An Evening Recital
With Jay Bitner

An Honors Project
By Jay Bitner

Advisor Mary Hagopin

Recital Date: April 29, 1994
The concept of my senior recital as a honors project began in the fall of 1993. It was at that time my voice teacher, Mary Hagopian, and I began choosing the repertoire that I would sing on April 29th. After much discussion regarding having a balanced and complete program, we settled on two arias from Bach cantatas, Schumann's Dichterliebe, Finzi's Let Us Garlands Bring, and Prince Gremin's aria from Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin as a suitable program. In the ensuing months of work, it became evident that singing the Russian would prove too difficult a challenge at this point. Due to the deletion of this selection and in the maintenance of balance another aria needed to be inserted. We decided that Ah! un foco insolito would be a good solid aria to close the program with, also adding a different emotion compared with the serious and somber nature of the program's previous material. Now with the absence of the Russian language, we felt we needed to add some French songs to round out the recital. We came across some pieces by Saint-Saëns and decided upon Danse Macabre and L'Attente. Now we thought we were set. We had a run through of the program in February and it ran about 7 minutes too long. So we decided to cut one of the Bach arias. This was to be the final program.

My practice routine also increased. I had two voice lessons a week the entire semester. In addition I spent from five to eight hours a week in the practice rooms working on my material. In April, following the opera production of Münch's The Consul, I began to increase the intensity of my rehearsal time. I lived and breathed my recital. Recordings of the works by other artists, and recordings of my voice lessons were the only music I listened to for the rest of the month. I watched no television, read no books for pleasure, and devoted almost every waking hour to my recital. In the end the result convinced me I should have begun this routine earlier, but I was impaired by my role in the opera. This is a lesson that I will apply to future recitals.

It was in February as well that I decided upon what to do regarding the publicity of my recital. I spoke briefly on the phone with my sister, Carol-Margaret, an artist, and asked if she would be interested in designing my posters for me. She graciously agreed. Over spring break I decided that in addition to the posters I would run off, I could have T-shirts made out of the poster design. This would allow me yet another avenue of getting the word out. Also over the break I designed some invitations with my mother, which were sent out in early April to selected faculty and friends. By the time April rolled around, I had the T-shirts and matching posters on order, to be delivered on April 15th, a full two weeks prior to the performance. It was the following week when I realized that fifty posters were not going to be enough to gain the desired audience size of 100+. So with the help of my friend Steve Lidy, a graphics arts design major, I designed a new poster from the original concept. We decided to incorporate a black and white photograph of myself into the design. This decision was made because we both thought it was I who would draw people to the performance. After we finished I enlarged it to 11"X14" and ran off two hundred fifty posters at a village copy outlet. That evening of the 23rd I personally went to every residence hall on campus dropping off 8-12 posters at each hall or complex to be distributed throughout the building. The following day I posted the remaining posters throughout the campus in every academic building. This method of publicity had the desired effect as there was a head count of 193 people at my recital. Also I sold approximately two dozen T-shirts to friends and another two dozen to family members.
Hollische Schlange
from Kantate No. 40
by J. S. Bach

Hollische Schlange,
wird dir nicht hangen?
Der dir den Kopf als ein Sieger zerkniet,
ist nun geboren, und die verloren,
werden mit ewigem Frieden beglickt.

Infernale Schlange,
werd dir nicht hangen?
He who will victoriously crush your head
is now born, and those who are lost,
will be filled with everlasting peace.

Dichterliebe
by Robert Schumann

I.
Im wunderschönen Monat Mai,
as alle Knospen sprangen,
da ist in meinem Herzen
die Liebe aufgegangen.

Out of the tears sprout
many blooming flowers forth,
and my sigh becomes
a choir of nightingales.

II.
Aus meinen Tränen sprießen
viel blühende Blumen hervor,
und meinen Seufzer werden
ein Nachtigallenchor.

Und wenn du mich lieb hast Kindchen,
seh' ich dir die Blumen all,
und vor diesem Fenster soll klingen
das lied der Nachtigall.

III.
Die Rose, die Lilie, die Taube, die Sonne,
die liebt ich einst alle in Liebeswonne.
Ich liebe sie nicht mehr,
ich liebe alleine die Kleine, die Feine,
die Reine, die Eine;
sie selber aller Liebe Wonne,
ist Rose und Lilie und Taube und Sonne.
ich liebe alleine die Kleine, die Feine,
die Reine, die Eine, die Eine!

The rose, the lily, the dove, the sun,
I loved them all once in love's delight.
I love them no more,
I love alone the small one, the fine one,
the pure one, the one;
the same best love's delight,
is rose and lily and dove and sun,
I love alone the small one, the fine one,
the pure one, the one, the one!

IV.
Wenn ich in deine Augen seh',
so schwand' all mein Leid und Weh;
doeh wenn ich küsse deinen Mund,
so werde ich ganz und gar gesund.

When I look in your eyes,
does all my grief and pain;
but when I kiss your mouth,
so become I whole and quite healthy.

V.
Ich will meine Seele tauchen
in den Kelch der Lilie hinein;
die Seele soll klingend hauchen
eine Lieder von der Liebsten mein.

Das Lied soll schauern und beben,
wie der Kuss von ihrem Mund,
den sie mir einst gegeben
in wunderbar süßer Stund'.

VI.
Im Rhein, im heiligen Strome,
da spiegelt sich in den Well'n,
mit meinem grossen Dom,
das grosse heilige Köln.

I will my soul plunge
in the cup within the lily;
the soul shall breathe sound
a song from my sweetheart.

VII.
Ich grolle nicht,
und wenn das Herz auch bricht,
ewig verlorenes Lieb,
ewig verlorenes Lieb!
ich grolle nicht, ich grolle nicht.

I'll not complain,
and when my heart also breaks,
eternal lost love,
eternal lost love!
I'll not complain, I'll not complain.

As you also gleam
with the splendor of diamonds,
no rays fall
into the night of your heart,
that I knew for a long time.

I'll not complain,
and when my heart also breaks.

I saw you yes in a dream,
and saw the night in your heart's chambers,
and saw the serpent,
as it gnawed on your heart,
I saw, my love,
how very wretched you are.

I'll not complain, I'll not complain.
VIII.

Und wüssten die Blumen, die kleinen, wie tief verwundet mein Herz, sie würden mit mir weinen, zu heilen meinen Schmerz.

Und wüssten die Nachtwälder, wie ich so traurig und krank, sie litten fröhlich erschallen erquickenden Gesang.

Und wüssten sie mein Wehe, die goldenen Sternelein, sie kämen aus ihrer Höhe, und sprachen Trost mir ein.

Sie alle könnten's nicht wissen, nur Eine kennt meinen Schmerz; sie hat ja selbst zerrissen, zerrissen mir das Herz.

And if the little flowers knew, how deeply wounded is my heart, they would weep with me, to heal my pain.

And if the nightingales knew, how I am so sad and sick, they would merrily let forth a refreshing song.

And if they knew my pain, the golden little stars, they would come down from heaven, and speak comfort to me.

They all cannot know, only one knows my pain, yes she herself has torn apart, torn apart my heart.

Es ist eine alte Geschichte, doch bleibt sie immer neu; und wem sie just passiert, dem bricht das Herz entzwei.

Es ist eine alte Geschicht, doch bleibt sie immer neu; und wem sie just passiert, dem bricht das Herz entzwei.

Das Mädchen nimmt aus Ärgern

IX.

Das ist ein Flöten und Geigen, Trompeten schmettern darin, Trompeten schmettern darin; da tanzt wohl den Hochzeitreigen, die Herzallerliebste mein, die Herzallerliebste mein.

Das ist ein Klingen und Dronken, das ist ein Klängen und Dröhnen, ein Pauken und ein Schalmeien; dazwischen schluchzen und stöhnen, dazwischen schluchzen und stöhnen die lieblichen Engelchen.

Das ist ein Klingen und Dronken; there are flutes and violins, trumpets blare therein; there dancing at the wedding ceremony the heart dearest of mine, the heart dearest of mine.

There is a klinging and droning; there is a klinging and droning, of kettledrums and pipe; in between sobs and moans, in between sobs and moans, is the lovely little angel.

Hör ich das Liedchen klingen, das einst die Liebste sang, so will mir die Brust zerspringen von wildem Schmerzendeinig.

Es treibt mich ein dunkles Sehnen hinaus zur Waldeshöh', dort löst sich auf in 'Thränen mein übergrosses Weh'.

Hear the little song sounding, that once my sweetheart sang, so wants my chest to burst from a fierce pain.

A dark longing drives me up there to the height of the forest, and there breaks into tears my enormous pain.

Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen, die hat einen Andern erwählt; der Andre liebt eine Andre, und hat sich mit dieser vermählt.

A young man loved a girl, who had chosen another; the other loved another, and has married her.

Allnächtlich im Traume seh' ich dich, und sehe dich freundlich, freundlich grüssen, und laut aufweinend stürz' ich mich zu deinen süßen Füssen.

Du siehst mich an wehmütiglich und schüttest, schüttelt dir das blondeKopfchen; aus deinen Augen schleichen sich die Perlenthärentropfchen.

Du sagst mir heimlich ein leises Wort, und giebst mir den Strauss, den Strauss von Cypressen.

Ein Jüngling liebt ein Mädchen, die hat einem Andern erwählt; der Andre liebt eine Andre, und hat sich mit dieser vermählt.

A young man loved a girl, who had chosen another; the other loved another, and has married her.

X.

X.

X.

X.

The girl out of anger took the next best man. that came into her path; the young man is badly off.

It is an old story, though it always remains new; and to whom it has just happened, then it breaks the heart in two.

On a shining summer morning I walk into my garden, the flowers whisper and speak, but I walk silently.

The flowers whisper and speak, and look sympathetically at me; Don't be angry at our sister, you sad, pale man.

Every night I see you in my dreams, and see you warmly, warmly greeting, and crying out loudly I fall upon your sweet feet.

You look at me with melancholy and shakes, shakes the blonde little head; out of your eyes steal forth little teardrops of pearls.

You tell me secretly a gentle word, and give me a bouquet, a bouquet of cypress.

I woke up, and the bouquet is gone, and your words have I forgotten.
XV.

Out of an old fairy-tale it beckons with a white hand, there it sings and there it rings as if from a magic land.

where multi-colored flowers blossom in the golden evening light, and lovely fragrantly glowing, with a bridalike face.

and green trees are singing very old melodies, the breeze secretly sounds, and the birds loudly sang;

and fog shapes ascend forth out of the earth, and join an airy round dance forming a wonderful choir;

and blue sparks burn in every leaf and twig, and red light races in an erring, disorderly circle;

and colorful fountains break forth from wild marble stones, and strangely in the brook radiate reflections.

Ab--------! Ah!
Ah, if I could go there, and there my heart delight, and all torment be released, and free and blessed be!

Ab! that land of joy, that I see often in dreams, dissolves like an empty dream, dissolves like an empty dream.

XVI.

Die alten, bösen Lieder, die Träume böse und arg, die lasst uns jetzt begraben, holt einen grossen Sarg.

The ancient, spiteful songs, the dreams spiteful and mean, let us now bury; get a large coffin.

Therein I lay much, but I won't say what; the coffin must be even larger than Heidelberg's cask.

And get a death stretcher and boards firm and thick; also and it must be still longer, than even the bridge at Mainz.

And get me also twelve giants, the must be even stronger, than the strength of St. Christoph, in the cathedral in Cologne on the Rhein.
L'Attente

Monte, écureuil, monte au grand chêne,
Sur la branche des cieux prochaine,
Qui plie et tremble comme un jonc.

Cigogne aux vieilles tours fidèle,
Oh! Voie! et monte à tire d'aile
De l'église à la citadelle,
Du hout clocher au grand donjon.

Vieil aigle, monte de ton aire
A la montagne centenaire
Que blanchit l'hiver eternel;
Et toi qu'en ta couche inquiète
Jarnais I'aube ne vit muette,
Rise, rise lively lark,
Lively lark, rise to the sky!

Danse Macbre

Zig et zig et zig, La mort en cadence
Frappant une tombe avec son talon,
La mort à minuit joue un air de danse,
Zig et zig et zag, sur son violon.

Le vent d'hiver souffle, et la nuit est sombre;
Des gémissements sortent des tilleuls;
Les squelettes blancs vont à travers l'ombre,
Courant et sautant sous leurs grands linceuls.

Zig et zig et zig, chacun se tremousse.
On entend claquer les os des danseurs:
Un couple lascif s'asseoit sur la mousse,
Comme pour goieter d'anciennes douceurs.

Zig et zig et zag, la mort continue
De racler sans fin son aigre instrument.
Un voile est tombé! La danseuse est nue.
Son danseur la serre amoureusement.

La dame est, diton, marquise ou baronne,
Et le vert gaitant un pauvre charbon;
Horreur! et voilà qu'elles s'aban donne
Comme si je nuste était un baron.

Zig et zig et zig, quelle sarabande!
Quels cercles de morts se donnant la main!
Zig et zig et zag, on voit dans la bande
Le roi gambader auprès du villain.

Mais psst! tout à coup on quitte la ronde,
On se pousse, on fuit, le coq a chanté.
Oh! la belle nuit pour le pauvre monde.
Et vivent la mort et l'égalité!

Waiting

Climb, squirrel, climb the large oak tree,
To the branch next to the sky,
That bends and trembles as a reed.

Stork, faithful to the old towers,
Oh! Fly! and rise with full speed
From the church to the citadel,
From the high steeple to the grand turret.

Old eagle, rise from your eyrie
To the mountain that is centuries old,
which is whitened by eternal winter;

And you, on your restless bed,
You, whom the dawn never saw mute,
Rise, rise lively lark,
Lively lark, rise to the sky!

And now, from the top of the tree,
From the spire of the marble tower,
From the great mountain, from the enflamed sky,

On the horizon, in the mist,
Do you see a fluttering plume
And a steaming horse racing
And returning my beloved?

And returning my beloved,
my beloved, my beloved?

Dance of Death

Zig and zig and zig, Death in cadence
Is knocking at a tomb with his heel.
Death at midnight plays a dance,
Zig and zig and zag, on his violin.

The winter wind blows, and the night is somber;
Sighs come forth from the linden trees;
The white skeletons pass in the shadows,
Running and jumping under their great shrouds.

Zig and zig and zig, everyone is frisking about.
One hears the rattling bones of the dancers.
A lascivious couple sits down on the moss
As if to taste the ancient delights.

Zig and zig and zag, death continues
To scrape endlessly on his shrill instrument.
A veil has fallen! The dancer is nude,
Her partner clasps her amorously,

The lady, they say, is a marquise or a baroness,
And her gallant cavalier a poor wheelwright,
Horrors! and here she throws off all restraint
As if the peasant were a baron.

Zig and zig and zag, what a sarabande!
What circles of the dead, holding hands!
Zig and zig and zag, one sees in the crowd
The king romping next to the villain.

But hush, suddenly they stop their round,
They push, they flee, the cock has crowed.
Oh! A beautiful night for the poor world.
And long live death and equality!
Ah! un foco insolito

from "Don Pasquale"

The scene is Rome; the time is the early nineteenth century. The central character, Don Pasquale is an aged, wealthy bachelor who wants to get married. He is fair game for anyone. Presently the Don's old friend Dr. Malatesta, joins him. Malatesta has found what Pasquale wants - a beautiful young girl to be his bride, and Malatesta describes her in his aria Bella siccome un angelo (Just as beautiful as an angel). Who is she? Why she is my sister, say Malatesta. Pasquale is so delighted he ignores Malatesta's warnings about rushing into marriage. Instead, he pushes his friend from the house and demands that this beauty be brought to him at once. Then Don Pasquale sings an aria of foolish soliloquy (Ah! un foco insolito) in which he already imagines himself the father of six!

Ah, a fire inside me fills my body,
love prompts my heart longingly,
age fades in the distance,
I look a scarce twenty years old,

Ah, hither quickly, a fair-bride he's found,
I can see even now a half dozen children
watching them be born, watching them grow,
all around me playing.

Come, come,
without the fire inside my body,
I shall find death.

A note of special thanks to:

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Love,

[Signature]
**Composer Notes**

*for An Evening Recital with Jay Bitner*

**Höllische Schlange**

*from Kantate No. 40*

They Bach family is one that can be traced from the early 16th century to the present. The family has a long tradition of musicianship, yet none so pronounced as that of Johann Sebastian Bach born on March 21, 1685. His father, Johann Ambrosius Bach, was a town musician in Eisenach, who played violin, organ, and trumpet. J. S. Bach the youngest of eight children enrolled in the Eisenach grammar school and sang in the church choir. At the age of ten J. S. Bach's father died and he was looked after by his eldest brother Johann Christoph Bach. Johann Sebastian did well in school showing a strong inclination towards theology. He also gained a sound musical education through his brother, J. C. Bach, who was organist at the small town of Ohrdruf, and a former pupil of Pachelbel. It was at this time that J. C. found his brother J. S. a paid position in the choir of St. Michael's Lünenburg. He was allowed to remain there even after his voice broke, it is assumed due to his ability to play various instruments. By the age 17 he began to look for a more permanent position and after a brief run as a violinist in the orchestra of the brother of the Duke of Weimar, J. S. Bach went on to become the organist and choirmaster of the new church of St. Boniface in Arnstadt. Here Bach's innovations on the organ during services were disapproved by the church council, so Bach moved on to an organist position at the church of St. Blasius at Mühlhausen, a free city. Soon disputes broke out between factions of orthodox Lutherans and more puritan Pietists which threatened to restrict what music could be performed there, so in June of 1708 he accepted the post of organist and court musician to Duke Wilhelm Ernst of Weimar. In his few years at this post, Bach took the time to widen his perspective from that of keyboard pieces, by studying the modern Italian concerto style, transcribing works by Vivaldi and others. By 1713 he was looking for a better paid post and in 1714 was promoted to the post of Konzertmeister (director of the court band), which involved the composition of a cantata each month. He adopted a new cantata style, using the Neumeister type of text, in which recitatives and arias of a quasi-operatic nature were included and the chorus was of lesser importance. The aria sung this evening is from the No. 40 of these cantatas. The style of this aria, as well as the entire cantata utilizes this Neumeister text.

**Dichterliebe**

Robert Schumann was born on June 8, 1810, the youngest of five children, whose father was a notable citizen, who made his living as a bookseller but also wrote novels and translated the works of Byron. Robert was educated first at private a private school and then at the Zwickau Grammar School. His father died in 1826, his sister thereupon committed suicide, and he was then somewhat spoiled by his mother, being indulged to expensive tastes, such as champagne and cigars, while still in school. While enrolled at Leipzig University in 1828 as a student of law, he continue living the good life instead of studying. He began to take piano lessons from a notable teacher, Wieck, at that time as well. After transferring to Heidelberg University and taking the customary Grand Tour in Italy, he was told by the Professor of Law that he had no talent for the subject. He thus began studying the piano seriously on the advice of Wieck, in whose house he lived; but was left in no doubt that while he might become a piano virtuoso, he more than likely would become a piano teacher. In any event, his ambitions as a piano player were ruined by a device used to strengthen the fingers. Fortunately at this time he had begun to talent as a composer, writing mainly for the piano. His piano writing is extremely individual, using the sustaining pedal and the middle range of the instrument to make a sensuous, rather brilliant tone. In 1837, after various indecisive affairs with several women, he fell in love with Wieck's daughter, Clara. As of yet his ability to make a career as a piano player had not come to fruition, which probably explains Wieck's refusal to Schumann marrying her daughter. Nor was Robert particularly in good health, having suffered a nervous breakdown in 1834 following the deaths of one of his brothers and his sister-in-law. By 1839 however Schumann's own compositions began selling well and he decided to take legal steps to break Wieck's veto, and married Clara in 1840, one day prior to her 21st birthday. The result of this passionate and torrid affair was what is known as Schumann's 'song year'. Rarely in music are the connections between exterior events and individual pieces of music so clear. In 1840 he composed a great many songs, including the two great song cycles *Frauenliebe und -leben* and *Dichterliebe*. The verse is mainly
subjective and so easy to relate to his feeling that the songs are extraordinarily personal in nature. Technically, his transference of his new piano idiom to the accompaniments allows still greater expressiveness, especially in preludes and postludes where the piano comments on and expands the sentiments of the verse. Schumann went on to compose symphonies, concertos and other great works. This and his criticism allowed him to support Clara and their seven children. But in February of 1854 he began to show signs of serious mental trouble, attempting suicide by throwing himself into the river Rhine (he was rescued by fisherman). He was then taken to a private asylum near Bonn, where he spent the remainder of his days.

L'Attente
Danse Macabre

Camille Saint-Saëns was born on October 9, 1835 in Paris France. His father died shortly after his birth and he was brought up by a musical mother and a highly intelligent, well-educated great aunt, who discovered his musical talents and his keen intelligence in other subjects at a very early age. He started to give piano recitals when still a young boy, entering Paris Conservatoire at the age of 13, where he studied composition with Halévy as well as piano and organ. By 1853 he had a symphony publically performed, which was much praised by Gounod. Soon he became highly popular as a concert pianist and composer, and in December of 1857 was appointed organist at the Madeleine, one of the most important of Parisian churches. By the 1860's Saint-Saëns was fully established as a composer. His concertos were performed by the leading virtuosos of the day and in Germany was considered one of the most progressive of French musicians. He was largely responsible for the introduction of the symphonic poem to France, and of his own works Le rouet d'Omphale and Danse Macabre were highly successful. The same feelings evoked in Saint-Saëns symphonic poems can be felt in his compositions for voice. Textures and colors as designated by the piano are clearly punctuated and lifted by the line of the vocal melody. It is even a little known fact that Danse Macabre was written for voice, before it was set for orchestra as a symphonic poem.

Let us Garlands Bring

Gerald Finzi was born in London, England on July 14, 1901. He studied privately with Sir Edward Bairstow and R.O. Morris. Apart from periods of time spent teaching at the Royal Academy of Music and of government service during the war, he lived quietly in the country composing music and conducting amateur orchestras. He made a notable contribution to English song, especially in his many Hardy settings. Finzi composed English songs in which lyrical vocal lines are acutely sensitive to the words. Gerald Finzi died in Oxford, England on September 27, 1956.

Ah! un foco insolito
from "Don Pasquale"

Gaetano Donizetti was born on November 29, 1797. The Italian composer was taught by the composer Johann Mayr, one of the earliest men to conduct the later works of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven in Italy. Donizetti was eventually sent to public subscription to study with the most famous teacher of counterpoint of his time, Padre Mattei. His first opera to be produced was given in Venice in 1818, to be followed by a number of one-act farces; but his real operatic career began in 1822 when the success of opera seria, Zoraide di Granata, in Rome. This led to contact with neapolitan theatres which was to grow into his appointment as resident composer in the years immediately after 18265. During this time he wrote usually three or four operas each year, giving him a facility which continued to the end of his career. His international fame grew with Anna Bolena, produced in Milan in 1830. This was a fortunate time for Donizetti, due to that it was then that Rossini gave up composing for the opera house. In the ensuing decade Donizetti became one of the wealthiest and most productive of all composers (save possibly Verdi). After the death of Gaetano's wife in 1838, his unhappiness in Naples prompted him to write a great deal for the Paris theatres, where Poliuto, banned for political reasons in Italy, was produced in 1840. A number of his best operas including La favorite (1840) and Don Pasquale (1843) date from these year. But by then Donizetti was showing signs of the illness, cerebrospinal meningo-vascular syphilis, which was to kill him. By the winter of 1843-4 he was in too nervous a condition to compose, and the following year he was declared insane, spending the rest of his life in several asylums.
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