

Daniel Chevallier, Tenor and Alto Trombones

Yoko Yamada, Piano

MM Recital #1

23 Oct 2020

Rückert-Lieder (1901):

Gustav Mahler (1860-1911)

1. Blicke mir nicht in die Lieder!
2. Ich atmet' einen linden Duft
3. Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen
4. Liebste du um Schönheit
5. Um Mitternacht

For text and translation, go to:

<https://www.oxfordlieder.co.uk/song/1935>

Concerto for Horn and Orchestra in Bb Major, Op. 91

(1950):

Reinhold Glière (1875-1956)

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. Allegro Vivace

This program represents many months of work -- it was originally going to be given on 17 April, but certain circumstances obviously made that impossible. Nonetheless, I look forward to finally presenting this recital. The two pieces on the program tonight, simply put, are pieces I enjoy listening to and playing, which was a more important quality to me than their status in the canon of trombone repertoire. I hope that after hearing my recital you may think, as I do, that these pieces deserve to be played more by trombonists (difficult as they may be!).

The first piece on the program, Mahler's Rückert-lieder, is the only set of songs Mahler wrote that cannot properly be called a cycle. This collection of 5 songs is (on a surface level) only unified by the single author of the songs' texts, Friedrich Rückert (1788-1866), an early German Romantic poet whose texts also form the basis of Mahler's Kindertotenlieder. Because they are not strictly a cycle, the five songs are treated with some flexibility -- they are often played in different orders and *Liebst du um Schönheit* is sometimes not included, as it was not orchestrated by Mahler himself.

Despite the looser nature of the collection, some underlying themes are still present; most of these songs (and, of course most songs in general) deal with love in some way. When *Liebst du um Schönheit* is excluded (or moved to the end, as is often the case), the four other songs tell a tale of someone who becomes increasingly disillusioned with love (*Blicke mir*) and with the world (*Ich bin der Welt*), before emerging from the darkness (*Um Mitternacht*) after having found faith and divinity. Although one could plausibly assume that this progression is in some way autobiographical, the year in which this was written makes that highly unlikely; Mahler did not experience his darkest periods until years after this was written. Although it's true that Mahler did convert to Christianity as a qualification for the directorship of the Wiener Hofoper

(a couple years before this cycle was written), this was largely a “conversion of convenience”, and Mahler, spiritual as he was throughout his life, leaves us with no evidence that this experience was as profound a conversion as the one experienced by our protagonist in the final song of the set.

I wanted to include *Liebst du um Schönheit* in my performance, and chose to include it between the two heaviest songs, lest no one leave my recital because they have lost all hope. As with most romantic songs, I grew to love these after hearing Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau's recordings of them (notably, the recording with Kubelik and the BRSO, and the recording with Daniel Barenboim at the piano) and I would encourage anyone with even a passing interest in these songs to listen to those.

One can say without a doubt that living in the USSR changed Reinhold Glière's work. His pre-USSR works show a striking modernism, with impressionistic harmonies, strong dissonances, and grand scale. One has only to listen to his third symphony, a musical setting of an old Russian tale, to hear not only the influences of Wagner and the Romantics, but also his evolution from them. However, after the October Revolution and the tumult of the 1920s, Glière emerged as a model of Soviet Populism, whose style largely adhered to the Romantic idiom. It was in this later period that he wrote his concerti, which, along with a short excerpt from his ballet *The Red Poppy* (the Russian Sailors' Dance), today remain some of his more frequently-performed works, although he is a composer that has seen comparatively little performance in western Europe and the US. The Concerto for Horn, though not a groundbreaking modern work by any stretch of the imagination, is nonetheless a highly engaging piece, representing what might be called a culmination of Romanticism in Russia. The piece is

largely known by its performance by dedicatee and premiere soloist, Valery Polekh, whose cadenza remains standard for horn players, although I have written my own cadenza because Polekh's is simply not possible to play on the alto trombone.

I first heard this piece many years ago (in high school, in fact), and have searched for a way to make it possible to play on the trombone for as long as I have known it. It wasn't until I started playing the alto trombone about 2 years ago that I finally had the means to perform this piece. I hope you will enjoy this piece, which I have practically grown up alongside as an alto trombonist.

Thank you to my family, my teachers, and my colleagues, all of whom have in some way made both this recital and my pursuit of music possible. I wish everyone could be in Evanston to hear the recital live, hopefully this will be possible before long.

Wear a mask.

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