

Pittsburg State University

Pittsburg, Kansas

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Graduate Recital

GAIL HAMILTON, Soprano

Assisted by

Carol Sue Maxwell

Thursday, December 1, 1977

McCray Auditorium

8:00 p.m.

PROGRAM

I
W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Oiseaux, si tous les ans
Komm, liebe Zither
Das Veilchen
Als Luise
Abendempfindung
Un moto di gioia

II
F. Schubert
(1797-1828)

Gretchen am Spinnrade
Liebe schwärmt auf allen Weben
Die Männer sind mechant

III
J. Brahms
(1833-1897)

Am Sonntag Morgen
Es träumte mir
Das Mädchen spricht
Vergebliches Ständchen

IV
H. Wolf
(1860-1903)

Elfenlied
Das verlassene Mägdlein
Er ist's

V
R. Strauss
(1864-1949)

Ich schwebe
Schlagende Herzen

PROGRAM NOTES

Gail Hamilton

Mozart composed only thirty songs. If looked at from the quantitative point of view, these constitute a tiny particle of the large mosaic of Mozart's musical production. This particle, however, displays every aspect of his genius. His second visit to Paris resulted in the chanson "Oiseaux, si tous les ans" (Antoine Ferrand). "Komm, Liebe Zither" was a study for DON GIOVANNI and heralds the world of romance to be found in ABDUCTION FROM THE SERAGLIO. In "Das Veilchen" (Goethe) there is a perfect balance between word and music, vocal part and accompaniment, dramatic content and lyrical structure. "Als Luise" (When Louise burnt the letters of her unfaithful lover) (Von Baumberg) shows the anger levelled against an imaginary Don Giovanni, "for, alas, he did not sing for me only". There is a wonderful wistfulness in "Abendempfindung" (Fly to the land of rest) (Campra) and "Un moto di gioia" (A motion of joy I feel in my heart) was a song written for the Susanna of a later production of THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO. And so Mozart's Lieder display the panorama of human passions to be found in the characters of his operatic works.

Schubert composed over seven hundred songs, transforming the world of poetry into music. In many of his songs he displayed, like Mozart, a great gift for the expression of human passions. "Gretchen am Spinnrade", Schubert's first Goethe song, was composed October 19, 1814. Gretchen sits at her spinning wheel. "My peace is gone forever," she sings, "my heart is heavy. I live only for him. His fine bearing, his noble form, the smile on his lips, the power of his eyes. And the magic of his speech, the clasp of his hand, and, ah, his kiss!" In 1815 Schubert set to music "Liebe schwärmt auf allen Wegen" (Love overwhelms from all sides) from Goethe's CLAUDINE VON VILLA BELLA). In "Die Männer sind mechant" (Seidl), a humorous refrain Lied composed by Schubert in 1826, a young girl sings of her sweetheart's betrayal, repeating several times "Men are really no good!"

Brahms, like Schubert, approached the composition of songs from a predominantly musical standpoint. Beauty of melody, of rhythm, and of musical texture were his chief concerns. He too was able to capture human emotions in music. "Am Sonntag Morgen" (On Sunday Morning) (Paul Heyse) is a spirited and gripping song, which depicts the contrast of a lover's smiling exterior and his inward despair. "Es träumte mir" (I dreamt that you were true, but on awakening I knew that even in my dream it was only a dream) (George F. Daumer) contains modulations, chords of the 9th and alterations which intensify the soaring vision and dreaminess of the text. In "Das Mädchen spricht" (Otto F. Gruppe) there is a fluttering and twittering of birds in the accompaniment. Brahms' touch is exquisitely light as the young girl inquires of the bird: "Are you also to be a bride?" "Vergebliches Ständchen" has all the simplicity and directness of a folk-song: Boy: "Good evening, my sweetheart, open your door and let me in". Girl: "My door is locked and I can't let you in. Mother said I would rue it." Boy: "But the night is cold and the wind icy. Perhaps my heart will freeze and my love will vanish." Girl: "If your love can vanish so quickly, let it go...go home to bed. Good-night, my lad."

In Hugo Wolf's creative activity, the fifty-three settings of poems by Eduard Mörike mark the breakthrough to a new type of "declamatory" song. Wolf wrote the set of Mörike songs in the year 1888. The ghostly spirit of romantic fairy tales is felt in "Elfenlied" in which the octave call of the watchman is given a musical and structural function. The piano part is no longer merely an "accompaniment" but an evocative commentary on the declamatory, almost parlando vocal line. It is night in the village and the watchman cries "eleven"! A little elf was asleep in the wood, just at eleven. (In German 'Elf' means both 'eleven' and 'elf'). And he thinks that the nightingale or someone must have called his name from the valley. So he rubs his eyes, gets up, peeps about, stumbles sleepily downhill through the hazelwood, and comes to a stonewall bright with glow-worms. "Why are the little windows lit up? It must be a wedding. I'll just peep in. Ouch!" He bangs his head hard. Poor little chap. But you can't help laughing at him. Cuckoo! In "Das verlassene Mägdlein" a whole world of love and loss is evoked. The warm brightness of flames and dreams, the cold darkness of the house and the truth, make a poignant contrast which is fused into one single emotion as the song passes from night and unawareness to daybreak and tears, evoking a lifetime of joys past and sorrows now to come. "Er ist's" (Spring is here!) is a splendid tour de force for voice and piano.

The song writer Strauss is not really well-known. Among his one hundred and fifty or so published songs, it is always the same twenty dead certain successes which are performed. This evening's program features two songs which are seldom performed. Long before Strauss reached the realm of opera he was regarded in the musical world primarily as a lyricist. His lyrical flow seems to proceed from the spirit of vocalization as can be heard in the love song "Ich schwebe" (I float as though on angel wings) (Henckel). In "Schlagende Herzen" (Beating Hearts) (Mackay) the humourously romantic nature of Strauss is revealed: "A youth hurried with lively step through meadows and fields. Kling, klang, his heart did beat. Midst meadows and fields a maiden stood. Kling, klang, her heart did beat; to me, to me, he is hastening, oh, if he only were already with me" Kling klang, kling klang, kling klang, her heart did beat"

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