

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

MARK PADMORE, *tenor*

PAUL LEWIS, *piano*

Tuesday, January 22 – 7:30 PM

Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

PROGRAM

Selection of Lieder

Johannes Brahms

Born: May 7, 1833, in Hamburg, Germany

Died: April 3, 1897, in Vienna, Austria

Duration: 15-20 minutes

Brahms' vocal works displayed a dichotomy of simplicity of melody, yet complexity of composition. He composed nearly 200 lieder between 1853 and 1896, many of which included an emotional intensity and expressive impact that is unique to his compositions. Strong base lines provide contrapuntal interplay between voices, and inner voices enrich chromatic inflection, typical of the romantic era. Brahms used varied strophic forms and included many folk characteristics. In addition to solo lieder, Brahms arranged 100 folk songs, and incorporated folk and dance idioms.

Rückert Lieder

Gustav Mahler

Born: July 7, 1860, in Kaliste, Czech Republic

Died: May 18, 1911, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1901-02

Duration: 23 minutes

Mahler began composing his lieder based on the poetry of German poet Friedrich Rückert in July of 1901. It was an optimistic time for Mahler. He was finishing his fourth symphony, which would premiere that fall. His career and reputation were on the rise. He was engaged to younger composer Alma Schindler, and would be married the following March. Four of the lieder were done by summer, 1901. The fifth, *Liebst du um Schönheit* ("If You Love for Beauty") was composed a year later, as a love poem to Alma. Compared with Mahler's earlier lieder, his Five *Rückert Lieder* are clearly more sophisticated in expressiveness, intimacy,

and mood painting. Of the five, two are about love: *Ich atmet' einen linden duft* ("I Breathed a Delicate Fragrance") and *Liebst du um Schönheit*. One is offhandedly playful: *Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder* ("Don't Look at My Songs"). And two are about isolation and loneliness: *Um Mitternacht* ("At Midnight") and *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* ("I Have Become Lost to the World"), perhaps Mahler's greatest song.

Dichterliebe, Op. 48

Robert Schumann

Born: June 8, 1810, in Zwickau, Germany

Died: July 29, 1856, in Bonn, Germany

Composed: 1840

Duration: 30 minutes

Dichterliebe, Op. 48, went unperformed and unpublished until, in 1844, Schumann cut four of the songs, revised some others, and published the set as *Dichterliebe*, or "A Poet's Love." Schumann composed more than half of his total song output in a single year, 1840. His love affair with Clara Wieck, who was to become his wife in August, provided fertile soil for serious attention to love lyrics. Schumann composed *Dichterliebe* in the space of about a week in May. In these sixteen songs, Schumann perfectly captures the psychological atmosphere of each poem. The piano writing, as in Schubert, is of great importance in defining the mood of each song. In Schumann, these moods are often carried to their greatest expressive heights in the piano postludes. All but two of the *Dichterliebe* songs end with postludes, some of them nearly half the length of the song itself. Another remarkable aspect of these songs is the vocal declamation. The music, with few exceptions, is perfectly welded to the words of the text with regard to meter, observation of punctuation and emphasis on the right word or syllable.