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John M. Koch, Baritone

John M. Koch Baritone
Illinois State University

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Illinois State University
College of Fine Arts and the School of Music
present

John M. Koch, baritone
Paul Borg, piano
with special guest artist
Tracy Marie Koch, soprano
Tuesday, August 21st, 2007, 7:30 p.m.
Kemp Recital Hall

PROGRAM

Pietà Signore

Alessandro Stradella
(1645-1682)

*Have mercy, Lord, on me in my remorse! Lord, have mercy if my prayer rises to you;
do not chastise me in your severity, less harshly, always mercifully; look down on me.
Never let me be condemned to hell in the eternal fire by your severity.*

Chansons gaillardes (Songs of a robust fellow)

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

In this cycle, composed between 1925 and 1926, Poulenc used anonymous 17th century texts that bordered on the bawdy; some are blatantly suggestive! His unique and witty settings are evident in this set of eight brief songs.

- I) *The fickle mistress*: *My mistress is fickle, my rival is happy: If he has taken her virginity, it's because she had two. So sails the ship...*
- II) *Drinking song*: *The kings of Egypt and Syria wanted to embalm their bodies to prolong death. What folly! We then drink to our envy; one must drink and drink again! We drink then all our life to embalm ourselves before we die. We embalm ourselves; This balm is sweet.*
- III) *Madrigal*: *You are beautiful as an angel, sweet as a little lamb: It is not of the heart Jeanneton, which under your rule was born to pacify. But a girl without tits is like a partridge without orange sauce...*
- IV) *Invocation to the fates*: *I vow, as long as I live, to love you Sylvia. Fates, who in your hands hold the thread of our life. Elongate, as much as you can, my own, I beg of you.*
- V) *Bacchanalian verses*: *I endure the day, sometimes sad, sometimes happy. When I see a flask without wine, I am sad. If it is full, I am happy. When my wife takes me to bed, I am wise all night long. If a whore takes me to bed, I am playful! O beautiful hostess, pour me some wine and I am happy!*
- VI) *The offering*: *A virgin offered a candle to the God of love one day, in order to attain a lover. The God smiled upon her demand and said: "Fair lady, while waiting, always help your self to your offering! Ha!"*

VII) *The beautiful girl: One must always love, but seldom marry. One must make love without a priest of justice of the peace. Cease, sirs, from being married men. Do not allude to the lark's song; do not allude to their hearts! Why marry when the wives of other men need not beg to become ours. When their fervor and goodwill seek our lark song, they seek our hearts!*

VIII) *Serenade: With such a beautiful hand you serve such charms. You must, as cupid would, handle your darts well. When this child is sorrowful, wipe away his tears, his tears.*

INTERMISSION

from *I Pagliacci*

Ruggero Leoncavallo
(1857-1919)

Aria: Stridono lassù

Duetto e scena: Nedda... Silvio, a quest' ora...

In these scenes from Act 1, Nedda, ever fearful of Canio, ponders the simplicity and freedom of a bird's life and wished that she, too, could be free to fly through mountains and over oceans to abandon her captors. Then, Silvio, discovering that Nedda and her troupe of traveling players have arrived back in town, seeks her out near their camp. Nedda claims that the grotesque Tonio actually loves her, and she is fearful that he will realize their love affair, and tell her husband Canio. Silvio then consoles her and declares his true love for her. Impassioned by his overwhelmingly convincing words, she gives into his advances, and promises that tomorrow she will escape with him.

A few words about the following songs: My teacher, the late Andrew White, was a contemporary of legendary baritones such as Leonard Warren, Robert Merrill, Norman Treigle, Louis Quilico and Ettore Bastianini in the 1950's and 1960's. After serving in World War II, Mr. White established his unique career by teaching and singing many *Elijahs* and *Messiahs* throughout the world. He also specialized in singing what he dubbed "character" songs. Many of these songs were written by mostly unknown composers around the turn of the 19th century. They became popular as they often spoofed political events, mentioned famous figures in history, and often quoted (and made fun of) the operas of the day, such as *Pagliacci*, *La bohème* and *Carmen*. I was fortunate to acquire copies of many of these songs before his passing in 1998 and I dedicate these songs to his enduring legacy.

Deaf old woman

Old Missouri folk song
Arr. by Katherine Davis
(1892-1980)

Lord Randall

Arr. by Cyril Scott
(1879-1970)

Oh where is my wandering boy soprano voice tonight?
(A baritone beef)

Maurice Baron

This is the first program of the 2007-2008 College of Fine Arts season.

I want to thank Paul Borg for sharing his talents and collaborating with us on this recital!
There will be a reception following the recital in the Kemp lobby.