

PHILADELPHIA CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY

a life more beautiful

PREVIEW
NOTES

Ying Fang, *soprano*

Ken Noda, *piano*

Wednesday, February 5 – 7:30 PM

American Philosophical Society

PROGRAM (Selection of program notes)

Ruhe Sanft from Zaide

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born: January 27, 1756, in Salzburg, Austria

Died: December 5, 1791 in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1779-1780

Duration: 6 minutes

Turkish pirates were on the prowl in the Mediterranean in the 1700s, taking loot and conscripting Christian slaves. Operas and stories about these Westerners escaping Turkish captivity were much the rage in Vienna in Mozart's day. Having found a librettist in Johann Schachtner, Mozart's *Zaide* took up this popular theme. *Zaide* is the heroine Christian slave who falls in love with another slave, Gomatz. "Ruhe sanft, mein holdes Leben" ("Rest gently, my dearest life (Beloved)") appears in Act I when *Zaide* first discovers Gomatz, at that moment asleep under a tree. She instantly falls in love, and leaves him her [. . .] It's one of Mozart's most beautiful arias, especially remarkable given that this is one of his first forays into full opera writing.

Ganymed, D. 544

Franz Schubert

Born: January 31, 1797, in Vienna, Austria

Died: November 19, 1828, in Vienna, Austria

Composed: 1817

Duration: 5 minutes

The year 1817 saw Schubert set more than 70 poems, resulting in some of his very finest songs. Of these, it may be Goethe's *Ganymed* that drew from him the deepest musical response. *Ganymed* was the Trojan youth who was carried up into Olympus to become the gods' immortal cup-bearer. Goethe's treatment of the legend avoids references to anything specifically Greek, instead focusing on the beautiful comfort of nature and the love of -- and for -- the divine.

Viola, D. 786

Franz Schubert

Composed: 1823

Duration: 14 minutes

Schubert composed his setting of von Schober's *Viola* in March 1823, the same time he began working on both the fateful *Symphony in B minor* and the song cycle *Die Schoene Mullerin*, and heard in context of his life and works, Schubert's *Viola* takes on a greater depth and poignancy than it might otherwise have. Or, to put it more precisely, putting *Viola* in context of Schubert's life and works lets the contemporary listener hear the depth and poignancy that was always present in *Viola* but that two centuries' worth of pseudo-sophistication have nearly effaced.

Im Frühling, D. 882

Franz Schubert

Composed: 1804-1805

Duration: 5 Minutes

Franz Schubert's 1826 song *Im Frühling*, D. 882, a setting of a poem by Ernst Schulze, may well be tops amongst the many songs about springtime that dot his *Lieder* catalog. Rarely even in that massive catalog does Schubert approach the kind of wonderful, taut formal weave that is *Im Frühling* -- this is strophic song at its most flexible and expressive. The song was written in March of 1826 (an appropriate enough time for such a spring song) but revised just a little bit -- tempo indication, some articulation markings -- when it was published in 1828.