



Faculty Recital Series

2017–2018 Season

Sara M. Snell Music Theater

Friday, March 2, 7:30 PM

Donald George, tenor
Eugenia Tsarov, piano

Die Schöne Müllerin
(*The Beautiful Miller Maid*)
Opus 25, D. 795 (1823)

Franz Schubert, music
(1797–1828)
Wilhelm Müller, poems
(1794–1827)

The subject of a beautiful miller's daughter was widely used in the Romantic era, following the successful opera "La Molinara" (The Miller Maid) by Giovanni Paisiello (1788). Copying the plot of the opera, Wilhelm Müller originally took part in a private Berlin performance (1816/17) of *Rose, the Beautiful Miller's Maid* for which Müller and others wrote portions. The poet Luise Hensel (1798–1876) took part in this presentation as Rose, and one can assume that Müller's later monodrama is an expression of his unrequited love for her. Franz Schubert took Müller's monodrama, leaving out poems he felt held up the drama, and composed 20 songs of the original 25 poems. Although Schubert wished to compose a successful opera, which he did not; he achieved in this cycle and "Winterreise", opera-like tragedies. The collaboration of the pianist and singer in this cycle is of supreme importance, with the piano commenting on, arguing with and complementing the text, for which Schubert used undulating brook and water motifs, mill wheel sounds, hunting horns and the like. The contrast in the cycle, which hovers between the menace which emanates from the brook and the miller's love of life, are perhaps that which makes this cycle so uniquely tragic. Sadly, Müller died at the age of 33 so never realized the fame which his poems, along with his "Winterreise", would bring. Müller wrote, "... my songs lead but half a life, a paper existence of black-and-white, until music breathes life into them ...". Schubert breathed life into these poems.

The following is a synopsis of Müller's poems along with Schubert's settings of them.

Müller's drama begins with "The Poet's Prologue" which Schubert omits.

1. Das Wandern (Hiking)

The miller expresses the joys of hiking through the mountains, comparing it to flowing water, or of rolling stones in a stream. A strophic song with each verse having a different style in the declamation and piano.

2. Wohin (Where to?)

The miller finds a brook and hopes that it will lead him to a mill. However, he imagines that the brook or the voices of the *Nixen* (water sprites) are enticing him with something he does not quite understand. The piano plays rippling brook patterns changing to a minor mode with the voices of the *Nixen*.

3. Halt! (Stop!)

The piano plays sounds of mill wheels and rushing water while the miller observes the appearance of the mill in the beautiful sunshine. He wonders if it was the brook's purpose to bring him to this particular mill.

4. Danksagung an den Bach (Song of Thanks to the Brook)

Again, he asks the brook why he came to this particular mill with the beautiful miller's daughter. He thanks the brook because he has work and, perhaps, love. The piano plays brook-like figures and dance-like rhythms, accompanying the miller's musings.

5. Am Feierabend (After Work)

The piano pictures the banging of the mill wheels and rushing water while the miller stresses his need to work harder to impress the miller's daughter. As the mood hushes with the evening meal, the owner of the mill praises all for their good work, after which the miller's daughter says to all "Good night", which the miller misunderstands as meant only for him. He resolves to work even harder the next day, whereupon the piano again explodes in mill wheel sounds.

6. Der Neugierige (The Curious One)

The miller has left the mill and is sitting by the brook contemplating his situation. He speaks to the brook but is met with silence. He begs the brook for an answer to the existential question of whether the miller's daughter loves him or not. The piano plays simple chords with alternating quiet, which conveys the brook's silence. In the postlude of the song the brook seems to answer him that the miller's daughter loves him.

Müller has a poem "Life at the Mill" which tells of the miller maid's life at the mill. Schubert omits this poem.

7. Ungeduld (Impatience)

The miller is overjoyed with the brook's assurance of the miller maid's love. He expects nature to burst forth with flowers, the heavens to fill with stars; he wants to carve his love in every tree and write it on every piece of paper. The piano plays incessant triplets which mirror heartbeats of ecstatic love and impatience. The voice part is almost operatic.

8. Morgengruss (Morning Greeting)

It is morning. The miller has been waiting outside the window of the miller maid's bedroom and is surprised when she sees him and she quickly looks away. He resolves to just watch from the distance. The piano part of this strophic song is simple and chordal except for the last line of each verse, which romantically echoes in canon the miller's words of love and longing.

9. Des Müllers Blumen (The Miller's Flowers)

The miller is contemplating the blue flowers which grow by the side of the brook. He imagines his tears of love will be like dew drops on the blossoms. A strophic song in A major in a gentle 3/4 similar to a Ländler, or folk dance.

10. Tränenregen (Tears Fall Like Rain)

The miller's daughter joins him on the banks of the brook. The moon and the stars are shining and reflected on the surface of the brook. He suddenly imagines that the brook is pulling him into the reflection, calling out to him to come under the waves. His tears begin to blur the water's surface so that the miller's daughter says "Adieu, rain is coming." The strophic song changes in the last verse to minor mode expressing the miller's trepidation, with staccato notes in the piano picturing the droplets, while the postlude repeats the introduction as the miller's daughter walks away.

11. Mein! (Mine)

The miller is convinced that she loves him and wants the world to stop and rejoice with him. The song expresses joy in both piano and voice with an exuberant piano part and coloratura in the voice. At one point in the Lied, he laments the fact that he is alone in his love, which Schubert conveys in Bb major, but this concern is soon overcome and returns to D major. One can imagine the miller rushing along to his quarters and slamming the door shut with the dramatic final chord.

12. Pause (Pause)

The miller has retreated quietly to his room, where we now observe that he is a musician. He sees his lute (later in Lied "Eifersucht und Stolz" he plays the flute) which is hanging on the wall with a beautiful green ribbon dangling from it. He wonders why he let the green ribbon hang so long. Perhaps, he muses, it would rustle the strings and the sound would be the echo of heartache; or, perhaps, the beginning of new songs? The piano imitates the strumming of the lute, with more rhapsodic sections playing a duet with the voice.

13. Mit dem grünen Lautenband (With the Green Lute Ribbon)

The miller's daughter interrupts by suddenly entering the room and admiring the green ribbon, commenting: "It's a shame that the ribbon will fade in the sunshine. Green is my favorite color." The miller tells her that he loves green and it is their mutual color. He gives her the ribbon which she puts in her hair. A strophic folk-song, the Lied exudes a charming atmosphere in a joyful Bb major.

14. Der Jäger (The Hunter)

Suddenly the hunter enters the picture with his green hunter's outfit in the green forest with guns and barking dogs. The piano pictures the gun shots and the barking of the dogs in short staccato dissonant chords. The miller implores the hunter to shoot the wild boars which destroy the garden and not to hunt the miller's daughter.

15. Eifersucht und Stolz (Jealousy and Pride)

The miller is torn between his love for the miller maid and his jealousy of the hunter. He rushes to the brook commenting on the wild crashing of the brook's current and how it mirrors his feelings. He wants the brook to rush to her and repeatedly calls out: "Sag ihr!" (Tell her!) to be faithful to him. He implores the brook to tell her that he is happy while playing tunes on a flute for the neighborhood children. The piano plays stormy runs and full chords picturing the confusion of the miller. When the miller asks the brook to lie and say he is playing the flute, the key becomes G major and affects a country dance. This breaks off with a return of the calls of "Sag ihr!" in g minor and despair in the postlude.

Müller has a poem "First Pain, First Joy" which recounts the miller's bitterness. Schubert omits this poem.

16. Die liebe Farbe (The Dear Color)

The key changes to b minor with the miller realizing he has no hope of the miller maid's love. He wants to clothe himself in their mutual green, and cry green tears because she loves green so much. He hears the hunter's horns and imagines he sees his grave covered in green. A strophic song with the piano playing a repeated F#, mirroring his heart beat and footsteps as he walks through the green forest.

17. Die böse Farbe (The Hateful Color)

In a sudden change of mood, he wants to escape from the hateful green but feels surrounded by the color. Again, he hears the hunting horns and imagines her lunging out of her window in search of the hunter. The piano again continues the incessant F#, alternating between wild rushing arpeggi, crashing chords and horn calls. Schubert makes use of one of his favorites devices of alternating major and minor mode, which reflects the unraveling of the miller's mind. Each return of the miller's motif of parting is accompanied by different piano figures finally ending in the piano in a wild downward plunge as he decides to drown himself.

18. Trockne Blumen (Dried Flowers)

The piano plays a funeral march as the miller trudges to his death holding dead flowers. He hopes that her tears will cause the flowers to spring back to life when she visits his grave. The Lied is in e minor but changes to E major when the visions of Spring are expressed, changing back to e minor in the postlude when hope is gone.

Müller has a poem “Little Forget-Me Flowers” which describe how everything, even the flowers, mock him. Schubert omits this poem.

19. Der Müller und der Bach (The Miller and the Brook)

The miller is now free of the delusions which have haunted him, and a dialogue ensues in g minor between the brook and the heart-broken miller. The miller hopes to find rest in death, which is expressed in a beautiful melody underscored by the simplest of accompaniments. The brook answers him in G major with rippling chords and a soaring melody, while reflecting that the heavens will have a new star and the flowers will never again wilt. The miller responds with the beginning g minor melody but now with the rippling brook motifs accompanying him in his despair. In the postlude the brook returns to G major as now the brook and the miller are one.

20. Des Baches Wiegenlied (The Lullaby of the Brook)

The brook sings the miller apprentice to “sleep” in a bright E major, a tritone distant from the opening song. This interval is the *diabolus in musica* (*the devil in music*), signaling, perhaps, that the brook is not the friendly companion it seemed. The brook declares that the wanderer finally is at home. The Wiegenlied, or lullaby, is the last of the strophic songs expressing previous thoughts. The blue of the water’s depths is peaceful. The hunter’s horn will not disturb him. Finally, the brook wishes the miller a good night. The fog lifts as the full moon appears, yet the heavens are so far above.

Müller concludes with “The Poet’s Epilogue” which ends the drama on a more ironical note. Schubert omits this poem.

Donald George has performed at La Scala, the Paris Opera Bastille, Kennedy Center, the State Operas of Berlin, Hamburg and Vienna, the Festivals of Salzburg, Buenos Aires, Jerusalem, Istanbul, Perth and Blossom USA. He has sung with Leonard Bernstein, Kurt Masur, Vladimir Jurowski, Simone Young and recorded for Sony, Naxos, Phillips Classic, Teldec, Delos, and Bavarian Radio, among others. Reviews of Donald George speak of his “pleasing tenor sound, vocally reliable in all challenges” (*Metropolitan Opera News*), His recordings of the songs of Margaret Ruthven Lang (1868-1972) "Love is Everywhere" & *Volume II "Love Also Rises"* were nominated for Grammys. The review, by Music Web International, of the recording of *Return to Old Ireland* described his singing as “splendid.” The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung reviewed his recording of Schubert’s *Schöne Müllerin*, praising Donald George with “a splendid visiting card of his artistry.... An absolute must.”

Eugenia Tsarov Renowned Russian-born pianist, Eugenia Tsarov, earned her Diploma with Distinction from the St. Petersburg Conservatory of Music. As a first-prize winner of the Soviet National Piano Competition, she subsequently worked as a pianist for the Moscow State Philharmonic Society, the most prestigious artists’ management in Russia. She has toured extensively throughout Russia, Yugoslavia, Italy, France, Sweden, the United States and Canada. Since immigrating to the US in 1991, Ms. Tsarov continues to perform internationally, making appearances in Spain, the United States, Canada, and in New York City at Mekin Concert Hall and the United Nations. She has also appeared on television and radio in the US, Italy, Sweden and Russia. Combining her solo performances with a distinguished collaborative career, Professor Tsarov was honored as the best accompanist at the Zagreb International Violin Competition (Yugoslavia, 1981) and the International Paganini Competition (Genoa, Italy, 1985). Professor Tsarov is currently on the piano faculty of the Crane School of Music at SUNY Potsdam.