



Western
Music

Don Wright Faculty of Music

FRIDAYS AT 12:30 SERIES
DIE SCHÖNE MÜLLERIN

Friday, October 30, 2026

12:30 p.m., von Kuster Hall and [via livestream](#)

Kevin McMillan, *baritone*

Gabriel Dobner, *piano*

Die schöne Müllerin op. 25, D. 795

Franz Peter Schubert
(1797-1828)

Das Wandern

Wohin?

Halt!

Danksagung an den Bach

Am Feierabend

Der Neugierige

Ungeduld

Morgengruß

Des Müllers Blumen

Tränenregen

Mein!

Pause

Mit dem grünen Lautenbande

Der Jäger

Eifersucht und Stolz

Die liebe Farbe

Die böse Farbe

Trockne Blumen

Der Müller und der Bach

Des Baches Wiegenlied

*This concert is supported by a generous gift from
Brenda Rolfe and the Dorothea & Orrin Rolfe Memorial Music Fund*

Music changes lives. So do our donors.

Philanthropic gifts from music lovers, like you, provide essential support for the Don Wright Faculty of Music and its students. To help us continue to enrich our community through the power of music, please [consider making a donation online](#) or call Carole Metron to discuss giving options at 519-661-2111 ext. 85695.

PROGRAM NOTES

We should always be careful when we want to tie events in a composer's life to their works. Many works filled with joy and optimism were composed while their creators were in darkest despair.

However, in the specific case of Franz Schubert and *Die schöne Müllerin*, life clearly met art.

Schubert and Müller - although living very contemporaneously - never met. Müller's poetry for *Die schöne Müllerin* was published in 1821 and Schubert discovered it through friends in early summer of 1823. Sadly, it was also in 1823 (at age 26) that Schubert was hospitalized for treatment of the secondary lesions of syphilis.

At that time, a diagnosis of syphilis was, in essence, a death sentence. What's worse, the treatment prescribed at the time was horrific. Lesions were treated with heavy metals, causing a myriad of painful and miserable side-effects. He wrote to his friend, Kupelweiser:

"I feel myself to be the most unhappy and wretched creature in the world. Imagine a man whose health will never be right again, and who in sheer despair over this ever makes things worse and worse, instead of better; imagine a man, I say, whose most brilliant hopes have perished"

The situation presented to Schubert by Müller's poetic drama, *Die schöne Müllerin*, is that of a naïve, healthy, joyful young man who becomes hopelessly infatuated with a beautiful young woman, only to discover that his feelings aren't reciprocated. He is so crestfallen that he takes his own life.

These themes of lost hope, lost youth, lost naïveté, and untimely death must have been agonizingly real for Schubert as he struggled with his own fate in 1823. The truth of this plays out clearly in his settings of these texts. His music translates the young man's dilemma from its folksy roots into something emotionally and existentially profound. As the young protagonist slips under the water Ophelia-like, we empathize not only with him, but also with the young Schubert who saw his life slipping away from him.

BIOGRAPHIES

Canadian baritone **Kevin McMillan** is a renowned performer and vocal pedagogue. His performing career has spanned over 40 years with more than 900 concerts, 16 professional recordings, a Grammy award, a Gramophone award, and numerous Juno award nominations. He has been described as "*an outstanding Schubertian whose voice of glowing freshness and beauty is at the service of an intelligent, lively, and distinctive personality.*"

A number of his students have proceeded to establish performing careers, both in North America and Europe, and those who have chosen to follow other paths, have done so possessing scientifically-sound and historically informed perspectives on singing.

He recently retired at the rank of Full Professor after decades at James Madison University in Virginia, USA. His studio based in Stratford, Ontario, Canada is well-established as an international center for professional voice users with clients from all over the world both online and in-person.

Gabriel Dobner was awarded a German Academic Exchange Scholarship (DAAD) to study Lied accompanying in Munich with Helmut Deutsch. He won the special collaborative pianist's prize in the International Hans Pfitzner Lieder Competition in Munich. While living in Augsburg, he established himself as a successful collaborative pianist performing regularly with such notable singers as Gerhard Siegel, Cornelia Kallisch, René Kollo, Christiane Oelze, Kevin McMillan, Alan Bennett, and John Wesley Wright.

Gabriel Dobner has recorded for the Ottavo, MDG and Kannevas labels. His first recording for MDG, consisting of songs of Liszt, Dvorák, and Mahler with mezzo-soprano Cornelia Kallisch, won high praise from BBC Music Magazine, Fono Forum, and the West German Radio in Cologne, who referred to him as a "master among Lieder pianists."

Dr. Dobner is a Professor in the Piano Area at James Madison University, and he is also on the faculty at the American Institute for Musical Studies in Graz, Austria.