

30 March 2025

# SCHUBERT'S SWAN SONGS:

TRIFONOV & GOERNE IN RECITAL



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# 2025 CONCERT SEASON

## INTERNATIONAL PIANISTS IN RECITAL

Sunday 30 March, 2pm

City Recital Hall,

Angel Place

# SCHUBERT'S SWAN SONGS: TRIFONOV & GOERNE IN RECITAL

**DANIIL TRIFONOV** piano

**MATTHIAS GOERNE** baritone

**PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY** (1840–1893)

**Children's Album, Op.39** (1878)

1. *Morning Prayer*
2. *Winter Morning*
3. *Playing Hobby-Horses*
4. *Mama*
5. *March of the Wooden Soldiers*
6. *The Sick Doll*
7. *The Doll's Funeral*
8. *Waltz*
9. *The New Doll*
10. *Mazurka*
11. *Russian Song*
12. *The Accordion Player*
13. *Kamarinskaya*
14. *Polka*
15. *Italian Song*
16. *Old French Song*
17. *German Song*
18. *Neapolitan Song*
19. *Nanny's Story*
20. *The Old Witch*
21. *Sweet Dreams*
22. *Lark Song*
23. *The Organ-Grinder Sings*
24. *In Church*

INTERVAL

**FRANZ SCHUBERT** (1797–1828)

**Schwanengesang, D957** (1828)

1. *Liebesbotschaft* (Message of love)
2. *Kriegers Ahnung* (Soldier's foreboding)
3. *Frühlingssehnsucht* (Longing in spring)
4. *Ständchen* (Serenade)
5. *Aufenthalt* (Resting place)

**Herbst (Autumn), D945** (1827)

**Schwanengesang, D957**

6. *In der Ferne* (In the distance)
7. *Abschied* (Farewell)
8. *Der Atlas*
9. *Ihr Bild* (Her portrait)
10. *Das Fischermädchen* (The fisher-maiden)
11. *Die Stadt* (The town)
12. *Am Meer* (By the sea)
13. *Der Doppelgänger* (The ghostly double)
14. *Die Taubenpost, D965a* (The pigeon post)

## Pre-concert talk

By Francis Greep in  
the Function Room  
Level 1 at 1.15pm

## Estimated durations

Tchaikovsky – 30 minutes  
Interval – 20 minutes  
Schwanengesang – 60 minutes

The concert will run for  
approximately two hours

## Cover image

Daniil Trifonov  
Photo by Caitlin Ochs

Daniil Trifonov's performances  
with the Sydney Symphony  
Orchestra have been made  
possible with support from the  
Berg Family Foundation

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Principal Partner





Photo by Darius Acosta

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### DANIIL TRIFONOV piano

Grammy Award-winning pianist Daniil Trifonov (dan-EEL TREE-fon-ov) has made a spectacular ascent of the classical music world, as a solo artist, champion of the concerto repertoire, chamber and vocal collaborator, and composer. Combining consummate technique with rare sensitivity and depth, his performances are a perpetual source of awe. ‘He has everything and more, ... tenderness and also the demonic element. I never heard anything like that,’ marveled pianist Martha Argerich. With *Transcendental*, the Liszt collection that marked his third title as an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon artist, Trifonov won the Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Solo Album of 2018. Named *Gramophone’s* 2016 Artist of the Year and *Musical America’s* 2019 Artist of the Year, he was made a Chevalier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 2021. As *The Times* of London notes, he is ‘without question the most astounding pianist of our age.’

Trifonov undertakes season-long artistic residencies with both the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Czech Philharmonic in 2024-25, first at season-opening concerts in Prague and then on tour in Toronto and at New York’s Carnegie Hall. Trifonov also opens the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra’s season with Mozart’s 25th Piano Concerto under Andris Nelsons; performs Prokofiev’s Second with the San Francisco Symphony and Esa-Pekka Salonen; reprises Dvořák’s concerto for a European tour with Jakub Hrůša and the Bamberg Symphony; plays Ravel’s G major Concerto with Hamburg’s NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra and Alan Gilbert; and joins Rafael Payare and the Montreal Symphony for concertos by Schumann and Beethoven on a major European tour of London, Amsterdam, Luxembourg, Paris, Hamburg, Berlin, Munich, and Vienna. In recital, Trifonov appears twice more at Carnegie Hall, first on a solo tour that also takes in Chicago and Philadelphia, and then with violinist Leonidas Kavakos, with whom he also appears in Chicago, Boston, Kansas City, and Washington, DC. Fall 2024 brings the release of *My American Story*, the pianist’s new Deutsche Grammophon

double album, which pairs solo pieces with concertos by Gershwin and Mason Bates. Bates’s concerto is dedicated to Trifonov and both orchestral works were captured live with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Philadelphia Orchestra, who previously partnered with the pianist on his award-winning *Destination Rachmaninov* series.

Since making solo recital debuts at Carnegie Hall, London’s Wigmore Hall, Vienna’s Musikverein, Japan’s Suntory Hall, and Paris’s Salle Pleyel in 2012-13, Trifonov has given solo recitals at venues including the Kennedy Center in Washington DC; Boston’s Celebrity Series; London’s Barbican, Royal Festival, and Queen Elizabeth Halls; Amsterdam’s Concertgebouw (Master Piano Series); Berlin’s Philharmonie; Munich’s Herkulesaal; Bavaria’s Schloss Elmau; Zurich’s Tonhalle; the Lucerne Piano Festival; the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels; the Théâtre des Champs Élysées and Auditorium du Louvre in Paris; Barcelona’s Palau de la Música; Tokyo’s Opera City; the Seoul Arts Center; and Melbourne’s Recital Centre.

It was during the 2010-11 season that Trifonov won medals at three of the music world’s most prestigious competitions, taking Third Prize in Warsaw’s Chopin Competition, First Prize in Tel Aviv’s Rubinstein Competition, and both First Prize and Grand Prix – an additional honor bestowed on the best overall competitor in any category – in Moscow’s Tchaikovsky Competition. In 2013 he was awarded the prestigious Franco Abbiati Prize for Best Instrumental Soloist by Italy’s foremost music critics.

Born in Nizhny Novgorod in 1991, Trifonov began his musical training at the age of five, and went on to attend Moscow’s Gnessin School of Music as a student of Tatiana Zelikman, before pursuing his piano studies with Sergei Babayan at the Cleveland Institute of Music. He has also studied composition, and continues to write for piano, chamber ensemble, and orchestra. When he premiered his own Piano Concerto, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* marveled: ‘Even having seen it, one cannot quite believe it. Such is the artistry of pianist-composer Daniil Trifonov.’



Photo by Marie Staggat

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **MATTHIAS GOERNE** baritone

Celebrated around the globe for his opera and concert performances, German baritone Matthias Goerne is a frequent guest with leading orchestras and renowned festivals and concert halls.

Matthias Goerne has appeared on the world's principal opera stages, including the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; Teatro Real in Madrid; Paris National Opera; Bayerische Staatsoper Munich, and the Vienna State Opera. His carefully chosen roles range from Amfortas, Marke, Wolfram, Wotan, Orest, and Jochanaan to the title roles in Béla Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* and Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*.

Goerne's artistry has been documented on numerous recordings, many of which have received rave reviews and prestigious awards, including five Grammy nominations, an ICMA award, a *Gramophone Award*, the *BBC Music Magazine Vocal Award* 2017, Diapason d'or arte and the ECHO Klassik 2017 in the category Singer of the Year. In 2001, he was appointed an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music in London. He has released four albums with Deutsche Grammophon: Beethoven Songs with Jan Lisiecki; a collection of Wagner, Strauss and Pfitzner Songs with Seong-Jin Cho; an album of Schumann and Brahms Songs with Daniil Trifonov which was awarded Vocal Recording of the Year by *Limelight*; and *Schubert Revisited*, the latest album with Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen released in 2023. He is featured as Wotan on the Naxos release of the entire *Ring Cycle* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic and conductor Jaap van Zweden.

During the 2023/24 season, Goerne embarked on an extensive recital and orchestral tour of China and has performed in a series of recitals with Evgeny Kissin in Europe and the United States. He sang the world premiere of Jörg Widmann's *Schumannliebe* at the Casa da Musica in Porto and the Cologne Philharmonie. In addition to a series of concerts with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, he sang Britten's *War Requiem* on tour in Germany with the SWR Symphony Orchestra. During the summer festival season, Goerne began a Schubert lied cycle at Lanaudière Festival and was the soloist with the OSM Montreal. He also returned to the Ravinia Festival and to Wigmore Hall, where he sang two recitals with different programs. Goerne also appeared at the Salzburg Festival, where he gave a lieder recital with Markus Hinterhäuser and performed Widmann's *Schumannliebe* with the Camerata Salzburg.

In the 2024/25 season, his schedule includes tours in Asia with Maria João Pires and in Australia with Daniil Trifonov. Goerne will perform *Bluebeard* with Mikko Franck and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France and will also appear at the Musikverein in Vienna for the Christmas concert and perform John Adams' *The Wound Dresser* with Marin Alsop. At the 2025 Mahler Festival, he will be a guest at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam with the NHK Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fabio Luisi. He will sing Frank Martin's *Jedermann Monologue* with the orchestra of the Bavarian State Opera under the baton of Vladimir Jurowski, and he will also appear in Israel with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Lahav Shani. At the Hamburg International Music Festival, he will perform in *Wozzeck* with Alan Gilbert and the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra.

Born in Weimar, he studied with Hans-Joachim Beyer, Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## WHO WAS PETER ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY?

Tchaikovsky was born in Votkinsk, in the Urals, where his father was a mining engineer. His musical education began with the orchestrion, a mechanical contraption that played popular operatic excerpts. He also began piano lessons in 1845. The family moved to St Petersburg in 1852, where Tchaikovsky attended the School of Jurisprudence. On graduating in 1859 he was employed at the Ministry of Justice, but attended classes run by the Russian Musical Society. Under the leadership of Anton Rubinstein, the Society founded the St Petersburg Conservatory in 1862, and Tchaikovsky enrolled in its first class, with Rubinstein as his composition teacher. After three years there, Tchaikovsky was invited by Rubinstein's equally illustrious brother, Nikolai, to teach harmony for the Moscow branch of the Russian Musical Society, which would soon become the Moscow Conservatory.

Around 1868 he became, briefly, quite friendly with the group of composers known as the *Kuchka* ('The Five' or 'Mighty Handful'), led by Mily Balakirev. Balakirev believed that Russian composers should create distinctly Russian music, unpolluted by the techniques of Western composition. But although Tchaikovsky had used some traditional melodies, he was an internationalist at heart, and by 1877 he had broken with the Five.

Despite being homosexual, Tchaikovsky became engaged to the Belgian soprano Désirée Artôt in 1868. It didn't last.



Tchaikovsky c. 1880

Tchaikovsky saw no reason not to marry, and in 1877 the hour produced the woman, in the form of Antonina Milyukova, from whom Tchaikovsky received a series of love letters. It didn't last either, with Tchaikovsky abandoning Antonina for his sister's estate at Kamenka in Ukraine. He did at least provide for her in her old age.

A year before the marriage, Tchaikovsky had received a letter from another woman, Nadezhda von Meck, who was a huge fan, but expressly did not want to meet Tchaikovsky. She did, however, want to use some of the considerable wealth her railway-tycoon husband had left her to commission new music, and for fourteen years supported Tchaikovsky so that he could give up teaching and concentrate on composition. He and Meck corresponded frequently, offering us an insight into Tchaikovsky's aesthetics and methods.

As symphonist, and great composer for ballet, Tchaikovsky was fêted as far afield as the United States and Britain. In November 1893, days after conducting the premiere of his Sixth Symphony in St Petersburg, he became ill and was treated for cholera which was epidemic in the city. The treatment was successful, but Tchaikovsky died of complications. There is no evidence that he had intended suicide. His body lay in state, visited by hundreds, and the Tsar arranged a state funeral and burial.



# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## TCHAIKOVSKY AND THE PIANO

Tchaikovsky was not a 'natural' composer for the piano in the same way as, say, Schumann or Chopin – both of whom he greatly admired. But in addition to the concertos we never hear, Tchaikovsky wrote a substantive amount for solo piano from as early as 1854 (when he was a teenager) through the year of his death, 1893. But as he wrote to his patron, Nadezhda von Meck in answer to her questions about composition:

the instrumentation of a work which is completely thought out and matured is a most enjoyable task. The same does not apply to the bare sketch of a work for pianoforte or voice, or little pieces in general, which are sometimes very tiresome.

Tchaikovsky's apparent disdain for the tiresome task of writing 'little pieces' may be part of the reason for the relative neglect of such works. In general his solo piano music tends to be for private or salon use, such as his Three Pieces Op.9 which include a 'Salon Polka' and 'Salon Mazurka'. Tchaikovsky's piano writing avoids the overtly virtuosic displays which often characterise the work of pianist-composers. His best known work for solo piano (and one which has, like much of his piano music, been arranged for numerous other instruments and ensembles) is probably *The Seasons*, Op.37b written between December 1875 and November 1876 for monthly publication in the magazine *Nouvelliste*. The piano could also provide a medium for a personal expression, as in the *Six pieces on a single theme*, Op.21, where the funereal theme may be a tribute to a young friend of Tchaikovsky's, Edward Zak, who had recently died.

## ABOUT THE CHILDREN'S ALBUM

When Tchaikovsky died it would fall to his legally-trained nephew Vladimir Davidov, known to the family as Bob, to execute the composer's final wishes. In adult life Bob had become extremely close to Tchaikovsky, receiving letters that contained the composer's (sometimes unwelcome) confidences (Bob, like his uncle, was gay) and accompanying him to spas (they both at various times enjoyed poor health).

Tchaikovsky adored his sister's second son from the time of Bob's birth, and was convinced that he would be a famous musician, writer, or artist. It seems likely that he had Bob in mind when he wrote to his patron, Nadezhda von Meck, that he wanted to make 'a small contribution to the stock of children's musical literature, which is very modest... a series of little individual pieces just for children, and with an attractive title, like Schumann's'.

Like *Kinderszenen*, the *Children's Album* comprises tiny, strongly characterised pieces – this is, after all, the composer of the vibrant character dances of *The Nutcracker*. In the order of the published collection (which differs slightly from the composer's autograph) we begin and end in church starting with a simple, choral **Morning prayer**. There follows an evocation of a brisk **Winter morning**, jumping around as if to keep warm. The energy carries over into the galloping rhythms of **Playing Hobby-horses**, while **Mama** has a gentle lyrical lullaby to sing. A terse **Toy Soldiers' March** gives way to a lament for **The Sick Doll**, whose obsequies form the tongue in cheek **The Doll's Funeral**. After a **Waltz**, **The New Doll** arrives to much rejoicing. There is a characteristic **Mazurka** and a **Russian song**. A peasant Accordion Player proffers handfuls of minor seventh chords; the **Kamarinskaya** is a fold-dance (think squatting, kicking Cossacks). Five national dance-songs follow: **Polka**, **Italian Song** (based on an Italian folk tune), **Old French Song** (which Tchaikovsky re-used in *The Maid of Orléans*), **German Song**, and Neapolitan Song (which borrows a pop tune by Teodor Cottrau, *Le femmene*

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

*so nfa*, and which reappears in *The Nutcracker*). The Nanny's Story is a sprightly tale that leads to the Old Witch, who is of course Baba Yaga, who turns up in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. After story time there are **Sweet Dreams**. A new morning is announced by the **Lark Song**, and we hear an **Organ Grinder** singing as the family return to **Church**, where a choir is chanting.

When the piece was complete Tchaikovsky wrote to Bob's father saying 'tell Bobik that the music has been printed with pictures, that the music was composed by Uncle Petya, and that on it is written Dedicated to Volodya Davydov... Bobik is an inimitably delightful figure when he's playing, and he might look at the notes, and think that a whole symphony is dedicated to him.'

**Gordon Kerry © 2025**



Tchaikovsky and Bob Davidov in 1892

## ABOUT FRANZ SCHUBERT

Schubert almost too neatly fits the stereotype of the Romantic artist: phenomenally productive though poor and largely unrecognised during a life that tragically ended when he was barely 31 years old.

Unlike Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven, who made Vienna their home, Schubert was born there in 1797. The family was by no means well off, but, as his father was a schoolmaster, Schubert was well educated, especially in literature and music: he began learning keyboard at the age of five. From 1805 he sang in the choir of the local parish church in the Viennese suburb of Lichtenthal for two years; then, having been auditioned by Antonio Salieri – the Kapellmeister who didn't kill Mozart – he joined the Imperial Chapel choir in 1808, and was enrolled in the Stadtkonvikt School, where he remained until 1813. He briefly took up teaching from 1814, by which time he had already produced original music including his Fantasy for piano duet (D.1), his first song, the beginnings of an opera and his First Symphony. The next two years would see several masses, symphonies and hundreds of songs, establishing Schubert's ability to set poetry of hugely variable types and qualities. A number of works were performed in the Schubert home; what history knows as the Schubert circle, people who loved him and his music and gave him practical, moral and financial support, begins to form.

Over the next few years Schubert had some success as a composer for the stage, though his wish to create operas in German was swamped by the craze for Rossini. He continued composition of songs and dance music and more than one unfinished symphony.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC



1875 painting of Schubert by Wilhelm August Rieder (1796–1880), after Rieder's watercolour painting of 1825. Source: Wikimedia/Vienna Museum.

In 1823 Schubert began to experience the severe illness which would carry him off five years later, but work carried on unabated, and the later years are those of the pieces whose dimensions were described later by Schumann as of 'heavenly length'. Among these are the great string quartets, the string quintet, large scale piano sonatas and song cycles *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise*.

In 1827 Schubert was a torch-bearer at Beethoven's funeral. As a student of Salieri, the young Schubert had thought Beethoven's work deliberately odd and grotesque but seeing the first performance of the final version of *Fidelio* may have catalysed his conversion.

Schubert's final year saw the only known public concert of his music – a great success. He began to study advanced counterpoint toward the end of the year but his condition worsened and he died on 19 November 1828.

### GERMAN POETRY IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the late 18th century, to purify the dialect of the tribe, poets Friedrich Schiller and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) had set about classicising German verse to raise it above both the current artificial, rococo style and, by contrast, the stolid pieties of popular religious works. In 1770 Goethe had come into contact with the scholar Johann Gottfried Herder, whose extensive writings included a reappraisal of folk poetry, offering Goethe a model of clear diction, simple imagery and flexible rhythm. The renewal of interest in folk poetry also had an effect on the German Romantics, (a generation that Goethe prefigured and then outlived), who were inspired by its recurrent themes of life and love, nature, the medieval world, the supernatural and death.



Portrait of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1787) by Angelica Kauffmann (1741–1807). Source: Wikimedia/ Goethe-Nationalmuseum (Weimar).

The stage was set for the appearance of the German 'art' song or *Lied* in the works of North German composers like Johann Rudolph Zumsteeg and Carl Friedrich Zelter. Franz Schubert acknowledged his debt to these masters, but took the *Lied* to an altogether different plane.

Schubert set poetry to which he could respond in music, regardless of its literary 'quality', so the poets he chose range from great figures like Goethe to some of the more disreputable members of his social set in Vienna.

# ABOUT THE MUSIC

## ABOUT *SCHWANENGESANG*

The songs of *Schwanengesang* are not strictly a cycle, unlike *Winterreise* or *Die schöne Müllerin*, but were composed all at once (except for the final song). The title (reflecting the legend that swans only sing as death approaches) was bestowed after Schubert's death by his brother Ferdinand and publisher Tobias Haslinger, and throws into sharp relief the range of quality of texts that the composer was willing to set.

Roughly half of the songs are set to poems of Ludwig Rellstab, a middling theatre critic who is famous for two things: the seven poems that Schubert sets here (and only because Schubert set them), and for giving Beethoven's 'Moonlight' Sonata its nickname. Two years younger than Schubert, the Berlin-based Rellstab had sent poems to Beethoven in the last year of the latter's life. According to Rellstab's memoirs, Beethoven had annotated those poems which he might have set; when his death intervened, Beethoven's biographer Schindler passed them on to Schubert.



1875 painting of Schubert by Wilhelm August Rieder (1796–1880), after Rieder's watercolour painting of 1825. Source: Wikimedia/Vienna Museum.

The seven poems (here augmented by Schubert's song *Herbst*, also to a Rellstab poem) show a not hugely inventive poet snacking on the various common motifs of Romanticism.

**Liebesbotschaft** (Message of love) features a rushing brook (depicted in rapid right hand passagework over a drone) which the poet charges to take a message to his distant beloved. The soldier of **Kriegers Ahnung** (Soldier's foreboding) might be the medieval knight popular in Romantic literature weeping at being parting from his beloved and the thought he might not survive the battle to see her again. Obsessively terse dotted rhythms give way to a rhapsodic wash of triplets as he remembers his lover, and a passage of urgency as he contemplates death.

In **Frühlingssehnsucht** (Longing in spring), breezes, flowers, brooks, forests and hills burgeon in spring reflecting the growing yearning of the poet. This is a strophic song, making use of the superimposition of triplet and duple rhythms.

In the hit single **Ständchen** (Serenade), Rellstab evokes the lover waiting for the beloved in the twilight as nightingales sing – something that Schubert opts not to imitate.

**Aufenthalt** (Resting place) is a kind of dark double of *Frühlingssehnsucht*. Schubert again overlays duple and triplet figures, but Nature and the poet's yearning are rather less benign here, with thundering torrents and roaring forests.

Though not officially one of the songs of *Schwanengesang*, **Herbst** (Autumn) is in keeping with the other Rellstab works: a conventional image of late autumn as decay, hope and solace as barren as the trees. The wavering notes played by the right hand recalls a cruel autumn wind, while the mournful bass melody reflects the protagonist's emotional state.

**In der Ferne** (In the distance) sees the broken-hearted poet fleeing the world. A short roiling refrain from the piano introduces a deceptively simple four-bar vocal melody; this however is made progressively more expressive by its accompaniment, and by the lengthening of the phrases and wider range of pitch.

Another farewell, **Abschied** (Farewell) is somewhat more stoic, with a trotting accompaniment as the poet bids farewell to his town.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

In sharp contrast, the following six songs are settings of one of the greatest of the German Romantics, Heinrich Heine, and it seems likely that Schubert planned to sell this set separately.

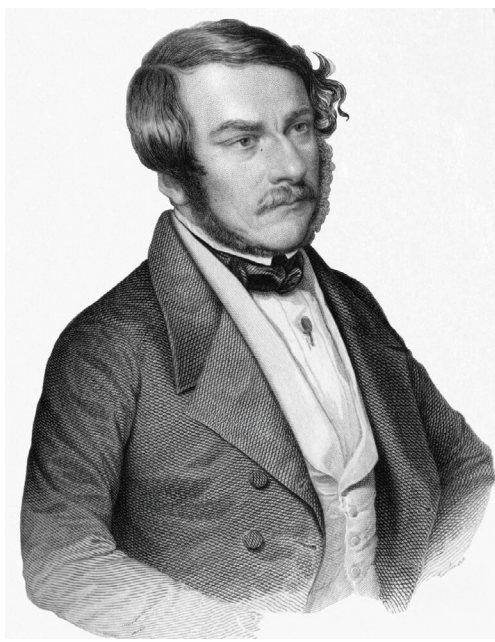


The poet Heinrich Heine (1831) by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1800–1882). Source: Wikimedia/Hamburger Kunsthalle.

**Der Atlas** evokes Beethoven in the opening piano tremolos and left-hand motif derived from the C minor Sonata, Op.111, as if the recently deceased composer should be compared with Atlas, the Titan who carries ‘the whole world of pain’ on his shoulders. The pain of **Ihr Bild** (Her portrait) the lover weeping at the lost beloved’s image, is expressed in stark simplicity.

**Das Fischermädchen** (The fisher-maiden) is a sprightly barcarolle, as the poet urges the fisher girl to return to shore so they might cuddle hand in hand.

**Die Stadt** (The town) is an extraordinary musical and poetic vision of the town, seen from the sea in both evening and morning light, where the poet lost his love; the boatman’s ‘mournful rhythm’ reminds us of the mythological ferryman of the dead. In **Am Meer** (By the sea), the poet and his beloved are in a fisherman’s hut at evening, where she weeps and ‘poisons’ the poet ‘with her tears’. The music is harmonically advanced yet radically simple until the restless yearning of the final stanza. Finally the poet sees his pain embodied as himself in **Der Doppelgänger** (The ghostly double), staring at the beloved’s window. Unusually, for Schubert, the accompaniment is a ‘ground’, here a pattern of four chords repeated obsessively.



The poet Heinrich Heine (1831) by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1800–1882). Source: Wikimedia/Hamburger Kunsthalle.

Schubert’s setting of Johann Gabriel Seidl’s **Der Taubenpost** (The pigeon post) was tacked on perhaps for a provisionally happy ending after the desolation of **Der Doppelgänger**. The poet keeps a carrier pigeon with which, in jaunty if somewhat slow music, carries messages and tears to the poet’s beloved.

**Notes by Gordon Kerry © 2025**  
**(Schwanengesang)**

# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## 1. *Liebesbotschaft*

By Ludwig Rellstab (1799-1860)

Rauschendes Bächlein,  
So silbern und hell,  
Eilst zur Geliebten  
So munter und schnell?  
Ach, trautes Bächlein,  
Mein Bote sei du;  
Bringe die Grüße  
Des Fernen ihr zu.

All ihre Blumen,  
Im Garten gepflegt,  
Die sie so lieblich  
Am Busen trägt,  
Und ihre Rosen  
In purpurner Glut,  
Bächlein, erquicke  
Mit kühlender Flut.

Wenn sie am Ufer,  
In Träume versenkt,  
Meiner gedenkend  
Das Köpfchen hängt,  
Tröste die Süße  
Mit freundlichem Blick,  
Denn der Geliebte  
Kehrt bald zurück.

Neigt sich die Sonne  
Mit rötlichem Schein,  
Wiege das Liebchen  
In Schlummer ein.  
Rausche sie murmelnd  
In süße Ruh,  
Flüstre ihr Träume  
Der Liebe zu.

## 1. *Message of Love*

Rushing brook,  
So pretty and clear,  
Will you hurry to my sweetheart  
So cheerful and quick?  
Ah, dear little brook,  
Be my messenger;  
Bring greetings  
To her from afar.

All of her flowers,  
Tended in the garden,  
That she wears so sweetly  
On her breast,  
And her roses,  
In crimson radiance,  
Brook, refresh them  
With your cooling stream.

When on the stream bank,  
lost in dreams,  
thinking of me,  
she bows her head,  
comfort my dearest  
with your friendly glance,  
for her beloved  
is coming back soon.

When the sun is setting  
With its red glow,  
lull my beloved  
off to sleep.  
Murmuring, rock her  
To her sweet rest,  
And whisper dreams  
Of love to her.

## TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

### 2. *Kriegers Ahnung*

In tiefer Ruh liegt um mich her  
Der Waffenbrüder Kreis;  
Mir ist das Herz so bang und schwer,  
Von Sehnsucht mir so heiß.

Wie hab ich oft so süß geträumt  
An ihrem Busen warm!  
Wie freundlich schien des Herdes Glut,  
Lag sie in meinem Arm!

Hier, wo der Flammen düstrer Schein  
Ach! nur auf Waffen spielt,  
Hier fühlt die Brust sich ganz allein,  
Der Wehmut Träne quillt.

Herz! Daß der Trost dich nicht verläßt!  
Es ruft noch manche Schlacht.  
Bald ruh ich wohl und schlafe fest,  
Herzliebste – gute Nacht!

### 2. *Soldier's Foreboding*

Around me in deep silence  
Lie my soldier comrades;  
My heart is so anxious and heavy,  
So aflame with longing.

How often have I dreamed sweetly  
On her warm breast!  
How friendly was the stove's warmth  
When she lay in my arms!

Here, where the brooding glow of flames,  
Alas, only shines on weapons,  
Here my heart feels totally alone,  
And tears of sadness flow.

Heart! Don't let solace abandon you!  
Many a battle is ahead.  
Soon I'll rest and sleep soundly,  
My beloved—good night!

*Nr. 30. A. 2.* *2 vols.*

**SCHWANENGE SANG**  
In Musik gesetzt  
für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte  
von  
**Franz Schubert**  
LETTZTES WERK.  
1te Abtheilung

*Nr. 3370* — Eigentum des Verlegers. — *Prof. G. H. P.*

Wien, bey Tobias Haslinger,  
Musikverleger,  
im Hause der ersten öftr. Sparkasse  
an Baden Nr. 178.

*A. E. Erler.*  
*1830.*

C E Erler.

# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## 3. Frühlingssehnsucht

Säuselnde Lüfte wehend so mild  
Blumiger Düfte atmend erfüllt!  
Wie haucht ihr mich wonnig begrüßend an!  
Wie habt ihr dem pochenden Herzen getan?  
Es möchte euch folgen auf luftiger Bahn!  
Wohin?

Bächlein, so munter rauschend zumal,  
Wollen hinunter silbern ins Tal.  
Die schwebende Welle, dort eilt sie dahin!  
Tief spiegeln sich Fluren und Himmel darin.  
Was ziehst du mich, sehndend verlangender Sinn,  
Hinab?

Grüßender Sonne spielendes Gold,  
Hoffende Wonne bringest du hold!  
Wie labt mich dein selig begrüßendes Bild!  
Es lächelt am tiefblauen Himmel so mild  
Und hat mir das Auge mit Tränen gefüllt!  
Warum?

Grünend umkränzt Wälder und Höh!  
Schimmernd erglänzt Blütenschnee!  
So drängt sich alles zum bräutlichen Licht;  
Es schwellen die Keime, die Knospe bricht;  
Sie haben gefunden, was ihnen gebricht:  
Und du?

Rastloses Sehnen! Wünschendes Herz,  
Immer nur Tränen, Klage und Schmerz?  
Auch ich bin mir schwellerer Triebe bewußt!  
Wer stillt mir endlich die drängende Lust?  
Nur du befreist den Lenz in der Brust,  
Nur du!

## 3. Longing in Spring

Murmuring breezes flutter so gently  
Fill me sighing with the scent of flowers!  
How you greet me with a blissful sigh!  
What have you done to my pounding heart?  
It wants to follow your airy trail!  
Where to?

Brooks, so cheerfully bubbling as well,  
Flow sparkling silver down to the glen.  
The billowing wave hastens downhill!  
The meadows and sky are reflected deep within.  
Why do you draw me, urgent, yearning feeling,  
Down there?

Sparkling gold of the greeting sun,  
You bring me hopeful bliss so sweet!  
How your joyfully greeting image refreshes me.  
It smiles so gently in the dark blue sky  
And has filled my eye with tears!  
Why?

The forests and hills are wreathed in green,  
A snowfall of blossoms sparkles and gleams.  
Everything surges to the nuptial light;  
The seeds are burgeoning, the buds are opening,  
They've found what they need to blossom:  
And you?

Restless longing, yearning heart,  
Nothing but tears, complaints, and pain?  
I too am aware of a growing urge!  
Who'll finally quiet my urgent desire?  
Only you can release the spring in my soul,  
Only you!



# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## 4. Ständchen

Leise flehen meine Lieder  
Durch die Nacht zu dir;  
In den stillen Hain hernieder,  
Liebchen, komm zu mir!

Flüsternd schlanke Wipfel rauschen  
In des Mondes Licht;  
Des Verräters feindlich Lauschen  
Fürchte, Holde, nicht.

Hörst die Nachtigallen schlagen?  
Ach! sie flehen dich,  
Mit der Töne süßen Klagen  
Flehen sie für mich.

Sie verstehn des Busens Sehnen,  
Kennen Liebesschmerz,  
Rühren mit den Silbertönen  
Jedes weiche Herz.

Laß auch dir die Brust bewegen,  
Liebchen, höre mich!  
Bebend harr' ich dir entgegen!  
Komm, beglücke mich!

## 5. Aufenthalt

Rauschender Strom,  
Brausender Wald,  
Starrender Fels  
Mein Aufenthalt.

Wie sich die Welle  
An Welle reiht,  
Fließen die Tränen  
Mir ewig erneut.

Hoch in den Kronen  
Wogend sich's regt,  
So unaufhörlich  
Mein Herze schlägt.

Und wie des Felsen  
Uraltes Erz,  
Ewig derselbe  
Bleibet mein Schmerz.

## 4. Serenade

Softly my songs implore  
You through the night;  
Down into the quiet grove,  
Beloved, come to me!

Slender treetops rustle, murmur  
In the moon's radiance;  
Don't fear the hidden listener's  
malice, my dearest.

Do you hear the nightingales singing?  
Ah, they appeal to you,  
With their sweet plaintive tones  
They're pleading for me.

They understand the heart's yearning,  
They know the pain of love,  
Touch with their silvery tones  
Every feeling heart.

Let them move you, too,  
My darling, listen to me!  
Trembling, I await you!  
Come, dearest, enrapture me.

## 5. Resting Place

Thundering torrent,  
Roaring forest,  
Stony crag,  
My resting place.

Just as the waves roll  
One after one,  
My tears are flowing  
Eternally new.

As high in the treetops  
It billows and seethes,  
Just as unceasingly  
Beats my heart.

And like the mountain's  
Ancient core,  
Ever the same  
Remains my pain.

# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## Herbst (Autumn), D945 (1827)

Es rauschen die Winde  
So herbstlich und kalt,  
Verödet die Fluren,  
Entblättert der Wald,  
Ihr blumigen Auen,  
Du sonniges Grün,  
So welken die Blüten  
Des Lebens dahin.

Es ziehen die Wolken  
So finster und grau,  
Verschwunden die Sterne  
Am himmlischen Blau.  
Ach, wie die Gestirne  
Am Himmel entfliehn,  
So sinket die Hoffnung  
Des Lebens dahin!

Ihr Tage des Lenzes,  
Mit Rosen geschmückt,  
Wo ich den Geliebten  
Ans Herze gedrückt!  
Kalt über den Hügel  
Rauscht, Winde, dahin –  
So sterben die Rosen  
Des Lebens dahin!

## 6. In der Ferne

Wehe dem Fliehenden,  
Welt hinaus ziehenden! -  
Fremde durchmessenden,  
Heimat vergessenden,  
Mutterhaus hassenden,  
Freunde verlassenden  
Folget kein Segen, ach!  
Auf ihren Wegen nach!

Herze, das sehrende,  
Auge, das tränende,  
Sehnsucht, nie endende,  
Heimwärts sich wendende!  
Busen, der wallende,  
Klage, verhallende,  
Abendstern, blinkender,  
Hoffnungslos sinkender!

Lüfte, ihr säuselnden,  
Wellen sanft kräuselnden,  
Sonnenstrahl, eilender,  
Nirgend verweilender:  
Die mir mit Schmerz, ach!  
Dies treue Herze brach -  
Grüßt von dem Fliehenden,  
Welt hinaus ziehenden!

## Autumn

The winds are roaring,  
So autumnal and cold;  
The fields have become barren,  
The forest has lost its leaves.  
You flowery meadows!  
You sunlit green!  
In the same way the blossoms wither – the blossoms  
Of life decay.

The clouds are going by  
So dark and grey;  
The stars have disappeared  
In the blue of the sky.  
Alas, just as the constellations  
Fly away in the sky,  
In the same way hope sinks – the hope  
Of life collapses!

You days of spring,  
Adorned with roses,  
Where I took my beloved  
And pressed him to my heart!  
Cold over the hill,  
Winds, roar away.  
In the same way the roses die – the roses  
Of life pass away.

## 6. In the Distance

Woe to the fugitive,  
Fleeing the world!  
Roaming foreign places,  
Forgetting his homeland,  
Hating his mother's house,  
Leaving his friends  
Alas, no blessing follows  
Along their ways.

Heart that is yearning,  
Eye that is weeping  
Longing that never ends,  
Turning toward home.  
Breast that is stirring,  
Lament that is fading,  
Evening star twinkling,  
Hopelessly sinking!

Breezes, you rippling,  
Waves gently ruffling,  
Sunbeam hastening  
Nowhere remaining:  
She who with agony  
Broke my loyal heart—  
Greetings from the fugitive,  
Fleeing the world!

# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## 7. Abschied

Ade! du muntre,  
du fröhliche Stadt, ade!  
Schon scharret mein Rößlein  
mit lustigen Fuß;  
Jetzt nimm noch den letzten,  
den scheidenden Gruß.  
Du hast mich wohl niemals  
noch traurig gesehn,  
So kann es auch jetzt nicht  
beim Abschied geschehn.

Ade, ihr Bäume,  
ihr Gärten so grün, ade!  
Nun reit ich am silbernen Strome entlang.  
Weit schallend ertönet mein Abschiedsgesang;  
Nie habt ihr ein trauriges Lied gehört,  
So wird euch auch keines  
beim Scheiden beschert!

Ade, ihr freundlichen Mägdlein dort, ade!  
Was schaut ihr aus  
blumenumduftetem Haus  
Mit schelmischen, lockenden Blicken heraus?  
Wie sonst, so grüß ich und schaue mich um,  
Doch nimmer wend ich mein Rößlein um.

Ade, liebe Sonne,  
so gehst du zur Ruh, ade!  
Nun schimmert der blinkenden Sterne Gold.  
Wie bin ich euch Sternlein am Himmel so hold;  
Durchziehn wir die Welt auch weit und breit,  
Ihr gebt überall uns das treue Geleit.

Ade! du schimmerndes  
Fensterlein hell, ade!  
Du glänzest so traulich  
mit dämmerndem Schein  
Und ladest so freundlich ins Hüttchen uns ein.  
Vorüber, ach, ritt ich so manches Mal,  
Und wär es denn heute zum letzten Mal?

Ade, ihr Sterne,  
verhüllet euch grau! Ade!  
Des Fensterlein trübes, verschimmerndes Licht  
Ersetzt ihr unzähligen Sterne mir nicht,  
Darf ich hier nicht weilen, muß hier vorbei,  
Was hilft es, folgt ihr mir noch so treu!

## 7. Farewell

Goodbye! You jolly,  
you cheerful town, goodbye!  
My horse paws the ground now  
with light-hearted hoof,  
Now receive my final,  
my parting salute  
You've never seen me  
downcast before,  
And it can't happen now  
at my farewell.

Goodbye, you trees,  
you gardens so green, goodbye!  
Now I'm riding along the silvery stream,  
My farewell song echoes far and wide,  
You never heard a sorrowful song from me,  
And you won't hear one now  
at my departure.

Goodbye, you friendly lasses there, goodbye!  
Why do you look out of your  
flower-perfumed house  
With such a flirtatious and alluring glance?  
As always I greet you and look around  
But I never turn my horse back.

Goodbye, dear sun,  
now go to your rest, goodbye!  
Now the gold of the twinkling stars shimmers.  
How much do I love you stars in the sky;  
We travel the world both far and wide,  
And everywhere you are my loyal guide.

Goodbye, you shimmering  
bright window, goodbye!  
You sparkle so homelike  
in the twilight glow  
And invite us so trustfully into your cottage.  
Alas, I've ridden by here so many times,  
And is today to be the final time?

Goodbye, you stars,  
hide yourself in grayness, goodbye!  
The dark, fading light of the window  
Can't be replaced by you countless stars,  
I can't linger here, I have to go on,  
What matter if you follow me so faithfully!

# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## 8. *Der Atlas*

By Heinrich Heine (1797–1856)

Ich unglücksel'ger Atlas! Eine Welt,  
Die ganze Welt der Schmerzen muß ich tragen,  
Ich trage Unerträgliches, und brechen  
Will mir das Herz im Leibe.

Du stolzes Herz, du hast es ja gewollt!  
Du wolltest glücklich sein, unendlich glücklich,  
Oder unendlich elend, stolzes Herz,  
Und jetzo bist du elend.

## 9. *Ihr Bild*

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen  
und starrte ihr Bildnis an,  
und das geliebte Antlitz  
Heimlich zu leben begann.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich  
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,  
Und wie von Wehmutstränen  
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Auch meine Tränen flossen  
Mir von den Wangen herab –  
Und ach, ich kann's nicht glauben,  
Daß ich dich verloren hab!

## 10. *Das Fischermädchen*

Du schönes Fischermädchen,  
Triebe den Kahn ans Land;  
Komm zu mir und setze dich nieder,  
Wir kosen Hand in Hand.

Leg an mein Herz dein Köpfchen  
Und fürchte dich nicht zu sehr;  
Vertraust du dich doch sorglos  
Täglich dem wilden Meer.

Mein Herz gleicht ganz dem Meere,  
Hat Sturm und Ebb' und Flut,  
Und manche schöne Perle  
In seiner Tiefe ruht.

## 8. *Atlas*

I, wretched Atlas, a world  
The whole world of pain I must carry,  
I bear the unbearable, and my heart  
Is breaking in my body.

You proud heart, you wanted it so!  
You wanted to be happy, eternally happy,  
Or eternally miserable, proud heart,  
And now you are in misery.

## 9. *Her Portrait*

I stood in dark dreams  
And stared at her image,  
And the beloved visage  
Quietly came to life.

Upon her lips appeared  
A smile so wonderful,  
And as if from tears of sadness  
Her eyes sparkled.

And my tears flowed as well  
Down from my cheeks—  
And oh, I just can't believe,  
That I have lost you!

## 10. *The Fisher Girl*

You lovely fisher girl,  
Row your boat to shore;  
Come to me and sit down,  
We'll cuddle hand in hand.

Lay your head on my breast  
And don't be so afraid;  
You trust yourself without care  
Daily to the untamed sea.

My heart is like the ocean,  
Has storm and ebb and flood,  
And many a lovely pearl  
Rests in its depths.

# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## 11. *Die Stadt*

Am fernen Horizonte  
Erscheint, wie ein Nebelbild,  
Die Stadt mit ihren Türmen,  
In Abenddämmerung gehüllt.

Ein feuchter Windzug kräuselt  
Die graue Wasserbahn;  
Mit traurigem Takte rudert  
Der Schiffer in meinem Kahn.

Die Sonne hebt sich noch einmal  
Leuchtend vom Boden empor  
Und zeigt mir jene Stelle,  
Wo ich das Liebste verlor.

## 12. *Am Meer*

Das Meer erglänzte weit hinaus  
Im letzten Abendscheine;  
Wir saßen am einsamen Fischerhaus,  
Wir saßen stumm und alleine.

Der Nebel stieg, das Wasser schwoll,  
Die Möwe flog hin und wieder;  
Aus deinen Augen liebevoll  
Fielen die Tränen nieder.

Ich sah sie fallen auf deine Hand  
Und bin aufs Knie gesunken;  
Ich hab von deiner weißen Hand  
Die Tränen fortgetrunken.

Seit jener Stunde verzehrt sich mein Leib,  
Die Seele stirbt vor Sehnen;  
Mich hat das unglücksel'ge Weib  
Vergiftet mit ihren Tränen.

## 11. *The Town*

On the distant horizon  
Appears like a cloud-image  
The town with its spires  
Shrouded in the gloom of evening.

A damp breeze ruffles  
The green surface of the water;  
In a mournful rhythm rows  
The boatman in my craft.

The sun rises once again  
Glowing above the earth  
And shows me that spot  
Where I lost my beloved.

## 12. *At the Seashore*

The sea sparkled far and wide  
In the last glow of evening;  
We sat at the lonely fisherman's hut,  
We sat silent and alone.

The fog rose, the water surged.  
The gull flew back and forth;  
From your lovely eyes  
The tears dropped.

I saw them fall upon your hand  
And fell on my knees;  
And from your white hand  
I drank away the tears.

Since that time my body pines  
My soul is dying with yearning;  
The wretched woman  
Poisoned me with her tears.

# TEXTS & TRANSLATIONS

## 13. *Der Doppelgänger*

Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen die Gassen,  
In diesem Hause wohnte mein Schatz;  
Sie hat schon längst die Stadt verlassen,  
Doch steht noch das Haus auf demselben Platz.

Da steht auch ein Mensch und starrt in die Höhe  
Und ringt die Hände vor Schmerzengewalt;  
Mir graust es, wenn ich sein Antlitz sehe -  
Der Mond zeigt mir meine eigne Gestalt.

Du Doppelgänger, du bleicher Geselle!  
Was äffst du nach mein Liebesleid,  
Das mich gequält auf dieser Stelle  
So manche Nacht, in alter Zeit?

## 14. *Die Taubenpost, D765a*

By Johann Gabriel Seidl (1804-1875)

Ich hab' eine Briefftaub' in meinem Sold,  
Die ist gar ergeben und treu,  
Sie nimmt mir nie das Ziel zu kurz  
Und fliegt auch nie vorbei.

Ich sende sie viel tausendmal  
Auf Kundschaft täglich hinaus,  
Vorbei an manchem lieben Ort,  
Bis zu der Liebsten Haus.

Dort schaut sie zum Fenster heimlich hinein,  
Belauscht ihren Blick und Schritt,  
Gibt meine Grüße scherzend ab  
Und nimmt die ihren mit.

Kein Briefchen brauch ich zu schreiben mehr,  
Die Träne selbst geb ich ihr,  
Oh, sie verträgt sie sicher nicht,  
Gar eifrig dient sie mir.

Bei Tag, bei Nacht, im Wachen, im Traum,  
Ihr gilt das alles gleich,  
Wenn sie nur wandern, wandern kann,  
Dann ist sie überreich!

Sie wird nicht müd, sie wird nicht matt,  
Der Weg ist stets ihr neu;  
Sie braucht nicht Lockung, braucht nicht Lohn,  
Die Taub' ist so mir treu!

Drum heg ich sie auch so treu an der Brust,  
Versichert des schönsten Gewinns;  
Sie heißt - die Sehnsucht! Kennt ihr sie? -  
Die Botin treuen Sinns.

## 13. *The Ghostly Double*

The night is quiet, the streets are silent,  
My beloved lived in this house;  
She left the town a long time ago,  
But the house still stands in the same place.

A man stands there, too, and stares upward  
And wrings his hands with the force of his pain;  
I'm horrified when I see his face—  
The moon shows me my own likeness.

You ghostly double, you pallid fellow!  
Why do you ape my lovesickness,  
That tormented me here  
So many nights long ago?

## 14. *The Carrier Pigeon*

I have a carrier pigeon in my employ,  
It's very devoted and true.  
It never stops short of my goal  
And never flies too far.

I send it out many thousand times  
With messages every day,  
Away past many a pretty place,  
Right to my dearest's house.

It peeks through the window secretly there  
And watches for her step and glance,  
Gives her my greetings playfully  
And brings hers back to me.

I don't need to write notes anymore  
I send my tears with it instead,  
I'm sure they will never go astray,  
It serves me so eagerly.

By night, by day, awake, in dreams,  
It's all the same to it,  
If it can only rove and roam,  
That is repayment enough.

It never tires, it never flags,  
The way is ever new,  
It needs no lure, it needs no pay,  
The dove is so loyal to me!

And so I keep it close to my heart  
Assured of the sweetest reward;  
Its name is—longing! Do you know it?  
Enduring love's messenger.

**All translations by Celia Sgroi, except *Herbst* which is by Malcolm Wren (schubertsong.uk).**

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