



Franz Schubert

Des Teufels Lustschloss

(The Devil's Pleasure Castle)

And. con fuoco. 1. All. con tempo. Sing. aff. Chorus Oct. 8th October 1873

Overture

Violins I
Violins II
Viola
Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in C
Bassoon
Horn I
Horn II
Trombone I
Trombone II
Violoncello
Double Bass

Programme & Libretto
May 3rd 1997
United Reformed Church, Highgate



OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE MUSICAL CLUB

in association with University College Chamber Music Club



Concert No 1782

Chorus

Soprano

Margaret Bond
Margot Boss
Christine Fisher
Cynthia McLaren
Jane Nelson

Alto

Sharon Colback
Rachel Goodkin
Margaret Jackson-Roberts
(also tenor)

Tenor

Paul Allatt
Brian Biandford
John Elton
Ian Watson

Bass

Martin Chang
Michael Drake
William Emery
Anthony Hetherington
John Lee
Giles de la Mare
Michael Scott
Peter Sowerby
Music Preparation
Evelyn Chadwick, Alan Reddish
Anthony McCarthy

Orchestra

Violins

Evelyn Chadwick (leader)
Margaret Banwell
Eileen Bell
Tom Kiidzia
Rachael Maher
Cecily Mendelssohn

Joanna Pieters

Hugh Thomas

Violas

Robert Behrman
Patrick Cafferkey
Keith Daley

Cellos

Laura Forbes
Philip Luck
Juliet Solomon

Bass

Christopher Patey

Flutes

Christopher Wyatt
William Phipps

Oboes

Malcolm Turner
Nicholas Murray

Clarinets

Deborah Smith
Richard Proudfoot

Bassoons

Glyn Williams
Ruth Grace

Horns

Peter Kaldor
Joanna Thirsk
Alison Knight

Timpani

Andrew Westlake

Trumpets

Frank Burgum
Peter Ramage

Trombones

Chris Hoepelman
Peter Heppiewhite

Evelyn Chadwick: recitals in England, Germany, Poland, Canada, USA, Brazil, Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa; London Mozart Players, other London and Midlands orchestras; frequent contributor to *The Strad*.

Christina Clarke: Lieder prize at RCM, studied in Berlin, member of Deller and Purcell consorts; declined Opera North contract for family reasons and now based in Lincolnshire leading own consort; recent *Gloriana*, Verdi requiem, *Carmen* etc

Michael Crowe: psychiatrist and chamber choir singer with recent operatic appearances as Figaro, Kecal, Mephistopheles etc.

Onone Forrester: versatile concert and operatic mezzo: Verdi requiem, *Ulrika*, *Azucena* etc; interested in new works, many 1st performances.

Carl Gombrich: maths and physics teacher, now Morley Opera, starting professional career.

Margaret Jackson-Roberts: counter-alto, sings alto or tenor interchangeably. Has voice, will travel (geographically or historically).

David Kirby-Ashmore: operatic roles for ENO, WNO and abroad; recent Masetto for Opera de Nantes, Figaro (*The Barber*) in Holland Park Festival and world tour as Rigoletto; Bartolo and Papageno later this year.

Lyn Parkyns: soprano, pianist and conductor, with particular interest in unusual and polychoral (one voice to a part) music; has sung professionally in most European countries, including several first performances.

Colin Pinney: actor in BBC Radio Drama Company and TV: Shakespeare, Shaw, *The Bill* etc; director here and in America; poetry/biography performances (*Brontës*, Dylan Thomas, Yeats etc) at National Portrait Gallery, Kenwood and elsewhere.

Ian Priestley: former industrial biochemist turned professional tenor. No engagement too trivial.

Alan Reddish: retired industrial and academic scientist; pianist, conductor and musical explorer.

Des Teufels Lustschloss

(The Devil's pleasure-castle)

A natural magic-opera in three acts

by Kotzebue

Music by Franz Schubert

Cast in order of appearance



Robert, servant to
David Kirby-Ashmore



Oswald,
Ritter von Scharfeneck
Ian Priestley



Luitgarde
his wife
Lyn Parkyns



An Amazon
Oenone Forrester



4 statues
Margaret Jackson-Roberts
Paul Allatt
Michael Crowe
Carl Gombrich



an esquire



An old slave
William Emery



Knights, pages, followers, nobles, servants, peasants, etc.

chorus & orchestra (leader: Evelyn Chadwick)

conducted by Alan Reddish

illustrations by Evelyn Chadwick

Des Teufels Lustschloss

Schubert began work on this, the first of his fifteen operas, on 30th October 1813, two days after finishing the D major symphony. He was 16 and had just left the Imperial Seminary. Almost four years of school-teaching lay ahead of him, a profession he longed to escape as soon as possible. To do this he had to register a success and this could only be done in the field of opera. The first and revised versions took him exactly a year. On the title page he pays tribute to his teacher, the much maligned Salieri, who, in addition to Mozart, also taught Beethoven and Liszt.

Schubert was in a hurry and seized on the first available libretto, sub-titled 'a natural magic-opera', by the notorious Baron August von Kotzebue. Einstein describes it as 'a masterpiece of sheer banality'. A German literary historian has this to say about Kotzebue: 'No one assessed so accurately the common instincts of the people, no one could pander to them so cleverly.... In Kotzebue the moral tendency gives place to an apotheosis of licentiousness, masquerading under the guise of virtue. Sentimental indulgence and cheap emotion are allowed to undermine the traditional ideas of morality, and generally accepted rules of conduct are ridiculed as mere European prejudice. His caricature of humanism weakens every tragic conflict; and he is at pains to parade vice and misery before us in all their nakedness.' This may be a little harsh, because he wrote exactly what the German public and Viennese audiences wanted. When Schubert had finished the opera he discovered Goethe and wrote *Gretchen am Spinnrade*. As Einstein has said, 'Schubert submitted to a text which as a song-writer he would not have touched with a barge-pole.'

He wrote the score out in full and thoroughly revised it. Einstein again: 'It is something of an embarrassment for us to see such a wealth of fine detail lavished on a work which is in reality nothing more than an operatic exercise. But as an exercise piece it is so good that it is frankly heart-breaking to see so much purely musical imagination coupled with so naive a dramatic technique..... Its models, *Don Giovanni* and *Die Zauberflöte*, are unmistakable.'

In 1822 he gave the opera to his friend Josef Hüttenbrenner as security for a debt. Hüttenbrenner had offered it to the Kärtner-Tor Theatre, to Holbein, the director of the Prague Opera and to the composer, Peter von Winter. Only Holbein showed any interest and asked for the score. Part of the debt was Diabelli's fee (90 florins) for copying the opera and Schubert could only afford 15 florins. He does not seem to have held out any hopes for Hüttenbrenner's efforts, saying with his usual modesty, 'that man is pleased with anything of mine'. It was not performed in Prague or anywhere else.

The original of the manuscript was one of the works Grove found during his visit to Vienna in 1867 with Arthur Sullivan when they discovered the missing parts of *Rosamunde* and spent much of the night copying them out.

Charles Chadwick



The case for reviving *Des Teufels Lustschloss*

The simplest argument is a basic one: here is a substantial work by a great composer that none of us has ever heard. In this bicentenary year especially, simple affection and curiosity leads us to seek an opportunity to make our own judgment, whatever the earnest pronouncements of earlier authorities. But is there a stronger case to be made, for intrinsic qualities in the music, perhaps for Schubert's nascent dramatic sense, even perhaps for the much-maligned libretto?

As for the music, there is not a bar which does not show 'that Herr Franz Schubert has completely learned the art of composition and has already furnished very good compositions both for the church and for the stage', as Salieri wrote in a reference for him in 1819. But beyond mere competence, and the clear influence not only of Mozart and Gluck but also already of Beethoven (whose final revision of *Fidelio* appeared during the writing of this opera in 1814), there are endless distinctive felicities: constant melodic invention, bold modulations and complex orchestral textures. Among evident high points are the overture, the revelation of the Amazon, Luitgarde's third-act aria of despair, the concluding canon for the three principals - no doubt the experience of performance will further reveal the charm of the simpler arias and the dramatic excitement of the more extended set-pieces.

Dramatic inexperience is always held to be the reason for Schubert's failure to write the successful German romantic opera that his near-contemporary Weber was to achieve so notably in *Der Freischütz*. Certainly he lacks that sure-footed sense of theatrical timing which was second nature to Weber. But there is no lack of response to dramatic situation, and at the very least the language Schubert chooses for its expression is a valuable clue to the emotional code of his later instrumental works.

Finally, the libretto: of course it's absurd, but no more so than that of a thousand B-movies and comic strips that continue to appeal widely to this day. Kotzebue was primarily a playwright, who had written this and other opera librettos fairly unwillingly for his Bohemian composer friend, Ignaz Walter, one of Mozart's singers. It is something of a parody of the fashionable 'machine-comedies' of the time, which depended on spectacular theatrical effects, as the denouement shows. There is no sign that Schubert himself treated it as parody however - but the young man who was to delight in the adventure novels of Fenimore Cooper need not be thought to be superior to such exciting tales of derring-do.

A final note about the title: if translated literally as 'The devil's pleasure castle' it perhaps gives too strong an impression of gross sensuality - perhaps a nearer equivalent is only 'The devil's country retreat'.

The performing version used is that of the 1888 Schubert complete edition edited by J.N. Fuchs. He combined the whole surviving part of Schubert's second version (Acts I and III) with Act II from the first version, adding a few missing instrumental parts in one number. The new Schubert complete edition provides both versions for comparison.

Alan Reddish

