

DER TOD, DIE MUSE

MAHLER • MUSSORGSKI • BRAHMS

Cornelia Sonnleithner & Clara Sophia Murnig

Sound engineer & recording manager
Lukas Froschauer

Photos
Agnes Stadlmann

Art Direction & Graphic Design
SVEA & JULIUS | Lovers of the Arts, Annika Ulla Schmid



This album is not a lament, but an expression of emotional intensity.

Death, an end, is always also a new beginning.

The contrast between pain and redemption, loss and longing, the past and the future.

Love, which reveals itself in all its facets through various twists of fate.

Clara Sophia Murnig & Cornelia Sonnleithner

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911)

KINDERTOTENLIEDER

TEXT: FRIEDRICH RÜCKERT (1788-1866)

NOW THE SUN PREPARES TO RISE AS BRIGHTLY (1901)

Now the sun prepares to rise as
brightly,
As though no misfortune had befallen
in the night!
The misfortune befall me alone!
The sun, it shines on all mankind!

You must not enclose the night within
you,
You must immerse it in eternal light.
A little lamp went out in my firmament,
Hail to the joyful light of the world!

NOW I SEE CLEARLY WHY YOU SO OFTEN (1901)

Now I see clearly why you so often
Flashed such dark flames at me.
- O eyes! - To compress, as it were, all
your power
Into a single glance.
Yet I could not guess, for mists sur-
rounded me,
Woven by fate to dazzle me,

That your brightness was already ma-
king for home,
Towards the place whence all light
comes.
With your shining light you were try-
ing to tell me:
We'd dearly love to stay here by your
side,

But this our destiny denies us.
Look at us well, for soon we shall be
far from you!

What now are merely eyes to you,
In nights to come shall be merely
stars.

WHEN YOUR DEAR MOTHER (1901)

When your dear mother
Comes in through the door
And I turn my head
To look at her,
My eyes light first,
Not on her face,
But on that place
Nearer the threshold
Where your
Dear little face would be,
If you, bright-eyed,
Were entering with her,
As you used, my daughter.

When your dear mother
Comes in through the door
With the flickering candle,
I always think
You are coming too,
Stealing in behind her,
As you used.
O you, the joyful light,
Ah, too soon extinguished,
Of your father's flesh and blood!



I OFTEN THINK THEY HAVE ONLY GONE OUT (1904)

I often think they have only gone out,
They will soon be coming home
again,
It is a beautiful day, ah do not be
afraid,
They have only gone for a long walk.
Yes, they have only gone out
And will now be coming home again.

Do not be anxious, it is a beautiful day!
They are only walking to those hills!

They have merely gone on ahead of us
And will not be coming home again.
We shall overtake them on those hills
In the sunshine! The day is beautiful
on those hills.

IN THIS WEATHER, THIS RAGING STORM (1904)

In this weather, this raging storm,
I'd never have let the children out;
But they were carried from the house,
I had no say in the matter.

In this weather, this howling gale,
I'd never have let the children out,
I feared that they would fall ill;
These are now but idle thoughts.

In this weather, this dreadful blast,
I'd never have let the children out.
I feared they might die next day,
There is no cause for such fears now.

In this weather, this raging storm,
I'd never have let the children out;
But they were carried from the house,
I had no say in the matter.

In this weather, this howling gale, this
raging storm,
They rest, as if in their mother's
house.

Protected by God's hand,
They rest, as if in their mother's
house!

MODEST MUSSORGSKI (1839-1881)

SONGS AND DANCES OF DEATH

TEXT: ARSENI GOLENISCHTSCHEW-KUTUZOW (1848-1913)

ULLABY (1875)

A child moans, a candle burns low,
And casts a dim flicker around.
All through the night, her cradle
rocking,
The mother has not slumbered.

Early in the morning, at the door so
gently
Death, the compassionate, knocks!
The mother gives a start, and looks
round in fear...

“Be not afraid, my dear! The pale
light of morn now peeps through the
window,
Weeping, in longing, in love,
Thou hast worn thyself out, now rest
thee awhile,

And I will sit here by his side.
Thou hast not been able to soothe the
poor child,
Sweeter than thou shall I sing.“
“Softly! My child is tossing and
restless,
It grieves my heart thus to see him!“
“Come now, he soon will listen to me.
Hush-a-bye, baby, my own.“
“His dear cheeks are pale, his breath
is failing...
Be silent now, do, I beseech thee!“
“That’s a good sign: soon his suffering
will end.
Hush-a-bye, baby, my own.“

“Get thee away, O accursed one!
The joy of my heart thou wilt destroy.“
“Nay, the sleep of peace will I breathe
on the infant:
Hush-a-bye, baby, my own.“
Have mercy! O tarry, if just for a
moment,
Ere ending that dread song of thine!“
“See now, he sleeps to the singing so
gentle.
Hush-a-bye, baby, my own.“



SERENADE (1875)

The magical languor, the blue of the night,
The trembling twilight of spring...
She listens, the invalid, hanging her head,
To the whisper of night's silent words.

Her eyes, wide and burning, are not closed in slumber,
Life to its joys calls her still!
Yet under her window in the silence of midnight
Death sings his soft serenade:

"In the dark gloom of prison, severe and confining,
Thy youth will fade quite away,
But I, thy unknown knight, with my wondrous power,
Will set thee free.

Rise, look on thyself: with what beauty
Thy face in radiance doth shine,
Thy cheeks so rosy, thy rippling tresses
Veiling thy form like a cloud.

The blue radiance of thine eyes so intense
Is brighter than the skies or fire...
With midday's heat thy breath bloweth o'er me...
Thou hast bewitched me, my love.
Thine ear is captivated by my soft serenade,
Thy whispered words summoned thy knight.
Thy knight has come for his final reward:
The hour of rapture is near.
Fair is thy form, thy tremor entralling,
O, I will clasp thee, my own,
In strongest embraces; to my lays of love
Harken... be still... Thou art mine!"



TREPAK (1875)

In the forest and glades not a soul is in sight...
The blizzard doth wail and howl...
It feels as if in the gloom of the night
The cruel snow is burying some poor man.

Look - so it is!
In the darkness a peasant
By Death is embraced and caressed;
With a drunkard Death dances a trepak together,
And sings in his ear a sweet song:

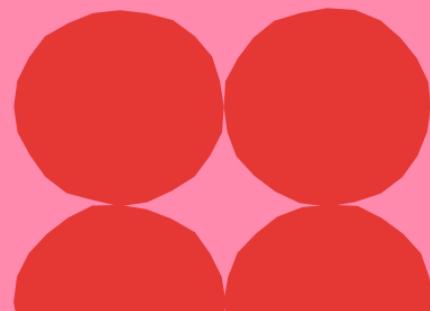
„Hey, poor peasant, thou wretched old man,
Thou hast drunk thyself silly and wandered astray;
But the blizzard, like a witch, rose and played with thee,
From the glades to the forest dense chanced to drive thee.

Through sorrow and grief and want grown weary,
Lie down, rest and sleep, my friend,
And I shall warm thee, my dear, with a cover of snow,
Around thee a fine game will I start.

Shake up the bed, thou swan-like snow!
Hey there, begin, start up a song, wild weather,
A song to last the whole night through,
That this drunkard may sink into sleep to its strains.

O you forests, heavens and clouds,
Darkness, breeze and sweeping snow,
Wrap him in a shroud of softest snow,
And in it like a babe the old man I'll shelter.

Sleep, my friend, my peasant so happy,
Summer has come, and all is in bloom!
O'er the cornfields the sun doth smile and the sickles are swinging,
The song rises up, and the doves are flying!... „



THE FIELD-MARSHAL (1877)

The battle thunders, the armour flashes, the cannons of bronze do roar, The regiments charge, the horses rush by, and red rivers of blood do flow.

Noon burns fierce, the people fight on! When the sun has sunk low, the battle rages fiercer!

Sunset pales, yet the enemies fight on More furiously still and savagely!

And night doth fall on the field of battle.

In the gloom the legions disperse... All is quiet, and in the darkness of night Groans rise up to the sky.

Then, illumined by the light of the moon, On his battle horse astride, His white bones gleaming in the pale light, comes the figure of Death.

And in the quiet, He hears the groans and prayers, And filled with pride and satisfaction, Like a warrior chief, he circles around The place of battle.

Up to a hill he climbs, and looks about, Stops, and gives a smile... And o'er the battle plain

The voice of doom is heard:

„The fight is ended! I have conquered all! Before me you have yielded, warriors all! Life set you at odds, but I joined you in peace! Rise up together for the roll-call of Death!

March in a solemn file all of you before me, my troops I do wish to record. Then later your bones in the earth you may lay, Sweetly to rest from life's toils in the earth!

Year after year will pass by unheeded, And amongst men no memory of you shall remain. But I'll not forget! And over your bones here I'll have a loud feast at midnight's hour!

In the dance's heavy tread upon the damp earth I'll stamp, so the shades of the grave Your bones will never, no never escape, And you'll never rise out of the earth again!“

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

VIER ERNSTE GESÄNGE, OP. 121

FOR THAT WHICH BEFALLETH THE SONS OF MEN (1896)

TEXT: PREDIGER SALOMO, KAP. 3
ECCLESIASTES III.

For that which befaller the sons of men
befallere beasts;
as the one dieth, so dieth the other;
yea, they have all one breath;
so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast;
for all is vanity.

All go unto one place;
all are of dust, and all turn to dust again.
Who knoweth the spirit of man [...] goeth upward
and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?

Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better,
than that a man should rejoice in his own works,
for that is his portion.
For who shall bring him to see what shall happen after him?

SO I RETURNED (1896)

TEXT: PREDIGER SALOMO, KAP. 4
ECCLESIASTES IV.

So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun;
and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter;
and on the side of their oppressors there was power;
but they had no comforter.

Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive.

Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been, who hath not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

O DEATH (1896)

TEXT: JESUS SIRACH, KAP. 41
ECCLESIASTICUS 41.

O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that liveth at rest in his possessions, unto the man that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things; yea, unto him that is yet able to receive meat!

O death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy and unto him whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age, and is vexed with all things, and to him that despaireth, and hath lost patience!



THOUGH I SPEAK WITH THE TONGUES OF MEN (1896)

TEXT: PAULUS AN DIE KORINTHER I., KAP. 13
I. CORINTHIANS XIII.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
and have not charity,
I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy,
and understand all mysteries,
and all knowledge;
and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains,
and have not charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,
and though I give my body to be burned,
it profiteth me nothing...

For now we see through glass, darkly;
but then face to face:
now I know in part,
but then shall I know even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity,
these three;
but the greatest of these is charity.

CORNELIA SONNLEITHNER CONTRALTO

The Vienna-born contralto graduated with honors from the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. She also completed a course in classical operetta at the Music and Arts University of the City of Vienna. Masterclasses with KS Vesselina Kasarova, KS Robert Holl, Charles Spencer, and others enriched her training. Her repertoire includes opera roles such as Eva (*La morte di Abel* by L. Leo), Angelo ("La Decollazione di San Giovanni Battista" by A. M. Bononcini), Storgè ("Jephtha" by G. F. Handel), Tetide ('Acide' by J. Haydn), Hänsel ("Hänsel und Gretel" by E. Humperdinck), Suzuki ("Madama Butterfly" by G. Puccini), Ulrica (*Un ballo in maschera* by G. Verdi), Henri (*Der Opernball* by R. Heuberger), Fortunata (*Satyricon* by B. Madera), as well as oratorios such as J. S. Bach's Mass in B minor, St. Matthew Passion, St. John Passion, and Christmas Oratorio, G. F. Handel's



Messiah, W. A. Mozart's Requiem, F. Mendelssohn Bartholdy's "Elijah," the "Stabat Mater" by G. B. Pergolesi, G. Rossini and A. Dvorák, *Petite Messe solennelle* by G. Rossini, and the 2nd Symphony by G. Mahler. She has sung at the Salzburg Festival, the Zurich Opera House, the Vienna Volksoper, the Vorarlberg State Theater, the Vienna Konzerthaus, the Musikverein Vienna, the Brucknerhaus Linz, the Festspielhaus St. Pölten, the Herbstgold Festival Eisenstadt, the Festival Retz, the Schubertiade, the Alte Oper Frankfurt, the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, the Azore Festival, at the Bach Festival Budapest, at the Mozart Festival Bratislava, at the Philharmonic Hall Lviv in Ukraine, at the Origen Festival Cultural in Switzerland. Further performances took her to Denmark, Belgium, Spain, South Korea, and Japan, among other places. The contralto has worked with conductors such as Adam Fischer, Marco Armiliato, Heinz Ferlesch, Gerrit Prießnitz, Beat Furrer, Luca De Marchi, Ilya Ram, and directors such as Michael Sturminger, Carolin Pienkos, Cornelius Obonya, Otto Schenk, Sven Eric Bechtolf, Wolfgang Dosch, Stefan Otteni, Georg Zlabinger, Giovanni Netzer, Matija Ferlin, Sebastian Hirn, Tatjana Gürbaca, and Vivien Hohnholz. She is also a member of the Austrian ensemble Cantando Admont, which specializes in early and contemporary music and collaborates with renowned composers. The contralto forms a song duo with pianist Clara Sophia Murnig.

Further information at:
www.corneliasonnleithner.com

CLARA SOPHIA MURNIG PIANIST

Austrian pianist Clara Sophia Murnig is performing as a soloist, chamber musician and Lied collaborative pianist. She is specializing in contemporary piano music and a lecturer for piano at the Ludwig van Beethoven Department of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna since 2013.

As a pianist she was guest at Konzerthaus Vienna, at Sage Gateshead (UK), Schönberg Center Vienna, Kultur- & Kongresszentrum Liederhalle Stuttgart (DE), Bernhard Theater Zürich (CHE), Reaktor, Kunststation St. Peter Köln (DE), Bayrischen Akademie oft the fine arts Munich (DE), Edgar Elgar Room of the Royal Albert Hall (UK), Beethovenhaus Baden bei Wien, Brahmsmuseum Mürzschlag, Stift Heiligenkreuz, King Alexei's Place (RU), as well as at festivals such as Wien Modern, Gmundner Festwochen, classic.muerz, Styriarte and Cremona Musica 2017 (ITA).



She is working with the composers Nimrod Borenstein, Violeta Dinescu, Dominik Giesriegl, Nava Hemyari, Peter Jakober and Verena Zeiner und can be heard in duo with the singers Cornelia Sonnleithner, Zacharias Galaviz-Guerra, as well as with violinist Iris Ballot and percussionist Joachim Murnig.

Her pianistic education she received at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna with Ursula Kneihs and Anna Pfeiffer and at the Royal College of Music in London in Piano Accompaniment with Simon Lepper and Roger Vignoles. In 2024, she participated in the International Masterclasses at the Arnold Schönberg Center with KS Ildikó Raimondi and Charles Spencer, as well as in the Lied class at Schloss vor Husum with Ulf Bästlein and Charles Spencer. There, she won the 1st Prize for Lied Duo and the Audience Award together with baritone Zacharias Galaviz-Guerra. She worked as a Samling Artist with Malcolm Martineau, Stephen King and Sir Thomas Allen in 2014, 2012 at the Schubert Institut Baden with Elly Ameling, Helmut Deutsch, Julius

Drake, Bernarda Fink, Robert Holl and Rudolf Jansen. She has been a student at the Viennese Days of Contemporary Piano Music with Helmut Lachenmann and Robert HP Platz, as well as part of the international summer academy of the mdw with Klangforum Wien.

In 2012 she received the STARTStipendium of the Ministry of Education, Art and Culture in the section Music and Performing Arts. She was a scholar of the Lucy Ann Jones Awards of the Royal College of Music and a scholar of the Josef-Krainer-Stipendienfonds of Styria in Austria.

More information at:
www.claramurnig.com

THANK YOU!

We would like to express our special thanks to our families and friends for their support and patience. We would also like to thank everyone who contributed to the creation of this production with their professionalism, commitment, and passion.



