

THE ST. OLAF COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC PRESENTS
IN GUEST ARTIST RECITAL

Katherine Rohrer, *soprano*

assisted by

April Kim, *piano*

with

Jenna McBride-Harris, *horn*

Karl Wiederwohl, *bass trombone*



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2021 • 7 P.M. • URNESS RECITAL HALL

PROGRAM

Music for a While
from *Oedipus*

Henry Purcell (1659–695)

Gedichte der Königin Maria Stuart
I. Abschied von Frankreich
II. Nach der Geburt ihres Sohnes
III. An die Königin Elisabeth
IV. Abschied von der Welt
V. Gebet

Robert Schumann (1810–1856)

Vier Gesänge
I. *Hornesruf*

Carl Gottlieb Reissiger (1798–1859)

Jenna McBride-Harris, *horn*

First Love Song

Karl Wiederwohl (b.1978)

Karl Wiederwohl, *bass trombone*

Les Chansons de Bilitis

Claude Debussy (1862–1918)

I. La Flûte de Pan
II. Le Chevelure
III. Le Tombeau des Naïades

Podrugi milyye (*Pauline's Aria*)
from *Pique Dame* (*The Queen of Spades*)
8. Romance

Pyotr Tchaikovsky (1840–1893)

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Music for a While

Act III, Scene one

Shall all your cares beguile,
Shall all, all, etc...
Shall all your cares beguile.
Wond'ring, Wond'ring
How your pains were eased, eased, eased
And distaining to be pleased
'Til Alecto free the dead
From their eternal bands
'Til the snakes drop, drop, drop
Drop from her head
And the whip from out her hand
Music for a while
Shall all your cares beguile

text by John Dryden and Nathaniel Lee

Gedichte der Königin Maria Stuart

I. Abschied von Frankreich

Ich zieh dahin!
Ade, mein fröhlich Frankenland,
Wo ich die liebste Heimat fand,
Du meiner Kindheit Pflegerin!
Ade, du Land, du schöne Zeit.
Mich trennt das Boot vom Glück so weit!
Doch trägt's die Hälfte nur von mir:
Ein Teil für immer bleibt dein,
Mein fröhlich Land, der sage dir,
Des andern eingedenk zu sein!
Ade!

text by Mary Stuart/trans. Gisbert Freiherr von Vincke

II. Nach der Geburt ihres Sohnes

Herr Jesu Christ, den sie gekrönt mit Dornen,
Beschütze die Geburt des hier Gebor'nen.
Und sei's dein Will', lass sein Geschlecht zugleich
Lang herrschen noch in diesem Königreich.
Und alles, was geschieht in seinem Namen,
Sei dir zu Ruhm und Preis und Ehre, Amen.

text by Mary Stuart/trans. Gisbert Freiherr von Vincke

Poems of Queen Mary Stuart

I. Farewell to France

I am going away!
Farewell, my happy France,
Where I found the loveliest homeland,
You the guardian of my childhood!
Farewell, O land, O happy time,
The ship bears me far away from joy!
Yet it takes but half of me:
One part will be for ever yours,
My happy land, recalling to you
The memory of that other self!
Farewell!

trans. Richard Stokes

II. After the birth of her son

Lord Jesus Christ, whom they crowned with thorns,
Protect this new born boy,
And, if it be Thy will, let his race
Long rule in this realm.
And let all that is done in his name
Be to Thy glory, praise and honour, Amen.

trans. by Richard Stokes

III. An die Königin Elisabeth

Nur ein Gedanke, der mich freut und quält,
Hält ewig mir den Sinn gefangen,
So dass der Furcht und Hoffnung Stimmen klangen,
Als ich die Stunden ruhelos gezählt.

Und wenn mein Herz dies Blatt zum Boten wählt,
Und kündet, Euch zu sehen, mein Verlangen,
Dann, teurer Schwester, fasst mich neues Bangen,
Weil ihm die Macht, es zu beweisen, fehlt.

Ich seh' den Kahn im Hafen fast geborgen,
Vom Sturm und Kampf der Wogen festgehalten,
Des Himmels heit'res Antlitz nachtumgraut.
So bin auch ich bewegt von Furcht und Sorgen,
Vor euch nicht, Schwester.
Doch des Schicksals Walten
Zerreißt das Segel oft, dem wir vertraut.

text by Mary Stuart/trans. Gisbert Freiherr von Vincke

IV. Abschied von der Welt

Was nützt die mir noch zugemess'ne Zeit?
Mein Herz erstarb für irdisches Begehren,
Nur Leiden soll mein Schatten nicht entbehren,
Mir blieb allein die Todesfreudigkeit.

Ihr Feinde, lasst von eurem Neid:
Mein Herz ist abgewandt der Hoheit Ehren,
Des Schmerzes Übermass wird mich verzehren;
Bald geht mit mir zu Grabe Hass und Streit.

Ihr Freunde, die ihr mein gedenkt in Liebe,
Erwägt und glaubt, dass ohne Kraft und Glück
Kein gutes Werk mir zu vollenden bliebe.

So wünscht mir bess're Tage nicht zurück,
Und weil ich schwer gestrafet werd' hienieden,
Erfleht mir meinen Teil am ew'gen Frieden!

text by Mary Stuart/trans. Gisbert Freiherr von Vincke

V. Gebet

O Gott, mein Gebieter,
Ich hoffe auf Dich!
O Jesu, Geliebter,
Nun rette Du mich!
Im harten Gefängnis,
In schlimmer Bedrängnis
Ersehne ich Dich;
In Klagen, dir klagend,
Im Staube verzagend,
Erhör', ich beschwöre,
Und rette Du mich!

text by Mary Stuart/trans. Gisbert Freiherr von Vincke

III. To Queen Elizabeth

*One thought alone gladdens and grieves me
And dominates my mind,
So that the voices of fear and hope resound,
When sleepless I count the hours.*

*And when my heart chooses this letter as messenger,
Revealing how I long to see you,
Then, dear sister, a new anguish seizes me,
Because the letter lacks the power to prove it.*

*I see the boat half hidden in the harbour,
Held back by the storm and warring waves,
And heaven's serene face blackened by night.
So am I likewise beset by cares and fear,
Not of you, my sister.
But the force of fate*

*Often lacerates the sail in which we trust.
trans. by Richard Stokes*

IV. Farewell to the World

*What use is the time still allotted me?
My heart is dead to earthly desires,
My spirit is severed from all but sorrow,
The joy of death alone remains.*

*Cease envying me, O enemies:
My heart abjures all honour and nobility,
Excess of anguish will devour me,
Hatred and schism will soon be buried with me.*

*O friends, who will remember me with love,
Consider and believe that without power or fortune
There is nothing good I can achieve.*

*So do not wish for the return of happier days,
And because I've been sorely punished here on earth,
Pray that a share of eternal peace might be mine!
trans. by Richard Stokes*

V. Prayer

*O Lord God,
I put my trust in Thee!
O beloved Jesus,
Rescue me!
In my harsh prison,
In dire affliction
I long for Thee;
Lamenting I cry to Thee,
Despairing in the dust,
Hearken, I implore Thee,
And rescue me!*

translation by Richard Stokes

Vier Gesänge

I. Hornesruf

“Komm mit! Beflügle deinen Schritt.”

So klang es von der grünen Au’,
Als schauend zu des Himmels Blau
Ich durch des Waldes Hallen
Ein Posthorn hörte schallen.
O wie sich da mein Sinn bewegt,
Die alte Lust zur Welt sich regt,
Ein fieberisches Sehnen
Fühlt’ ich bei Hornestönen.

“Komm mit! Ich lehr dich fremde Sitt’!”

So klang es hell, so klang es süß,
Wie Stimmen aus dem Paradies.
“Ich führe dich zur Ferne,
Zu neuer Sehnsucht Sterne.
O sieh’, wie lacht die Bläue schön,
Folg meinem lockenden Getön,
Hinab zum Land der Blüten,
Wo Dichters Träume glühten.”

I. Horncall

“Come along! Hasten your steps.”

Thus it sounded from the green meadow,
As, gazing at the blue of the heavens,
I heard a post-horn sounding
Through the halls of the forest.
Oh how my spirit was moved,
The old desire for the world stirred,
I felt a feverish yearning
At the sound of the horn.

“Come along! I will teach you foreign customs!”

Thus it sounded brightly, thus it sounded sweetly,
Like voices from paradise.
“I will lead you to distant places,
To the stars of new yearnings.
Oh see how the blueness laughs beautifully,
Follow my enticing sounds
Down to the land of blossoms
Where the poet’s dreams glowed.”
trans. by Wesley Jackson

First Love Song

She had moonlight inside that shone from her eyes.
It was deep night bright light that won’t answer why.
In her myst’ry she found me and clung to my shore.
Blue sky pulled her away, a faint moon in the day; now watching untouchably far.
Always gone too soon, leaving just a faint moon at the end of a long lifted scar.

And she’d come and she’d go.
The tides fell. The tides rose.
She’d cut her connection to me.
But I wouldn’t let go.
As the child in me knows, I need more from the person for me.

Room of myst’ry, discovery; how sweet were the nights in those walls.
Oh how she’d enchant me. Her eyes had the moon’s siren call.
We were young then, free then. Young bodies with open young minds.
We had passion, freedom. Our love was the best waste of time.
When the sun rose she chose to let the love’s light fade to dark.

She could fill up a room with the light of the moon;
those nights when she gave light to me.
What I couldn’t have known, but the years since have shown,
she wasn’t the person for me.

Now the years since have blessed me with the great love of my life.
There’s a person—my friend—who gives her whole self day and night.
When I look back I see myself; in the day all alone.
Memory of moonlight is sweet, but it isn’t my home.

Goodbye, love of the past. I’ve found something that lasts.
Some things just aren’t meant to be.

What the moon wouldn’t show, were things I’ll never know.
But the moonlight was her gift to me.
Sweet moonlight was her gift to me.

text by Karl Wiederwohl

Les Chansons de Bilitis

I. La Flûte de Pan

Pour le jour des Hyacinthies, il m'a donné une syrinx
Fait de roseaux bien taillés, unis avec la blanche cire
Qui est douce à mes lèvres comme le miel.

Il m'apprend à jouer, assise sur ses genoux; mais je
Suis un peu tremblante. Il en joue après moi, si
Doucement que je l'entends à peine.

Nous n'avons rien à nous dire, tant nous sommes
Près l'un de l'autre; mais nos chansons veulent se
Répondre, et tour à tour nos bouches s'unissent sur la flûte.

Il est tard; voici le chant des grenouilles vertes qui
Commence avec la nuit. Ma mère ne croira jamais que
Je suis restée si longtemps à chercher ma ceinture perdue.

text by Pierre Louÿs

II. Le Chevelure

Il m'a dit: «Cette nuit, j'ai rêvé. J'avais ta chevelure
Autour de mon cou. J'avais tes cheveux comme un
Collier noir autour de ma nuque et sur ma poitrine.

«Je les caressais, et c'étaient les miens; et nous
Étions liés pour toujours ainsi, par la même chevelure
La bouche sur la bouche, ainsi que deux lauriers n'ont
Souvent qu'une racine.

«Et peu à peu, il m'a semblé, tant nos membres
Étaient confondus, que je devenais toi-même ou que
Tu entrais en moi comme mon songe.»

Quand il eut achevé, il mit doucement ses mains sur
Mes épaules, et il me regarda d'un regard si tendre,
Que je baissai les yeux avec un frisson.

text by Pierre Louÿs

III. Le tombeau des Naiades

Le long du bois couvert de givre,
Je marchais; mes cheveux
Devant ma bouche se fleurissaient de petits glaçons,
Et Mes sandales étaient lourdes
De neige fangeuse et tassée.

Il me dit: «Que cherches-tu?»—
«Je suis la trace du satyre.
Ses petits pas fourchus
Alternent comme des trous dans un manteau blanc.»
Il me dit: «Les satyres sont morts.

«Les satyres et les nymphes aussi.
Depuis trente ans il
N'a pas fait un hiver aussi terrible.
La trace que tu vois est celle d'un bouc.
Mais restons ici, où est leur tombeau.»

Et avec le fer de sa houe
Il cassa la glace de la source
Où jadis riaient les naïades.
Il prenait de grands morceaux froids,
Et les soulevant vers le ciel pâle,
Il regardait au travers.

text by Pierre Louÿs

I. The Flute of Pan

*For Hyacinthus day he gave me a syrinx made of
Carefully cut reeds, bonded with white wax which tastes
Sweet to my lips like honey.*

*He teaches me to play, as I sit on his lap; but I am
A little fearful. He plays it after me, so gently that I
Scarcely hear him.*

*We have nothing to say, so close are we one to
Another, but our songs try to answer each other, and
Our mouths join in turn on the flute.*

*It is late; here is the song of the green frogs that
Begins with the night. My mother will never believe
I stayed out so long to look for my lost sash.*

trans. by Richard Stokes

II. The Tresses of Hair

*He said to me: 'Last night I dreamed. I had your
Tresses around my neck. I had your hair like a black
Necklace all round my nape and over my breast.*

*'I caressed it and it was mine; and we
Were united thus forever by the same tresses,
Mouth on mouth, just as two laurels
Often share one root.*

*'And gradually it seemed to me, so intertwined
Were our limbs, that I was becoming you, or you were
Entering into me like a dream.'*

*When he had finished, he gently set his hands on
My shoulders and gazed at me so tenderly that I lowered
My eyes with a shiver.*

trans. by Richard Stokes

III. The Tomb of the Naiads

*Along the frost-bound wood
I walked; my hair across
My mouth, blossomed with tiny icicles,
And my sandals were heavy
With muddy, packed snow.*

*He said to me: 'What do you seek?'
'I follow the satyr's track.
His little cloven hoof-marks
Alternate like holes in a white cloak.'
He said to me: 'The satyrs are dead.*

*'The satyrs and the nymphs too.
For thirty years there
has not been so harsh a winter.
The tracks you see are those of a goat.
But let us stay here, where their tomb is.'*

*And with the iron head of his hoe
He broke the ice of the spring,
Where the naiads used to laugh.
He picked up some huge cold fragments,
And, raising them to the pale sky,
Gazed through them.*

trans. by Richard Stokes

Podrugi milyye Act I, Scene 2

Да, вспомнила!

Подруги милые! в беспечности игривой
Под плясовой напев вы резвитесь в лугах.
И я, как вы, жила в Аркадии счастливой;

И я, на утре дней, в сих рощах и полях
Минутны радости вкусила:
Любовь в мечтах златых
Мне счастье сулила;
Но что ж досталось мне в сих радостных местах?
Могила!

text by Batjushkov

Pauline's Aria

Yes, I remember now!

*Dear girl-friends! In your carefree playfulness
To a joyful tune you are playing in the fields
And just like you I lived in happy Arcady*

*I too, in the morning of my days, in these groves and fields
Tasted the short-lived joys
Love in my golden dreams
Promised nothing but happiness
But what is it I found in these places of joy?
A grave!*

trans. by Anastasia Witts

PROGRAM NOTES

Henry Purcell's Music for a While (Z. 583)

Music is often a reflection of political upheaval and demonstration. It can be, at times, patriotic and at other times the embodiment of anarchy. I will say now that this opening choice for the recital is not an intentional reflection of a political viewpoint but rather perhaps unconsciously is a call to arms. It is a call to "music" ...if just for a while (or forever!).

Henry Purcell lived in a chaotic political landscape. Europe had weathered multiple wars including a civil war. This was the beginning of the Restoration Period in which the political scenery was drastically and violently returned to prior constructs. The monarchy was restored to power, and the Church of England was reinstated as the national religious entity of England. It was reversal of Puritan morality and repression. In response to this reversal, women were allowed to perform commercially on stage for the first time.

Henry Purcell was a musician defined and educated by the Church of England. While a large portion of his compositions were sacred, he also explored secular compositions. An example is his incidental music for dramatic plays. Unlike the current contemporary definition of a "play" which contains little or no music, the Restoration Theater used music as an integral portion of its form. Music could define scenes, the passage of time, and/or increase the emotional intensity of a scene (Crouse, 2013). This piece was composed as the first of four movements to Nathaniel Lee and John Dryden's tragic play Oedipus. Just prior to the publishing of Music for a While there was yet another overturn in historical events in which the previously "restored" king was deposed, and the glorious revolution initiated the reign of Queen Mary II and her husband King William III. Music for a While outlines the use of music to calm the troubles of the listener emanating from war, jealousy and punisher of mortal crimes as embodied by the mythical figure of Alecto.

Robert Schumann's song cycle *Gedichte der Königin Maria Stuart* was his last work for solo voice. He was in a period of his life in which depression and career frustrations were at their peak. In the text and story of Maria Stuart he identified with the notion of an innocent doomed to unjust oppression and persecuted by internal and external forces. One of two biographical cycles set by Schumann (both based on women), the text was attributed to Maria Stuart herself and then later versified for song. Demonstrative of his later style, the compositional structure is minimalist and spare focusing on the psyche of Mary's plight rather than applied theater. The drama is set in the use of vocal color, text painting and in so offers an opportunity for unique individuality for each singer and performance.

Vier Gesänge, Op. 117

Carl Gottlieb Reissiger was a successful teacher, conductor, and prolific composer, but is relatively unknown to modern audiences because his contributions were soundly overshadowed by his Romantic contemporaries Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin and Schumann. The son of an organist, Reissiger was a talented keyboardist performing public piano concerts by age ten. As a young man, he abandoned his theological studies at the University of Leipzig to pursue a full-time career in music. He moved to Vienna in 1821 and began taking theory lessons from Salieri, eventually moving to Munich to study composition with Peter Winter, another talented German composer whose operas were overshadowed by the likes of Mozart and Weber. Although he was a prolific composer of over two hundred works in a variety of genres, he was known mainly as a composer of opera. During his life, Reissiger was most lauded for his skills as a gifted conductor, holding the coveted post of Hofkapellmeister of the theater and opera (succeeding Weber) in Dresden during the pinnacle of his career.

While Reissiger wrote primarily operas, oratorios, masses and piano pieces, there are also a few works for horn in his oeuvre. In addition to a concerto for horn and orchestra, Reissiger, like Schubert in his *Auf dem Strom*, wrote in the

chamber genre of adding an obbligato melodic instrument to the singing voice and the piano. Within this genre, he composed six total pieces for horn, voice, and piano, as well as a song for soprano, horn and harp.

Composed in 1901, **Debussy's Chansons de Bilitis** shares many of the thematic and unique compositional gestures as demonstrated in Debussy's instrumental works, including *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*. Early in his compositional career Debussy displayed a strong connection to poetry and text as an inspiration/collaboration for which and by which the music interacts. These songs are a perfect example of Debussy's mastery of text painting. He began collaborations with some of the most notable poets and writers of the day including Paul Verlaine, Stéphane Mallarmé and Pierre Louÿs. These writers, poets and authors focused on symbolism and embraced the esoteric. The poetry in these songs perfectly illustrates the cohesion of symbolic textual painting through the inclusion of musical gesture. Debussy throws form and harmonic tradition to the proverbial wind and instead becomes a slave to the textual intent as a guide for musical form and function. His inclusion of both eastern and western harmonic ideas is most evident in his opera *Pelléas et Mélisande*, but the genome of those musical characteristics is also evident in these songs.

The text of *Chanson de Bilitis* is by Pierre Louÿs. Originally Pierre Louÿs asserted that the poetry was ancient Greek classical text based on the mythological figures of Aphrodite and the works of Sappho. This was not true, but rather was a highly convincing imposter and a reflection of Louÿs' own talent and value of Greek classical text and language. Louÿs worked in his own writings to assimilate a musicality into his form, phrasing and word use. In response to his passion for classical literature he pens these poems as an ode to a Greek woman named Bilitis. Louÿs used his works to highlight his social commentary regarding sexuality and taboos. The poems included in the *Chansons de Bilitis* are a direct reflection of this commentary, and encompass thematic material centered on sexuality - specifically lesbianism. They are a compilation of writings in which the female perspective on love/sex is admired and celebrated. To encourage sexual and gender equality, Louÿs uses ancient settings as a model to instruct and comment on current life. Similar to Purcell, Debussy and Louÿs seek to beguile the listener into a new way of thinking and listening by reflecting and accessing the past. This contemplation of the past is the key to envisioning a better future/present in Louÿs' and Debussy's minds.

Tchaikovsky's opera "Pique Dame" based on a Puskin play is a triumph of vocal and dramatic writing. In this aria (Act 1, scene 2) is the point at which the image and pervasiveness of death is introduced to the young heroine. In the simple song, Pauline (Lisette's) friend, offers entertainment by singing a folk song. The text of the piece is based on a poem by Batjushkov which was used as an epitaph of a young shepherdess and inspired by Nicolas Poussin's Painting entitled "The Shepherds of Arcadia."

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mezzo-soprano **Katherine Rohrer** has been impressing audience members internationally with her warm, expressive tone, vocal agility, and dramatic, emotionally gripping performances. Balancing the rigors of traditional and mainstream repertoire with some of today's most celebrated composers, Katherine Rohrer garnered critical acclaim in performances as Nicklausse/Muse in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* with Opera Colorado and Florida Grand Opera, Marguerite in *La Damnation de Faust* with Oper Frankfurt, the Malaysian Philharmonia, and the Saint Louis Symphony, the role of Lady Macbeth in Bloch's rarely-heard *Macbeth* with London's University College Opera, and her first Pilgrim in Saariaho's *L'Amour de Loin* with Vlaamse Opera. In her debut in the title role of *Carmen* with Glyndebourne on tour, the Times Online writes, "she has already deeply assimilated the strength and complexity of this *Carmen*. And her minutely expressive mezzo-soprano traces every nerve ending of Bizet's writing."

Recent and previous concert engagements include Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Japan with the Mito Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Seiji Ozawa (released internationally on CD and DVD), Mozart's *C Minor Mass* with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra conducted by Donald Runnicles, Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra, and a Gala Concert with New Orleans Symphony under the baton of Kauspeter Siebel, Verdi *Requiem* with the Columbus Symphony under Dr. Scott McCoy and *Messiah* with Toledo Symphony. Her Carnegie Hall debut was for the Marilyn Horne Foundation followed by recitals in Louisville, Kentucky and Bradford, Pennsylvania. The Louisville Courier-Journal's review of the performance praises her "luscious, ringing voice," and notes that she displayed "just enough sass to convert you immediately to her cause."

In 2015, she directed Opera Columbus (Opera on the Edge) production of *La Traviata*. She also completed a recording (Naxos) with the Ohio State University Wind Ensemble of *Um Mitternacht*. She was a finalist in the Eleanor McCollum Competition at Houston Grand Opera, and finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. Ms. Rohrer was an Adler Fellow at the San Francisco Opera from 2004-2006. She has a BM in music education from Stetson University as well as a MM in performance from New England Conservatory and a PhD from Ohio University in 2018. In autumn 2013, she joined the faculty at The Ohio State University where she is Associate Professor and Area Head of Voice.