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PREVIEW
NOTES

Matthew Polenzani, tenor • Julius Drake, piano
Sunday, March 27 • 8:00 PM — Perelman Theater

Background

American tenor Matthew Polenzani has been widely praised for his artistic versatility and fresh lyricism. Recognized by the Metropolitan Opera with the 2008 Beverly Sills Artist Award, Mr. Polenzani appeared at the Met last season as Tamino in *Die Zauberflöte*, conducted by Ascher Fisch, and also made his debut in the title role of *Idomeneo* at Teatro Reggino Torino under the baton of Gianandrea Noseda. A committed recitalist, he has appeared with Roger Vignoles at the Verbier Festival, with Julius Drake under the auspices of Lincoln Center and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and has presented Janáček's *The Diary of One Who Vanished* at Zankel Hall with pianist Richard Goode. He was named recipient of the Richard Tucker Award in 2004.

Program

***Die Schöne Müllerin*, D. 795**

Franz Schubert

Born: January 31, 1797 in Vienna, Austria

Died: November 19, 1828 in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1823

Last PCMS performance: Nathan Gunn in 2002

Duration: 62 minutes

Based on poems by Wilhelm Müller (who also wrote the poems Schubert used in *Winterreise*), *Die Schöne Müllerin* is the earliest of Schubert's extended song cycle to be widely performed. There are twenty songs in the cycle, around half in simple strophic form, and they move from cheerful optimism to despair and tragedy. At the beginning of the cycle, a young journeyman miller wanders happily through the countryside. He comes upon a brook, which he follows to a mill. He falls in love with the beautiful miller's daughter (the "Müllerin" of the title) who is out of his reach as he is only a journeyman. He tries to impress her, but her response seems tentative. The young man is soon supplanted in her affections by a hunter clad in green, the color of a ribbon he gave the girl. In his anguish he experiences an obsession with the color green, then an extravagant death fantasy in which flowers sprout from his grave to express his undying love. In the end, the young man despairs and drowns himself in the brook. The cycle's final song is a lullaby sung by the brook. The question remains: is the brook really the miller's friend or is it a friend like Mephistopheles in the *Faust* legend, who leads the miller to his downfall and destruction?