

LIEDER ALIVE!

RE-INVIGORATING THE TEACHING, PERFORMANCE AND APPRECIATION OF GERMAN LIEDER

Maxine Bernstein, Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LIEDER ALIVE! Presents

“Im Abendrot: Songs of Schubert and Strauss”

A Gala Celebration and an Evening of Lieder with

Brian Asawa, countertenor

Kevin Korth, piano

Sunday, September 7 at 5 PM

(Doors open at 4:30 PM)

The Music Salon at Salle Pianos

1632C Market Street, San Francisco

Full calendar listing below

San Francisco – LIEDER ALIVE! will kick-off its Fourth Annual Liederabend Series on Sunday, September 7, 2014 with a **Gala Opening Celebration** featuring acclaimed **countertenor Brian Asawa** in collaboration with **pianist Kevin Korth**. Mr. Asawa’s groundbreaking career has established himself as one of the foremost countertenors of our time. The Japanese American singer was the first countertenor Grand Prize Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the first countertenor Adler Fellow at San Francisco Opera, and the first countertenor honored with Seattle Opera’s Artist of the Year Award. He is also the only countertenor ever to win the top prize of Plácido Domingo’s Operalia International Vocal Competition. Over a career spanning 21 years, Mr. Asawa has sung in most major opera houses worldwide, including San Francisco Opera, The Metropolitan Opera, de Nederlandse Opera, Opera National de Paris (Garnier), Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Opera, and Opera di Roma, among others, and has concertized with the Seattle Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Concertgebouw (Amsterdam), Vienna Musikverein, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and many more. Mr. Korth is both a Vocal Coach and Collaborative Pianist at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music; his collaborations have been with such outstanding artists as Robert Mann, Axel Strauss, Joel Krosnick, William Burden, and the late Zheng Cao. The Liederabend recital program will feature songs titled *Im Abendrot* (“At Dusk”) by both Franz Schubert and Richard Strauss, along with other Lieder by these two great composers. The concert will take place at 5:00 pm at the **Music Salon at Salle Pianos** – an intimate performance space perfectly suited to the tradition of *Liederabend* – located in the City’s lively Performing Arts District. The program will be followed by a reception with the artists.

About the Program

In Germany, the great age of song came in the 19th Century with the flowering of German literature through the works of Goethe, Schiller, Heine, and other great Romantic poets. Many of the composers of the period found high inspiration in this poetry, but none more than Franz Schubert, in whose songs a particularly deep connection was made between words and music. He wrote over 600 songs in his short life, and countertenor Brian Asawa begins this twilight recital for LIEDER ALIVE! with *Im Abendrot* ("At Dusk"), the great Master of Song's beautiful ode to a ray of evening sunlight, set to a text by Karl Lappe. Other of Schubert's songs on the program include *Litanei*, *Rastlose Liebe*, *Nacht und Träume* and more.

Schubert's *Im Abendrot* may be one of the more famous "sunset songs," but he was by no means the only composer to see in the twilight a reminder of the fragility of all beauty and of our own mortality. Richard Strauss – whose *Im Abendrot* closes the program – based his version on a text of the same name by Joseph von Eichendorff. Here the metaphorical nature of the dying sun is unequivocal – toward the end of the song, as the final intonation of "der Tod" (death) fades, Strauss musically quotes his own tone poem, *Death and Transfiguration*, written 60 years prior; as in that piece, the quoted phrase (the "transfiguration theme") represents the fulfillment of the soul into death. Asawa will perform several other interrelated songs by Strauss on this program, including *Traum durch die Dämmerung* and *Die Nacht* ("Dreaming through the Twilight" and "The Night").

LIEDER ALIVE!'s director, Maxine Bernstein, is delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with Brian in putting together the program for this Gala Opening for our 2014/15 Liederabend Series. "Brian has the expansiveness in his soul and in his innate musicality that is at the heart of this music," she said. "He really is deeply romantic by nature," she added.

As Brian says on his website, he is equally enthusiastic about this new partnership: "Maxine sees the Strauss songs, in particular, as an exciting new vehicle for my voice, and Schubert is certainly one of my favorite composers, so we went all in. Our recital is lovingly dedicated to both composers." The idea for *Im Abendrot* as a theme for the recital came out of a group brainstorm, involving Maxine, Brian, and pianist Kevin Korth. "It's a wonderful link between the two composers that they both wrote Lieder with this title," Brian continued. "Translated literally, the word *abendrot* means 'evening red,' referring to the time at dusk when the sky is glowing with varied hues of gorgeous shades of color, as different as the two featured composers." With the concert scheduled to take place at 5:00 pm, *Im Abendrot* is a wonderfully appropriate starting –and ending – place for an evening of song.

About the Series

The annual Liederabend Series ("Evenings of Song") was inaugurated by LIEDER ALIVE! in 2011/12 to increase audience awareness and appreciation of the wonderful musical genre of Lieder. Recitals are presented in the intimate setting of the Salle Music Salon in San Francisco, and feature performances by some of the most outstanding professional musicians in the Bay Area and beyond; past programs have included sopranos Heidi Moss and Erin Johnson; mezzo-sopranos Kindra Scharich and Katherine Tier; bass Kirk Eichelberger; and collaborating pianists John Parr (LIEDER ALIVE!'s Master Coach), Steven Bailey, Bryan Baker, George Fee, Peter Grünberg, and Simona Snitkovskaya. The 2012/13 season closed with a performance by Ms. Scharich with violist Paul Yarbrough (of the award-winning Alexander String Quartet) and Mr. Parr; in his San Francisco Classical Voice review, critic Jason Victor Serinus wrote: "[The] performance was so beautiful, and so honored the essence of love and longing at the heart of Brahms' music, that I wanted it to go on and on." The setting, at Salle Music Salon, is another key feature of the series: Mr. Serinus concluded his review by saying, "If there is a more refreshing setting for a lieder recital in the Bay Area, let alone a less stuffy, more respectful audience composed of people of all ages, please point me to it."

About the Artists

BRIAN ASAWA's career was launched in 1991 when he became the first countertenor to win both the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and an Adler Fellowship to the San Francisco Opera's Merola Opera Program. He made his professional opera debut at the San Francisco Opera in 1991 in Hans Werner Henze's *Das verurteilte Meer* where he also sang the Shepherd in *Tosca* and Oberon in Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1992. In 1993, Asawa was awarded a career grant from the Richard Tucker Music Foundation and that same year made his debut at the Santa Fe Opera as Arsamene in Handel's *Xerxes*. In 1994 he became the first countertenor to win the Plácido Domingo Operalia International Opera Competition, and made debuts at the Metropolitan Opera as the Voice of Apollo in Benjamin Britten's *Death in Venice* and Glimmerglass Opera as Ottone in Claudio Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*. He has performed throughout the world, including appearances at Opera Australia, the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Paris Opera, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Hamburg State Opera, Lincoln Center, the Bavarian State Opera, and more. Mr. Asawa has recorded five solo discs and is featured widely on video.



KEVIN KORTH graduated in 2006 from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance. He studied under Christopher Taylor, and won the University's concerto competition the year prior. In August 2006, Kevin moved to San Francisco to pursue a Master's degree in Chamber Music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music with Paul Hersh, and completed the degree in May of 2008. Since then, he has held a position as both Vocal Coach and as a Collaborative Pianist, which includes frequent performance opportunities. He has collaborated with artists such as Robert Mann, Axel Strauss, Joel Krosnick, William Burden, and the late Zheng Cao.

About LIEDER ALIVE!

LIEDER ALIVE! was founded in 2007 to reinvigorate the teaching, performance, and appreciation of Lieder, an intimate and radiant art form that is generally described as 19th and early 20th Century songs with piano, set to Romantic German poetry. One of our core programs is our Vocal Master Workshop series, which has included master classes by baritone Thomas Hampson, mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne, soprano June Anderson, and baritone Håkan Hagegård. LIEDER ALIVE!'s educational programming also includes The Lieder Institute, directed by Master Coach John Parr (recently appointed Head of Music Staff at Deutsche Oper Berlin); "Bringing Lieder to Life!," a collaboration with soprano Heidi Moss aimed at novice and experienced singers alike; and year-round coaching and consulting by LIEDER ALIVE!'s founder, Maxine Bernstein. Our public programs include the Liederabend Series, which includes performances by some of the most outstanding professional singers in the Bay Area and beyond; "Hausmusik," presented in collaboration with pianist Peter Grünberg and his organization, SongStage; and "For the Love of Lieder," an occasional series for advanced pre-professional singers. In 2013 LIEDER ALIVE! named Kurt Erickson our Composer-in-Residence and launched the Neue Lieder Commissioning Program. The only organization of its kind in America that is so thoroughly devoted to the performance, training, and appreciation of German Lieder, LIEDER ALIVE! is dedicated to continuing to present outstanding master artists and exceptional singers and instrumentalists who share our unwavering commitment to keeping Lieder where it belongs—alive!

CALENDAR INFORMATION

WHO: LIEDER ALIVE! presents countertenor Brian Asawa and pianist Kevin Korth

WHAT: An Evening of Lieder and a Gala Opening Celebration
"Im Abendrot: Songs of Schubert and Strauss"

PROGRAM: **FRANZ SCHUBERT** (1797-1828)

Im Abendrot
Der Schiffer
Liebesbotschaft
Fischerweise
Litanei

Frühlingsglaube
Der Einsame
Rastlose Liebe
Nacht und Träume

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864–1949)

Du meines Herzens Krönelein
Traum durch die Dämmerung
Die Nacht
Allerseelen
Im Abendrot

WHEN: Sunday, September 7, 2014 @ 5:00 pm (doors open at 4:30 pm)

WHERE: The Music Salon at Salle Pianos
1632C Market Street, San Francisco (between Franklin and Gough)
Entrance on Rose Street opposite Zuni Café

TICKETS: \$75 premium reserved seating in advance
General admission \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door
All ticket prices include wine reception and delectables
[Buy tickets through Eventbrite now](#) or call 415.561.0100

MORE INFO: www.LiederAlive.org

Please note: High-res jpegs are available at the LiederAlive.com media page ([LIEDER ALIVE! Media Page](#))

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