

Pacific Lutheran University
The College of Professional Studies and School of Music, Theatre & Dance present

JUNIOR RECITAL

Lillian Gundersen, *mezzo-soprano*
Dominic Walker, *baritone*

Amy Boers, *piano*

Sunday, April 14, 2024 at 12pm
Lagerquist Concert Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

PROGRAM

Why do the nations so furiously rage together? G. F. Handel (1685-1759)
from *Messiah*

Dominic Walker

Oh Glory Shawn E. Okpebholo (b. 1981)

Lillian Gundersen

Let Us Garlands Bring Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

I. Come away, come away, death

II. Who is Silvia?

III. Fear no more the heat o' the sun

IV. O mistress mine

V. It was a lover and his lass

Dominic Walker

Non più mesta Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

La Cenerentola

Lillian Gundersen

INTERMISSION

Elégie Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Nuit d'Espagne

Lillian Gundersen

Chasons de Bilitis Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

I. La flûte de Pan

II. La chevelure

III. Le tombeau des naïades

Dominic Walker

Laue Sommernacht Alma Mahler (1879-1964)

Bei dir ist es traut

from *Fünf Lieder*

Lillian Gundersen

Ich bin dein Baum Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Lillian Gundersen and Dominic Walker

This recital is presented by Lillian Gundersen and Dominic Walker in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degrees of Bachelor of Music in vocal performance. Ms. Gundersen is a student of Dr. Soon Cho, and Mr. Walker is a student of Dr. Jim Brown.

Program Notes

Composed in 1741, *Messiah* remains one of **George Frideric Handel**'s most beloved works. This powerful aria, "Why do the nations..." is sung by a bass soloist in Part II of *Messiah*, which focuses on the Passion and Resurrection of Christ. The text is drawn from Psalms 2:1-6, vividly portraying the tumultuous and defiant reactions of the nations to the coming of the Messiah. Musically, the aria is characterized by its dramatic and agitated melody, reflecting the rage described in the text.

Shawn E. Okpebholo, a Nigerian-American composer, has received critical acclaim for his innovative music, earning nominations and distinguished awards for his solo album *Lord, How Come Me Here?* which features reimagined Negro Spirituals. "Oh Glory" is a fantastic example of how Okpebholo embraces and innovates with fantasy and color. The piece holds reflections of hurt and looks forward with hope in paradise. It is important to note how directly the lyricism has affected the composition of the music. Through expressive text and intricate melody there is serenity and poeticism. Okpebholo celebrates the notion that music is meant to be shared by all and is deeply passionate about the importance of music outreach.

Gerald Finzi's exquisite song cycle, *Let Us Garlands Bring*, features settings of songs from plays by William Shakespeare. It was dedicated to Ralph Vaughan Williams and premiered on October 12, 1942, Vaughan Williams's 70th birthday. "Come away, come away, death" (from *Twelfth Night, Act II, Scene 4*), a melancholic and introspective song, reflects on death, love, and the passage of time. Finzi's music captures the somber mood, with accompaniment that is evocative of an acquiescent march to the end. "Who is Silvia?" (from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Act IV, Scene 2*) is a lyrical and romantic piece, wherein the speaker excitedly ponders the beauty and mystery of Silvia. Finzi's setting is tender and expressive, emphasizing longing and admiration. "Fear no more the heat o' the sun" (from *Cymbeline, Act IV, Scene 2*) holds a sophisticated lens to resignation, acceptance, peace, and release from earthly troubles. "O mistress mine" (from *Twelfth Night, Act II, Scene 3*) is a lively and playful celebration of life and revelry. "It was a lover and his lass" (from *As You Like It, Act V, Scene 3*) offers a delightful and dance-like finale to the set. The text rejoices in love, blooming flowers, rolling hills, and the pleasures of youth. In this song cycle, Finzi masterfully combines Shakespeare's timeless poetry with his own expressive musical language. Each song reveals a different facet of human experience, from existential dread to love and joy.

Italian composer **Gioachino Rossini** is renowned for his large contributions to opera, writing 39 operas in his lifetime. Rossini exemplifies the essence of Italian opera, characterized by its expressive lyricism, dazzling coloratura passages, and spirited ensemble writing. Inspired by the classic fairy tale of Cinderella, Rossini's *La Cenerentola* offers a fresh interpretation, focusing on themes of kindness, forgiveness, and the triumph of love over adversity. With its vivacious overture, lively ensembles, and poignant arias, *La Cenerentola* remains a staple of the operatic repertoire, captivating audiences with its charm and musical brilliance. In the final act, Angelina (Cinderella) expresses her joy and relief after she reunites with the prince and asks to pardon her abusive stepfather and stepsisters. She then sings to showcase her newfound happiness and liberation through song. Through its virtuosic coloratura passages and sparkling orchestration, "Non più mesta" showcases Rossini's mastery of bel canto style and remains a highlight of the opera repertoire.

Claude Debussy's *Chansons de Bilitis* is a captivating song cycle composed in 1897-1898. Inspired by the sensuous and evocative prose poems of Pierre Louÿs, this narrative transports us to an ancient world of mythic love, desire, and mystery. The opening song, "La flûte de Pan", paints a vivid picture of summer night romance, where two souls are met on Hyacinthus' day. Pan and Hyacinthus are the first of many references made to Greek mythology in the cycle. Pan was a lusty satyr and master of the flute; Hyacinthus was a lover of the more elegant god of arts and the sun, Apollo. The next chapter, "La chevelure" delves into sensuality and desire. It tells of a love so intense that it's as if one eats their partner up, until they become one and the same. The haunting finale of the trilogy, "Le tombeau des naïades", takes place at a mythical water nymph's tomb, sealed in the ice of an unforgiving winter. A mysterious guide apprises us of the sudden, frigid death of the satyrs and naiads. He reminisces in the memory of their love and laughter as he gazes through the ice. Debussy's exquisite settings capture the essence of Louÿs's poetic world, infusing it with his signature impressionistic style.

French composer, **Jules Massenet**, is known for his lyrical melodies and rich orchestrations. Through art song displaying themes of death to newfound love, Massenet's melodicism and expressive harmonies display the depth of human emotion. *Nuit d'Espagne* transports listeners to the romantic landscape of Spain through vibrant colors and passionate rhythms. Juxtaposing romantic joy *Elégie* is a wonderful example of Massenet's range of emotions, encompassing melancholy

through bold and romantic melodic lines. Massenet's art songs offer a glimpse into his mastery of melody and his ability to evoke profound emotion in a more intimate musical setting.

Austrian composer **Alma Mahler**'s musical legacy is one of the many forgotten voices, overshadowed by creative men. Alma Mahler embarked on her musical journey primarily through the creation of songs that reflected her life, and indications suggest that she might have explored larger musical genres if she had found herself in more conducive environments. Her songwriting style is characterized by lyrical melodies that reflect the late Romantic period, often favoring the lower registers of the keyboard, employing atmospheric textures, and adopting a rhapsodic, through-composed structure. Works like *Fünf Lieder* exemplify Mahler's exquisite ability to convey emotion in her compositions.

Robert Schumann's "Ich bin dein Baum, op. 101, no. 3" is part of the song cycle *Minnespiel*, which Schumann composed in 1849. The cycle features eight songs, each capturing different facets of love, longing, and nature. The poem speaks of a tree as a symbol of steadfast love and devotion. The tree stands strong, providing shelter and support to its beloved. Schumann's music reflects the text's imagery. The piano accompaniment features gentle arpeggios, evoking the rustling leaves and branches. The vocal lines are lyrical and expressive, emphasizing the tree's unwavering commitment and the gardener's gratitude and awe.



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