«A Sylvia» (An Silvia) D 891 Franz Schubert · Lied for voice and piano (1826), setting words by William Shakespeare – Second Year of Middle School

The Lied at a glance Element Description

Composer Franz Schubert (Vienna, 1797–1828)

Year 1826

Text Song from the comedy I due gentiluomini di Verona (Act IV, Scene 2) by William Shakespeare, translated into German by Eduard von Bauernfeld

Performing forces Voice and piano t o Form Simple (strophic) Lied: three verses set to the same music

l l a ve Key and tempo A major, Mäßig (moderate), 2/4

The story behind the song Po In Shakespeare's comedy, the young Proteo arranges a serenade beneath Silvia's window

l la to win her heart: musicians sing this song, praising her beauty,

t e kindness and wisdom. According to a story passed down by his friends, Schubert read the words in a beer hall and immediately wrote the melody on the back of the menu.

r i s The text: original and translation a English (Shakespeare) M German (Bauernfeld, English translation of the Italian version

Who is Silvia? what is she, b y sung in Schubert's setting)

Was ist Silvia, saget an, Who is Silvia? What is she, That all our swains commend her? ♥ Dass sie die weite Flur preist? that all our shepherds Schön und zart seh' ich sie praise her?

i t h Holy, fair and wise is she; The heaven such grace did lend nahn, She is pure, beautiful and wise; Auf Himmels Gunst und Spur heaven has given her such grace her, w weist, so that she might be admired.

d e That she might admirèd be. Dass ihr alles untertan.

a Is she kind as she is fair? Ist sie schön und gut dazu? Is she as kind as she is beautiful? For beauty lives with kindness. Reiz labt wie milde Kindheit; For beauty lives with kindness. MLove doth to her eyes repair, Ihrem Aug' eilt Amor zu, Love rushes to her eyes To help him of his blindness; Dort heilt er seine Blindheit to cure his blindness, And, being help'd, inhabits Und verweilt in süßer Ruh'. and, once cured, stays to live there. there.

Then to Silvia let us sing, Darum Silvia, tön', o Sang, Then let us sing to Silvia, That Silvia is excelling; Der holden Silvia Ehren; for Silvia is the most excellent; She excels each mortal thing Jeden Reiz besiegt sie lang, she surpasses every mortal creature Upon the dull earth dwelling: Den Erde kann gewähren: living on the grey earth: To her let us garlands bring. Kränze ihr und Saitenklang! let us bring her garlands of flowers.

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Let's listen: what to notice Element What you hear

Piano A short introduction; chords with repeated, detached notes (staccato), recalling a lute or a guitar accompanying a serenade

Bass A moving bass line that responds to the voice, like a short conversation

Melody Simple, elegant and songlike, easy to remember

Verses Three verses with the same music: the music does not change, only the words do

Mood expressed Admiration, tenderness, peacefulness

Activities 1. How many times do you hear the same music repeated? Why is it called a «strophic» Lied? 2. What t o does the piano do while the voice is singing? 3. Which of Silvia's qualities are praised? 4. l l a ve Write a verse in Italian praising a person (or a place) you admire.

Po _____
_____
_____

l la _____

t e _____

Self-assessment r i s ☐ I know the story behind Shakespeare's text a ☐ I know what a Lied is ☐ I can recognise strophic form ☐ I can explain the piano's role

M b y ♥ i t h w d e a M

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