

# Autumnal “Winterreise” in the version for string trio and medium voice

by Renate Publig

## Franz Schubert’s Winterreise in September?

Why not. Schubert’s unsurpassed cycle is relevant also outside the eponymous season. Ultimately the crunching snow under the shoes, the bursting ice and the bitter cold symbolize the ‘wanderer’s’ emotional state.



## Version for String Trio and Medium Voice

It is a change for performers as well as for listeners to experience this work accompanied by string instruments instead of Schubert’s original piano accompaniment—a consideration made by composer and arranger Shane Woodborne, who created a version for string trio and medium voice.



What induced Woodborne to write this version? ‘The first impulse to arrange “Winterreise” for string trio and voice came from the Cologne “Ensemble Unterwegs.” The idea fascinated me from the outset, as the “Winterreise” has been a constant factor in my life

as a musician, a piece to which I return again and again. It was important to me that the intimacy that is so essential for this cycle does not get lost. So, I knew that I didn’t want a lush orchestration and so I decided upon a string trio.’

Woodborne emphasizes the ‘wanderer’s’ state of mind by using the timbres of violin, viola and cello; the instruments sound sometimes hollow, then comforting or even furious.



Shane Woodborne (c) Camerata Salzburg



## Festival ‘Schubert in Gastein’

The arrangement was published by Doblinger last winter; but to talk about music, we know—is very difficult. On September 14, however, there is an opportunity to experience the version in Bad Gastein at the festival ‘Schubert in Gastein’. The baritone part is sung by Klemens Sander, who has already proven the quality of his lieder singing on his CD recordings (e. g. Schubert’s ‘Die schöne Müllerin’ or the CD ‘Lyrisches Intermezzo’ with ‘Dichterliebe’ by Robert Schumann).



The ending of the ‘Winterreise’ is open to interpretation; frequently, the ‘Leiermann’ (‘Hurdy-Gurdy Man’) is seen as a metaphor for the Grim Reaper, Death, as longing for death is a frequent element



Franz Schubert / W. A. Rieder (1875)

For your soun<sup>🎵</sup> files:

### Soundsample Klemens Sander

#### Franz Schubert: from „Winterreise“:

Nr. 4, „Erstarrung“

Piano: Cristian Peix

<https://bit.ly/2MImOSH>

### Website Klemens Sander

[www.klemenssander.com](http://www.klemenssander.com)

### Website Schubert in Gastein

<https://bit.ly/2JVbhrs>

in this cycle. But if 23 agitated soliloquies are succeeded by the comparably monotonous mood of this 24th song one could also interpret this as the wanderer’s emotional state has entered, so to speak, a kind of standby mode and that the narrator gradually becomes able to talk about his feelings to somebody else (... ‘willst zu meinen Liedern deine Leier drehen?’ ‘do you want to turn your hurdy-gurdy to my songs?’); to somebody who is used to being ‘barked at.’



## Autumnal „Winterreise“



### Klemens Sander

How does Klemens Sander interpret the 'Winterreise'?

*'Contrary to the "Schöne Müllerin", in which the love for the Müllerin, and perhaps the Müllerin herself could very possibly be dream images, the wanderer's love in "Winterreise" truly and concretely exists. In "Müllerin" all facets of the emotional range of a finally unhappy love are illuminated erratically; "Winterreise," however, already sets out at a very "low" level and retains this until the end. The wandering journeyman, already harshly disappointed at the outset, leaves the place of his rejection, hoping for relief of his torments—he wanders through the winter landscape, which symbolizes, for me, also the coldness and frozenness of his heart. "Im Dorfe" he painfully realizes that he is an outcast—"was will ich unter den Schläfern säumen", "why do I want to tarry among the sleepers". He no longer has anything in common with the dreamers who indulge in the illusion of a better life, of a fulfilled hope. In a certain sense he even despises the people happy in their illusion. He is a searcher without a goal, tormented by his yearning for death, which is expressed most potently in the "Lindenbaum," the "Krähe," the "Wegweiser"*

*and the "Wirtshaus." But this yearning, too, remains unfulfilled. In my view the "Winterreise" does not inevitably end with desired death, but, actually much worse, in utter hopelessness.'*

And how does Shane Woodborne see the ending of 'Winterreise'?

*'It probably remains open whether and how the "Winterreise" continues. Everybody has to decide this for themselves. For me, personally, the "Leiermann" is the symbol of death himself, who will accompany the further path miserably and shakingly—on a road from which no one has ever returned.'*

This cycle can indeed be interpreted in many ways. Hence—enough said! Go to Bad Gastein to experience this interpretation!

14. September 2018,  
SCHUBERT: WINTERREISE  
Festival „Schubert in Gastein“ | Bad Gastein



Klemens Sander (c) Nancy Horowitz