



92nd Street Y, Theresa L. Kaufmann Concert Hall
Saturday, October 29, 2011, 8 pm

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Born Himmelpfortgrund, suburb of Vienna, January 31, 1797; died Vienna, November 19, 1828

Fantasy for Violin and Piano in C major, D. 934

Composed in 1827; 25 minutes

Schubert had less than one year to live when he composed the Fantasy for Violin and Piano in C major, dedicating it to the masterful Bohemian violinist Josef Slavík. Slavík and the pianist Karl Maria von Bocklet first performed the work at a public concert in Vienna in January 1828, a month after its composition.

A work in four movements, the C-major Fantasy is further subdivided into an ingeniously worked out seven-part structure. Above a rustling tremolo in the piano, the violin opens the Fantasy with a plaintively sweet melody. It is a song without words, reminiscent of the many Lieder that Schubert wrote on themes of nature, in which the piano sets a brook-like background for the singer's meditation. The jaunty dance that follows, Allegretto, is often playful, but with a melancholy undercurrent.

Schubert turned pointedly to one of his own Lieder for the Fantasy's Andantino section, which is a set of variations on the main melody from his 1822 song "Sei mir gegrüsst." Schubert composed the song on a melancholy text of farewell to a lost love by the poet Friedrich Rückert. In the original Lied, Schubert created a recurring musical refrain from the words: "Sei mir gegrüsst, sei mir geküsst." [I greet you, I kiss you.] In this Fantasy for Violin and Piano, Schubert turned the theme of that musical refrain into a subject for a lengthy (more than ten minutes) set of variations.

The "Sei mir gegrüsst" theme and other echoes of earlier movements recur briefly in the finale, which is based on a quick march tune. Replete with many changes of mood and tempo, the fourth section ends with a blazing Presto coda.

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