

WIGMORE HALL 125

Tuesday 9 September 2025
7.30pm

Matthias Goerne baritone
David Fray piano

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

From Schwanengesang D957 (1828)

*Liebesbotschaft • Kriegers Ahnung •
Frühlingssehnsucht • Ständchen • Aufenthalt*

Herbst D945 (1828)

From Schwanengesang D957

*In der Ferne • Abschied • Der Atlas •
Ihr Bild • Das Fischermaedchen • Die Stadt •
Am Meer • Der Doppelgänger*

Interval

Piano Sonata in B flat D960 (1828)

*I. Molto moderato • II. Andante sostenuto •
III. Scherzo. Allegro vivace con delicatezza •
IV. Allegro ma non troppo*



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This evening's recital comprises Schubert's original *Schwanengesang* minus 'Die Taubenpost', plus 'Herbst' and his final Piano Sonata – all composed in the final year of his short life. There is a heartrending and pleading letter to Probst, written in October 1828, a month before Schubert's death, offering the publisher the last three Piano Sonatas, the String Quintet and 'several songs by Heine of Hamburg which have given great pleasure here.' Schubert was desperate for funds to pay for his medical treatment, and it was only with the posthumous publication of all these works that he received the recognition and financial rewards that were denied him during his life.

D960 is characterised by those mood swings that affected Schubert throughout his life. Tovey refers to the 'sublime' first movement's 'calmness and breadth' but there is a brooding quality to this music, intensified by those unsettling trills; despite the lyrical section of the *Andante sostenuto*, the movement also seems redolent of a final farewell; the *Scherzo*, though playful, has a chilling turn to the minor; while the *rondo* starts with a wistful dance tune that is then banished in the concluding *presto*. Composed, like the String Quintet and the Heine songs in the last months of his life, D960 was not published until some ten years after Schubert's death.

The seven Rellstab poems from *Schwanengesang* have the distant beloved as their central theme, and it seems more than likely that Schubert, when after Beethoven's death he received the portfolio of Rellstab's verse that had been offered the older composer, chose poems that were united by this common theme, thus forming a tribute to the Beethoven of *An die ferne Geliebte*. '**Liebesbotschaft**' starts in G major, and then passes through E minor, C major, A minor, F major and B, as though Schubert wished to illustrate the distance between the lovers by the multiplicity of keys. '**Kriegers Ahnung**' begins with nine bars of muffled drums, as we are introduced to the soldier who, billeted with his comrades on a battlefield, dreams of his beloved in the knowledge that his imminent death will prevent them ever meeting again. '**Frühlingssehnsucht**' ends with a passionate question and answer: 'Who shall finally quell my longing?/Only you can set free the spring in my heart,/Only you!' Though the poet's 'Nur du!' is repeated four times, the last two to an *ff* dynamic, there is no final flourish; instead, the broken B flat major chords limp to a close with a suggestion of E flat minor, as we realise that the poet is alone. A similar melancholy informs '**Ständchen**'. Although the song begins brightly enough with staccato quavers that suggest a plectrum-plucked guitar, the key is minor and all four verses are touched with a sense of vulnerability. The distant beloved seems present in every bar of '**Aufenthalt**', an anguished outpouring in which the outcast and fugitive expresses his torment in E minor, Schubert's key of sadness and depression. '**In der**

Ferne' presents us with an emotional wreck, whose distressed mental state is wonderfully conveyed by Schubert at the end of the first verse where the vocal line plunges a fifth on the repeated 'Wegen nach' ('No blessing follows him on his way'). Though the song ends in a fortissimo crescendo, the final *ffz* tells us that there can be no solace or cure. '**Abschied**' is marked *mässig geschwind*, which means that he does not leave the town at breakneck speed, as some singers and pianists insist. Nor is this a merry farewell. The last verse, in particular, is full of foreboding – the stars are commanded to 'veil themselves in grey', and the lover tells us that he has been forced to leave the town. '**Herbst**', not included in *Schwanengesang*, was not published till 1895. The success of this wonderful song is partly due to the astonishing way the autumnal winds are suggested by the minor third semiquavers that oscillate in the piano's right hand, while the left hand plays a motif that chills the heart.

The Heine songs from the *Schwanengesang* manuscript follow on from the Rellstab settings. '**Der Atlas**' calls for a dynamic range from *pp* to *fff* to express the suffering of Atlas, who fought for the Titans against Zeus, was defeated and condemned to carry the weight of the world on his shoulders. The bleakness of '**Ihr Bild**' is achieved in a mere 36 bars – a distillation of despair conveyed by bare octaves and a modulation at 'ihre Lippen' from B minor to G flat major that provides an illusory solace which is immediately dashed as minor reasserts itself. '**Das Fischermädchen**' is not the blithe barcarolle it is sometimes claimed to be. The abrupt shift from C flat to B flat in stanza two and the repetition of the final word of each verse as a slurred seventh successfully convey the irony of Heine's verse. The short prelude of '**Die Stadt**' repeats in the bass the bare octaves of '**Ihr Bild**', while the scurrying diminished sevenths of the right hand 17 times convey the gusting wind – without resolution. A lonely low C on the piano brings the chilling song to a close. The serene diatonic opening of '**Am Meer**' is followed by a tormented, chromatic stanza whose tremolando chords depict the rising tide, the mist and the poet's grief. Heine's bitter last line is caught to perfection by Schubert's slow ironic turn on '**Tränen**'. The same device closes '**Der Doppelgänger**', the bleakest song – or rather declamation – in Schubert. The resemblance between the four-note theme of the opening bars to the *Agnus Dei* of Schubert's E flat Mass, composed in June of the same year, tells us which way Schubert's thoughts were turning. His art, with this intensely dramatic declamation, was turning prophetically towards Wagner and Wolf.

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Richard's new book, *A Carl Loewe Song Companion* (Bittern Press), will be launched at Wigmore Hall on 10 October 2026.

Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

From
Schwanengesang
D957 (1828)

Liebesbotschaft
Ludwig Rellstab

Rauschendes Bächlein,
So silbern und hell,
Eilst zur Geliebten
So munter und schnell?
Ach, trautes Bächlein,
Mein Bote sei Du;
Bringe die Grüsse
Des Fernen ihr zu.

All' ihre Blumen
Im Garten gepflegt,
Die sie so lieblich
Am Busen trägt,
Und ihre Rosen
In purpurner Glut,
Bächlein, erquicke
Mit kühlender Flut.

Wenn sie am Ufer,
In Träume versenkt,
Meiner gedenkend
Das Köpfchen hängt;
Tröste die Süsse
Mit freundlichem Blick,
Denn der Geliebte
Kehrt bald zurück.

Neigt sich die Sonne
Mit rötlichem Schein,
Wiege das Liebchen
In Schlummer ein.
Rausche sie murmelnd
In süsse Ruh,
Flüstre ihr Träume
Der Liebe zu.

From Swansong

Love's message

Murmuring brooklet,
so silver and bright,
is it to my love
you rush with such glee?
Ah, be my messenger,
beloved brooklet;
bring her greetings
from her distant love.

All the flowers
she tends in her garden,
and wears with such grace
on her breast,
and her roses
in their crimson glow –
brooklet, refresh them
with your cooling waves.

When on your bank,
lost in dreams,
she inclines her head
as she thinks of me –
comfort my sweetest
with a kindly look,
for her lover
will soon return.

And when the sun sets
in a reddish glow,
rock my sweetheart
into slumber.
Murmur her
into sweet repose,
whisper her
dreams of love.

Kriegers Ahnung

Ludwig Rellstab

In tiefer Ruh liegt um mich
her
Der Waffenbrüder Kreis;
Mir ist das Herz so bang und
schwer,
Von Sehnsucht mir so heiss.

Wie hab' ich oft so süß
geträumt
An ihrem Busen warm!
Wie freundlich schien des
Herdes Glut,
Lag sie in meinem Arm!

Hier, wo der Flammen
düstrer Schein
Ach! nur auf Waffen
spielt,
Hier fühlt die Brust sich ganz
allein,
Der Wehmut Träne quillt.

Herz! Dass der Trost Dich
nicht verlässt!
Es ruft noch manche Schlacht.
Bald ruh' ich wohl und
schlafe fest,
Herzliebste – Gute Nacht!

Warrior's foreboding

Ludwig Rellstab

In deep repose my
brothers-in-arms
lie round me in a circle;
my heart's so heavy and
afraid,
so afire with longing.

How often have I dreamt
sweet dreams,
resting on her warm breast!
How welcoming the fire's
glow seemed,
when she lay in my arms!

Here, where the flames'
sombre glow
plays merely, alas, on
weapons,
here the heart feels quite
alone,
a tear of sadness wells.

O heart, may comfort not
abandon you!
Many a battle still calls.
I shall soon be at rest and
fast asleep,
sweetest love – good night!

Frühlingssehnsucht

Ludwig Rellstab

Säuselnde Lüfte
Wehend so mild,
Blumiger Düfte
Atmend erfüllt!
Wie haucht ihr mich wonnig
begrüssend an!
Wie habt ihr dem
pochenden Herzen getan?
Es möchte Euch folgen auf
luftiger Bahn!
Wohin?

Bächlein, so munter
Rauschend zumal,
Wollen hinunter
Silbern ins Tal.
Die schwebende Welle, dort
eilt sie dahin!
Tief spiegeln sich Fluren und
Himmel darin.
Was ziehst Du mich, sehnend
verlangender Sinn,
Hinab?

Grüssender Sonne
Spielendes Gold,
Hoffende Wonne
Bringest Du hold.
Wie labt mich Dein selig
begrüssendes Bild!
Es lächelt am tiefblauen
Himmel so mild
Und hat mir das Auge mit
Tränen gefüllt!
Warum?

Grünend umkränzet
Wälder und Höh'
Schimmernd erglänzet
Blütenschnee!
So dränget sich Alles zum
bräutlichen Licht;
Es schwellen die Keime, die
Knospe bricht;
Sie haben gefunden was
ihnen gebriicht:
Und Du?

Rastloses Sehnen!
Wünschendes Herz,
Immer nur Tränen,
Klage und Schmerz?
Auch ich bin mir schwellender
Trieben bewusst!
Wer stillet mir endlich die
drängende Lust?
Nur Du befreist den Lenz in
der Brust,
Nur Du!

Spring longing

Whispering breezes
blowing so gently,
filled with the fragrant
breath of flowers!
How blissfully you greet
me and breathe on me!
What have you done to
my pounding heart?
It yearns to follow your
airy path!
But where?

Silvery brooklets,
murmuring so bright,
cascade down
to the valley below!
The ripples glide swiftly
that way,
reflecting earth and sky in
their depths.
Why, longing desire, do
you draw
me down?

The welcoming sun's
glittering gold,
the bliss of hope,
all this you sweetly bring.
How your rapturous
greeting refreshes me!
It smiles so gently in the
deep blue sky
and has filled my eyes
with tears!
But why?

The woods and hills
are wreathed in green!
The snowy blossom
shimmers and gleams!
All things reach out to the
bridal light;
seeds are swelling, buds
are bursting;
they have found what
they once lacked:
and you?

Ständchen

Ludwig Rellstab

Leise flehen meine Lieder
Durch die Nacht zu Dir;
In den stillen Hain hernieder,
Liebchen, komm' zu mir!

Flüsternd schlante Wipfel
rauschen
In des Mondes
Licht;
Des Verräters feindlich
Lauschen
Fürchte, Holde, nicht.

Hörst die Nachtigallen
schlagen?
Ach! sie flehen Dich,
Mit der Töne süßen
Klagen
Flehen sie für mich.

Sie verstehn des Busens
Sehnen,
Kennen Liebesschmerz,
Rühren mit den
Silbertönen
Jedes weiche Herz.

Lass auch *Dir* die Brust
bewegen,
Liebchen, höre mich!
Bebend harr' ich Dir entgegen!
Komm', beglücke mich!

Serenade

Softly my songs implore you
through the night;
come down to me, my love,
into the silent grove!

Slender tree-tops
whisper
and murmur in the
moonlight;
do not fear, my
sweetest,
any eavesdropping enemy.

Can you hear the
nightingales call?
Ah! they are imploring you,
with their sweet and
plaintive songs
they are imploring for me.

They understand the
heart's longing,
they know the pain of love,
they touch with their
silver notes
every tender heart.

Let your heart too be
moved,
listen to me, my love!
Quivering, I wait for you!
Come – make me happy!

Aufenthalt

Ludwig Rellstab

Rauschender Storm,
Brausender Wald,
Starrender Fels
Mein Aufenthalt.

Wie sich die Welle
An Welle reiht,
Fließen die Tränen
Mir ewig erneut.

Hoch in den Kronen
Wogend sich's regt,
So unaufhörlich
Mein Herze schlägt.

Und wie des Felsen
Uraltes Erz,
Ewig derselbe
Bleibet mein Schmerz.

Rauschender Storm,
Brausender Wald,
Starrender Fels
Mein Aufenthalt.

Resting place

Thundering river,
raging forest,
unyielding rock,
my resting place.

As wave
follows wave,
so my tears
flow on and on.

As the high tree-tops
stir and bend,
so my heart pounds
without respite.

Like the rock's
age-old ore,
my grief remains
forever the same.

Thundering river,
raging forest,
unyielding rock,
my resting place.

Herbst D945 (1828)

Ludwig Rellstab

Es rauschen die Winde
So herbstlich und kalt;
Verödet die Fluren,
Entblättert der Wald.
Ihr blumigen Auen!
Du sonniges Grün!
So welken die Blüten
Des Lebens dahin.

Es ziehen die Wolken
So finster und grau;
Verschwunden die Sterne
Am himmlischen Blau!
Ach, wie die Gestirne
Am Himmel entfliehn,
So sinket die Hoffnung
Des Lebens dahin!

Ihr Tage des Lenzes
Mit Rosen geschmückt,
Wo ich die Geliebte
Ans Herze gedrückt!
Kalt über den Hügel
Rauscht, Winde, dahin!
So sterben die Rosen
Der Liebe dahin.

From

Schwanengesang

D957

In der Ferne

Ludwig Rellstab

Wehe dem Fliehenden
Welt hinaus
ziehenden! –
Fremde durchmessenden,
Heimat vergessenden,
Mutterhaus hassenden,
Freunde verlassenden
Folget kein Segen, ach!
Auf ihren Wegen nach!

Herze, das sehnende,
Auge, das tränende,
Sehnsucht, nie endende,
Heimwärts sich wendende!
Busen, der wallende,
Klage, verhallende,
Abendstern, blinkender,
Hoffnungslos sinkender!

Lüfte, ihr säuselnden,
Wellen sanft kräuselnden,
Sonnenstrahl, eilender,
Nirgend verweilender:
Die mir mit Schmerze,
ach!
Dies treue Herze brach, –
Grüßt von dem Fliehenden
Welt hinaus ziehenden!

From Swansong

Far away

Woe to the fugitive,
who sets out into the
world! –
Who roams foreign parts,
who forgets his fatherland,
who hates his family home,
who forsakes his friends –
alas, no blessing follows him
on his way!

The yearning heart,
the weeping eyes,
the endless longing,
the turning for home!
The swelling breast,
the fading lament,
the glittering evening star,
sinking without hope!

You whispering breezes,
you gently ruffled waves,
you fleeting sunbeams,
you who never linger:
ah! send greetings to her
who broke
this faithful heart with pain –
from the fugitive,
from one who sets out
into the world!

Autumn

The winds are blowing
so autumnal and cold;
the fields are barren,
leafless the woods
You blossoming meadows!
You sunlit green!
Thus do life's blossoms
wither away.

The clouds drift by
so sombre and grey;
the stars have faded
from the heavenly blue!
Ah, as the stars
flee from the sky,
thus does life's hope
fade away!

You days of spring
adorned with roses,
when I pressed my beloved
against my heart!
Howl on, chill winds,
across the hills!
Thus do love's roses
die away.

Abschied

Ludwig Rellstab

Ade, Du munstre, Du
fröhliche Stadt, Ade!
Schon scharret mein
Rösslein mit lustigem Fuss;
Jetzt nimm noch den letzten,
den scheidenden Gruss.
Du hast mich wohl niemals
noch traurig gesehn,
So kann es auch jetzt nicht
beim Abschied geschehn.
Ade, Du munstre, Du
fröhliche Stadt, Ade!

Ade, ihr Bäume, ihr Gärten
so grün, Ade!
Nun reit' ich am silbernen
Strome entlang,
Weit schallend ertönet mein
Abschiedsgesang;
Nie habt ihr ein trauriges
Lied gehört,
So wird euch auch keines
beim Scheiden beschert.
Ade ...

Ade, ihr freundlichen
Mägdlein dort, Ade!
Was schaut ihr aus
blumenumduftetem Haus
Mit schelmischen,
lockenden Blicken heraus?
Wie sonst, so grüss' ich und
schau mich um,
Doch nimmer wend' ich
mein Rösslein um.
Ade ...

Ade, liebe Sonne, so gehst
Du zur Ruh', Ade!
Nun schimmert der
blinkenden Sterne Gold.
Wie bin ich euch Sternlein
am Himmel so hold;
Durchziehn wir die Welt
auch weit und breit,
Ihr gebt überall uns das
treue Geleit.
Ade ...

Ade, Du schimmerndes
Fensterlein hell, Ade!
Du glänzest so traurlich mit
dämmerndem Schein
Und ladest so freundlich ins
Hüttchen uns ein.
Vorüber, ach, ritt ich so
manches Mal
Und wär' es denn heute zum
letzten Mal?
Ade ...

Farewell

Farewell, lively, cheerful
town, farewell!
My horse is happily
pawing the ground;
accept now my final
farewell.
Never yet have you seen
me sad,
nor shall you now at
parting.
Farewell, lively, cheerful
town, farewell!

Farewell, trees and gardens
so green, farewell!
Now I ride by the silvery
stream,
my farewell song echoes
far and wide;
you've never heard a sad
song yet,
nor shall you now I'm
leaving.
Farewell ...

Farewell, you friendly
maidens there, farewell!
Why do you gaze from
flower-fragrant houses
with such roguish and
enticing eyes?
I greet you as always and
turn my head,
but never again shall I
turn back my horse.
Farewell ...

Farewell, dear sun, as you
sink to rest, farewell!
The stars now glitter in
shimmering gold.
How I love you, little stars
in the sky;
though we travel the whole
world far and wide,
you always serve us as
faithful guides.
Farewell ...

Farewell, gleaming little
window so bright, farewell!
Your faint light has such a
homely gleam,
which kindly invites us
into the cottage.
Ah, I've ridden past so
many a time,
and might it today then
be the last?
Farewell ...

Ade, ihr Sterne, verhülltet
Euch grau! Ade!
Des Fensterlein trübes,
verschimmerndes Licht
ersetzt ihr unzähligen
Sterne mir nicht;
Darf ich hier nicht weilen,
muss hier vorbei,
Was hilft es, folgt ihr mir
noch so treu!
Ade, ihr Sterne, verhülltet
Euch grau! Ade!

Farewell, stars, veil yourself
in grey! Farewell!
You countless stars
cannot replace
the little window's fading
light;
if I can't linger here, if I
have to ride on,
what use are you, however
faithfully you follow!
Farewell, stars, veil yourself
in grey! Farewell!

Der Atlas

Heinrich Heine

Ich unglücksel'ger Atlas!
eine Welt,
Die ganze Welt der Schmerzen,
muss ich tragen,
Ich trage Unerträgliches,
und brechen
Will mir das Herz im Leibe.

Du stolzes Herz! du hast es
ja gewollt!
Du wolltest glücklich sein,
unendlich glücklich,
Oder unendlich elend,
stolzes Herz,
Und jetzo bist du elend.

Atlas

I, unfortunate Atlas! a
world,
the whole world of sorrow
I must bear,
I bear what cannot be
borne, and my heart
would break in my body.

You proud heart! you
willed it so!
You wished to be happy,
endlessly happy,
or endlessly wretched,
proud heart,
and now you are wretched.

Ihr Bild

Heinrich Heine

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen,
Und starrt' ihr Bildnis an,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
Heimlich zu leben begann.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,
Und wie von Wehmutstränen
Erlänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Auch meine Tränen flossen
Mir von den Wangen
herab –
Und ach, ich kann es nicht
glauben,
Dass ich dich verloren hab'!

Her likeness

I stood in dark dreams,
and gazed at her likeness,
and that beloved face
sprang mysteriously to life.

A wonderful smile played
about her lips,
and her eyes glistened,
as though with sad tears.

My tears too
streamed down my
cheeks –
and ah, I cannot
believe
I have lost you!

Das Fischermädchen

Heinrich Heine

Du schönes Fischermädchen,
Treibe den Kahn ans Land;
Komm zu mir und setze dich
nieder,
Wir kosen Hand in Hand.

Leg' an mein Herz dein
Köpfchen,
Und fürchte dich nicht zu sehr;
Vertraust du dich doch
sorglos
Täglich dem wilden Meer.

Mein Herz gleicht ganz dem
Meere,
Hat Sturm und Ebb' und
Flut,
Und manche schöne Perle
In seiner Tiefe ruht.

The fishermaiden

You lovely fishermaiden,
row your boat ashore;
come and sit down by my
side,
hand in hand we'll cuddle.

Lay your little head on my
heart
and don't be too afraid;
each day, after all, you
trust yourself
fearlessly to the raging sea.

My heart's just like the
sea,
it storms and ebbs and
floods,
and many lovely pearls
are resting in its depths.

Die Stadt

Heinrich Heine

Am fernen Horizonte
Erscheint, wie ein Nebelbild,
Die Stadt mit ihren Türmen
In Abenddämmerung gehüllt.

Ein feuchter Windzug kräuselt
Die graue Wasserbahn;
Mit traurigem Takte
rudert
Der Schiffer in meinem
Kahn.

Die Sonne hebt sich noch
einmal
Leuchtend vom Boden empor,
Und zeigt mir jene Stelle,
Wo ich das Liebste
verlor.

The town

On the distant horizon
the town with its turrets
looms like a misty vision,
veiled in evening light.

A dank breeze ruffles
the gloomy waterway;
with sad and measured
strokes
the boatman rows my
boat.

The sun rises once
again,
gleaming from the earth,
and shows me that place
where I lost what I loved
most.

Am Meer

Heinrich Heine

Das Meer erglänzte weit
hinaus
Im letzten Abendschein;
Wir sassen am einsamen
Fischerhaus,
Wir sassen stumm und
alleine.

By the sea

The sea gleamed far and
wide
in the last evening light;
we sat by the fisherman's
lonely hut,
we sat in silence and
alone.

Der Nebel stieg, das Wasser
schwoll,

Die Möwe flog hin und wieder;
Aus deinen Augen liebevoll
Fielen die Tränen nieder.

Ich sah sie fallen auf deine
Hand,
Und bin aufs Knie gesunken;
Ich hab' von deiner weissen
Hand
Die Tränen fortgetrunken.

Seit jener Stunde verzehrt
sich mein Leib,
Die Seele stirbt vor
Sehnen; –
Mich hat das unglücksel'ge
Weib
Vergiftet mit ihren
Tränen.

The mist lifted, the water
rose,

the gull flew to and fro;
from your loving eyes
the tears began to fall.

I watched them fall on
your hand,
and sank upon to my knee;
from your white
hand
I drank away the tears.

Since that hour my body
wastes,
my soul expires with
longing;
that unhappy
woman
has poisoned me with her
tears.

Der Doppelgänger

Heinrich Heine

Still ist die Nacht, es ruhen
die Gassen,
In diesem Hause wohnte
mein Schatz;
Sie hat schon längst die
Stadt verlassen,
Doch steht noch das Haus
auf demselben Platz.

Da steht auch ein Mensch
und starrt in die Höhe,
Und ringt die Hände, vor
Schmerzensgewalt;
Mir graust es, wenn ich sein
Antlitz sehe, –
Der Mond zeigt mir meine
eigne Gestalt.

Du Doppelgänger! du
bleicher Geselle!
Was äffst du nach mein
Liebesleid,
Das mich gequält auf dieser
Stelle,
So manche Nacht, in alter
Zeit?

The night is still, the
streets are at rest,
this is the house where
my loved-one lived;
she left the town long
ago,
but the house still stands
in the same place.

A man stands there too,
and stares up,
wracked with pain, he
wrings his hands;
I shudder when I see his
face –
the moon shows me my
own form.

You wraith! You pale
companion!
Why do you ape the pain
of love
that tormented me on
this same spot,
so many nights in times
gone by?

Interval

Piano Sonata in B flat D960 (1828)

- I. Molto moderato*
- II. Andante sostenuto*
- III. Scherzo. Allegro vivace con delicatezza*
- IV. Allegro ma non troppo*