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**THE MAKING OF
DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN**

Saturday, November 23, 2013 ~ 11 am
Mary Pickford Theater
Library of Congress, James Madison Building



THE DA CAPO FUND
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WAGNER IN AMERICA

ALEX ROSS, LECTURER

MARGARET LATTIMORE, MEZZO-SOPRANO

DANIEL HOBBS, PIANIST

Saturday, November 23, 2013 ~ 2 pm
Coolidge Auditorium
Library of Congress, Thomas Jefferson Building

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Presented in association with The Wagner Society of Washington, DC



**The Library of Congress
Mary Pickford Theater
Saturday, November 23, 2013 — 11 am**

PROGRAM

Filmscreening

The Making of Der Ring des Nibelungen (2005)—(56 minutes)



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Coolidge Auditorium
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WAGNER IN AMERICA

**ALEX ROSS, LECTURER
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PROGRAM

**AFRICAN-AMERICAN WAGNERISM
AND THE QUESTION OF RACE REVISITED
*Alex Ross, The New Yorker***

[Ross will sign books in the Whittall Pavilion following the recital]

BRIEF INTERMISSION

Margaret Lattimore, mezzo-soprano
Daniel Hobbs, pianist

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

"Ch'io mi scordi di te?—Non temer, amato bene"
recitative and rondo for soprano, KV 505 (1786)

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

"Ständchen" from *Fünf Lieder*, op. 106, no. 1 (1888)

"Botschaft" from *Fünf Lieder*, op. 47, no. 1 (c. 1868)

"Von ewiger Liebe" from *Vier Gesänge*, op. 43, no. 1 (1864)

"Vergebliches Ständchen" from *Romanzen und Lieder*, op. 84,
no. 4 (c.1882)

RICHARD WAGNER (1813-1883)

Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme mit Pianoforte-Begleitung,
WWV 91a ("Wesendonck Lieder") (1857-1858)

"Der Engel"

"Stehe still!"

"Im Treibhaus"

"Schmerzen"

"Träume"



About the Program

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART, "Ch'io mi scordi di te?—Non temer, amato bene" recitative and aria (rondo) for soprano KV 505 (1786)

The recitative and aria for soprano "Ch'io mi scordi di te?—Non temer, amato bene" is one of 55 concert works for voice(s) and orchestra by Mozart.¹ Many of these works were excerpted from his operas. "Ch'io mi scordi di te?" is in fact a transformed version of "Non più tosto ascoltai—Non temer, amato bene" KV 490, a tenor recitative and aria that was composed for a March 13, 1786 performance of a revamped *Idomeneo, re di Creta* KV 366 (at the Auersperg Palace in Vienna). Much of the text in the version for soprano is identical to that of the tenor scene, which in the opera is sung by the character Idamante during the second act.² "Ch'io mi scordi di te?" was completed on December 26, 1786 in Vienna and was first performed on February 23, 1787 at Vienna's Kärntnertor Theater by Nancy Ann (Selina) Storace (1765-1817), with Mozart at the keyboard. The original score calls for an orchestra of two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, violin soloist and strings.

1 Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe, eds., *The Cambridge Mozart Encyclopedia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 639-640.

2 Ibid., 220 & 228.

Storace, an English soprano, completed her studies and launched an operatic career in Italy, later arriving in Vienna where she began work with Mozart. She originated the role of Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* KV 492, which premiered at the Vienna Burgtheater on May 1, 1786. Her brother Stephen (1762-1796), who accompanied Storace to Vienna, was a composer and briefly studied with Mozart.³ In Vienna Storace married an English violinist and composer (who was 22 years older than she) named John Abraham Fisher (1744-1806). Fisher was abusive, to the point that he was banished from the Habsburg empire. Needless to say, the marriage ended abruptly.⁴

The concert at which "Ch'io mi scordi di te?" premiered was a special farewell tribute to Storace, who immediately thereafter departed Vienna for London. She had hoped to take Mozart along, but he decided to remain in Austria.⁵ Reviews of Storace's Viennese performances were mixed, though Mozart certainly sided with the positive commentary. He evidently liked Storace enough to cast her in the premiere of one of his biggest female roles and to give her the dedicated concert scene. Mozart offered two dedications for "Ch'io mi scordi di te?":

Mozart's Thematic Catalogue: "Für Mselle. Storace und mich" (For Miss Storace and me)

Holograph Manuscript Score of KV 505: "Composto per la Sigra. Storace dal suo servo ed amico W.A. Mozart, Vienna li 26 di deembre. 1786." (Composed for Ms. Storace from her servant and friend W.A. Mozart, Vienna, December 26, 1786)

One of the main criticisms directed at Storace was related to her pay at the opera, which was apparently high for the time.⁶ An account by Franz Kratter of her February 23, 1787 Viennese farewell concert remarked:

"...people fight to hear a few arias negligently sung at a bad concert by the arrogant foreigner Storace, whose talent for art equals that for impertinence, while thy Mozart, so excellent an artist, is not even paid as much for a good concert as will cover his costs for it."⁷

Hungarian poet Franz Kazinczy (1759-1831) described Storace as a "beautiful singer" who possessed an "enchanted eye, ear and soul."⁸ English critic Charles Burney said in 1788 that Storace was a "lively and intelligent actress, and an excellent performer in comic opera," while chastizing "her ambition to appear as a *serious singer*."⁹ These contrasting reviews aside, Storace was an important musical figure in Mozart's career. Some scholars like to postulate that Mozart was in love with Storace, and that "Ch'io mi scordi di te?" was the musical manifestation of their romance. There does not seem to be much evidence of this being the case, though it is possible. Mozart and Storace corresponded for the remainder of Mozart's life. Storace burned their letters prior to her death, leaving us with little information about their friendship (this fact might spark a romantic-conspiracy theorist's imagination).¹⁰ The biographical accusations of an affair being divulged in the romantic poetry of a song seem oddly similar to the notion that Wagner's "Wesendonck Lieder" were a confession of that composer's love for his (at least emotional) mistress Mathilde Wesendonck (see the program note for "Wesendonck Lieder").

3 Louis Biancolli, ed., *The Mozart Handbook: A Guide to the Man and His Music* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1954), 73.

4 Ibid.

5 Otto Erich Deutsch, *Mozart: A Documentary Biography*, transl. Eric Blom, et al. (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1966), 285-286.

6 Biancolli, 73.

7 Kratter in *Philosophische und statistische beobachtungen vozüglich die Österreichischen Staaten Betreffend* (Frankfurt & Leipzig, 1787) reprinted in Deutsch, 309.

8 Deutsch, 276.

9 Eisen & Keefe, 494

10 Biancolli, 73.

In the recitative, marked *Andantino*, the soprano boldly asks "Am I e'en thus forgot?" She resigns herself to feel "the anguish of death than of such life," of being a forgotten or distant memory to someone whom she loved. The music slows as the soprano languishes in her grief, with a point of death connecting the recitative to the rondo. One distinguishing aspect of KV 505 is the exquisite piano part. In essence, the concert work is a duet for soprano and piano, with orchestral accompaniment. The first performance with Mozart and Storce would have been a very special experience for the performers, as they said goodbye to each other through a spectacularly touching musical experience.

Mozart's piano line acts as a second principal voice, exchanging unspoken dialogue with the singer who gathers a measure of composure and searches for strength to counteract her sorrow. The orchestral accompaniment is typical of Mozart's operatic orchestral writing. It features vivid use of simple dynamics. Coordinated rhythmic motives supplement the solo voice and piano without being overbearing. In the reduction for piano and voice some of the orchestral accompaniment is simplified, in order to preserve the solo quality of the piano's thematic statements. Overall, "Ch'io mi scordi di te?" challenges the soprano's ability to act and communicate the text, rather than her technical skill (at least for a professional). Sections of the text are repeated and transformed musically, indicating the place of cyclical evolution in human relationships.



JOHANNES BRAHMS

"Ständchen" from *Fünf Lieder*, op. 106, no. 1 (1888)

Like Mozart, Brahms was a prolific composer for the solo voice. He was responsible for composing 190 solo lieder (between 1853-1896), in addition to dozens of vocal chamber works. As was the norm in the nineteenth century, the songs were aggregated into sets for the purpose of public distribution and commercial sale. Sometimes these sets were comprised of songs with thematic or textual connections, and sometimes they were simply grouped based on what projects were at hand. According to one source, Brahms specifically sought texts that would be enhanced or improved when set to music.¹¹

Brahms obtained the text of "Ständchen" ("Serenade") from Franz Kugler's *Skizzenbuch* (1830), a collection of Kugler's drawings, writings and compositions. Kugler also worked as an art historian and biographer.¹² Op. 106, no. 1 was composed in 1888, though two selections from the op. 106 set were composed as early as 1885.¹³ "Ständchen" was Brahms' only Kugler setting for solo voice. He also composed two vocal quartets (op. 112, nos. 1-2) to Kugler's "Sehnsucht" and "Nächtens" (all of his Kugler settings were composed in 1888).¹⁴

"Ständchen" is marked *Anmutig bewegt* ("moves gracefully") and is a delightful bounce through an evening landscape. The moon stands high above the mountains (identified musically by a rising scale to the upper G of the female voice). Youths play flute, fiddle and zither for their own amusement (and potentially that of a strikingly beautiful blonde). A melodic fragment emerges in the piano's segue to the third verse that recalls Brahms' most famous student-

11 George S. Bozart and Walter Frisch, "Brahms, Johannes" *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/article/grove/music/51879>>.

12 Leon Botstein, ed., *The Compleat Brahms* (London: W.W. Norton, 1999), 294.

13 Bozart & Frisch.

14 Peter Clive, *Brahms and His World: A Biographical Dictionary* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 274.

themed work, the *Academic Festival Overture* in C minor, op. 80 (1880). In "Ständchen" the melodic fragment emulates the informal instrument playing described in the text.¹⁵

"Botschaft" from *Fünf Lieder*, op. 47, no. 1 (c. 1868)

"Botschaft" ("Message") belongs to a set of five lieder (op. 47) that are typically grouped with the op. 43 and opp. 46/48/49 songs. These twenty-five songs were composed between 1859-1868, and were all published in 1868. Two songs from the op. 47 set were settings of texts by Hafiz (1300-1388) that were translated by Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800-1875). Hafiz (whose birth name was Shams-ud-dia Mohammed), a Persian poet, was one of Daumer's most frequent sources of works to translate. Daumer was a teacher and homeopath, as well as a fervent Rosicrucian who was quite outspoken about orthodoxy in the Christian church. His work focused on the translation of Eastern and Middle Eastern texts, as he had a diverse set of language skills. Brahms included a second Daumer translation in the op. 47 lieder, the second selection "Liebesglut." He set Daumer's texts and translations in various other instances throughout his oeuvre. Brahms is credited with being the principal reason why anyone today has even heard of Daumer, who would have likely faded into obscurity otherwise.¹⁶

Most of the 1859-1868 lieder contain themes related to love. One theory for this is that Brahms was expressing his love for Agathe (Sophie Louise Bertha) von Siebold (1835-1909), a soprano with whom the composer had a brief relationship in the second half of 1858. The only surviving primary source that recounts this relationship is von Siebold's memoir *Allerlei aus meinem Leben* (Küntzel, 1985).¹⁷ Whether one chooses to adopt the unrequited love reading of Brahms' op. 47 lieder is likely unimportant (though certainly worthy of pondering). The ideas of universal love and romance that are expressed may be applied to any situation, era in history or fantasy. A flowing triple meter characterizes "Botschaft," evoking the imagery of the breeze that strokes the cheek and flows through the hair of a beloved figure. The wind fills the space between two lovers who think of each other, but are not within reach. The song is divided into three sections that flow seamlessly into one another, the third acting as a variation on the theme of the first section.

"Von ewiger Liebe" from *Vier Gesänge*, op. 43, no. 1 (1864)

Belonging to the same large group of songs as "Botschaft," "Von ewiger Liebe" ("From everlasting love") was composed in 1864. It is likely that the first performance took place on March 11, 1869 in Zürich, with Brahms accompanying baritone Julius Stockhausen (1826-1906) at the piano. Brahms' song sets a text by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798-1874). Hoffmann's text was a German translation of a traditional poem in Wendish, a Saxon dialect.¹⁸ Brahms set seven texts by Hoffmann and the two met at least three times in the 1850s.¹⁹

"Von ewiger Liebe" depicts the journey of two young mates through the darkness of evening into the woods and fields. Brahms sets the text to reflective and passionate music, with a particularly bold piano accompaniment that outlines the drama of the poem. The song is divided into three distinct sections that each possess a unique melody and tone, though the first section is twice as long as the ensuing parts. The narrator tells of the young lovers proclaiming their

15 Michael Musgrave, *The Music of Brahms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 150.

16 Malcolm MacDonald, *The Master Musicians: Brahms* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1990), 460.

17 Clive, 416-417.

18 Botstein, 229-230.

19 Clive, 227.

love for each other, focusing on the metaphor that their bond is as strong as iron and steel. Though those almost impenetrable metals should withstand the test of time, they are susceptible to wear. The lovers must combat fate and ensure that their love holds for eternity.

"Vergebliches Ständchen" from *Romanzen und Lieder*, op. 84, no. 4 (c.1882)

Brahms composed this *Romanze* for either two voices (male and female) or solo voice. There are conflicting reports of when the song was composed. The consensus is that it was completed by 1882, though some scholars believe Brahms began conceiving it as early as 1877-1879.²⁰ The text originated in an anthology of German folksongs (*Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Original-Weisen*) that was compiled by Anton Wilhelm Florentin von Zuccalmaglio (1802-1869) and Andreas Kretzschmer (1775-1839). The editors claimed that the tune and text were traditional from the Lower Rhine region, though musicologist Heather Platt contends that Zuccalmaglio may have composed them himself.²¹

The joys and frustrations of courtship are front and center in "Vergebliches Ständchen" ("Hopeless Serenade"). A young male suitor arrives at his beloved's window (she is clearly playing hard to get). The young man begs to be let into the lass' house. The girl promptly replies that she must not let him in, as her mother would disapprove. Brahms cleverly gives these introductory stanzas virtually identical music—suggesting that both parties are equally eager to spend time together. The boy protests her response as the music shifts to minor. He pleads for his crush to allow him inside so that his frozen heart, affected adversely by the night chill, may thaw. He even offers an empty threat, saying that his love is extinguished. She responds by banishing him into the night, for she is off to bed. A melodic figure she sings at the very close, which arpeggiates an F# minor triad, indicates the girl's curiosity for mischief, as this motive is pervasive throughout the playful first two stanzas.



RICHARD WAGNER, *Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme mit Pianofortebegleitung*, WWV 91a ("Wesendonck Lieder") (1857-1858)

The study of Richard Wagner's "Wesendonck Lieder" requires opening a can of worms that involves scandal, infatuation, money and one of Wagner's greatest operas, *Tristan und Isolde*, WWV 90 (1856-1859). Wagner loved the attention of women and seemed to thrive on the turmoil that resulted from his deeply passionate relationships. As a result, he was involved in a series of marriages and extended affairs (usually concurrently) that both directly and indirectly influenced his compositions. The story begins in February of 1852 when Wagner made the acquaintance of a society couple in Zürich, Otto and Mathilde (Agnes) Wesendonck.

Otto Wesendonck (1815-1896) was a German businessman who amassed a fortune in the textile industry beginning in the 1830s. His work took him to New York City, where he established a firm in partnership with William Loeschigk (1808-1887). According to Alex Ross' study of Wagner's connections to New York, Wesendonck and Loeschigk operated out of 12 Old Slip in Manhattan (the modern 77 Water Street building) and later relocated to Broad Street. After several years, Wesendonck returned to Europe in order to expand the firm's business there.²² In 1848 Wesendonck married Agnes Luckemeyer (1828-1902). He convinced her to change her first name to Mathilde (the same name as Wesendonck's first wife, who

20 Botstein, 266.

21 Ibid.

22 Alex Ross, "A Walking Tour of Wagner's New York," *The New Yorker* Blog, May 26, 2013 <<http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/culture/2013/05/a-walking-tour-of-wagners-new-york.html>>.

died on their honeymoon).²³ The couple settled in Zürich in 1851, where Mathilde asserted herself as a hostess and dominant force in the household. Otto rapidly became one of Wagner's principal benefactors, even paying off the composer's debts in 1854 (the caveat was that Otto would receive a portion of the box office income from performances of Wagner's works).²⁴

At the time of his first encounter with the Wesendoncks, Wagner was married to Christine Wilhelmine ("Minna") Planer (1809-1866), a German actress with whom he fell in love during the 1830s. They married on November 24, 1836 and there was turmoil from the get-go. Minna is purported to have left Wagner for another man at least once in their first year of the marriage. Though the relationship weathered several decades, it was rife with financial difficulties, further marital indiscretions (on both sides) and difficulties associated with Minna having an illegitimate daughter (Natalie Bilz-Planer) from an earlier relationship. These tensions reached a point at which Wagner and Minna merely tolerated each other. This mutual attitude provided a fertile climate for a new romance in Richard's life.

While the Wagners and Wesendoncks become friendly as couples, a semi-clandestine relationship was brewing between Mathilde and Richard. Mathilde had been infatuated with Wagner since she heard him conduct the Overture to *Tannhäuser* when she was just 23. Wagner, who at first was unmoved by the attention from Mathilde, eventually found her to be an intellectual match. This contrasted with his sentiments about Minna, whom Wagner felt was incapable of appreciating his art. Ultimately art was more important to Wagner than any wife, romantic partner or person.²⁵ An emotional affair developed between the composer and Mathilde, who was a young mother by the mid-1850s. The general consensus in scholarship is that the affair likely was never consummated physically, but that position does not detract from the strength of their emotional partnership. Mathilde was always honest with Otto about her relationship with Wagner, though Wagner was not as open with Minna. Throughout the first years of the Wagner/Wesendonck friendship Mathilde and Minna exchanged amicable letters. Otto lived with a "don't ask, don't tell" mindset. He knew what was transpiring between Mathilde and Wagner, and was bothered by it (though he kept quiet). In these years Otto remained dedicated to Wagner as a patron, providing money and even a home.

In 1857 Otto purchased a mansion in the suburbs of Zürich and offered the adjoining cottage to the Wagners for a reduced rent. The cottage became known as "Asyl" (refuge) and was intended to be a peaceful and productive home for Wagner's composing. Wagner quickly became the focal point of the social functions held at the Wesendonck home. He and Mathilde gradually became less discrete with their romance (to the point that Minna would be at home on the first floor of the cottage while Mathilde visited Wagner alone on the upper level). Understandably, Minna rapidly reached the end of her wits with this arrangement. She felt insulted, cast aside and jealous of the composer's obsession with Mathilde (who was twenty years her junior).²⁶

On April 7, 1858 Minna intercepted a letter from Richard that was intended for Minna. The letter compared their relationship to that of Faust and Gretchen in Goethe's tragedy *Faust*. In the incriminating letter Wagner said to Mathilde:

23 Michael Tanner, *Faber Pocket Guide To Wagner* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010), 50.

24 Barry Millington, et al., "Wagner, Richard," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/article/grove/music/O905605>>.

25 John N. Burk, ed., *Letters of Richard Wagner: The Burrell Collection* (New York: MacMillan, 1950), 361.
26 *Ibid.*, 368.

“But when I look into your eyes, then I simply cannot speak any more; then everything I might have to say simply becomes void! Look, then everything becomes so indisputably true to me, then I am so sure of myself, when this wonderful, holy glance rests upon me, and I submerge myself within it!”²⁷

Minna erupted with rage and confronted Wagner about the affair. He was unfazed by this and found her reaction unwarranted. Minna went one step further and challenged Mathilde to explain the letter. This conflict spelled the worst for Wagner’s marriage and his relationship with Mathilde. He was forced to save face and separate from Minna. They promptly left Asyl. In later years they reconciled temporarily, but by 1862 the marriage was over and they saw each other for the last time. Wagner’s relationship with Mathilde strained, though they remained friends in the ensuing years.

In his writings Richard suggest that Minna’s reaction was prompted by the assortment of physical and emotional conditions that afflicted her (many of which seem to stem from his chauvinism). He also felt that she should have appreciated Mathilde’s role as his muse, for she was feeding his creativity. Richard’s own family stood by Minna during this conflict. His sister Cläre Wolfram wrote to Minna “he is treating you badly and heartlessly in every respect...I don’t blame you if you are deeply indignant at him...”²⁸ One letter from Minna to an anonymous friend suggests that she was most irked by Wagner’s complete lack of discretion with Mathilde. She suggests that if her “ridiculously vain husband ought to have concealed everything” she would have been less bothered, since “husbands so frequently have liaisons...”²⁹ The marriage between Minna and Wagner had been doomed from the beginning, but it took 26 years for them to push past each other and live independently.

“Wesendonck Lieder” are Wagner’s musical setting of five poems by Mathilde, “Der Engel,” “Stehe still!,” “Im Treibhaus,” “Schmerzen” and “Träume.” He composed the songs while living at Asyl during the winter of 1857-1858, and the cycle was intended for Mathilde to play. Wagner orchestrated one of the songs, “Träume,” and performed it for Mathilde on her birthday in 1857 with local string players. The remaining songs were later orchestrated by Felix Mottl (1856-1911) and Hanz Werner Henze (1926-2012). “Wesendonck Lieder” was the only song cycle that Wagner composed during what is considered his “mature period.”³⁰ Schott published the set in 1862 with a different ordering than is common in performance today: “Der Engel,” “Träume,” “Schmerzen,” “Stehe still!,” and “Im Treibhaus.” The publishing house asked Wagner to drop the original title of “Five Dilettante Poems”—apparently Wagner wanted to conceal the fact that the texts were by Mathilde.³¹ Ironically, “Wesendonck Lieder” connect to the next great romantic scandal of Wagner’s epic biography, his marriage to Cosima von Bülow (née Liszt). Without getting into the details of the now infamous tryst, Cosima’s first husband, conductor and pianist Hans von Bülow (1830-1894), premiered “Wesendonck Lieder” with soprano Emilie Genast (1833-1905) on July 30, 1862 at the Villa Schott (Laubenheim bei Mainz).³²

The most significant musical legacy of “Wesendonck Lieder” is its connection to *Tristan und Isolde*. Wagner began to develop the opera during his stint at Asyl, while the romance with Mathilde was at the forefront of his consciousness. It is widely agreed that their relationship

27 Ibid., 371.

28 Ibid., 372.

29 Ibid., 376.

30 Ulrich Müller and Peter Wapnewski, eds., *Wagner Handbook*, transl. John Deathridge (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 67 & 457.

31 Ibid., 458.

32 John Deathridge, et al., *Wagner Werk-Verzeichnis (WWV)* (Mainz: Scott, 1985), 448.

influenced the romantic themes found in *Tristan*. Some of the music from “Wesendonck Lieder” made its way into the opera. Wagner specifically identified “Träume” and “Im Treibhaus” as studies for *Tristan*.³³ The first full draft of Act I of *Tristan* was completed between October 1–December 31, 1857, while Wagner composed “Der Engel” (November 30, 1857), “Träume” (December 4, 1857), and “Schmerzen” (December 17, 1857).³⁴ The remaining songs were composed in the winter and spring of 1858, while the final score of Act I of *Tristan* was completed on April 3, 1858, just three days prior to the brouhaha among the members of Wagner’s love-triangle. The editors of the *Wagner Handbook* consider *Tristan* to be the “artistic confession”³⁵ of Wagner’s love for Mathilde, a reading that adopts the belief that their relationship was not physical. Wagner’s outlet for his passion and fervor for Mathilde was his music.

Mathilde’s poetry questions the existence of different states of being, including private vs. public, heaven and earth, sad and happy, as well as notions of time and presence. If so desired, it is possible to read the text as a commentary on the relationship between Mathilde and Wagner, as they struggled to embrace their love in a manner that was appropriate given that they were both married. “Der Engel” explores the idea of angels and the deliverance that they may provide from distress or sorrow. Wesendonck’s text juxtaposes the idea of pain and difficulty on earth (“Erden”) with peace and salvation in heaven (“Himmel”). It begins with a gentle statement of G major that indicates nostalgia for the singer’s youth, when they heard and believed “tales of angels who trade the heaven’s blissful sublimity for the earth’s sunshine.” The second section of the song shifts harmonically by outlining chords related to the G major scale. Wagner focuses his word-painting on ideas that relate to angels providing salvation and heaven. The voice flows into the higher tessitura to animate these key words and phrases, sometimes descending gradually and sometimes pausing. The song closes with a solo piano phrase similar to the opening’s rocking outlines of the G-major tonic key that suggest calm.

“Stehe still!” is a plea for the “Rushing, roaring wheel of time” to stop and allow the protagonist to remain still in mind and spirit. The singer protests the inevitable emotional transformations that come with the progression of life and time. The propulsion of the wheel is indicated by a scalar sixteenth-note pattern that is offset by chordal statements on the strong beats of the duple pulse. The song begins in a dark C minor that is declarative, commanding time to “cease” and “give but one moment of peace!” The rhythmic pace relents, though repeated eighth notes remain to indicate the passing of time, enhancing the gradual harmonic transformation. The text reveals that the “joy” the singer wishes to experience is love, the all-consuming feeling that transpires “When eye gazes blissfully into eye, [and] soul drowns in soul.” C major emerges after the tempo has slowed. The poem claims to have solved the riddle of “divine nature,” that love is the only way to stop time, in that true love can provide an escape from reality and the challenges of the human condition.

During “Im Treibhaus” the singer contemplates the cycle of life, as symbolized by plants. Wagner creates a musical atmosphere that is sentimental but feels hollow and tragic. The song is marked *Langsam und schwer* (slow and heavy). Wagner uses diminuendi and crescendi carefully to symbolize the floating quality of leaves and branches moving in slow-motion. The lamentations of “children of distant lands” are heard in the gripping piano introduction and the singing of the first stanza. The “incline” of the branches and “tracing [of] signs in the air” occur silently,

33 William Ashton Ellis, ed., *Richard Wagner to Mathilde Wesendonck* (Boston: Milford House, 1971), 17.
34 From a note by Mathilde Wesendonck, December 1857, in William Ashton Ellis, 16.
35 Müller & Wapnewski, 457.

representing an internal and solitary suffering. The character intensifies with the third stanza, as "longing" and "desire" try to grab at emptiness. Wesendonck suggests that this is "self-deception," an attempt to shirk destiny and that "fearful void." A simpler, transformed swelling motive emerges as the sun, a key textual image throughout the song cycle, and recedes into the evening. Those who suffer are able to wrap themselves "in the dark mantle of silence." The "anxious rustling" of the original swell motive returns. Tears, symbolized by "heavy rain drops" forming and falling, reveal a physical manifestation of the pain that accompanies solitude. Darkness is the result of the sun resigning itself for the day, imagery that Mathilde explores in the text. She compares the state of happiness to the presence of light and sorrow to night's emptiness and silence.

The imagery of tears intensifies in "Schmerzen." The end of the day is described as the sun's "lovely eyes" crying red tears and being "overtaken by [its] early death." The difference in this song is that the sun returns, defeating the "glory of the dark world" and providing nourishing illumination "like a proud and conquering hero!" Though the shortest song of the cycle, "Schmerzen" marks a key juncture—it stands as the point of rejuvenation and rebirth. The speaker comes to the realization that life, sorrow and joy are all part of a cycle. Happiness cannot be known or enjoyed without the experience of pain, which is guaranteed to return. Time is again personified by repeated notes in the piano accompaniment, however the voice is so powerful in its expression of triumph that time passes almost without notice. Wagner's harmonic development straddles the fine line between C minor (representing sadness) and C major (joy and glory). Ultimately C major wins, though only in the closing phrase of the song.

"Say, what wondrous dreams hold my soul captive, and have not, like bubbles, disappeared into darkest night?" Thus opens the closing song, "Träume." Wesendonck's journey through the shadows of darkness and glimpses of joy under the sun's warmth has led to the realization that the one constant in all moments of the cycle of life is the presence of dreams. Dreams transform and "penetrate" the soul "like glorious rays" from the sun. They are present at all times of the day, in consciousness and in sleep. Though time continues to elapse, with the repeated chord motive, it is no longer viewed negatively. This poem hearkens back to "Schmerzen" in its recognition of the different stages of the human experience that repeat cyclically. Sorrow, redemption and love occur in different forms. Those conditions are transformative, but do not completely alter any person's fundamental truth—his or her identity.

*Nicholas Alexander Brown
Music Specialist
Library of Congress, Music Division*



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Texts & Translations

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

"Ch'io mi scordi di te?—Non temer, amato bene" KV 505

Author of text unknown

English Translation by Mildred Gauntlett (publ. c.1886 by Boosey & Hawkes, London)

Recitativo

Ch'io mi scordi di te?
Che a lui mi doni puoi consigliarmi?
E puoi voler che in vita... Ah no.
Sarebbe il viver mio di more assai peggior.
Venga la morte, intrepida l'attendo.
Ma, ch'io possa struggermi ad altra face,
ad altr' oggetto donar gl'affetti miei,
come tentarlo? come tentarlo?
Ah! di dolor, ah! di dolor morrei.

Rondo

Non temer, amato bene,
per te sempre, sempre il cor sarà.
Più non reggo a tante pene,
l'alma mia mancando va, mancando va.
Tu sospiri? o duol funesto!
Pensa almen, pensa almen,
che istante è questo!
Non mi posso, oh Dio! spiegar, oh Dio!
spiegar, no,
ah no! ah non mi posso, oh Dio! spiegar.
Non temer, amato bene,
per te sempre, sempre il cor sarà.
Stelle barbare, stelle spietate!
perchè mai tanto rigor? tanto rigor?

Alme belle, che vedete
le mie pene in tal momento,
dite voi, s'egual tormeto
può soffrir un fido cor?
Stelle barbare, stelle spietate!
perchè mai tanto rigor? perché?

Non temer, amato bene,
per te sempre, sempre il cor sarà.
Più non reggo a tante pene,
l'alma mia mancando va, mancando va.
Tu sospiri? o duol funesto!

Recitative

Am I e'en thus forgot?
by him to whom I gave many counsels?
what wish have I for living? Ah no.
I'd rather feel the anguish of death than of
such life.
Death, thou art welcome, calmly I will await
thee!
Yet, how could I live thus to face things
unknown,
new days of torment, and give my heart's
affections
unto derision, unto derision?
Ah then of grief, ah then of grief I perish!

Rondo

Fear thou not, O best beloved,
faithful always, always is this heart.
Crush'd by sorrow, in vain resisted,
still my soul with thee has part.
When thou sighest, 'tis grief heartrending!
think of this day, think of this day,
of woe unending!
Words can never, oh can never paint my
feelings,
ah no, ah no, can never all my sorrow tell.
Fear thou not, O best beloved,
faithful always, always is my heart.
Fatal destiny, stars, ah how cruel!
thus to play so dark a part? so dark a part?

Pow'rs above me, now beholding
all the griefs my soul tormenting,
will ye not, your wrath relenting,
soothe this suff'ring faithful heart?
Fatal destiny! stars, ah, how cruel!
thus to play so dark a part! ah why? ah why?

Fear thou not, O best beloved,
faithful always, always is this heart.
Crush'd by sorrow, in vain resisted,
still my soul with thee has part.
When thou sighest, 'tis grief heartrending!

che istante è questo!
Stelle barbare, stelle spietate!
perchè mai tanto rigoro? ah perchè?

Ah! Alme belle, che vedete
le mie pene in tal momento,
dite voi, s'egual tormento
può soffrir un fido cor?

JOHANNES BRAHMS

"Ständchen" from *Fünf Lieder*, op. 106, no. 1 (1888)

Text by Franz Kugler (1808-1858)

English Translation by Nicholas Alexander Brown

"Ständchen"

Der Mond steht über dem Berge,
So recht für verliebte Leut';
Im Garten rieselt ein Brunnen,
Sonst Stille weit und breit.

Neben der Mauer im Schatten,
Da stehn der Studenten drei,
Mit Flöt' und Geig' und Zither,
Und singen und spielen dabei.

Die Klänge schleichen der Schönsten
Sacht in den Traum hinein,
sie schaut den blonden Geliebten
und lispelt: "Vergiß nicht mein!"

JOHANNES BRAHMS

"Botschaft" from *Fünf Lieder*, op. 47, no 1(c.1868)

Text by Georg Friedrich Daumer (1800-1875)

English Translation by Nicholas Alexander Brown

"Botschaft"

Wehe, Lüftchen, lind und lieblich
Um die Wange der Geliebten,
Spiele zart in ihrer Locke,
Eile nicht hinweg zu flieh!

Tut sie dann vielleicht die Frage,
Wie es um mich Armen stehe,
Sprich: "Unendlich war sein Wehe,
Höchst bedenklich seine Lage;

Aber jetzt kann er hoffen
Wieder herrlich aufzuleben,
Denn du, Holde,
Denkst an ihn."

of woe unending!
Fatal destiny! stars, ah, how cruel!
thus to play so dark a part! ah why?

Ah! Pow'rs above me, now beholding
all the griefs my soul tormenting,
will ye not, your wrath relenting,
soothe this suff'ring faithful heart?

"Serenade"

The moon stands still above the mountains,
So right for peoples' love;
A fountain trickles in the garden,
Otherwise, silence is wide and far.

In the shade beside the wall,
as three students stand,
With flute and fiddle and zither,
there sing and play.

The sweetest sounds sneak
gently into the dream,
the beloved blonde looks
and whispers: "Do not forget mine!"

"Message"

Alas, breeze, lovely and gently
to the cheek of the beloved,
plays gently in her locks,
Do not rush to flee away!

Then she perhaps questioned
how it was to poor me to stand,
[and] spoke: "Infinite was his woe,
his highly questionable location;

But now he can hope
to again revive gloriously,
for you, sweetly,
think of him."

JOHANNES BRAHMS

"Von ewiger Liebe" from *Vier Gesänge*, op. 43, no. 1 (1864)

Traditional Wendish Text

German Translation by August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben (1798-1874)

English Translation by Nicholas Alexander Brown

"Von ewiger Liebe"

Dunkel, wie dunkel in Wald und in Feld!
Abend schon ist es, nun schweiget die Welt.
Nirgend noch Licht und nirgend noch
Rauch,

Ja, und die Lerche sie schweiget nun auch.
Kommt aus dem Dorfe der Bursche heraus,
Gibt das Geleit der Geliebten nach Haus,
Führt sie am Weidengebüsche vorbei,
Redet so viel und so mancherlei:
"Leidest du Schmach und betrübest du dich,
Leidest du Schmach von andern um mich,
Werde die Liebe getrennt so geschwind,
Schnell, wie wir früher vereinigt sind.
Scheide mit Regen und scheide mit Wind,
Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind."

Spricht das Mägdelein, Mägdelein spricht:
"Unsere Liebe sie trennet sich nicht!
Fest ist der Stahl und das Eisen gar sehr,
Unsere Liebe ist fester noch mehr.

Eisen und Stahl, man schmiedet sie um,
Unsere Liebe, wer wandelt sie um?
Eisen und Stahl, sie können zergehn,
Unsere Liebe muß ewig bestehn!"

"From Everlasting Love"

Darkness, as darkness in the woods and field!
It is already evening, now the world is silent.
Nowhere a light and nowhere smoke,

yes, and the lark is now silent.
The boy comes out of the village,
he is the escort to the beloved house,
leads past the willows,
he talks so much of many things:
"Do you suffer reproach and grieve,
do I disgrace you around others,
the love will so quickly dissipate,
quickly, as how we once united.
Dissolved with rain and dissolved with wind,
quickly, as how we once united."

The maiden speaks, the maiden says:
"Our love, it doesn't end!
it is fixed as steel and iron,
our love is even stronger.

Iron and steel may be forged together,
our love, who transforms it?
iron and steel may melt,
our love must last forever!"

JOHANNES BRAHMS

"Vergebliches Ständchen" from *Romanzen und Lieder*, op. 84, no 4 (c.1882)

Traditional Text, Lower-Rhine Region

English Translation by Nicholas Alexander Brown

"Vergebliches Ständchen"

(Er) Guten Abend, mein Schatz,
guten Abend, mein Kind!
Ich komm' aus Lieb' zu dir,
Ach, mach' mir auf die Tür,
mach' mir auf die Tür!

(Sie) Meine Tür ist verschlossen,
Ich laß dich nicht ein;
Mutter, die rät' mir klug,
Wär'st du herein mit Fug,
Wär's mit mir vorbei!

"Hopeless Serenade"

(Boy) Good evening, my treasure,
good evening, my child
I come out of love for you,
Oh, carry me to the door,
carry me to the door!

(Girl) My door is closed,
I will not let you in;
Mother has advised me so,
If you were inside,
It would be over for me!

(Er) So kalt ist die Nacht,
so eisig der Wind,
Daß mir das Herz erfriert,
Mein' Lieb' erlöschen wird;
Öffne mir, mein Kind!

(Boy) The night is so cold,
the wind is so icy,
that it freezes my heart,
My love is extinguished;
Open for me, my child!

(Sie) Löschet dein' Lieb';
lass' sie löschen nur!
Löschet sie immerzu,
Geh' heim zu Bett, zur Ruh'!
Gute Nacht, mein Knab'!

(Girl) Do away with your love;
let it just go!
Do away with it always,
I am going to bed, to rest!
Good night, my lad!

RICHARD WAGNER

Fünf Gedichte für eine Frauenstimme mit Pianoforte-Begleitung, WWV 91a
("Wesendonck Lieder")

Text by Mathilde Wesendonck (1828-1902)

English Translation by D. Kern Holoman (b.1947) (*used with permission*)

"Der Engel"

In der Kindheit frühen Tagen
Hört ich oft von Engeln sagen,
Die des Himmels hehre Wonne
Tauschen mit der Erdensonne,

"The Angel"

In my childhood's early days
oft I heard tales of angels
who trade heaven's blissful sublimity
for the earth's sunshine;

Daß, wo bang ein Herz in Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt verborgen,
Daß, wo still es will verbluten,
Und vergehn in Tränenfluten,

heard that, when a heart in sorrow
hides its grief from the world,
that it bleeds in silence, and
dissolves in tears,

Daß, wo brünstig sein Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung fleht,
Da der Engel nieder schwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel hebt.

offers fervent prayers
for deliverance:
then the angel flies down
and bears it gently to heaven.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, ferne jedem Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

Yes, an angel came down to me also
and on shining wings
bears my spirit from all pains
heavenwards.

"Stehe still!"

Sausendes, brausendes Rad der Zeit,
Messer du der Ewigkeit;
Leuchtende Sphären im weiten All,
Die ihr umringt der Weltenball;
Urewige Schöpfung, halte doch ein,
Genug des Werdens, laß mich sein!

"Stand Still!"

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

Halte an dich, zeugene Kraft,
Urgedanke, der ewig schafft!
Hemmet den Atem, stilltet den Drang,

Cease, generative powers,
primal thought, that endlessly creates;
stop every breath,

Schweigt nur eine Sekunde lang!

Schwellende Pulse, fesselt den Schlag;
Ende, des Wollens ew'ger Tag!

Daß in selig süßem Vergessen
Ich mög' alle Wonne ermessen!

Wenn Auge in Auge wonnig trinken,
Sehe ganz in Seile versinken;
Wesen in Wesen sich wiederfindet,
Und alles Hoffens Ende sich kündigt,
Die Lippe verstummt in staunendem
Schweigen,

Keinen Wunsch mehr will das Innre zeugen:
Erkennt der Mensch des Ew'gen Spur,
Und löst dein Rätsel, heil'ge Natur!

"Im Treibhaus"

Hochgewölbte Blätterkronen,
Baldachine von Smaragd,
Kinder ihr aus fernen Zonen,
Saget mir, warum ihr klagt?

Schweigend neiget ihr die Zweige,
Malet Zeichen in die Luft,
Unde der Leiden stummer Zeuge
Steiget aufwärts, süßer Duft.

Weit in sehndem Verlangen
Breitet ihr die Arme aus
Und umschlinget wahnbefangen
Öder Leere nicht'gen Graus.

Wohl ich weiß es, arme Pflanze:
Ein Geschicke teilen wir,
Ob umstrahlt von Licht und Glanze,
Unsre Heimat is nicht hier!

Und wie froh die Sonne scheidet
Von des Tages leerem Schein,
Hullet der, der wahrhaft leidet,
Sich in Schweigens Dunkel ein.

Stille wird's ein säuselnd Weben
Fullet bang den dunklen Raum:
Schwere Tropfen seh' ich schweben
An der Blätter grunem Saum.

still every urge, give but one moment of
peace!

Swelling pulses, restrain your beating;
end, eternal day of the will!

So that in sweet forgetfulness
I may taste the full measure of my joy!

When eye gazes blissfully into eye,
soul drowns in soul;
being finds itself in being,
and the goal of all hopes is near;
when lips are mute in silent amazement

and the soul has no further wish:
man knows eternity's footprint
and solves your riddle, divine nature!

"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,
there rises a sweet perfume.

Wide in longing and desire
you spread your arms out
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
day's empty brightness,
so he who truly suffers
wraps himself in the dark mantle of silence.

It grows quiet, an anxious rustling
fills the dark room;
I see the heavy drops hanging
from the leaves' green edges.

"Schmerzen"

Sonne, weinest jeden Abend
Dir die Schönen Augen rot,
Wenn im Meeresspiegel badend
Dich erreicht der frühe Tod;

Doch erstehst in alter Pracht,
Glorie der düstren Welt,
Du am Morgen, neu erwacht,
Wie ein stolzer Siegesheld!

Ach, wie sollte ich da klagen,
Wie, mein Herz, so schwer dich sehn,
Muß die Sonne selbst verzagen,
Muß die Sonne untergehn?
Und gebietet Tod nur Leben,
Geben Schmerzen Wonnen nur:
O wie dank'ich daß gegeben
Solche Schmerzen mir Natur.

"Träume"

Sag', welch' wunderbare Träume
Halten meinen Sinn umfängen,
Daß sie nicht wie leere Schäume
Sind in ödes Nichts vergangen?

Träume, die in jeder Stunde,
Jedem Tage schöner blühen
Und mit ihrer Himmelskunde
Selig durchs Gemüte ziehn?

Träume, die wie hehere Strahlen
In die Seele sich versenken
Dort ein ewig Bild zu malen;
Allvergessen, Eingedenken!

Träume, wie wenn Frühlingssonne
Aus dem Schnee die Blüten küßt,
Daß zu nie geahnter Wonne
Sie der neue Tage begrüßt,

Daß sie wachsen, daß sie blühen,
Träumend spenden ihren Duft,
Sanft an deiner Brust verglühen
Und dann sinken in die Gruft.

"Sorrows"

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 former splendor,
the glory 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,
if the sun itself must go down?
And, if only death gives birth to life,
if only torment brings bliss:
then how thankful I am that nature
has given me such sorrows.

"Dreams"

Say, what wondrous dreams
hold my soul captive,
and have not, like bubbles,
disappeared into darkest night?

Dreams, which in every hour
of every day beautifully bloom
and with their heavenly imitations
blissfully float through my mind?

Dreams, that like glorious rays
penetrate the soul,
there to leave an everlasting impression:
all-forgetting, single-minded!

Dreams, as when the spring sun
kisses blossoms from the snow,
that to undreamed-of bliss
the new day can greet them,

So they grow, so they flower,
dreamily casting their scent,
softly fade upon your breast,
and then sink into their grave.

D. Kern Holoman is Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, Davis, and conductor emeritus of the UC Davis Symphony Orchestra. He is the author of *Charles Munch*, *Writing About Music*, *Evenings with the Orchestra*, *Berlioz*, and the popular textbook *Masterworks*.

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About the Artists

Alex Ross has been the music critic of *The New Yorker* since 1996. His first book, *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, won a National Book Critics Circle Award and *The Guardian* First Book Award, and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. He has also published an essay collection, *Listen to This*. Ross has received an Arts and Letters Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Belmont Prize in Germany, and a MacArthur Fellowship. A native of Washington, DC, he lives in Manhattan and is married to filmmaker Jonathan Lisecki.

GRAMMY-nominated mezzo-soprano **Margaret Lattimore** has gained acclaim in recent seasons for her versatility in performing the works of Handel, Rossini, and Mozart alongside Mahler, Verdi, and Wagner. She returns to the Metropolitan Opera for the 2013-14 season as the Countess in *Andrea Chénier*, the Third Lady in *The Magic Flute*, and for the world premiere of Nico Muhly's *Two Boys*. She appears in recital at the Library of Congress performing Wagner's "Wesendonck Lieder" in honor of the composer's bicentennial; with The Bach Festival Society of Winter Park, singing Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* Suite; and with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra performing Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 and Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody*.

After winning the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions at the age of 24, Lattimore became a member of the Metropolitan Opera Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. Later that year she made her Met debut as Dorotea in *Stiffelio*. Subsequent engagements at the Met included Marcellina in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, Jordan Baker in *The Great Gatsby*, and Meg Page in *Falstaff*. Other recent opera appearances include the world premiere of Nico Muhly's *Dark Sisters* with Opera Philadelphia and Gotham Chamber Opera, as well as performances with New York City Opera, Washington National Opera, Dallas Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, Florida Grand Opera, Central City Opera, San Diego Opera and Boston Lyric Opera, among others.

On the concert stage Lattimore has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Orchestra of St. Luke's, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Houston Symphony, and the Minnesota Orchestra. Recent concert performances include Verdi's Requiem at Lincoln Center, The Bach Festival Society of Winter Park, the Houston Symphony Orchestra and Spoleto Festival U.S.A.; Brahms' *Alto Rhapsody* and Beethoven's Symphony no. 9 with the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional in Mexico City; Mozart's Requiem with the Louisiana Symphony; Handel's *Berenice* with the American Symphony at Carnegie Hall; *Alto Rhapsody* and Bruckner's *Te Deum* with the Spoleto Festival U.S.A.; and Lawrence Siegel's *Kaddish* with the Houston Symphony.

Lattimore is a graduate of the Crane School of Music at the State University of New York at Potsdam, where she began vocal studies with Patricia Misslin. She resides with her husband and young son in New York.



Pianist **Daniel Hobbs** is based in New York City and has performed as a collaborative artist in such diverse venues as Trinity Church, the New York Public Library, and Merkin Concert Hall in New York City, the National Chiang Kai-Shek Culture Center in Taipei, Taiwan, the Tanglewood Music Center (Lenox, MA), and the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. He is especially in demand as a partner in the vocal and instrumental repertory and regularly provides musical preparation and diction coaching for such prestigious ensembles as the American Symphony Orchestra. Originally from Nebraska, Hobbs studied piano and French at Illinois Wesleyan University. He received a Master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music.

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