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Jennifer Marie Christianson Soprano
Illinois State University

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Illinois State University
School of Music

Graduate Recital

Jennifer Marie Christianson, Soprano

Patricia Foltz, Piano

*Kemp Recital Hall
Saturday Evening
December 1, 2001
8:00 p.m.*



The Fifty-eighth Program of the 2001-2002 Season.

Program

Morgen!
Allerseelen
Zueignung

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Hermit Songs, Op. 29

At Saint Patrick's Purgatory
Church Bell at Night
St. Ita's Vision
The Heavenly Banquet
The Crucifixion
Sea-Snatch
Promiscuity
The Monk and His Cat
The Praises of God
The Desire for Hermitage

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

Intermission

from *Faust*
Ah! Je ris de me voir

Charles Gounod
(1818-1893)

La Bonne Cuisine
(Four Recipes)
Plum Pudding
Ox-tails
Tavouk Gueunksis
Rabbit at Top Speed

Leonard Bernstein
(1918-1990)

Amor
Vanilla Ice Cream

William Bolcom
(born 1938)
Jerry Bock
(born 1928)

Program Notes

Richard Strauss composed over one hundred lieder for voice and piano; many of which he later orchestrated. For the most part, Strauss's songs were composed before 1900. He produced six different collections containing 31 songs during his most productive "song period" which was 1899-1901. All of the songs display Strauss's passionate lyricism and feature rich-textured accompaniments. During his lifetime, his compositions made him famous and wealthy. Strauss was the most publicized composer of the early twentieth century.

Morgen!, Op. 27, No. 4

Tomorrow
1893-1894

Opus 27 was completed when Strauss was twenty-eight years old. It was also the year of his marriage to Pauline de Anha, and these songs were his wedding gift to her. Three were composed in May 1894 shortly before they left Weimar to return to Munich via Bayreuth; "*Cäcilie*" was added at the last minute on September 9th. Strauss's dedication: "*To my beloved Pauline, 10 September 1894.*" Four lieder comprise the set: "*Ruhe, meine Seele,*" "*Cäcilie,*" "*Heimliche Aufforderung,*" and *Morgen!*"

"*Morgen!*" has been described as "motionless ecstasy." The poem relates of the hope of two lovers that morning will see them close united, lost to the world in each other's eyes. Strauss's exquisite piano prelude seems suspended in time. It is sixteen bars long, almost half the song's total length, but it firmly establishes the atmosphere of wonder and deep rapture. The first entry of the voice emerges seamlessly from the piano and subsequent vocal phrases join the piano in an integrated texture. The manner in which the voice begins makes us believe it will only comment on the beauty of the scene, but it quickly establishes its own lyricism in the middle of the piano's textural range. Vocal phrases seem longer than they are due to varying rhythmic stress and phrasing over the bar lines.

Strauss chose a through-composed form for his setting. The flowing calm comes to an end in the last measures—a little coda—where the vocal line becomes chant-like and declamatory, ending poised on the leading tone. It remains for the piano to resolve the cadence, and add several measures of postlude, which brings the song to an end "that is no end"—a 6/4 chord.

Morgen!, Op. 27, No. 4

Und morgen wird die Sonne wieder scheinen,
und auf dem Wege, den ich gehen werde,
wird uns, die Glücklichen, sie wieder einen
inmitten dieser sonnenatmenden Erde...

Tomorrow!

And tomorrow the sun will shine again,
and on the path where I shall walk
it will reunite us, the blessed ones,
amidst the world that breathes in the sun...

Und zu dem Strand, dem weiten, wogenblauen,
werden wir still und langsam niedersteigen,
stumm werden wir uns in die Augen schauen,
und auf uns sinkt des Glückes stummes Schweigen...

And to the wide shore, lapped by blue waves,
We shall quietly and slowly descend,
Silently we shall look into each other's eyes
And upon us falls the silence of true bliss...

Allerseelen, Op. 10, Nr. 8

All Souls' Day
1882-1883

All Souls' Day, November 2, is the day consecrated to the dead. This poem has been described as "a love song set against a background of graveside flowers and memories of May-time love." The singer tries to use the day to his advantage and revive a love affair that has also died.

This is one of Strauss's early songs, verging on the too-sentimental, but saved by its glowing lyricism. The mood is intimate and tranquil. The piano introduction quotes melodic material from the vocal phrase that begins the last stanza "Es blüht und duftet heut auf jedem Grabe" (Today every grave is decked with fragrant blossoms). There is a vibrant climax reached at "*komm an mein Herz dass ich wieder habe*" (Come to my heart and let me hold you again). The piano ends with four measures of shifting harmonies that finally come to rest, but a little inconclusively, like the lover's question.

German composer and opera conductor Robert Heger orchestrated this song in 1932. Strauss liked the orchestral version and conducted it at his own concerts.

Allerseelen, op. 10, No. 8

Stell' auf den Tisch die duftenden Reseden,
die letzten roten Aestern trag herbei,
und lass uns wieder von der Liebe reden,
wie einst im Mai.

Gib mir die Hand, dass ich sie Heimlich drücke,
Und wenn man's sieht, mir ist es einerlei;
Gib mir nur einen deiner süßen Blicke,
wie einst im Mai.

Es blüht und duftet heut' auf jedem Grabe,
Ein Tag im Jahre ist ja dem Toten frey,
komm an mein Herz, dass ich dich wieder habe,
wie einst in Mai.

Zueignung, Op. 10, Nr. 1

Opus 10 was Strauss's first collection of songs, composed at age eighteen. He expressly stated that he had the tenor voice in mind for this opus, although all voice types sing these songs with great pleasure.

"Zueignung" is one of his most familiar songs. The first two stanzas share identical opening phrases (4 bars); the second verse is varied only slightly. The third stanza begins with the identical first phrase, then moves to an exultant high note climax (an example of word-painting on the word "Heilig"-holy) emphatically underscored with thick-textured chords in the piano. Each stanza ends with the refrain "Habe Dank!" which was Glim's original title for the poem.

The poet's solemn dedication to the loved one is set in broad vocal phrases, underlined with an accompaniment of octaves and triplets. Strauss retracts the accompaniment of the first verse and uses it for the second, altering it only with one varied vocal phrase.

Zueignung, Op. 10, Nr. 1

Ja du weisst es teure Seele,
dass ich fern von dir mich quäle,
liebe macht die Herzen krank,
habe Dank!

Einst hielt ich, der Freiheit Zecher,
hoch den Amethysten Becher,
und du segnestest den Trank,
habe Dank.

Und beschworst darin die Bösen,
bis ich, was ich nie gewesen,
heilig, heilig an's Herz dir sank, habe Dank.

Samuel Barber was the most frequently performed American composer of his generation, from 1941 until the mid-sixties. He enjoyed early fame and enduring acclaim as a composer, and he lived to see virtually all of his music recorded. Barber's songs have a lyric grace that we immediately identify with his music. His songs are well-conceived for the voice, exercising the singer's intellect as well as vocal technique.

After his death, soprano Leontyne Price, preeminent interpreter of Barber's vocal music, wrote: "For a singer Barber's music is always a challenge; but the end product is so rewarding and so terribly vocal, you can't wait to pick up another piece of his."

Hermit Songs, Opus 29

For this cycle, Barber chose ten anonymous poems written by Irish monks and scholars, dating from the eighth to the thirteenth centuries. He chose texts that are wide-ranging in mood and length, encompassing themes that vary from intensely devout to ribald. Hermit Songs is one of Barber's most-performed vocal works; it ranks among the foremost song cycles of the twentieth century. It was first performed in 1953 by soprano Leontyne Price with the composer accompanying- an occasion, which inaugurated a long professional collaboration and friendship between Barber and Price.

All Souls' Day

Put the fragrant mignonettes on the table,
bring in the last red asters
and let us speak of the love again,
as once in May.

Give me your hand, that I secretly shall hold,
and if one sees, it is the same to me;
give me only one of your sweet glances,
as once in May.

Today it blooms and smells sweet upon each grave,
one day out of the year is reserved for the dead,
come to my heart that you again have,
as once in May

Dedication

1882/83

Devotion

Yes you know it dear soul,
that I am tormented far from you,
love makes the heart sick,
have thanks!

Once I held the drinker to freedom,
the amethyst goblet high,
and you blessed the drink,
have thanks.

And you conjured the demons,
till I, what I never had been,
sank solemnly on your heart, have thanks.

1. *At Saint Patrick's Purgatory.* Strong, forceful rhythms mark the pilgrimage to Loch Derg. A steady ostinato figure in the piano accompanies the pilgrim's resolute steps.

2. *Church Bell at Night.* The accompaniment evokes the sound of a bell, swinging backward and forward while the hermit sings that he would rather keep tryst with the bell than "be with a light and foolish woman."

3. *St. Ita's Vision.* This tender lullaby, preceded by a section of declamatory recitative, makes up a little miniature scena. St. Ita imagines that she is nursing the Christ Child, a moment of religious ecstasy blended with distinctly human desires. Accompanying triplet figures provide a rocking effect.

4. *The Heavenly Banquet.* This song describes an amiable feast for "Heaven's family." Vocal passages consist of eighth notes over an undulating rhythmic piano accompaniment. The droll whimsy of the singer who wishes for "a great lake of beer for the King of Kings" is tinged slightly with good-natured greed.

5. *The Crucifixion.* This song is one of the best known in Hermit songs. Its stark fourths and fifths evoke the intense emotion of the crucifixion. A motive in the high register of the piano features a grace note. This "bird-like" motive is heard throughout the song.

6. *Sea-Snatch.* The sea's fury is evoked in this song of tempest. The vocal line is harsh and angular while the accompaniment is reminiscent of surging waves.

7. *Promiscuity.* Barber uses conventional speech declamation as the basis for the vocal line in this miniature song that contains only two lines of text. The unadorned declamatory line gives greater impact to the sly text.

8. *The Monk and His Cat.* This song paints a happy picture of a scholar and his cat, a compatible pair. Each has his own work to do, but they provide good company for one another. The playful padding movements of the animal are heard in the delightful rhythmic patterns in the piano accompaniment. The scholar and the cat are completely content to be "alone together."

9. *The Praises of God.* Melismatic vocal passages are found on the word "Laudation." The lifting pointillistic piano figurations happily celebrate the text.

10. *The Desire for Hermitage.* The first section of this song, which is a passionate plea for solitude, is marked "Calm and sustained." The vocal line always returns to the central note initiated by the piano at the beginning of the song, just as the monk always returns to his cell, the center of his earthly existence. Within the song's meditative mood, there is fervent lyricism, especially in the B section. The song ends with a return to the quiet opening.

Charles Gounod was the leading composer of French opera in the nineteenth century. One of his most famous operas is *Faust*, in which the character Marguerite sings her most famous aria in the third act, titled the *Jewel Song*.

The Jewel Song

Ah! Je ris de me voir
si belle en ce miroir
Est-ce toi! Marguerite?
Est-ce toi? Réponds-moi,
Réponds vite!
Non, non, ce n'est plus toi!
Non, non, ce n'est plus ton visage!
C'est la fille d'un roi, ce n'est plus toi,
C'est la fille d'un roi,
Qu'on salue au passage!

Ah! It makes me laugh to see myself
looking so pretty in this mirror!
Is it you, Marguerite?
Is it you? Answer me, answer quickly!
No, no, it's no longer you!
No, no, it's no longer your face!
It's a King's daughter, not you,
It's a King's daughter
the people bow to as she passes!

Ah, s'il était ici!
S'il me voyait ainsi!
Comme une demoiselle
il me trouverait belle,
ah, comme une demoiselle
il me trouverait belle!

Ah, if only he were here!
If only he could see me like this!
Pretty as a lady
he would find me,
ah, pretty as a lady
he would find me!

Achevons la metamorphose!
Il me tarde encore d'essayer
Le bracelet et le collier,
Dieu! C'est comme une main
qui sur mon bras se pose!
Ah, je ris de me voir
Si belle en ce miroir!

Est-ce toi, Marguerite?
Est-ce toi? Réponds-moi,
Réponds vite!
Ah, s'il était ici!
S'il me voyait ainsi!
Comme une demoiselle
il me trouverait belle!

Marguerite, ce n'est plus toi!
Ce n'est plus ton visage!
Non. C'est la fille d'un roi
Qu'on salue au passage.

Let's complete the transformation!
I'm longing to try
the bracelet and the necklace.
Heaven's! It's like a hand
being laid on my arm!
Ah! It makes me laugh to see myself
looking so pretty in this mirror!

Is it you, Marguerite?
Is it you? Answer me,
answer quickly!
Ah, if only he were here!
If only he could see me like this!
Pretty as a lady
he would find me!

Marguerite, it's no longer you!
It's no longer your face!
No, it's a King's daughter
the people bow to as she passes.

The songs of **Leonard Bernstein** defy homogenous grouping. They exist in many different contexts: Broadway shows, operetta, revues, incidental music, opera, musicals, theater pieces, and finally, the songs or cycles for voice and piano. In fact, the number of songs he wrote for voice and piano alone or in song cycles is quite small when compared to the numerous songs which exist in Bernstein scores for musical theater, many of which have become American classics.

La Bonne Cuisine is a witty cycle of four songs, settings of recipes from a French cookbook by Emile Dumont. Bernstein dedicated the cycle to his close friend mezzo-soprano Jennie Tourel, whom he referred to as "the only begetter of these songs." Bernstein translated the recipes himself, perfectly highlighting their humor; he even wrote a title, which serves as a sly comment on the French *mélodie*.

Bernstein has carefully gauged song order according to musical pace and dramatic value; two lively songs begin and end the set, framing two slower songs in the middle.

1. **Plum Pudding.** "Plum Pudding" is a song that maintains a frenzied atmosphere from start to finish. An angular vocal line in eighth notes darts over a wide range, pausing only twice to break the pace (for the cook to consult the recipe?) before continuing to headlong to the end.
2. **Ox-tails.** Vacillating harmonies combine with a vocal line that swings between broad declamation and more lyric motives. A perfect character from which to generate a sub-text is celebrated chef Julia Child whose down-to-earth culinary commentary would probably include the first line of the text: "Are you too proud to serve your friends ox-tail stew?"
3. **Tavouk Gueunksis.** "Tavouk Gueunksis" is a Turkish recipe featuring chicken. The singer pompously announces "Tavouk Gueunksis" and then comments "with breast of chicken" in a bluesy cadence. As the recipe is read, the piano plays smoky, indolent rhythms to imitate the beating of a tambour. The vocal line is peppered with augmented intervals to evoke a proper Eastern atmosphere. The chef gives only general directions; one must know the Arab way of doing things to have success with this recipe. The last vocal phrase echoes the beginning "Tavouk ueunksis...with breast of chicken," with the same bluesy cadence.
4. **Rabbit at Top Speed.** "Rabbit at Top Speed" rounds out the group with a lively discourse on a quick way to prepare rabbit stew. With crazed enthusiasm, the chef whips up a recipe whose directions seem less than quick and whose portions seem more than substantial. The hectic pace slows briefly at mid-song for a lyrical moment of admiration for an essential ingredient, "a bottle and a half of red vino." Vocal passages are short melodic segments, combined with the same skill that creating this recipe demands.

***All of the above program notes were taken from
"Song, A Guide to Style & Literature" by Carol Kimball. ***