January, playwright-director Alec Duffy recreated his production in a three-day run in September at Chicago's Victory Gardens Theater as part of a commemoration of Albert Einstein's revolutionary 1905 papers. The overall event was co-sponsored by the Illinois Humanities Council and Chicago's Goethe Institute. The production features Einstein played by a walrus-mustached actress speaking in a light German accent. Some cast members "sing" Schubert's Lieder. To see where the production goes next, visit <www.toptenpeople.com>.

PUBLICATIONS

Recently published is the American edition of **Conrad Wilson**, *Notes on Schubert: 20 Crucial Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005). Wilson, former program editor of the Edinburgh International Festival, music critic, and contributor to the *New Grove*, has written succinct and intelligent essays in a small book of commentary of 130 pages that include listening and reading lists as well as a very short glossary. Each essay approximates the length of a major program note, with citations to scholarly publications about Schubert and the work discussed. The book's format is chronological in which Wilson notes his favorite performers and recordings for each work. Twenty selections are obviously too few for a devoted Schubertian, however, Wilson writes with authority and sensitivity.

Note a recent article by **James William Sobaskie,** "The 'Problem' of Schubert's String Quintet," in *Nineteenth-Century Music Review*, Vol. 2, Issue No. 1, 2005, pp. 57-92.

For those interested in acquiring the **Bärenreiter Urtext Edition** of Schubert's Lieder, a complete list of contents and editions can be viewed at <www.baerenreiter.com/html/schubert-lieder>.

Complete study scores for four of Schubert's operas are available from **Musikproduktion Juergen Hoeflich** in Munich. Each score includes an informative preface in German and English about the composer, the work, and performance material. To date, the Schubert entries are: *Alfonso und Estrella, Die Zauberharfe*, *Die Zwillingsbrüder*, and *Fierrabras*. In preparation are *Des Teufels Lustschloss*, *Fernando*, and *Der Vierjährige Posten*. See <www.musikmph.de>.

In the Spring 2005 *American Brahms Society Newsletter* there is a mention of the AMS Southern Chapter meeting (February) at which **Valerie Goertzen** (Loyola University, New Orleans) presented "Brahms's Readings of Schubert's Ländler."

October saw the publication of *The Book of Lieder: The Original Text of 1000 Songs*, selected and translated by Richard Stokes (Faber, 2005). Ian Bostridge wrote an interesting Schubert-centered article "Gripped By Song" (*The Guardian*, October 1, 2005) in conjunction with the book's news release.

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE

The Phantom Narrator Revealed: Performing the Final Song of Schubert's *Winterreise*

Schubert's *Winterreise* is the wintriest of journeys. It begins, in "Gute Nacht," with the persona telling us that the good days are over and winter has come. His girl no longer speaks of love, and her mother no longer mentions marriage. It is cold and dark, and he must journey, with no foreseeable destination, and at a time of year not of his choice. This is the emotional high point of the cycle: It is all down hill from here.

Throughout these twenty-four songs, our down-trodden young man reports to us the weather, his surroundings, his memories, his dreams, some sounds, and more sights; but until the final song, the only companions we hear of are a solitary crow (#15) and a few inhospitable dogs (#17). The penultimate song, "Die Nebensonnen," suggests that the traveler's hold on reality is weakening. Schubert kept Müller's ordering of the twenty-four poems intact except for the transposition of "Die Nebensonnen" with its predecessor, "Mut!" (#22), perhaps because the mental

shakiness elides so well with the final song. Our traveler sees three suns. He also had three suns, he tells us, two of which have now gone down. Some suggest those two are the eyes of his beloved. Some suggest the three are love, faith, and hope. I have always taken them to be his happiness, his sanity, and his life. Trembling, we come to the final song, "Der Leiermann."

If there is such a thing as perfection in a work of art, this song is one of its few manifestations. The open fifths in the base of the piano would have suggested all by themselves the extremity of his emptiness – a persuasive, non-resolving resolution for this lengthy and burdensome journey; but the grace notes that spoil their perfection add to the pervasive emptiness a twinge of neurosis. No matter how many times I encounter them, I always find them shocking, unnerving. But the shock comes from more than their assault on 19th century tonality: They introduce, for the first time in the whole seventy-five-minute progression, another human being – not once, but twice. One of these two newcomers is obvious: He is a hurdy-gurdy player, as poor and as solitary as our traveler, whose droning instrument dominates the work of the piano accompaniment. His music has already become our music, even before the persona asks that it become his music as well. The sight, the sound, and the concomitant pathos create just the kind of restless resting place this cycle requires.

The other intrusive newcomer at the beginning of "Der Leiermann" is quite hidden. There is no one new to see but rather a new voice to hear. For twenty-three poems, the traveler has served as our narrator; but for the first four of the five stanzas of "Der Leiermann," we are listening to a new voice, a faceless, omniscient narrative voice, who relates the scene for us and changes our relationship to it. If this voice is still our main character's voice, his voice has changed. Perhaps this represents the sound of a man who, as suggested by "Die Nebensonnen," has lost his mind. There is a new numbness here that could be the result of just that kind of loss of affect. But it could also be a new character, a narrator, separate from action, who gives us a new sense of distance, a new perspective from which to survey the scene. Our hero is no longer capable of sane description; someone else has to help us finish the journey. If that is the case, then the re-introduction of the traveler's voice in the final stanza gives us yet another new voice – the voice of the insane, the beaten, the pathetic, the person in total collapse. It comes, if not out of "nowhere," out of a cognitive world entirely different from the rational, detailed, portrait-painting voice of the first four stanzas. Here, in Robert Jordan's translation, is the end of "Die Nebensonnen" and the first four stanzas of "Der Leiermann":

Ah, you are not my suns!
Look others in the face!
Lately indeed I too had three;
now the two best have gone down.
If only the third would follow them!
I shall be better in the dark.
……………………………………………………
Over there beyond the village stands a hurdy-gurdy man,
and with numb fingers he winds as best he can.
He staggers around, barefoot on the ice,
and his little plate always stays empty.
No one want to hear him, no one looks at him,
and the dogs growl around the old man.
And he lets it pass, lets everything be,
winds, and his hurdy-gurdy never stays still.

The final stanza brings back the traveler, his voice now shaken, betraying a mind no longer sound:

Strange old man, should I come with you?
Will you grind your hurdy-gurdy to my songs?

I have experimented with this interpretation in live performance, with stunning results. I have given a number of lieder recitals (as pianist) with my good friend Dr. Eric Meyers, a noted archaeologist and Biblical scholar. As amateurs, we attract audiences mostly consisting of our friends and colleagues at Duke University – perhaps 125 people for our presentation of *Winterreise*. I began the evening with a few minutes of oral program notes, which made my voice the narratorial voice for our duo. Here are some interesting facts about the poet, about the composition of the music (Schubert's last completed effort, which some say hastened his death), and, by they way, about the curiosity of the last song, in which a separate narrative voice appears for the only time in the whole cycle, for four of the last five stanzas. (You could almost hear some of the audience minds dismissively thinking, "Oh well, he's an English professor. He cares about those kinds of things.") And then the music. An uninterrupted hour and ten minutes of these extraordinary, sometimes searing, sometimes freezing songs, obviously requiring a maximum effort from both performers – but more obviously from the voice that had to engage directly in the struggles agonized by the words.

When we arrived at the beginning of the last song, you could feel the sense of near-exhaustion in the room. Everyone was "holding on" for one last song, after which the tension could be allowed to dissipate. Silence. Then the painful twinge of a grace note cracking the solidity of an open fifth in the left hand of the piano. After a burdensome wait, another adulterated open fifth. Then yet another, but this time accompanied by a "new voice" – a winding, aimless melody announced by the right hand, which ends on a note so dissonant with the left hand that it almost sounds like a mistake. And then the last three notes – the "mistake" – repeated, as if to say they were trying their best to resolve something, even though they failed. And then, with new energy, the right hand tries again, higher, to get *somewhere*, as the drone in the left hand continues. This time it manages to end on a note that joins the insistent tonality of the drone. Then it repeats its last three notes again, to show that by the second time around it had learned something.

And then the shocker. Over the continuing drone of the left hand, the audience heard a voice – a new voice, a foreign voice – a voice that was clearly *not* the voice to which they had been listening for more than an hour now. Here were Muller's words and Schubert's notes, surely enough; but Eric was standing there close-mouthed, silent. It took several highly charged moments for people to realize that the phantom narrative voice was emanating from the pianist. It shook the foundation of the concert-going experience. This was an intrusion. The evening's singer had been done in by "Die Nebensonnen" and had nothing more to say. The pianist's voice was cold, calculating, unmoved by the desultory details of the picture the text was painting. The keel was all too even. The empty fifths sounded even more emptied. The grace notes had nothing in them of grace.

By the end of the fourth stanza, everyone had become accustomed to the new voice. Tonally and textually, the first stanza had led us out and the second stanza led us back. The third stanza had led us out, and the fourth stanza led us back. After two such journeys with a new guide, the guide was no longer new. This was the new universe. Everyone – pulses still somewhat frazzled from the shock – had resigned themselves to the new sense of control. And then the fifth stanza. Another shock. Another new voice – as strange and foreign now as the phantom voice had been four stanzas earlier. As different as the second voice had been from the first, so different was the first voice, now contextualized by the second. Eric's voice re-introduced our traveler, whose mind was now clearly unhinged. The final stanza invoked a pathetic response that left everyone undone, exhausted. He crescendoed and de-crescendoed on his last note, as required by Schubert, fading into despair, and the piano's right hand made its final foray upwards, failed for the final time, and – after what seemed an endless wait – joined the empty fifth of the left hand and was silent.

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