

SAVORING THE CLASSICAL ART SONG

Coordinator: James Smith

The majority of classical music lovers are not inclined to seek out or appreciate the Art Song. This is a shame, as they are missing many of the masterpieces of the tradition. For instance, Schubert's cycle *Winterreise* (Winter's Journey) is widely considered to be the greatest work of early romanticism. One problem is that these pieces demand an unusual degree of attention and integration of our listening abilities. In other words, "work." But as your mother told you, nothing worthwhile is gained without work. And when the work leads to such great pleasure, it is its own reward. We will delve into the brilliant compositions of many of the giants in this field: Schubert, Schumann, Berlioz, Brahms, Faure, Debussy, Mahler, Grieg, Barber, Britten. We'll explore how a remarkable composer can enhance the effect of great (or even mediocre) poetry through the interaction of words and music.

James has coordinated many study groups on the classical repertoire, and he spent a number of delightful years as a choral singer.

Type of Study Group: Lecture/Discussion

Readings and other Materials/Online Services:

Links to online readings and YouTube videos will be emailed by coordinator.

***** **SYLLABUS - A WORK IN PROGRESS** *****

WEEK 1

TOPIC: From Schubert to Britten.

READING/VIEWING:

Online articles and videos

QUESTIONS:

What is the variety and history of the Art Song? What are the qualities it possesses to move and enchant us? What vocal techniques and qualities are needed and desirable?

LP² STUDY GROUP PROPOSAL FOR FALL 2022

WEEK 2

TOPIC: The Songs and Song Cycles of Schubert

READING/LISTENING:

Selected on-line readings;

Listen to *Gretchen auf Spinnrade*, *Die Schone Mullerin*.

QUESTIONS:

Why is Schubert considered the greatest song composer? Is great poetry suitable for translation into song? What is the relation between the voice and the piano?

WEEK 3

TOPIC: Schumann's Songs

LISTENING:

Listen to *Dichterliebe* and *Liederkreis*

QUESTIONS:

What is the relation between the Romantic Style and Schumann's innovations? Which types of poetry were best suited to his style and aesthetic?

WEEK 4: Berlioz and Faure

WEEK 5: Brahms and Dvorak

WEEK 6: Grieg and Sibelius, Hugo Wolf.

WEEK 7: Ravel and Chausson

WEEK 8: Faure and Debussy

WEEK 9: Faure and Debussy, continued

WEEK 10: Richard Strauss and Janacek

WEEK 11: Mahler and (just a little bit of) Schoenberg

WEEK 12: Britten and Barber