

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

JUNIOR RECITAL

Rae Hyra, mezzo-soprano

Sheila Bristow, *piano*

Saturday, May 22, 2021 at 3pm
Jennie Lee Hansen Recital Hall, Mary Baker Russell Music Center

Program

Faust.....Charles Gounod (1818-1893)

Faites-lui mes aveux, portez mes vœux

Die Mainacht.....Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Der Tod das ist die kühle Nacht

An die Nachtigall

Von ewiger Liebe

Let Us Garlands Bring.....Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

1. *Come away, come away, death*

2. *Who is Silvia?*

3. *Fear no more the heat o' the sun*

4. *O Mistress Mine*

5. *It was a lover and his lass*

Roméo et Juliette.....Charles Gounod

Que fais-tu, blanche tourterelle?

Sexy Lady.....Ben Moore (b. 1960)

Program Notes

Charles Gounod's opera *Faust* premiered in Paris in 1859, the work that began to establish his international reputation. A tragic story drawn from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's play, *Faites-lui mes aveux* is a light-hearted moment of tenderness in the midst of corruption and greed. Siébel is a young man trying to pick a bouquet of flowers for the woman he loves, Marguerite, but he has been cursed by Satan to never pick a flower without it wilting immediately. At first defeated, Siébel thinks to dip his hands into holy water, which to his delight allows the flowers to live. As he gathers them up, he speaks to the blossoms, asking them to carry his confession of love to Marguerite.

Gounod's interpretation of Shakespeare's tragedy *Roméo et Juliette* was premiered in 1867. As he had done with his earlier opera *Faust*, Gounod initially composed the work with spoken dialogue in lieu of recitative, but by its first performance had been persuaded to include passages of recitative. As he focused the story-telling so strongly upon the star-crossed lovers, several of the other character's roles diminished as a result. The character Stéphanos was created by Gounod's librettists, and he adopted the lines of the character Benvolio. Stéphanos is searching for his master, Roméo, whom he fears is still with Juliette. He sings of the danger surrounding the two lovers, warning them that they are but amorous turtledoves in a nest of vultures, and in doing so he draws the attention of the Capulets and passersby to himself.

Johannes Brahms was an incredibly prolific composer, who published over 200 pieces of lieder in addition to numerous works for chamber ensembles, orchestras, choirs, and solo piano. He preferred to avoid composing music that followed an explicit narrative or scene, yet his music is so expressive and passionate on its own that it surpasses the need for language. *Die Mainacht* details the midnight musings of a lonely soul who wanders through the woods and listens to the nightingales, wondering when it will be their time for love. *Der Tod* is the narrative of a person who is tired of the activity and heat of life, and longs for rest. Hearing a nightingale outside their window singing of its love, the narrator continues to hear its passionate song even once they fall asleep. In *An die Nachtigall*, the singer implores a nightingale not to continue its serenade, for the narrator is already lovesick and unable to sleep. They bid the bird to fly off to its faithful mate, who is waiting back in their nest. *Von ewiger Liebe* finally breaks with the theme of noisy birds by focusing on the conversation of two young lovers as they walk through the forest. The boy implores the girl to tell him if she is embarrassed by their being together, and that if she feels any shame for being with someone beneath her station, he will disappear and never trouble her again. The girl protests, saying that their love is stronger than iron or steel, and that their romance will be everlasting.

Gerald Finzi was an avid admirer of poetry, and the song cycle *Let Us Garlands Bring* consists of five sonnets from Shakespearean plays, including *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*. The cycle moves wonderfully between gentle reflections upon humility in the face of death, to jubilant celebration of young love and the passion of spring. Originally written for piano and baritone, the

This recital is presented by Ms. Hyra in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance. Ms. Hyra is a student of Janeanne Houston.

cycle was dedicated to the composer Ralph Vaughan Williams and was premiered in 1947 on Williams' 70th birthday.

Ben Moore is an American composer with experience writing everything from operas to comedy material. Artists who have performed Moore's works include Frederica von Stade, Isabel Leonard, and Audra McDonald. *Sexy Lady* is a comedic song written for Susan Graham, depicting the lamentations of a mezzo-soprano on her place in the operatic world. The singer complains that all the glamorous roles are given to sopranos, while mezzos are stuck in "pants roles" (characters that are male but are performed by female singers; also known as "trouser" or "breeches roles"). This mezzo refuses to be put in a box, however, and makes her impassioned case on behalf of all the sexy mezzos out there.



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