

Gotham Early Music Scene (GEMS) presents



Thursday, March 11, 2021 1:15 pm

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Taya König-Tarasevich ~ Romantic flute

Daniel Swenberg ~ Romantic guitar

***A Midday Nocturne:
A Schubertiade for Biedermeier Flute & Guitar***

Abendlied	Robert Schumann (1810–1856) [arr. J.K. Mertz]
An Die Sonne	Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
Romanze from Rosamunde	Franz Schubert
Am Fenster	Franz Schubert
Mouvement de prière religieuse	Fernando Sor (1778–1839)
Nocturne	Friedrich Burgmüller (1806–1874)
Nacht und Träume	Franz Schubert [arr. Diabelli]
9 Waltzes from D. 365 original Dances	Franz Schubert [arr. Diabelli]
Mondnacht	Robert Schumann

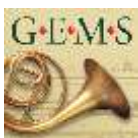
Taya König-Tarasevich: Romantic flute by Stefan Koch 1830 (restored M. Wenner 2019)

Daniel Swenberg: 8-string guitar after Ries (Kresse 2012)

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Notes on the Program, Instruments, Editions, and Arrangements

by Daniel Swenberg

I suppose this program gradually formed over the years I got to know Taya and we shared our love of German Romantic poetry, particularly the song or Lied repertoire of Schubert and Schumann. It became our priority once Taya acquired her beautiful 1830 original flute. The program itself is suffused with the mood of the Nocturne: between a candlelit house concert and walks outside under the magical light of the full moon.

There is no shortage of Biedermeier music for guitar and flute. For us, however — and especially after reading a lot of charming, but rather empty music — our program needed to feature the Lied. It had to include our favorite Lied: *Mondnacht*, a song that had intense meaning for us both. So it was that I assembled a list of instrumentals like the Schubert dances of opus 9/D. 365, the Burgmüller *Nocturne*, and the gorgeous *Abendlied* of Schumann to accompany a few sets of *Songs without Words*. Later in these notes, Taya discusses her training in Germany, where she was taught to both *pronounce* and *color* the words on her flute — follow the German text and you'll swear you can hear the consonants and vowels.

All of the pieces on the program, with the exception of *Mondnacht* (my transcription) are from publications and manuscripts of Schubert and Schumann's day: c. 1820—1850. The guitar was a very popular instrument in the Biedermeier period. Publishers like Diabelli often offered Schubert's music in arrangements for the guitar in addition to the originals with piano accompaniment — sometimes, the guitar editions appeared first. Most of the songs on our program come from a recently discovered manuscript by a friend of Schubert's, Baron Franz von Schlecta. Besides being a friend, Schubert set his poetry. This manuscript features 39 of Schubert's songs, many of which were the arrangements of Schubert's publisher Anton Diabelli, although some are unique —perhaps Schlecta's own arrangements. Now and then, I have modified his settings to include a fun bit from the piano editions, more often to include the two extra bass notes on my copy of a Ries 8-string Viennese guitar. From Diabelli's arrangement of 15 Original Dances of Opus 9 /D. 365 (waltzes and Ländler), I have selected 9 and put them more or less back into the order Schubert had conceived of them. I did this in order to make better contextual sense of Schumann's own musings on these dances, which he thought of as scenes or flowers. The second dance became known as *Le Désir* and the later as the *Trauer* or *Sehnsuchtwalz* (the mourning or waltz of longing). In this passage from an imagined meeting of his Davidsbund, Schumann tells of a night of rapturous listening and discussing Schubert's Opus 9 dances. Curiously, the speaker protests rather disingenuously about the *Sehnsuchtwalz* or *Le Désir*, as Schumann went on to compose a set of variations to this favorite dance:

“...lovely little genii, floating above the earth at about the height of a flower--though I do not much like *Le Désir* [No. 2], in which hundreds of girls have drowned their sentiment... There is much beauty in the way in which the rest circle round the *Désir*, entangling it more or less in their delicate threads, also in the dreamy thoughtlessness which pervades them all, so that we, too, when playing the last, believe that we are still in the first.”
R. Schumann

On Playing Words and an Original Romantic Flute from 1830

by Taya König-Tarasevich

Renate Greiss-Armin — my greatest example of pure artistry and never-ending curiosity for expression — originally inspired me to perform Lieder on the flute, aiming to create very personal sonority, using the consonants of the lyrics to transform the articulation into words — literally making the flute sing.

It was 10 years ago in Germany, when I had the honor to study with Renate. Back then, even in my wildest dreams, I could never imagine that I would be performing it in New York on historical instruments, using period transcriptions, together with now my dear friend and huge musical inspiration — Daniel Swenberg.

The sensibility of a broken heart in music of the Romantic era, the restless longing, the pain and hopelessness phrased in such a poetic way are aspects that I cherish in our program the most. Recording it in the midst of the coronavirus silence has given me great hope for better times in our society and world in general.

My original Romantic flute was made by the most famous flute maker of his time — Stefan Koch in Vienna around the year 1830 and was restored by Martin Wenner in 2019 in Germany. Without doubt, most of the music that was performed by this exact instrument was by Schubert. The miraculous story how this instrument found me is hard to believe: back in 2018, after a performance with my classical piano trio, we all expressed our strong wish to expand our repertoire into the Romantic era. It was easy for them — fortepiano and cello didn't change too much from the classical to Romantic epoch. The flute on the other hand became a whole new instrument and I started searching for it without knowing yet how to play it. It turned out Martin Wenner had just begun restoring a legendary instrument by Stefan Koch when I visited his workshop in Germany. He wrote down my name and promised to tell me when he would be done with the restoration. A year passed, and when I was on my way to a tour in southern France, Martin called me and invited me to try out the instrument. The timing was perfect — I had spent the entire year in New York but on the day he called me I was a half an hour away from his workshop! I was convinced that he was not selling it and thanked him for the opportunity to learn from this instrument during the forty minutes I got to spend with it. I have to admit I fell in love with its sound, from the first. A week later, he called me again and asked if I were interested in buying it. I was speechless. I returned to New York and told this story to as many people I could. Miraculously, there were four extremely generous people who made my dream come true: a couple that chose to stay anonymous, as well as Joseph and Gloria Latona. This wonder changed my perspective on time. I feel extremely humbled to own an historical Romantic flute. I have therefore started a 10-year project in anticipation of my flute's anniversary. In 2030, she is turning 200 years old. I hope to celebrate it with a Schubertiade. Until then, I am committed to record one Schubert program per year with a final goal to perform all of the pieces on her birthday.

About the Artists

Daniel Swenberg plays a wide variety of lutes and guitars of the Baroque, Renaissance, Classical/Romantic periods — small, medium, and large. While based in New York, Daniel schleps instruments throughout North America and Europe to play with a wide range of ensembles: ARTEK, REBEL, The Metropolitan Opera, the Carmel Bach Festival, Mr. Jones & the Engines of Destruction, Opera Atelier/Tafelmusik, The New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, Jordi Savall and Le Concert de Nations, Catacoustic Ensemble, Handel & Hayden, The Green Mountain Project, Tenet, Skid Rococo, the Newberry Consort, Music of the Baroque, Staatstheatre Stuttgart, the Orchestra of St Lukes, and Blah, blah, blah. He has accompanied Renee Fleming and Kathleen Battle at Carnegie Hall. He is on faculty at The Juilliard School's Historical Performance program. Daniel received awards from the Belgian American Educational Foundation (2000) for a study of 18th-century chamber music for the

lute, and a Fulbright Scholarship (1997) to study in Bremen, Germany at the Hochschule für Künste (studying with Stephen Stubbs and Andrew Lawrence King). He studied previously with Pat O'Brien at Mannes College of Music, receiving a Masters degree in Historical Performance (Lute). Prior to this life's incarnation as a lutenist, he studied classical guitar at the North Carolina School of the Arts, and musicology at Washington University (St. Louis). His programming integrates and emphasizes music with the history, sciences, economics, politics, and broader culture of its time.

Siberian flutist **Taya König-Tarasevich** enjoys an international career as soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral performer on historical flutes. While Taya is fluent in English, German, Italian and Russian, she believes that music speaks a language of its own — a language that reaches deep within the listener, touching desires and awakening delights while opening our ears and the eyes of our soul to the depths of beauty. Having mastered Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic and modern flutes, Taya is committed to authentic performances that are faithful to the approach and style of the musical era in which a work was originally composed. Taya is a co-founder of the ensemble VERITÀ, based in Germany. Her successful career spans the globe — from Russia through Europe, to Brazil, New Zealand and the United States, where she recently graduated from The Juilliard School in 2020.

Song Translations

An die Sonne D270 ~ Gabriele von Baumberg (1768–1839)

Sink, dear sun, sink!
End your dusky course, and in your place quickly bid the moon rise.

But, tomorrow come forth more glorious and more beautiful, dear sun!
And with you, bring my love.

Rosamunde 'Der Vollmond strahlt' D797 ~ Wilhelmina Christiane von Chézy (1783–1856)

The full moon beams on the mountain tops;
how I have missed you!
Sweetheart, it is so beautiful
when true love truly kisses.

What are May's fair adornments to me?
You were my ray of spring.
Light of my night, O smile upon me
once more in death.

She entered in the light of the full moon,
and gazed heavenwards.
'In life far away, yet in death yours!'
And gently heart broke upon heart.

Am Fenster D878 ~ Johann Gabriel Seidl (1804–1875)

Dear, familiar walls,
you enclose me within your coolness,
and gaze down with silvery sheen
when the full moon shines above.

Once you saw me here so sad,
head buried in weary hands,
looking only within myself,
understood by no one.

Now a new light has dawned,
the time of sadness is past,
and many join me on my path
through this sacred life.
Chance will never steal them
from my faithful heart;
I carry them deep in my soul,
where fate cannot penetrate.

Well, you imagine I am as gloomy as I once was:
that is my silent joy.
When you reflect the moonlight
my heart swells.

Then I imagine I see at every window
a friendly face, lowered,
that then gazes heavenwards,
thinking of me too.

Nacht und Träume

Holy night, you sink down; down come also dreams;
like thy moonlight through space, through men's silent breasts.
They listen to them with joy. Cry, when day awakes:
"Return, holy night! Sweet dreams, return!"

Mondnacht

It was as though Heaven had softly kissed the Earth,
So that she, in a shimmer, had only to dream of him.

The breeze passed through the fields, the corn swayed gently to and fro,
The forests murmured softly, so star-clear was the night

My soul's wings spread wide,
Across the silent land, as though flying home.

NEXT WEEK: ALBA Consort
Dancing over the Caucasus to the Sea...