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Senior Recital

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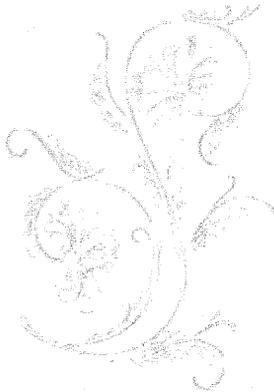
A Senior Recital

by

Kristin Ruth Bluemel

with Stephen Karr, piano

March 17, 2007



Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Franz Peter Schubert was born on January 31, 1797, in Vienna. His father was a parish school teacher and his mother had been a house maid prior to marriage. Schubert was one of 14 children in his family, only four survived infancy. His father Franz Theodor was not only his childhood school teacher but also his first violin instructor. After two years of instruction, at the age of seven, Schubert was sent to Michael Holzer for further instruction. His studies with Holzer were unproductive and Schubert would always have to work to make up for his poor elementary education. In 1808, Schubert was admitted as a student at the Convict, where he studied the works of Mozart. His years at Convict set the groundwork for his later pieces. During this time, Antonio Salieri, the leading composer and theorist of his day, noticed Schubert's talent and began training him in composition and theory. After completing his studies at Convict, Schubert returned to his hometown to teach at his father's school. He detested teaching and for two years he endured the daily drudgery as a school teacher. On the bright side, these two years were some of the most productive years of his whole career in composition. In 1816, Schubert was noticed by Franz von Schober, a young man of means, who offered to give Schubert the chance to compose in piece without the need to teach for a living. Schubert readily accepted this offer and was soon off to the Schober's residence where he was treated as a guest. During the years following his stay at Herr Schober's, Schubert was almost constantly penniless, and survived thanks to the combined efforts of his fellow starving artist friends. Each day, they would take turns paying for their meals, depending on who could afford to pay the bill of the day. Schubert continued composing and moved frequently, living with friends, and struggling to survive, never receiving the true notice he deserved during his lifetime. On November 19, 1828, while staying with his brother in the suburb of Vienna, Schubert died of syphilis. Though Schubert was a brilliant composer of many genres, his songs and song cycles are particularly distinguished. Some of these famous songs include *Erlkönig*, *Ave Maria*, and *Die Forelle*, *Nacht und Träume*, and his wonderful song cycles include *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Schwanengesang*, one of the songs from this cycle will be in tonight's performance.

To the Nightingale (An die Nachtigall)



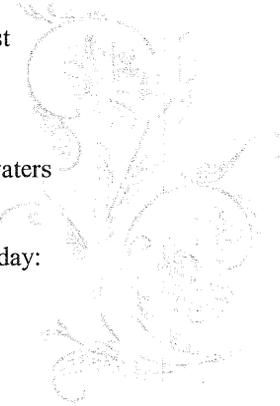
He lies and sleeps upon my heart;
My good guardian spirit sang him to sleep.
And I can be joyful and can have fun
Can delight in every flower and every leaf
Nightingale, ah! Nightingale, ah!
Do not sing my love awake!

Night and Dreams (Nacht und Träume)

O sacred night, gently you fall,
And as your moonlight steals into each room,
 Dreams float down
And enter the still hearts of men.
They receive these dreams with joy,
And when day breaks, they call,
 Come back, sacred night!
O lovely dreams, come back!

To be Sung on the Water (Auf dem Wasser zu Singen)

Amid the shimmering of the mirror-like waters,
 The rocking boat glides, swanlike:
Ah, and on the soft-shimmering waters of joy
 The soul too, glides away like the boat.
Descending from heaven upon the waters
The evening glow dances around the boat.
Over the tree-tops of the forest in the west
 The rosy glow smilingly beams on us.
Under the boughs of the forest in the east
 The reeds rustle in the rosy glow.
Ah, and on dewy pinions vanishes
From the time spent on the gently rocking waters
 Tomorrow again on shimmering wings
Time will vanish, as it did yesterday and today:
 Till I, on higher gleaming pinions,
I shall vanish from the changing time.



Swan Song (Schwanengesang)

“How shall I express in lament the sensation of death
That runs, dissolving, through my limbs?
How shall I express in song the sensation of life
That breathes salvation on thee, my spirit?”
He lamented, he sang, in fear of destruction,
In joy of transfiguration, until life was fled.
That is the meaning of the swan’s song

Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848)

Donizetti was born on November 29, 1797 in Bergamo, Italy. He showed great musical talent at an early age, and started attending the Lezioni Caritatevoli School on a full scholarship at the age of 9. The school was founded by Simon Mayr, a man who played an important role in Donizetti’s success. Upon Donizetti completing his time at the institute, Mayr paid and arranged for Donizetti to study with Padre Stansilao Mattei. He also arranged for Bartolomeo Merelli to write librettos for Donizetti. As a result, Donizetti was extremely loyal to Mayr. Donizetti composed for various opera houses and traveled throughout Italy, as well as in Paris, and Austria. In 1828, Donizetti married Virginia Vasselli, and they had three children, none of whom survived. Unfortunately, the 1830s brought him extreme misfortune. Both of his parents died, and only a year later his wife fell ill and died of cholera. Soon after that he developed cerebro-spinal syphilis. His condition deteriorated until he was admitted to an institution for over a year. He was then moved to an apartment in Paris where his friends could visit him. Eventually he returned to his hometown of Bergamo, where he died in 1848. Like Verdi, Bellini, and Rossini, Donizetti was one of the great composers of the bel canto style. He wrote both serious and comic operas. His most notable serious opera was *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and his most well known comic operas were *L’elisir d’amore* and *Don Pasquale*, which he wrote in 1843.

Don Pasquale takes place in Rome, where Don Pasquale, a rich old man has tried to arrange for his nephew to marry the woman he has picked out in order to produce an heir. His nephew, Ernesto, has refused saying that he is already in love with Norina, who Pasquale considers unsuitable. Don Pasquale decides to marry and produce his own heir, and at the recommendation by his physician decides to marry his physician’s sister Sofronia. Norina disguises herself as Sofronia, and a false marriage takes place. After the wedding Norina acts unbearable, and makes Pasquale miserable. Once she reveals the truth, Don Pasquale gives his consent to her marriage to his son, deciding that marriage was no longer suitable for his tastes. Norina’s aria takes place in Act one, and begins with her reading a love story about a Cavalier and his lady. After laughing at this sentimental scene depicted in the story, she then shares her knowledge on love and seduction.

Recitativo

“That glance, that pierced the cavalier
In the middle of his heart,
He bent on his knees and said:
I am your cavalier.
And in that glance there was
Such a taste of heaven,
That the cavalier Riccardo,
Being conquered by love,
Swore that he would not
Think of any other woman.”
Ha, ha!

Aria

I also know the magical virtue
Of a glance at the right time and place,
I also know how hearts burn
On the slow fire,
Of a quick smile
I also know the effect
Of a deceitful tear,
Of an instant languor,
I know the thousand means
Used by thieves of love,
The charms and the easy arts
Used to seduce a heart.
I have a bizarre mind, I have a quick wit,
I like being witty, joking:
If I get angry, I rarely remain calm
But I can soon change indignation to laughter,
I have an odd mind, but an excellent heart.



Ned Rorem (1923 -)

Ned Rorem was born on October 23, 1923, in Richmond, Indiana. He started taking piano lessons at age ten, and during this time he was introduced to the music of Debussy and Ravel. He later recalled first hearing their music as a life changing experience. He attended the Music School of Northwestern University, and transferred two years later to Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. He then went on to study composition at Julliard, under Bernard Wangenaar. He received several musical awards, including best song of the year, by the Music Library Association. In 1949, Rorem moved to France where he lived for almost a decade while composing. He has distinguished himself as not only an excellent composer of art songs and vocal music, but also of orchestral works as well. His works display a wide range of emotions and themes which are insightfully set. In one of Rorem's publications about his life as a composer, he wrote, "I don't believe that composers notate their moods, they don't tell the music where to go— it leads them.... Why do I write music? Because I want to hear it and it's as simple as that. Others may have more talent, more sense of duty. But I compose just from necessity, and no one else is making what I need." (Naxos.com) Rorem used texts by various poets including Robert Browning, Walt Whitman, William B. Yeats, and Gertrude Stein.

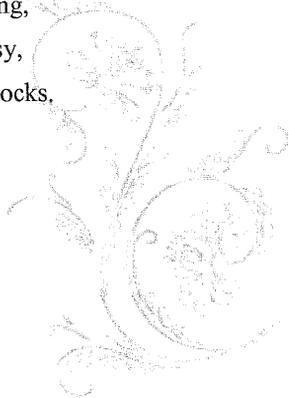


Joseph Szulc (1875-1956)

Joseph Szulc was born in Poland. He studied at Warsaw Conservatory, and later studied privately with Massenet. Szulc created a name for himself as a composer in Paris. Operettas became his specialty, and he loved to use popular dance rhythms in his music. Some of his rhythms included the foxtrot, march, charleston, and tango. Some of his best known Operettas were *Flup*, *Pantoufle*, and his most famous and longest running work, *Flossie*. Szulc took a text by Paul Verlaine and created *Clair de Lune*. He set this melancholy text perfectly using rhythmic variations and an enchanting melody.

Moonlight (Clair de Lune)

Your soul is a chosen landscape
Where charming masques and
Bergamasques are promenading,
Playing a lute and dancing,
And almost sad in their fantastic disguise,
While singing in the minor mode
Of conquering love and a pleasant life.
They do not seem to believe in their happiness,
And their song mingles with the moonlight,
The quiet moonlight, sad and lovely,
Which sets the birds in the trees adreaming,
And makes the fountains sob with ecstasy,
The tall slim fountains, among the marble rocks.



César Franck (1822-1890)

Franck was born in Liège on December 10, 1822. His father was determined to make him into a piano virtuoso. Franck started at the Paris Conservatory in 1837, where he studied until 1842. He eventually gave up on becoming a virtuoso which caused a rift in his relationship with his father. He continued his pursuits as a pianist while taking organist posts at Notre Dame de Lorette, St. Jean-St. Francois, and his final position at the basilica of Sainte-Clotilde, where he remained for the rest of his life. He was known for his abilities at improvisation, and his organ works are considered to be some of the best written in his time. Though he wrote only a handful of works, his influence as a young French composer was immense. He also taught many great emerging composers such as, including Henri Duparc and Ernest Chausson. Though he was known for his organ music, he also wrote brilliant orchestral works as well as some beautiful vocal pieces, including *Nocturne*, presented in tonight's program. In 1890, Franck was in a traffic accident that would lead to his death later that year.

Nocturne

O cool night, transparent night,
Mystery without obscurity,
Life is black and devouring;
O cool night, transparent night,
Grant me your tranquility.
O lovely night, starry night
As you look down on me,
Bring light to my troubled soul,
O lovely night, starry night,
Let your smile enter my thoughts.
O holy night, silent night,
Full of peace and gentleness,
My heart seethes like a cauldron;
O holy night, silent night,
Bring silence to my heart.
O boundless night, solemn night,
In which all things give delight,
Take my whole being under your wing;
O boundless night, solemn night,
Pour sleep into my eyes.



Georges Bizet (1838-1875)

Alexandre-Cesar-Leopold (Georges) Bizet was born on October 25, 1838 to musician parents. His father taught vocal music, and his mother was a piano teacher. In his early years his musical talents were encouraged, and his abilities flourished. He was considered a child prodigy and entered the Paris Conservatory by age 9. He studied under Charles Gounod and Jacques Halevy. His composition and piano talents were extraordinary. After finishing his time at the Paris conservatory, Bizet won the Prix de Rome and moved to Rome to compose. He spent three years composing there, but only four of his works created in Rome survived. Also during these three years, Bizet was faced with a lot of changes in his life. In 1861, Bizet's mother died, and Bizet found consolation from his parents maid, who bore his son in 1862. He also rejected several prestigious job opportunities, determined to fulfill the obligations to the terms of the Prix de Rome. His following years were full of compositions that met mediocre reviews, and by 1868, Bizet was quite discouraged and depressed. In 1869 Bizet married Genevieve, the daughter of his former teacher, Halevy. He also enlisted in the National Guard, and found himself too preoccupied to compose much for the next two years. In 1871, he composed a one-act opera, *Djamileh*, which met poor reviews at best. Though the opera failed, Bizet found his calling, and soon after he composed his famous opera, *Carmen*. Though this comic opera today is hailed for its exotic setting and storyline as well as Spanish dance-like harmonic and rhythmic structures, *Carmen* was not greeted with positive reviews; in fact its libretto was said to be "obscene" and the music "undistinguished and unromantic." This left Bizet depressed and in June of 1875, he suffered two heart attacks and died. Bizet's love for exotic settings, beautiful melodies, and dance-like rhythms is found in many of his works, including *Ouvre ton Coeur*.

Open your Heart (Ouvre ton Coeur)

The daisy has closed its flowery crown,
Twilight has closed the eyes of day,
My lovely beauty, will you keep your word?

Open your heart to my love.

Open your heart to my desire, young angel

May a dream charm your slumber

I want to take back my soul

As a flower opens to the sun!



A Special Thanks

I would first and foremost like to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
He has blessed me beyond measure and without Him,

I would be nothing.

Next, I would like to thank my teacher Patricia S. Gee. You have inspired, pushed, comforted, and encouraged me to grow and become a better musician and person. I will always love and respect you and I appreciate all of the time and effort you have given me. You are a true example Of Proverbs 31:31, "Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her own works

praise her in the gates."

Next, I have to thank my family. Mom and Dad, thank you, thank you, thank you for your supporting me in everything I do. You have blessed me abundantly and I only hope that I can bless others as you have blessed me. You have given me excellent examples to live by in more areas than one, and I love you both so much.

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To my darling lil' sis Caitlin and my swing buddies, thanks for the good times and good dances.

To Carol Neblett, Stephen Karr, Dr. Atherton, and all of my other teachers here at Chapman, thank you for investing your expertise and time in my life. You have given me an excellent education, and I am better because of it.

To everyone who came to hear my recital, thanks and have a great Saint Paddy's Day!

"I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being." Ps 104:33