

Pacific Lutheran University  
School of Arts and Communication / Department of Music present

## JUNIOR RECITAL

**Hugh Davis, *baritone***

Rowena Hammill, *piano*

Sunday, April 18, 2021 at 8pm  
Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

### Program

**Le Nozze di Figaro.....W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)**

*Hai gia vinta la causa... Vedro mentr'io sospiro*

**Die Schöne Müllerin.....Franz Schubert (1797-1828)**

1. *Das Wandern*
2. *Wohin?*
3. *Halt!*
4. *Danksagung an den Bach*
5. *Am Feierabend*
6. *Der Neugierige*

**Les Berceaux.....Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)**

**N'est-ce pas?.....Cécile Chaminade (1857-1954)**

**L'énamourée.....Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947)**

**Billy Budd.....Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)**

*Look! Through the port comes the moonshine astray*

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*This recital is presented by Mr. Davis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. Mr. Davis is a student of Professor Holly Boaz.*

### Program Notes

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's** *Le Nozze di Figaro* was first performed on May 1st, 1786, and has since become a mainstay on almost every major opera stage worldwide. "Hai gia vinta la causa... Vedro mentr'io sospiro" is one of the opera's highlights and is perhaps Mozart's greatest showstopping baritone aria. Count Almaviva has taken a liking to one of his servants, Susanna. He repeatedly tries to seduce her, but she is far too clever to fall for him. Instead, she uses his feelings for her to her advantage by tricking him into giving her his blessings in marriage to Figaro, his other servant. Just before singing this aria, Susanna lies to the Count, telling him that she has always had feelings for him and that she would love to meet with him that night under the moonlight. The Count is overjoyed, thinking that his wish has finally been fulfilled. However, after their meeting, he overhears her conspiring with Figaro. Enraged, the Count vows to end their scheme and punish them both.

**Franz Schubert** composed *Die Schöne Müllerin* in 1823 during the darkest period of his life. He had just contracted syphilis and began spending most of his time alone in bed away from his friends and fellow musicians. Inspired by his intense feelings of shame and isolation he wrote this song cycle based on selections of Wilhelm Müller's set of poems by the same name, *Die Schöne Müllerin*. These poems tell the story of a young man who leaves home for the first time to begin working as a traveling miller boy. During his travels, he finds friendship in a babbling brooklet and experiences love at first sight for a young girl whom he calls "the maid of the mill." Even though he has never spoken a word to her, the miller boy is certain that she is his true love. However, he is uncertain if his love is reciprocated or not. Schubert chose to set these poems because he saw some of himself in the character of the young miller boy. He had spent his whole life being rejected by women. In fact, it was this constant rejection that drove him to allegedly visit an escort and contract syphilis. This failure to find love even in the cheapest of ways was heartbreaking for Schubert. His heartbreak shows throughout the cycle and especially in the song *Der Neugierige*.

**Gabriel Fauré** was one of France's most prolific composers throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. His diverse musical catalog of symphonies, concertos, choral works, and of course mélodies (art songs) greatly influenced the French 20<sup>th</sup>-century modernist composers who followed him (Debussy, Stravinsky). *Les Berceaux*, composed in 1879, tells the story of a man leaving his wife and children to set sail for war. Notice how Fauré wrote the left hand of the piano to rock back and forth, similar to the rocking of a ship or of a baby's cradle.

**Cécile Chaminade** was a prolific French composer and pianist throughout most of her long career. Near the end of her life, her critical reception wavered and after her death, her music was almost completely forgotten. Only recently has her music begun to find its audience again. She was mostly known for her piano works and for her *Concertino, op. 107* for flute and orchestra

which was commissioned by the Paris Conservatory. However, she also wrote numerous beautifully written mélodies. *N'est-ce pas?*, set to a poem by Armand Silvestre, asks one of life's most difficult questions: Why is life so sad? Notice the dynamic contrast between each section of the song and how it corresponds to the meaning of the text. Chaminade does a wonderful job of conveying the dramatic highs and lows that life has to offer within just one song.

**Reynaldo Hahn** was a Venezuelan-French composer best known for his mélodies, of which he wrote over one hundred. *L'énamourée* was written around 1888 but is a set to a poem written by French poet, Théodore de Banville, from 1859 – during the beginning of the impressionist era. As is typical of impressionist era poetry, Banville's poem does not tell a finite story with developed characters. Rather, he presents a set of images and symbols all based around the common theme of eternal love and asks the listener to unravel the meanings for themselves. Hearing this poetry being sung is like listening to an auditory representation of an impressionist painting being painted in real-time. It is absolutely gorgeous.

**Benjamin Britten's** 1951 adaptation of Herman Melville's novella, *Billy Budd*, is considered one of the defining operas of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. It tells the tragic story of a young sailor with a big heart and a sense of justice, who is recruited as a sailor on the H.M.S. Bellipotent – a British warship, during the French wars of 1797. Billy is seen as a threat by the ship's officers, especially by the master-at-arms John Claggart, due to his boldness and infectious positivity. The ship's captain, Captain Vere, dismisses their concern and sees Billy simply as an energetic young lad. Not convinced, Claggart and the officers try stealing from and bribing Billy in order to provoke him, but their attempts fail. Eventually, Claggart is fed up with Billy and convinces Captain Vere to set up a meeting between the three of them to discuss him. During this meeting, Claggart does everything he can to provoke Billy. He harasses and threatens him as much as an officer can without being persecuted. Finally, Billy snaps and strikes Claggart, killing him in front of Captain Vere. Billy is found guilty of manslaughter and is sentenced to death. On the morning of his execution, Billy watches the sunrise shine through the darbies and sings "Look! Through the port comes the moonshine astray!" Though he is upset that his life had to end so early, he does not feel like his punishment is unjust. It is during this aria that Billy accepts his fate and comes to peace with his death rather than fighting it.



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