

hear the *song* in the music

mozart, schubert, liszt

7.30pm
Shouson
Theatre

22 APRIL 2018

HK Arts
Centre
Wanchai

A concert
celebrating songs and song-
inspired piano music

SONGFULLY



A MUSICAL COLLABORATION *with* MARY WU, CALEB WOO, SYLVIA CHAN,
THE CLASSICAL SINGERS, AND JESSIE LAU



Brought together
by
beautiful songs
and song-
inspired piano
music



Introduction to The Classical Singers

In early 2016, a group of working Hong Kong professionals – all of whom love singing and sang in various settings when growing up – were brought together in a small-group vocal ensemble setting.

We were inspired by the idea of creating a new group for those of us who are doing it for only 2 reasons: to make music for its beauty (and the spirit of creating something together), and the spirit of trying to be better, of taking a hobby seriously, and to keep learning.

We want to be a small group – we are currently operating most often as a 6- or 8-voice ensemble – and to find beautiful music. We bring with us a dream for a beautiful blended sound and for making music that engages. We are also brought together by a joy in discovering and rediscovering vocal repertoire of exceptional quality, whether classical, romantic, or modern.

We've called ourselves The Classical Singers – “classical” in the meaning of, first, being exemplary and setting a high standard, and second, we are classically trained and we sing mostly serious art music (though we will also sing some musicals and transcriptions). Overall, our name reflects the value of great music sung with exemplary musicality and a sheer joy in the music-making.

You can find more information at www.theclassicalsingers.com and www.facebook.com/theclassicalsingers

“
brought
together
by
beautiful
music”



Mary Wu 吳美樂 - pianist (*Schubert and Liszt – inspired virtuosi*)

Mary is an international artist now based in Hong Kong. Hailed as “one of the most gifted pianists of her generation” for her “musical variety, profundity and sensitivity” by Ravel's protégé Vlado Perlemuter, Mary was also praised by the late Lord Yehudi Menuhin as having “a captivating poetical quality to her playing”.

European critic praised Mary for "her extraordinary artist quality, absolute mastery over the keyboard and magical virtuosity".

Mary frequently performs as soloist and chamber musician in Europe, Asia and has collaborated with artists including the late Lord Menuhin, Vlado Perlemuter; Richard Stoltzman, Colin Carr, the Maggini Quartet, the Szymanowski Quartet and Tasmin Little.

She was the president of the International Piano Competition Ibiza Spain 2017.

Her recent performances include solo and chamber music recitals in Hong Kong, London and Spain.



Caleb Woo 胡永正 - baritone (*Schubert, or 'Wanderer'*)

Caleb is a renowned baritone known for the expressive strength and lyricism of his voice.

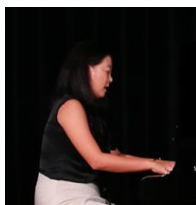
Caleb graduated with the Master of Music degree in Voice Performance and Literature at Eastman School of Music, University of Rochester, New York. Caleb holds degrees from the Hong Kong Baptist University including the Bachelor of Arts degree in Voice Performance and Pedagogy in 2006 with first class honor as well as the Social Science degree in China-Studies in 2003. He obtained his ATCL diploma and LRSM diploma in 2005 and 2009 respectively.

His voice teachers include Prof. Robert McIver, Mr. Jimmy Chan and Mr. Sanson Lau.

Recently Caleb gave recitals performing Vaughan Williams's Songs of Travel, Brahms's *Vier Ernste Gesänge* and Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. He has also performed many Bach's works with John Butt, Jonathan Cohen, David Chin as well as Oratorios including Haydn's the Creation, Elijah with Helmuth Rilling and Jahja Ling, to name a few.

Highlights of Caleb's recent opera performances include 2 Hong Kong Arts Festival commissioned Chan Hin-yan originals, Heart of Coral and Datong.

Caleb is currently Music director of Tuen Mun Alliance Church and Voice Instructor at Music Department, Chinese University of Hong Kong and Qin Music; in parallel, he also serves as a Co-ordinator of Music Ministries in Hong Kong Baptist University. He also has a Master of Arts degree in Christian Studies from the Chung-Chi Divinity School, Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2007.



Sylvia Chan 陳心怡 - pianist (*Liszt "heaven and hell"*), producer

Sylvia dreams about yet-to-be-explored concert programmes and bringing disparate ideas together, and brings her piano, vocal and chamber training and background in conceiving the concept and theme behind this evening's concert.

Sylvia was a prizewinning pianist in open competition while growing up in Hong Kong and the UK, and performed as a solo pianist and in a duo with cellist Miriam Kirby (The Hague String Trio), including in St John's Smith Square, London, West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, and recorded as a soloist (Bach, Brahms and Liszt).

Sylvia studied the piano with Eleanor Wong (Academy of Performing Arts) in Hong Kong and Christopher Elton (Royal Academy of Music) in London, also taking lessons from Hamish Milne (also in London), and gave her last recital in Trinity College Chapel, Cambridge.

Sylvia also received individual voice training since a young age and later went on to study with British baritone Nigel Wickens in Cambridge, singing in a number of prizewinning choirs and ensembles when growing up and performing in a number of professional productions, notably in *La Traviata* with Opera Lyrica in the UK.

2018 marks Sylvia's first "return" solo piano performance after more than 15 years away, and she will be playing in 2 recitals in the UK later this year.

She enjoys a multi-faceted career in investment management and entrepreneurship with a focus on technologies; she is author of 2 books and has a PhD from the University of Cambridge; recent activities include a project researching into the transferable skills, mindsets and habits of intensively trained musicians to business and professional life.



Jessie Lau 劉潔芝 - organist

Jessie Kit-Chi began her organ studies with Wong Kin-yu in 2007 at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and obtained her Bachelor of Music degree. She later graduated from the Royal College of Music (London) with a Master degree in Music, studying organ performance with David Graham and organ improvisation with Sophie-Véronique Cauchefér-Choplin, and where she won the RCM Scholarship and was supported by the Christopher & Susan Gordon-Wells Award.

In 2012, Jessie received the Eric Thompson Trust to participate in the International Organ Festival Haarlem in the Netherlands. In the same year, she won both the First Prize and David Sanger/Bach Memorial Prize in the Glasgow Society of Organists Paisley Abbey Organ Competition in Scotland.

During her study in London, Jessie served as organist of Holy Trinity, Dalston and performed at various venues in the United Kingdom. At present, she is organist of the Chung Chi College Chapel of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and St. Stephen's Chapel, Stanley. She teaches organ performance at the extramural department of the Hong Kong Music Institute. She is also accompanist of Lecture Choir and Kowloon District Choir of the Hong Kong Church Music Association.

Introduction to the concert programme

This concert programme looks at how composers have crafted exceptional piano works out of beautiful vocal works that stand majestically in their own right. It celebrates both piano and vocal music.

Perhaps the 2 composers that come immediately to mind are Schubert and Liszt. The former is known for being the father of *lieder* while the latter did many piano transcriptions of songs with a significant number being German *lieder* including over 50 Schubert songs.

We indeed start our concert with a Schubert-Liszt pairing: we begin with one of the most alluring of Schubert's *lieder*, *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen* ("To be sung on the water") that contrasts with a second Schubert song that is a darker mood, *Gute Nacht* ("Good night"), the 2 songs followed by Liszt's piano transcription of *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen*; we finish the evening also with Schubert, how Schubert at the peak of his creative powers crafted a pianistic masterpiece, *Fantasie in C* ("Wanderer" Fantasie) (D.760) that has a number of clear references and allusions to one of his most important songs, *Der Wanderer* (D.489) that he had written earlier in his life.

In between we present two vocal-piano pairings that may be slightly surprising: Liszt delightfully used Mozart's *Ave Verum* and Allegri's *Miserere* to create a rather virtuosic piano piece that he was inspired by while inside the Sistine

Chapel – in fact this piece meant a lot to Liszt who had admired and studied Mozart since a young age and was inspired to write it after visiting the famous religious site in Rome in 1862.

The other slightly unusual vocal-piano pairing presents an ascetic side to Liszt's music writing: this time, Liszt wrote a rather faithful piano rendering of a choral work he wrote himself, the *Ave Maria I* (S.20). Compared to his the Sistine Chapel piece which is effectively a fantasy on Mozart and Allegri, the piano version of the *Ave Maria* - included as the second piece in his *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (S.173), a piano cycle of 10 pieces - is more of a simple, highly faithful transcription, showing a very different aspect of Liszt's piano writing.

After a Schubert-Liszt and a Mozart-Liszt pairing in the first half of the programme, it is interesting to see a Liszt-Liszt pairing followed by a Schubert-Schubert pairing. While we have picked the 3 Schubert *lieder* from various different parts of Schubert's *oeuvre* given our interest in illuminating the role of the songs in piano works, the sequence follows our protagonist (i.e.

soloist) from life while on the leaving his house (and his beloved) for his journey, and definitively wanderer and a

It must be noted transcribed the 100 other he had done than transcribe, paraphrase other works, he would formidable history. Liszt Schubert's songs and his versions were

The programme

Schubert & Liszt

Schubert *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen* ("boating song") (D.774)

Schubert *Gute Nacht* ("good night") (D.911)

Liszt *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen* (S.558)

Mozart & Liszt

Mozart *Ave Verum* K.618

Liszt *A la Chapelle Sixtine* S.461

[there will be a 15-minute intermission]

Liszt & Liszt

Liszt *Ave Maria I* (S.20)

Liszt *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses - 2. Ave Maria* (S.173)

Schubert & Schubert

Schubert *Der Wanderer* (D.489)

Schubert *Fantasie in C major* ("Wanderer") (D.760)

our baritone pondering on water to (and his (wintry) finally singing about being the stranger.

that Liszt works of over composers. If nothing more arrange or composers' still remain a figure in music came to early in his life transcriptions into piano some of the

early examples of his work in this genre. Indeed, the year 1838 was when he returned to Vienna (to participate in charity concerts in aid of massive floods in the Danube that affected his homeland, Hungary) and rediscovered Schubert - the Schubert song transcriptions started to pour from his pen almost as soon as he entered the city (and most of his Schubert song transcriptions were completed between 1838 and 1840). Looking today, no one did more to popularize Schubert's music in the nineteenth century than Liszt (in fact, Schubert's songs were not fashionable during his lifetime; neither were his piano music, as a matter of fact), while scholar and biographer Alan Walker called Liszt's Schubert song transcriptions "art that conceals art". (Amongst his efforts in this direction, he also transcribed a number of Schubert's waltzes.)

Liszt generally approaches transcriptions in one of two ways. The first is a relatively faithful transcription, taking songs and phrases from operas or symphonies and composing a reproduction of the music for the keyboard. In other transcriptions he is more improvisational, taking a work and building it in his own image. Liszt used many words: *phantasie*, *paraphrase*, *transcription*, *reminiscence*, ...*sur de[s]* [*themes/motifs de*] ... , *d'après*, *illustrations*, etc. to describe his arrangements. It is generally thought that the paraphrase is a free variation on the original or as his biographer put it, "a transformation", while transcription is more strict and literal. We hear both types of transcriptions in this concert.

Liszt was both an avid accompanist and a composer of songs, which likely contributed to both his interest in transcribing and the reverence with which he approached it. These song transcriptions certainly offer insight into an aspect of Liszt as

a musician, composer and accompanist that cannot be found in his other music. They also provide a window into Liszt as a thoughtful interpreter rather than the showman and virtuoso for which he was so well-known in his time.

Notes on the music

F. SCHUBERT

Auf dem Wasser zu Singen &
D.774 (1823)

F. LISZT

Auf dem Wasser zu Singen (transcription of Schubert)
S.558, no.2 (1838)

In 1838, ten years after Schubert's death, Liszt referred to him as "the most poetic musician that ever lived" and confessed that his songs often moved him to tears.

During his life, Liszt made piano transcriptions of over 50 of Schubert's songs and many of these are much-loved by pianists even today. And indeed, it was through Liszt's piano transcriptions that many audiences in the cities of Europe learned about and came to appreciate Schubert's songs.

Most of these Schubert-Liszt transcriptions were rather faithful and literal; in some instances Liszt even insisted that the song texts be integrated into the publication and printed immediately above the staff, indicating that Liszt did in fact envision his compositions to be "songs without words".

But anyone who knows Schubert's *lieder* would understand the technical problem facing Liszt: how to telescope the vocal line of the songs into Schubert's accompaniment, thus creating a self-contained piano piece, with no loss of musical substance and no distortion of musical sense. Some of Schubert's accompaniments are difficult and demand a virtuoso technique. To reproduce the vocal line as well seems impossible, but Liszt always succeeds in finding a solution.

In *Auf dem Wasser zu Singen* ("To be sung on the water"), Schubert embellishes on a sentimental poem by Leopold Graf zu Stollberg that speaks of a sense of being content to enjoy the sunset while the water rocks gently back and forth. While the poet does ponder the passing of time, he is in no hurry to go anywhere. By applying a strophic form, Schubert keeps his music floating peacefully on these gentle waves, without any distraction from a far off destination.

Although the key signature is A flat major, Schubert begins his song in A flat minor; A flat major does not appear until the end of each of the 3 verses. By vacillating between parallel keys, Schubert continues to accentuate a sense of the aimless drifting of the boat.

Schubert's rhythmic choices contribute to the scene as well. The 6/8 meter sets up a dance rhythm that helps to portray the joyful feeling of the poet as he looks out across the water. The constant running sixteenth notes in the piano create the motion of light waves lapping at the side of the boat. And by consistently repeating the pitch level before stepping down in a scalar motion, Schubert keeps his sixteenth note motive from racing forward through the music, and instead creates the notion of water gently cascading around rocks and reeds. Enjoy the moment, Schubert seems to be saying, as this graceful song convinces his audience to be content rocking on nature's tranquil waters.

F. SCHUBERT

Gute nacht
D.911 (1827)

Gute Nacht is the first song in the *Winterreise* song cycle of 24 songs based on text by Wilhelm Müller. It tells of the "traveller" about to go on this journey and is saying goodbye to his beloved as he embarks on it. "A stranger I arrived; a stranger I depart." In May, he won the love of a girl and hoped to marry her. But now the world is dreary, and he must

leave, in winter, in the dead of night, finding his own way in the trackless snow. "Love loves to wander – from one person to the next." As he leaves, he writes "Good Night" on her gate to show he thought of her.

It is not totally bleak: the transition from the piece's primary key of D minor to the lightness of D major at the words "Will dich im Traum" is of ineffable beauty (even if Schubert made sure it is an ephemeral hope as the song's ending shifts back to the minor however short the minor section is!). Indeed, *Winterreise* has been described as a cycle "without a center, spinning slowly out into a frozen wasteland".

Schubert wrote 2 song cycles for the male voice and the piano – the other being *Die schöne Müllerin* – and *Winterreise* is the more mature of the two; these two cycles hold the foremost place in the history of the genre. Schubert's song cycles has been considered by some to have a dramatic effect not unlike that of a full-scale opera. Like *Die schöne Müllerin*, Schubert's *Winterreise* is not merely a collection of songs upon a single theme (lost or unrequited love) but is in effect one single dramatic monologue, lasting over an hour in performance.

Completed just a year before his death, the cycle comprises a monodrama from the point of view of the wandering protagonist, in which concrete plot is somewhat ambiguous – the psychological and spiritual progression of the protagonist is as important as the literal winter's journey. Throughout the cycle, wintry imagery of cold, darkness, and barrenness serve to mirror the feelings of the isolated wanderer.

While the piano transcription is not included in this evening's performance (what's there to say more after saying goodnight and goodbye?), we note that Liszt transcribed 12 of the songs in *Winterreise* cycle for the piano (S. 561), rearranging their order, although *Gute Nacht* is the first piece in both Schubert's cycle and Liszt's transcribed set.

W.A. MOZART

Ave Verum

K.618 (1791)

&

F. LISZT

A la Chapelle Sixtine

S.461 (S.658) (1862)

Why would you tinker with the composition that has been called Mozart's perfect composition? It is certainly one of the most famous settings of the *Ave Verum*, and at a mere 46 bars, the exquisite piece is a summation of the composer's ability to say something profound in the simplest possible way. It was also one of the composer's last works.

It is 70 years on when Liszt wrote *A la Chapelle Sixtine*, a wonderful piano piece (the organ version, numbered S.658, is named "Evocation a la Chapelle Sixtine") that appropriates two emblematic Catholic choral pieces: Allegri's *Miserere* and Mozart's *Ave Verum*. Liszt was into his 50s, had lost two of his children and was soon to actually make Rome his residence (he was to spend much of his time there during the last 20 years of his life). The piece was composed after a visit to Sistine Chapel in the second half of 1862 – following his arrival in Rome, Liszt often found himself drawn to the place where, in 1770, the 14-year-old Mozart had heard for the first time and committed to memory Allegri's *Miserere*, an unpublished choral piece whose performance at that time continued to be limited to the Sistine Choir during Holy Week.

The inspiration behind penning the piece can be seen from a letter Liszt wrote in late 1862:

"It was as if I saw [Mozart] and as if he looked back at me with gentle encouragement. Allegri was standing by his side, basking in the fame which his Miserere now enjoyed I have not only brought them closer together, but, as it were, bound them together. Man's wretchedness and anguish moan plaintively in the Miserere; God's infinite mercy and the fulfilment of prayer answer it and sing in [Mozart's] Ave Verum. This concerns the sublimest of mysteries, the one which reveals to us Love triumphant over Evil and Death."

Liszt is known to have played this piece – the heavenly soaring work remains one of his special favourites, together with his transcription of the *Dies Irae* and *Larymosa* from the *Requiem* – and to have said that:

"The sequences of the Ave Verum are among the most beautiful things that Mozart wrote I do not think he would have objected to my development of them."

In the piece, Liszt refers less directly to *Allegri* with its static harmonies, but actually inserts the *Mozart*, whole and intact. One could say that the piece alternates between the longer *Allegri* evocations and the shorter *Mozart* sections – starting in G minor, we hear ever more tortured, dark and searing chords and arpeggios suggesting “the misery and anguish of mankind” (capturing the essence of the *Allegri* piece), which sets the scene for the appearance in B major (transposed from the original’s D major) of Mozart’s exquisite motet representing “the infinite mercy and grace of God” and a clear contrast with the previous section. Thereafter, we hear a reprise of *Allegri* and G minor before a second appearance of the ethereal *Ave Verum* - this time in F sharp major! (Liszt’s key for “heaven”) - and finally the piece ends in G major. (It is of interest also to note that the Russian composer Tchaikovsky later on incorporated an orchestration of Liszt's transcription of Mozart in his fourth orchestral suite, *Mozartiana* (moving the theme to F major!).

F. LISZT
Ave Maria I
 S.20 (1846 / 1852)

&

F. LISZT
Harmonies Poétiques et Religieuses – 2. Ave Maria
 S.173 (1847)

Throughout his life, the central struggle of Liszt’s being was fought on religious lines and he expressed his deepest religious sentiments through his music. He created an astonishing quantity of religious works, not only for chorus but also for the piano.

Liszt was one of the few composers to take on the *Ave Maria* multiple times. The S.20 is his first setting and completed as he was coming to the end of his 8-year tour of Europe. He made 3 more settings during the rest of his life, often writing versions for not only voice but organ and piano solo as well, and one of them for the mixed voice chorus. He famously also wrote a transcription for the piano of Schubert’s “*Ave Maria*”. While not often performed today, Liszt’s *Ave Maria* is filled with inventive harmonies, changing textures and interesting play between the different vocal parts.

In his piano cycle entitled *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses*, we find some of Liszt’s most wonderful piano compositions with 3 of the 10 pieces drawn from his earlier choral work. Number 2 is based on the first version of the *Ave Maria* he composed a year earlier (revised in 1852) and is also one of 4 pieces set to Latin liturgical texts. In this concert, we sing the slightly more popular 1852 version that is in A major rather than the 1st version that is in B flat major (as is the key for the piano piece).

Over the piano score Liszt writes the Latin words of the well-known prayer. It is a short but expressive prayer. It is both interesting and enlightening to see that the rhythm and intervals of the last 4 notes of this piece (crotchet, dotted crotchet, quaver [all underneath a triplet sign], barline, and whole-note, in descending whole-tones until the fourth note, which repeats the third) are identical in all but key with the first 4 notes of the next piece in the set, number 3 *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la solitude* (Blessing of God in Solitude), the first of the 10 to be composed and the most elaborate work in this cycle.

In these 2 pieces, we see Liszt the famous virtuoso writing music that is simple to the point of almost being austere.

F. SCHUBERT
Der Wanderer
 D.489

&

F. SCHUBERT
Fantasie in C major (“Wanderer Fantasie”)
 Op.15 (D.760)
 I. *Allegro con fuoco ma non troppo*
 II. *Adagio*
 III. *Presto*
 IV. *Allegro*

Der Wanderer (D.489) was written when Schubert was not even 20 years old. This song, on Georg Schmidt’s poem, captured the public’s imagination like few other Schubert songs - only *Erlkönig* could rival its reputation in the composer’s own lifetime.

An early work, the D.489 is somewhat different from much of the great Schubert song repertoire that is characterized by spontaneity and naturalness. Instead, the D.489 illustrates how much the Schubertian *lied* owes to the opera house; the song is constructed from alternating short and often theatrical recitative followed by lyrical aria-like sections.

It begins with throbbing right-hand triplets in the piano – in common with *Erlkönig* too – but the drama is generated by harmony rather than rhythm as the left hand spells out the first three notes of a C sharp major arpeggio: C sharp – E sharp – G sharp. There is something typically Schubertian about the way a song in the minor key begins with a tonal major-key harmony. Each bar begins on this low C sharp pedal and climbs in different directions; bar by bar the right hand makes tiny changes to vary the harmonies of those triplets, the widening harmonies a metaphor for a slow but inexorable rising tide (and a sense of impending doom). The famed Schubert pianist Graham Johnson has spoken about how in the 6 bars of piano introduction before the soloist sings, “it is astonishing how much, and how little, can happen in thirty seconds of music”.

The singer enters with “*Ich komme vom Gebirge her ...*” (I come down from the mountains ...) in C sharp minor and after a few bars, the music moves into its relative major, E major, with gravity and unhurried nobility, as the Wanderer sings “*Ich wandle still*” (I wander silently...). The idea of a “Wanderer” was an important theme within German literary and philosophical circles at the time, and the “traveller” was often on an important spiritual journey as much as a physical one. Indeed, Schubert wrote another *Der Wanderer lied* a few years later, numbered D.649 (1819), based on Friedrich von Schlegel’s text and in D major; while other pieces on the theme include *Der Wanderer an den Mond* (D.870, on Seidl text), *Der Pilgrim* (D.794, on Schiller text), as well as the 2 famous settings of Goethe, *Wandrer’s Nachtlied* I (D.224) and II (D.768).

This section briefly transitions through G sharp major harmonies before ushering in the arietta in C sharp minor (“*Die Sonne dünkt mich*”) which lies at the heart of the work. This then again wanders back into E major before a rhythmic change into 6/8 tempo that is accentuated by a rising sequence of harmonies (C sharp major – F sharp minor – E major – A minor) and culminates in “*das meine Sprache spricht, Oh Land, wo bist du*” (That land where they speak my language, Oh land, where are you?), with the restless harmonic shifts in the music reflecting the Wanderer’s ponderous question.

The *Fantasie* in C major, Op. 15 (D. 760), popularly known as the *Wanderer Fantasy*, is a fantasy for solo piano completed by Schubert in 1822 (6 years after the song) when he was in his mid-20s and is the work of Schubert the confident master. In contrast to the more intimate and inward-looking nature of most of Schubert’s *lieder* and much of his mature piano music, the *Fantasie* is a work on an heroic scale in which a rhythmic pattern called a *dactyl* - long, short-short - heard in the first few bars of the *Allegro* is expanded, inverted, repeated and elaborated with dazzling effect, heavily present in three of the four movements and forming the basis for the stupendous conclusion.

The piece is considered Schubert’s most technically demanding composition for the piano - Schubert himself is known to have said “the devil may play it, for I cannot”, in reference to his own inability to do so properly, while pianist Alfred Brendel perceptively noted that no previous composer had gone so far beyond the possibilities of contemporary instruments as Schubert did here. No other piano work of Schubert’s requires nearly as much technical facility, and even today almost 200 years after its completion, it remains one of the most difficult pieces in the piano repertoire.

The four “movements” or sections are designed to be played without a break between them and the piece becomes more and more virtuosic as it moves toward its thunderous conclusion. No work better demonstrates Schubert’s ability to conjure up a wide palette of orchestral colours with the piano.

There are multiple references and allusions to the song in all sections but the most direct reference to the D.489 song itself is in the second movement, marked *adagio*, which is itself in the key of C-sharp minor – the original key of the song – and even more specifically, an 8-bar phrase from the song that describes the feelings of the wanderer: the sun seems old, the blossom withered, life old:

*Die Sonne dünkt mich hier so kalt,
Die Blüte welk, das Leben alt,
Und was sie reden, leerer Schall;
Ich bin ein Fremdling überall.*

Schubert is known to have returned to the Wanderer theme on multiple occasions especially towards the end of his life. And his last piano sonata, the Sonata in B flat major, D.960, is a prime example of Schubert's obsession with the theme - with its reference to the song in the development section of the first movement and its second movement also in C sharp minor (while the Fantasie in C bookends the C sharp minor in C major, the last sonata bookends it in 2 movements both in B flat major). So much so that C sharp minor - the key of the D.489 song - is generally known to be Schubert's Wanderer key!

Text to songs (with English translations)

Mozart - Ave Verum

Ave verum corpus natum
De Maria virgine
Vere passum immolatum
In cruce pro homine
Cuius latus perforatum
Unda fluxit et sanguine
Esto nobis praegustatum
In mortis examine. [Amen]

Mozart - Ave Verum

Hail the true body, born
of the Virgin Mary:
You who truly suffered and were sacrificed
on the cross for the sake of man.
From whose pierced flank
flowed water and blood:
Be a foretaste for us
in the trial of death. [Amen]

Liszt - Ave Maria

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum.
Benedicta tu in mulieribus,
et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Iesus.
Sancta Maria, Mater Dei,
ora pro nobis peccatoribus,
nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen

Liszt - Ave Maria

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and in the hour of our death. Amen.

Schubert - Auf dem Wasser zu Singen

Mitten im Schimmer der spiegelnden Wellen
Gleitet, wie Schwäne, der wankende Kahn:
Ach, auf der Freude sanftschimmernden Wellen
Gleitet die Seele dahin wie der Kahn;
Denn von dem Himmel herab auf die Wellen
Tanzet das Abendrot rund um den Kahn.

In the middle of the shimmer of the reflecting waves
Glides, as swans do, the wavering boat;
Ah, on joy's soft shimmering waves
Glides the soul along like the boat;
Then from Heaven down onto the waves
Dances the sunset all around the boat.

Über den Wipfeln des westlichen Haines
Winket uns freundlich der rötliche Schein;
Unter den Zweigen des östlichen Haines
Säuselt der Kalmus im rötlichen Schein;
Freude des Himmels und Ruhe des Haines
Atmet die Seel im errötenden Schein.

Over the treetops of the western grove
Waves, in a friendly way, the reddish gleam;
Under the branches of the eastern grove
Murmur the reeds in the reddish light;
Joy of Heaven and the peace of the Grove
Is breathed by the soul in the reddening light.

Ach, es entschwindet mit tauigem Flügel
Mir auf den wiegenden Wellen die Zeit;
Morgen entschwinde mit schimmerndem Flügel
Wieder wie gestern und heute die Zeit,
Bis ich auf höherem strahlendem Flügel
Selber entschwinde der wechselnden Zeit.

Ah, time vanishes on dewy wing
for me, on the rocking waves;
Tomorrow, time will vanish with shimmering wings
Again, as yesterday and today,
Until I, on higher more radiant wing,
Myself vanish to the changing time.

Schubert - Gute Nacht

Fremd bin ich eingezogen,
Fremd zieh' ich wieder aus.
Der Mai war mir gewogen
Mit manchem Blumenstrauß.

I came here a stranger,
As a stranger I depart.
May favored me
With many a bunch of flowers.

Das Mädchen sprach von Liebe,

The girl spoke of love,

Die Mutter gar von Eh', -
Nun ist die Welt so trübe,
Der Weg gehüllt in Schnee.

Her mother even of marriage -
Now the world is so gloomy,
The road shrouded in snow.

Ich kann zu meiner Reisen
Nicht wählen mit der Zeit,
Muß selbst den Weg mir weisen
In dieser Dunkelheit.

I cannot choose the time
To begin my journey,
Must find my own way
In this darkness.

Es zieht ein Mondenschatten
Als mein Gefährte mit,
Und auf den weißen Matten
Such' ich des Wildes Tritt.

A shadow of the moon travels
With me as my companion,
And upon the white fields
I seek the deer's track.

Was soll ich länger weilen,
Daß man mich trieb hinaus ?
Laß irre Hunde heulen
Vor ihres Herren Haus;

Why should I stay here any longer
So that people can drive me away ?
Let stray dogs howl
In front of their master's house;

Die Liebe liebt das Wandern -
Gott hat sie so gemacht -
Von einem zu dem andern.
Fein Liebchen, gute Nacht !

Love loves to wander -
God made it that way -
From one to the other,
My dearest, good night !

Will dich im Traum nicht stören,
Wär schad' um deine Ruh'.
Sollst meinen Tritt nicht hören -
Sacht, sacht die Türe zu !

I don't want to disturb your dreaming,
It would be a shame to wake you.
You won't hear my step,
Softly, softly the door closes !

Schreib im Vorübergehen
Ans Tor dir: Gute Nacht,
Damit du mögest sehen,
An dich hab' ich gedacht.

I write in passing
On your gate: Good night,
So that you may see
That I thought of you.

Schubert - Der Wanderer

Ich komme vom Gebirge her,
Es dampft das Tal, es braust das Meer.
Ich wandle still, bin wenig froh,
Und immer fragt der Seufzer, wo?

I come down from the mountains,
The valley dims, the sea roars.
I wander silently and am somewhat unhappy,
And my sighs always ask "Where?"

Die Sonne dünkt mich hier so kalt,
Die Blüte welk, das Leben alt,
Und was sie reden, leerer Schall;
Ich bin ein Fremdling überall.

The sun seems so cold to me here,
The flowers faded, the life old,
And what they say has an empty sound;
I am a stranger everywhere.

Wo bist du, mein geliebtes Land?
Gesucht, geahnt, und nie gekannt!
Das Land, das Land so hoffnungsgrün,
Das Land, wo meine Rosen blühn.

Where are you, my dear land?
Sought and brought to mind, yet never known,
That land, so hopefully green,
That land, where my roses bloom,

Wo meine Freunde wandelnd gehn,
Wo meine Toten auferstehn,
Das Land, das meine Sprache spricht,
O Land, wo bist du? . . .

Where my friends wander
Where my dead ones rise from the dead,
That land where they speak my language,
Oh land, where are you?

Ich wandle still, bin wenig froh,
Und immer fragt der Seufzer, wo?
Im Geisterhauch tönt's mir zurück:
"Dort, wo du nicht bist, dort ist das Glück."

I wander silently and am somewhat unhappy,
And my sighs always ask "Where?"
In a ghostly breath it calls back to me,
"There, where you are not, there is your happiness."

Introducing the ensemble singers

The singers for this evening The Classical Singers concert include the trio of Florence, Simone and Sylvia, who sang together at the same senior mixed-voice and senior girls' choir at school years ago; Vincent and Irene made their mark singing also in the same school choir a few years later (also playing in the orchestra). Leonard is a recent graduate from a music college in the UK and is a student of the same voice teacher whom we all admire and adore.

Our singers are business people and professionals engaged in various walks of life who share a love of singing and making music together as well as a dream of a beautiful blended sound; Sylvia currently provides artistic direction.

While we have probably sung in 20 different ensembles and choirs all combined and some of us take on solo parts once in a while too, we are excited to be coming together to do small-scale ensemble singing and to present a beautiful programme.

Mr Jimmy Chan – who taught more than a few of us – has generously provided encouragement, inspiration and guidance.

Thank you to Wingman Leung for helping as repetiteur.

Soprano	Alto	Tenor	Bass
Sylvia Chan	Simone Lee	Vincent Leung	Leonard Ma
Florence Chang	Irene Chan		

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Join us

We are delighted to hear from talented singers and supporters. Information about The Classical Singers and our 2018 and 2019 programmes can be obtained from info@theclassicalsingers.com. You can also learn more at www.facebook.com/theclassicalsingers and www.theclassicalsingers.com. A statement of the constitution and objectives of The Classical Singers is at www.theclassicalsingers.com/contact-us/our-constitution-and-objectives.