

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

DIE SCHÖNE MÜLLERIN / THESE FEVERED DAYS

Instrumentation of the song cycle with seven new Dickinson songs

for tenor and large ensemble (2023/2024)

Franz Schubert, text: Wilhelm Müller (1823/24).

Ensemble version: Johannes Maria Staud (2023/24)

Johannes Maria Staud, text: Emily Dickinson (2023/24)

INSTRUMENTATION:

Flute - oboe - clarinet - bassoon (with interchangeable instruments).
horn - trumpet - trombone
2 percussionists - accordion - harp - piano
Tenor
2 violins - 2 violas - 2 violoncellos - double bass

At the request of the great Schubert interpreter Christoph Prégardien, I am currently working intensively on the song cycle Die Schöne Müllerin (1823) by Franz Schubert. I am orchestrating this cycle for 19-piece ensemble and combining it with seven to eight of my own songs, for which I am using poems by Emily Dickinson. In the structure, both strands will be interlocked and intertwined. Of course, this should and will also entail a new interpretation of this eternally relevant material.

Of course, Hans Zender's "composed interpretation" of Winterreise from 1993 might immediately come to mind as a point of reference. However, with all admiration for this work, my approach will be completely different.

In the orchestration of the 20 songs of Schubert's cycle, I will draw very closely on the original text, radically drawing Schubert's vibrant sonority and inventiveness into the present. A misunderstood historicity would make little sense here. My own songs, composed of course in a completely different tonal language, are intended to function as a conscious counterpoint, as a present-day commentary, but as the work progresses, they will merge with Schubert's cycle on a higher level.

A different, female perspective - almost from the point of view of the Müllerin, who in Schubert/Müller remains only a projection screen for male desire - is to be cast on the nature mirroring narrative: Wandering - Strangeness - Desire - Unrequited Love - Suicide.

In the late work of Emily Dickinson (incidentally written only a few decades after Wilhelm Müller on the other side of the Atlantic in New England), I have found great, laconic poems that fit wonderfully with the world of Die Schönen Müllerin -

complementing it, expanding it, contradicting it, ironically questioning its romanticised image of nature or casting a radically feminine view on it.

My seven to eight own songs and an instrumental interlude after the great break after number 10: Tränenreigen, will, as mentioned above, be interlocked with the Schubert songs and should act as a commentary from the here and now. The total duration of this full-length work should be around 85-90 minutes and, if possible, played without an intermission. In addition to the almost 60 minutes of the Schönen Müllerin orchestrated for ensemble, about 25-30 minutes of original music will be added.

Johannes Maria Staud, IX 2023