether a will is present:* none

*Fortune*—whether the same is considerable or negligible, of what main items it consists withal—and whether it is to be submitted to jurisdiction or embargo. The aforesaid consists merely of the following, according to the declaration of his own father and brother: 3 cloth dress coats, 3 frock coats, 10 pairs of trousers, 9 waistcoats, 1 hat, 5 pairs of shoes, 2 pairs of boots, 4 shirts, 9 neckerchiefs and pocket handkerchiefs, 13 pairs of socks, 1 sheet, 2 blankets, 1 mattress, 1 featherbed cover, 1 counterpane. Apart from some old music besides, estimated at 10 florins, no belongings of the deceased are to be found.

(Quoted from Otto Erich Deutsch, *The Schubert Reader: A Life of Franz Schubert in Letters and Documents*, trans. Eric Blom, New York, 1947).

Vienna's preeminent poet Franz Grillparzer (1791-1872) was entrusted with writing the epitaph to mark the composer's grave in the suburban cemetery of Währing, where Beethoven had been buried a year and a half before. Grillparzer sketched five versions of the epitaph (all of which survived), and eventually settled on one that has been the subject of much controversy ever since: *The art of music here entombed a rich possession, but even far fairer hopes*. Among those who were offended by the epitaph was the composer Robert Schumann, one of the most perceptive critics of Schubert's music and a tireless advocate for its performance and dissemination. In an essay examining Schubert's posthumous legacy, published in his influential music journal *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* in 1838, Schumann vented his frustration at Grillparzer's assessment: "It is pointless to guess at what more Schubert might have achieved. He did enough; and let them be honored who have striven and accomplished as he did."

To this day, several aspects of Schubert's psychological profile remain elusive, but our perception of his musical legacy has been clarified and informed by a rich tradition of performance and the ready availability of his entire oeuvre. It was Schubert's first biographer, Heinrich Kreissle Hellborn, who sensed a change in the reception of the composer when he wrote, in 1865:

Nowadays, when the largest part of Schubert's treasures has been revealed to us, Grillparzer's epitaph, which gave offense so many years ago, sounds to our ears still more strangely, and we may hope that over Schubert's future resting place there will be nothing carved but the name of the composer. As the simple "Beethoven" over that great man's grave, the word "Schubert" will speak volumes.

As if to demonstrate the veracity of this judgment, the bodies of Schubert and Beethoven were exhumed in 1888 from the Währing Cemetery and moved to the Vienna's Central Cemetery, the acknowledged pantheon for the city's most illustrious dead.

## THE SHORT STORY

Schubert's short story *Mein Traum* (1822), a tale of exile and homecoming framed by two visions of familial bliss, remains a tantalizing document for his biographers. It is an extremely condensed narrative—no more than one and a half pages—packed with powerful imagery about the relationship between a young man and his father. Although the brothers, sisters, and mother of the young man are mentioned, the father remains the central figure in determining the course of some profound changes in the man's life, particularly his distress at being thrown out of the paternal house and forced to wander into foreign and unfriendly lands. Twice he returns home, both times heralded by the death of someone: his mother in the first return, and an unidentified maiden in the second. The story

has a cyclical structure insofar as it begins with a description of familial harmony, the destruction of that harmony through loss and banishment, and the dream of reconciliation with the father at the end.

The story, which is Schubert's only known literary work in prose, exists in the original manuscript and in a copy by his friend Franz Schober (1796-1882). The original text was written in pencil, but carries in ink the title and a signature by Schubert's brother Ferdinand, who gave the manuscript to Schumann on the occasion of the latter's visit to Vienna on January 7, 1839. The literary style is reminiscent of the mystic Romanticism of several German writers and poets of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially Friedrich Leopold von Hardenberg (1772-1801), known to posterity as Novalis.

The events described in the story bear no direct relation to Schubert's life. It is doubtful that its central event--the banishment from the parental house--has any relation to an alleged statement by Schubert's stepbrother Anton to the effect that Schubert had been twice expelled from his father's house. No reliable evidence for this statement has been found, and no other sources mention these episodes in Schubert's life. It is known, however, that Schubert's relationship with his father was sometimes strained on account of his having to teach as an assistant at his father's school. It is also unclear whether the death of the protagonist's mother has any relation to the death of Schubert's own mother in 1812.

It is only natural that, confronted with a document of such suggestive power, biographers would strive to unveil correspondences between Schubert's life and the events described in the story. Scholars have returned to it at different moments in the history of Schubert's reception, offering interpretations that have been inevitably influenced by prevailing methods of criticism and analysis. In recent times, it has been interpreted primarily from a psychoanalytic perspective that centers on its pivotal event and its implications for understanding Schubert's personality. Other approaches have endeavored to find structural similarities between the tripartite layout of the story and some compositions by Schubert, which are perceived to emulate the idea of exile and return through a symbolic play of tonalities and modulation. Some of the songs included in tonight's program contain the same kind of imagery presented in the story, particularly its references to the unsettling experience of exile and the wanderer, as well as the notion of dream as a welcome alternative to reality. If the events of the story have no basis in real life (at least, not in the external appearance of real life), they nevertheless may reflect Schubert's perception of what real life meant to him.

## THE SONGS

Schubert's legacy cannot be adequately appreciated without an intimate knowledge of his songs, the portion of his musical production that most clearly set him apart from all his contemporaries. In his more than 600 songs, Schubert created a universe that was hitherto unknown. No composer before him had achieved such a richly nuanced melding of poetry and music, or managed to translate the meaning of a poem with such infallible musical accuracy. Schubert's revolutionary approach to song composition can be best understood when compared with contemporaneous expectations about what a *Lied* (song) should be. Heinrich Christoph Koch's influential *Musikalisches Lexikon* (1802) provides the following definition:

*Lied.* With this name one generally designates any lyrical poem of many strophes that is intended for song and associated with a melody repeated for each strophe, and that is capable of being performed by anyone who has healthy and not entirely inflexible vocal chords, without need of artistic instruction. It thus follows that a Lied melody should have neither so wide a range nor such vocal mannerisms and extended syllables as characterizes the artificial and cultivated aria; rather it should express the sentiment in the text through simple but hence all the more efficient means.

Many of Schubert's most accomplished songs stand in sharp contrast to this model. He refashioned the genre into a completely new entity, as demonstrated by the bewildering diversity of his individual songs and the dramatic scope of the song cycles. Schubert's legacy in this genre constitutes one of the most magnificent products of the Romantic imagination, justifying the epithet of "Prince of Song" given to him by his admirers. The songs included in tonight's program express some of the psychological traits associated with Schubert, and their texts include images and metaphors that highlight the contents of the short story *Mein Traum*.

One of the projects on which Schubert was working shortly before his death was the proofing for publication of the second part of the song cycle *Die Winterreise*, a setting of 24 poems by Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827). Schubert had composed the songs in two installments, the first 12 immediately upon discovering the poems in a publisher's magazine called *Urania* in February 1827, and the others in October of that year. The composition of *Die Winterreise* undoubtedly engaged some of Schubert's most profound artistic ideals, and the work has been universally recognized as one of his towering achievements; arguably, it remains the greatest song cycle ever written. Schubert waited until the cycle was completed before singing it to his friends, who were troubled by the unrelenting pessimism of the texts and the music. A few of them actually thought that the gloomy nature of the work had hastened Schubert's death, but he stressed that he liked the songs better than any he had composed, and believed that, in time, others would come to appreciate them as well. *Die Winterreise* centers on one of the most enduring archetypes of the Romantic century, the figure of the wanderer. In this particular case, a wanderer who is also beset by two of the most devastating forces known to humankind: the misery of unrequited love and the implacability of nature. The wanderer in *Die Winterreise* traverses both a natural and an emotional wasteland, the ice of the inclement winter and the burning fire of his unconsummated love. More interestingly, from the perspective of Schubert's personal and artistic outlook, the poems are rich in oppositions between an idealized world and the harsh reality of life. Such dichotomies spoke profoundly to Schubert, who acknowledged those antagonisms as part of his psychological make up. The music he composed for the poems embodies this clash of realities to a supreme degree, sometimes within the context of a single song.

*Der Leiermann*, which closes the cycle, is one of the most miraculous examples of Schubert's ability to grasp the essence of a poem and completely transfigure it into music. The image of the lonely organ-grinder, ignored by the crowd and harassed by dogs as he plays his instrument, barefoot on the ice, is pregnant with symbolism about the pathos of the defeated wanderer. He also stands as an emblem of the forgotten and humiliated artist, faithful to his calling in the face of adversity. The song is of such an astonishing simplicity, and yet so powerful and haunting that one is at a loss for words to explain its spell. This very failure of the critical discourse, however, signals the supreme artistry that went into its creation. Liszt, in preparing his piano transcription of the song (which is heard in the second part of the program), bowed to the concentrated musical substance of Schubert's setting and wisely avoided obscuring its stark melodies with a flourish of pianistic writing. The other song from *Die Winterreise* presented in the program, *Frühlingstraum*, is a perfect example of the psychological duality that permeates the cycle: the wanderer dreams of spring flowers and the bliss of love, only to be starkly reminded of the bleak reality by the screech of ravens and the frost on the windows. The music absorbs these images into a setting that fluctuates between a lyrical, lilting melody, and aggressive disruptions by dissonant chords that lead to a tumultuous rumbling in the piano accompaniment.

*Der Atlas*, *Ständchen*, and *In der Ferne* come from the pseudo-cycle *Schwanengesang*, comprising a group of 13 songs based on poems by Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) and Ludwig Rellstab (1799-1860) on which Schubert was working at the time of his death. His brother Ferdinand submitted these to the publisher Tobias Haslinger shortly after Schubert's death, and in May 1829 they appeared in print, together with an additional song (*Die Taubenpost*, on a poem by Johann Gabriel Seidl), under the title *Schwanengesang* (Swan Song). The songs do not make up a cycle, insofar as they lack both the narrative and musical connections that characterize *Die Winterreise* and *Die schöne Müllerin*, an earlier cycle also based on poems by Wilhelm Müller. In their individuality, the songs in *Schwanengesang* cover a wide range of feelings and compositional techniques. *Ständchen* is one of Schubert's signature tunes, a melody of such charm and lyricism that it is impossible to remain indifferent to its appeal. It has been anthologized and sung in countless arrangements, and is very likely among the pieces that would constitute a calling card for Schubert's music. In contrast, *Der Atlas* is a powerful depiction of unrelieved suffering. By invoking the mythical figure of Atlas, who was destined to carry the terrestrial globe on his back, the poet magnifies the depth and extent of personal tragedy by equating it to the condition of carrying all the world's pain in one's heart. Schubert's setting is a concentrated A-B-A form, in which the second section A repeats the opening strophe of the poem. The music is characterized by impassioned gestures and great rhythmic vitality, culminating in the painful outburst on the last line. The text of *In der Ferne* is rich in the kind of imagery that permeates the short story *Mein Traum*. The similarities are so striking that the song could be taken as a musical rendition of the story, even though there is no historical connection between the two works. The opening gesture of the song is loaded with drama, the threefold presentation of the initial motive creating a powerful psychological scenario for the entrance of the voice. The song unfolds in three consecutive statements about the condition of the protagonist, away in a strange land and far from his homeland, his father, his mother, and his loved ones. The prosodic regularity of the words creates a recurring rhythm that is at once obsessive and fatalistic. Schubert dresses the lines of the poem in melodies built on a similarly stark rhythm, creating a texture in which poetry and music proceed as if chained to one another. The declamatory quality of the musical setting brings out the underlying musicality of the verse with utmost clarity, thus achieving once again the expression of psychological truth for which Schubert is justly admired.

*Nacht und Träume*, composed in 1822, is based on a conflation of two poems by Matthäus von Collin (1779-1824), a friend for whom Schubert had much affection. Collin had died the year before, and some commentators see in this song a tribute to the poet. Its imagery, suffused with the suggestion of calm, moonlit landscapes, also evokes a connection between the temporary peace of sleep and the definitive peace of death. The sustained accompaniment, built entirely on a wavy pattern of chords framed by octaves, provides a dense nest over which the voice floats in a melody of exquisite beauty. Schubert's handling of modulation is characterized by great subtlety, as if with each subtle change of harmony he lulled the protagonist into increasingly deeper states of introspection. The last line of the poem, with its plea for the return of night and its



attendant dreams, is rendered in a musical phrase of immaculate limpidity, the tonality coming to rest effortlessly in the final tonic.

*Auf dem Strom*, a setting of a poem by Ludwig Rellstab, was composed expressly for the public concert that Schubert held on March 26, 1828, consisting entirely of his own works. This was a very special occasion for Schubert, the first and only event of this kind in his entire life. The fact that he chose the first anniversary of Beethoven's death to hold a concert of such significance spoke volumes about his veneration for the classical master. His tribute went further, as he incorporated a quotation from the *Marcia funebre* of Beethoven's "Eroica" symphony into strategic points of the musical structure of *Auf dem Strom*. Furthermore, the contents of the poem reminded Schubert of several important events in Beethoven's life, either literally or metaphorically, and this may have been an additional incentive for him to set it for that special occasion. The song is also unique in that it includes a part for horn obligato, a procedure that Schubert believed would bring a touch of novelty to the concert. The distinguished horn player Josef Lewy was the performer at the concert, and Schubert's writing for the instrument undoubtedly paid heed to Lewy's musicianship. Since then, the song has also been performed with a cello instead of the French horn, a practice that is in accord with 19<sup>th</sup>-century tradition. While the French horn is more suggestive of the natural landscape across which the protagonist's drama plays out, the sustained sonorities of the cello bring greater depth to the melodic lines. The dimensions of the song are perfectly suited for a public concert. This function is further intensified by the through-composed style of the musical setting, which expands the dramatic narrative of the poem by registering a great variety of psychological states. The anchoring of text and music is strengthened by short interludes for piano and the obligato instrument, which link each of the five strophes of the poem. The composition of *Auf dem Strom* may have inspired Schubert to write another song which calls for an obligato instrument in addition to the piano, the exquisite *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* for voice, clarinet, and piano, which he completed later that same year.

## THE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

Schubert's mastery as a song composer often influenced his conception of instrumental music and led him to experiment with unorthodox alternatives to larger musical forms. His lyrical approach to form was already hinted at by Schumann, who found much pleasure in Schubert's "heavenly lengths." Schumann was referring to Schubert's tendency to dwell on the repetition of structural material, as if presenting a thought dressed in several shades of psychological meaning. The pianist Alfred Brendel, musing on the structure of Schubert's late piano sonatas, addressed this same issue:

In his large forms, Schubert is the wanderer. He likes to move at the edge of the precipice, and does so with the assurance of a sleepwalker. To wander is the Romantic condition; one surrenders to it enraptured, or one is driven and plagued by the terror of finding no way out. More often than not, happiness is but the surface of despair. Suddenly, the mind is overcast, and nothing is more

typical of Schubert than these febrile afflictions of unease and horror. (From *Schubert's Last Sonatas*, 1989).

Schubert's large chamber and instrumental works were virtually unknown during his lifetime, an unfortunate circumstance that greatly compromised the evaluation of his legacy during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It was the absence of such works from the public musical scene that laid the grounds for the belief that Schubert was not very proficient in the treatment of extended musical forms. Today, such judgments about the composer hardly merit any scrutiny, except as evidence of the pitfalls of history.

Schubert's interest in chamber music stemmed from his early experiences in performing string quartets with his family. It is natural, therefore, that his chamber music should reflect his familiarity with string instruments and his understanding of their technical and expressive possibilities. He began to write works for piano and strings relatively late in his career, and it was only in the last years of his life that he produced the acknowledged masterpieces in this genre. The *Piano Trios in B-flat major, D.898* and in *E-flat major, D.929*, were completed during the last 12 or 13 months of Schubert's life. Another work for the same medium, the *Notturmo D.897*, was also completed during this time, but is generally believed to be a rejected slow movement for the first trio. Before these two masterpieces, Schubert's only experience in writing for this instrumental combination was an unremarkable single movement in B-flat, which he entitled *A Sonata*, completed when he was 15 years old.

The autograph manuscript for the first trio does not survive, hence it is difficult to ascertain the precise date of its completion; the autograph for the second trio, however, is dated November 1827, a year before the composer's death. The publication history of the first trio is obscure, as there is no reliable evidence for tracking the events leading to its publication in Vienna in 1836 by the firm of Diabelli. To compound the uncertainties surrounding the composition of this work, Schubert never mentioned it in any of the surviving letters to his publishers. Recollections from his friends, however, suggest that the first trio was composed probably two months before the second. A letter from Schubert to his friend Anselm Hüttenbrenner, from January 1828, mentions a successful performance of a "new trio" by him in the hall of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde on 26 December 1827. Three of the city's leading musicians participated in the performance: the violinist Ignaz Schuppanzigh, the cellist Josef Linke, and the Bohemian pianist Karl Maria von Bocklet, who was a member of Schubert's circle of friends. The "new trio" could have been either the B flat or the E flat, based on the chronological evidence alone. However, it is known that Schubert included the second trio in his own private concert in March 1828, which leads to the logical conclusion that the trio he was referring to in connection with the Gesellschaft concert was the first one. Schubert was very particular about the publication and performance of the second trio, as confirmed by a relatively rich documentation about this work in letters to his publisher and references to it in his correspondence with his friends.

The two trios have much in common, beginning with the choice of the four-movement layout favored by Beethoven for this type of work. Furthermore, three of the four

movements are in the tonic key, while the slow movement of both trios begins with a theme for solo cello. The scherzos are contrapuntal in texture, while the last movements show remarkable similarities in rhythm, time signature, and changes of meter. Some distinctive features of each work, especially the movements performed in tonight's concert, include the Beethovenian verve of the scherzo of the first trio, the processional accompaniment pattern in the slow movement of the second trio, which supports a melody of great beauty based on a Swedish folk song, and the recall of this very same theme at the end of the last movement of the trio, thus creating a cyclic structure. In the context of this program, the recall of this theme brings an added element of cohesion to the narrative by connecting two different moments in the script and enhancing the multilayered references between the music and the dramatic text.

James Melo  
Musicologist in residence