

# The Naked Tenor

“*Ströme der Seele Verlangen, Ström’ es in brausende Lieder...*”

“*Pour out the soul’s longing, pour it out in impassioned songs...*”

Within the fifth song of Brahms’ *Lieder und Gesänge*, Op. 32, the true nature of Ian Bostridge is revealed through the poetry of August Graf von Platen.

There is something easy about Ian Bostridge’s voice and singing. His velvety tone and nuance hue can haunt and warm. He can pierce with deadly accuracy and soften the most jaded lines. Perhaps all of these traits can exist together because of the repertoire Mr. Bostridge has chosen for a career.

A singer must set out to define their voice by *what* they sing as much as *how* they sing it. It is now far more difficult in most musical disciplines to simply be proficient at your craft. The audience, audition committees, opera companies, orchestra conductors and the remaining record labels are more interested in substance. That isn’t to say that a mediocre performer can make it on repertoire alone, but rather the most skilled singers stand out because of their voice and intelligence.

Ian Bostridge comes from a lineage of singers (and I don’t mean blood related, though his family tree is fascinating) who

have each bestowed something of their gifts. Dietrich Fischer-Diskeau, who sings each *Lied* (German art song) as though he were channeling the composers – and poets – themselves. Peter Pears’ effortless and clear singing of Britten and Bach, two of his specialties along with lieder, parallel Bostridge’s seminal Britten and Handel. Bostridge’s own path is now carved with Leoš Janáček and Hans Werner Henze (b. 1926), alongside operas of Mozart and Monteverdi. Bostridge’s operatic debut was made in 1994 as Lysander in Britten’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

This recital of Brahms scheduled for March, opens with the dark *Lieder und Gesänge*, Op.32 from 1864. The set combines *lied* and *gesänge*, two types of German songs. The latter of these is closer to a German folk song, with a simple structure and generally uncomplicated musical material, a form Brahms relished. The expressivity of the text is always achieved through melody and harmony, not piano effects or vocal spectacle. The nine songs set mostly introspective, and at times tormented, love poems of August Graf von Platen, and Moldavian (modern-day Romania) and Persian texts translated by Georg Friedrich Daumer.

The poet Heinrich Heine’s reputation rests almost entirely on art songs, with a list of composers that includes Schumann, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Wagner and Brahms. From two separate cycles, Mr. Bostridge has selected two songs from each of Brahms’ settings of Heine. The rest of the program is filled with songs representative of Brahms’ output spanning two decades, a small dose of his 200 lieder.



photo by David Thompson

Recital performance has little value any more to most singers’ careers. Formal education in vocal performance will involve several recitals and a fair amount of coaching, but the financially advantageous side of professional singing is in opera. But, where the opera stage provides some safety with costumes, other singers and a fair amount of distance (and bad lighting) between the performer and audience, song recital places the performer in the most vulnerable of situations. If performing an opera is like being fully clothed, singing a recital is being completely naked. With this vulnerability comes great responsibility.

Ian Bostridge and Julius Drake understand that songs are chamber works, intimate and personal. Rather than intrusive, we should feel warm and comfortable. Our connection with the text and music is dependent on Bostridge’s magical ability to “pour out the soul’s longing...”

**Daniel Gilliam** is a composer ([danielgilliam.com](http://danielgilliam.com)), music director and host on classical 90.5 ([wuol.org](http://wuol.org)). You can hear him weekdays from 3 to 7p and Saturdays after the opera.

Speed Concert Series presents  
**Ian Bostridge**  
**Saturday, March 27, 2010 at 8p**  
 University of Louisville  
 School of Music, Comstock Hall  
 members free, non-members \$10

# The Stars Have It

Perhaps you’ve noticed a recent change in the look of all our print materials? Well, you may be interested to know that we’ve taken a few notes from our very own history to redesign the visual identity of the Speed. For instance, did you know that the star pattern we’ve been using was inspired by a classical design motif above the front entrance to the museum? Louisville-based architect, Arthur Loomis placed three-perfect-rows-of-nine, bronze latticework when drawing up the original plans for The J.B. Speed Memorial Museum (a quietly-brazen flourish and a jewel in the crown of our elegant façade with democratic ideals, Doric columns, and near-perfect symmetry). Now featured on Speed Art Museum advertisements, print materials, and soon-to-be-completed website – we’ve taken this architectural detail and made it the star of the show (ahem).

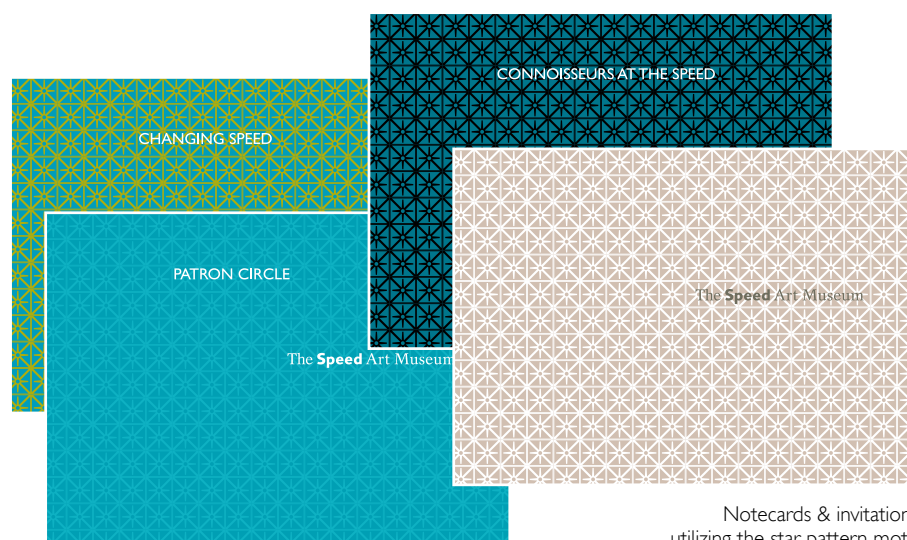
Whether it is being inspired by our limestone façade, to vibrant hues dear to founder Hattie Bishop Speed, to choosing historically accurate paint for the galleries, or a hat-tip to our bluegrass heritage, assembling our color palette is another way that we move our visuals forward while giving a nod to our past.

WHY Architecture and Reed Hilderbrand have respectively approached their designs for The Speed Art Museum building and landscape remodels in a similar fashion: by evaluating our history to inform the future. (editors note; stay tuned for the next Member Magazine for details and model renderings of their progress.)

We’re proud to let you know that some of this recent print material, created by local graphic designer Jason Pierce of Mperfect Design and visually spearheaded by Scott Rogers, is now award-winning! The Louisville Graphic Design Association (LGDA) held their 20th annual 100 Show in December 2009 and awarded two gold medals for the design of the Sweet Hattie Speed chocolate bar and The Speed Member Magazine. That’s right, this very issue is now part of a trophy-worthy series of publications brought to you by the Speed.



photo by Sarah Lyon



Notecards & invitations utilizing the star pattern motif.