Senior Honors Voice Recital; Amber Nicole Dilger, soprano

An Honors Project (HONORS 499)

by

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Thesis Advisor

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Purpose of Honors Recital

The Senior Honors Creative Project is the definitive work for a student of Ball State University's Honors College. This recital is a representation of the five years that I have attended Ball State University as a Vocal Performance and Music Education major, as well as an Honors College student. This recital program was chosen with the intent of presenting a wide spectrum of music from various time periods in a variety of languages which are traditionally represented in vocal literature of the classical western tradition. These program notes are provided to increase your enjoyment of this performance through a better understanding of the text and the circumstances under which these pieces were created.

So shall the lute and harp awake

Handel’s oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus* was commissioned in 1746 by Frederic, Prince of Wales. The occasion was to celebrate the safe return of the Duke of Cumberland from Scotland, after the battle of Culoden. Reverend Thomas Morell (1703-1784) wrote the libretto, which includes material from the first book of Maccabees and the twelfth book of Josephus’ “Antiquities of the Jews”.

*Au Bord de l’Eau*

*To sit together on the bank of the stream that passes, to see it pass;*
*Together, when a cloud floats in space, to see it float;*
*When a cottage chimney is smoking on the horizon, to see it smoke;*
*If nearby a flower spreads its fragrance, to absorb its scent;*
*To hear at the foot of the willow, where water murmurs, the water murmuring,*
*Not to care at all about the world’s quarrels, to ignore them,*
*And alone, together, facing all that grows weary, not to grow weary;*
*To be in love while all passes away,*
*Never to pass!*

Fauré set this poem by Sully Prudhomme to music in August 1875, before the poem was published. This piece focuses on the Vanitas Vanitatum theme (everything must pass), with a hint of a happy ending. The repeated minor chords at the beginning bring an ominous feel to the song, but as the music unfolds with text a more introspective atmosphere is created. The song ends in a surreal and hopeful way, both musically and with the repetition of the idea of love never passing away.
Le Secret

I wish the morning not to know the name I told the night.
And that in the wind of dawn, silently, it should evaporate like a tear.
I wish the day would proclaim the love I hid in the morn,
And bent over my open heart, should inflame it like a grain of incense.
I wish the sunset to forget the secret I told to the day,
And carry it away with my love, in the folds of its pale garment!

Faure chose this text from a poem by Armand Silvestre. This song, written around 1880-1881, is number three in his opus 23 (you will notice, Notre Amour is number two in this same opus). The tune used for this song is thought to be borrowed from his song Lydia, which shares the same Lydian mode within the framework of F major. The character in this song is inconsistent with the desire for his or her love to be proclaimed or kept secret. Faure helps achieve this feeling through his pensive opening chords and continues with his abrupt changes in dynamics to help show the differing emotions.

Notre Amour

Our love is a light thing
Like the perfumes which the wind
Lifts from the top of the fern
To be inhaled in dreaming.
Our love is a light thing!

Our love is a charming thing,
Like the songs of the morning,
With no expression of regret,
In which vibrates an uncertain hope...
Our love is a charming thing!

Our love is a sacred thing
Like the mysteries of a forest,
Where a strange soul is trembling,
Where stillness has a voice;
Our love is a sacred thing!

Our love is an infinite thing,
Like the paths of sunsets,
Where the sea reunited with the skies,
Slumbers under setting suns;

Our love is an eternal thing,
Like all things that almighty God
has touched with the fire of his wing,
Like all that comes from the heart;
Our love is an eternal thing!

This piece (number two of opus 23) was written around 1879, based on another poem by Armand Silvestre. This celebration of love is musically personified by Faure's light and quick-moving triplets in the accompaniment, along with the exuberant melodic lines. The rhythmic duple of the melody against the triplet in the accompaniment also helps bring vitality to the song. The music for the first three verses is in the mood of the first line, very light. Only when the fourth verse is reached, which contemplates the more serious aspects of infinite and eternal love, does the melody begin on a lower and more weighted pitch. The end of this piece crescendos to reestablish the feeling of love's boundless power.
Wie Melodien zieht es mir

Like a melody it passes Softly through my mind,
Like the flowers of spring it blooms, And floats on like a fragrance;
But the word comes and seizes it, And brings it before my eyes
Like the gray mist it pales then, And vanishes like a breath.
And yet there is in the rhyme A fragrance deeply hidden,
That gently from a dormant bud is called forth by tear-stained eyes.

This song is the first in the opus 105 collection titled Fünf Lieder für eine tiefe Stimme mit Begleitung des Pianoforte von Johannes Brahms. The poem is from Klaus Groth's (1819-1899) Hundert Blätter, Paralipomena zum Quickborn. Brahms composed this song at Thun in August, 1886. Stark suggests that as Groth's poem portrays the poets' yearning to bring the beauty of the world to paper, Brahms' music echoes the longing. Only through the combination of the two mediums can the power of the emotion become closer to being realized.

Vergebliches Standchen

(He) Good evening, my treasure,
Good evening my child,
Love brings me to you,
Oh, open the door for me!

(She) My door is locked,
I won't let you in.
Mother gives good advice,
If you should come in,
It would be all over with me!

(He) So cold is the night,
So icy the wind,
That my heart freezes,
And my love will be extinguished;
Open for me, my child!

(She) If your love dies,
Let it perish! Let it perish, never mind;
Go home to bed, to sleep,
Good night, my boy,
Good night, good night, my boy!

This strophic song, probably composed during one of his summers in Pörtschach (1877-1879), was one of Brahms' favorites. It was the fourth song in his opus 84 collection titled Romanzen und Lieder für eine oder zwei Stimmen mit Begleitung des Pianoforte von Johannes Brahms. Brahms, usually very critical of his work, responded to the critic Eduard Hanslick's singling the song out for praise by saying "It was really something special for me and I am in a particularly good humor about it...For this one song I would sacrifice all the others." (Stark, 247) Brahms found the poem in his favorite collection, Deutsche Volkslieder mit ihren Original-Weisen. He had assumed that the text was an original folk song, but in actuality it was an adaptation of a folk song from the Lower Rhine by Anton Wilhelm Florentin von Zuccalmaglio.
Sul fil d'un soffio etesio

Agile shadows scurry on the breath of an etasian breeze: among the branches a bluish-grey glow of the rising moon has appeared. Dance! And may the gently steps measure a gentle sound, combining the magical dances with the song.

Let us wander beneath the moon, choosing flower by flower; each crown of petals, in its heart, brings its good fortune.

With the lilies and the violets let us write secret names; from our enchanted hands may words blossom... words illuminated by pure silver and by gold...

magic incantations and magic charms. The Fairies have, for letters of the alphabet, flowers.

-Larsen translation

Verdi's last opera, *Falstaff*, was premiered in 1893. The libretto, by Arrigo Boito, is based on Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Henry IV*. In this aria, Nannetta is disguised as the Queen of the Fairies and is surrounded by children who are disguised as her subjects. This masquerade in the forest is intended to frighten Falstaff into confessing his antics of professing his love to the two married women, Alice Ford and Meg Page.

Bonny at Morn, David of the White Rock, Bird Scarer’s Song

Benjamin Britten was born in 1913 and died in 1976. These three folk songs from the British Isles are from a collection of Eight Folk Songs for High Voice and Harp. The first, *Bonny at Morn*, is what might be called an “inward lullaby”. This kind of singing, as explained by Leslie Daiken, is done with the understanding of the confidentiality of the situation of singing to a baby, so thoughts and troubles of life are disclosed. *David of the White Rock* was written originally in Gaelic, and speaks of an aging musician musing about life lived and music played. The *Bird Scarer’s Song* is a light piece proclaiming “Shoo arlo birds!” to chase the bothersome creatures away, even if only onto the neighbors land.
Der Hirt auf dem Felsen

When on the highest rock I stand, and gaze down into the depths of the valley, and sing, the echo from the ravines floats up from far away out of the deep dark valley. The further my voice reaches, the clearer is the answer that returns to me from down below. My darling dwells so far from me, and so I long so fervently for her over there.

Deep grief consumes me, my joy is gone. Now earthly hope has forsaken me;
I am so lonely here.

So longingly rang the song through the wood, so longingly it rang through the night, drawing the hearts toward heaven with wondrous power.

The spring will come, the spring, my joy; now I shall make things ready so that I can go wandering.

The further my voice reaches, the clearer is the answer that returns to me.

This song was written for voice, piano, and clarinet obbligato in October 1828, just one month before Franz Schubert died. He wrote it for the highly regarded soprano, Anna Milder-Hauptmann. In a letter she wrote to him in 1825, she suggested he write for her an extended piece with contrasting sections and a brilliant conclusion. Although at first he did not pursue this, three years later he appears to have followed her suggestion closely. The first section of the text is from a poem by Wilhelm Müller, Der Berghirt (The Alpine Shepherd). The last section of the text is from the poem Liebesgedanken (Thoughts of Love), by the same author. The middle section text is thought to have been written by Helmina von Chézy.

Bibliography


AMBER NICOLE DILGER
soprano
in a
SENIOR HONORS RECITAL
and
TAMERA WYKES
piano
in a
GRADUATE RECITAL
with
Ingrid Sevy, harp - Matt Tieken, clarinet

So shall the lute and harp awake . . . . . . . . . . . . . George Frideric Handel
from Judas Maccabaeus (1685-1759)

Au Bord de l'Eau . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Gabriel Fauré
Le Secret (1845-1924)
Notre Amour

Wie Melodien zieht es mir . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Johannes Brahms
Vergebliches Ständchen (1833-1897)

Sui fil d'un soffio etesio . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Giuseppe Verdi
from Falstaff (1813-1901)

... Intermission...

from Eight Folk Song Arrangements . . . . . . . . . . . . . Benjamin Britten
Bonny at Morn (1913-1976)
David of the White Rock
Bird Scarer's Song

Der Hirt auf dem Felsen . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

Amber Nicole Dilger is a student of John Hines
and the recipient of a Young Artist Award.
She is warden of Mu Phi Epsilon,
International Professional Fraternity in the field of music.
This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Honors Program at Ball State University.

Tamera Wykes is a student of Mitchell Andrews.
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PRUIS HALL
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