

Program Notes and Texts/Translations

Mentor Williams (1946–2016) is an American songwriter and producer. Williams was born in Omaha, Nebraska but when his father died at 7 years old, he moved to California with his aunt. He has won 17 awards for his work and the ASCAP award for his 30 years of songwriting. He is best known for his song “**Drift Away**” which was popularized by Dobie Gray in his 1973 version. This song was written about the love and joy that an individual receives from listening to music. The lyrics express a need to escape the world around us and simply drift away into the beat of the music.

William Roy (1928–2003) was born in Detroit, Michigan and started out as a child actor and teenage pianist. He went on to study composition where he began to compose art songs. Roy was a writer, arranger, and musical conductor for several cabaret acts and had several of his songs featured in musicals such as *Maggie*. “**This Little Rose**” was originally a text written by Emily Dickinson (1830–1886) and then set to music by William Roy. In this piece, the rose symbolizes growth and change. The text expresses the loneliness and hardships experienced during growth entering new stages of life. Often, individualistic and authentic personalities remain unnoticed, leaving the rose to feel unmissed and alone in this piece.

Duncan Sheik (b. 1969) is a singer/songwriter and composer from California. He is most known for writing music for musical theater show *Spring Awakening* and *American Psycho*. During his career, he has won Grammys and Tony Awards for his work. “**Mama Who Bore Me**” comes from his popular musical *Spring Awakening* which takes place in 1891. The main plot of the musical is about the exploration, self-discovery, and awakening of youth. Wendla opens the show with this song to express her confusion and changes occurring in her teenage life. The text, which was written by Steven Sater, begs for Wendla’s mom to help her navigate and understand what she is going through.

Robert Schumann (1810–1856) was a German composer and music critic. He explored all the musical genres of the time, but he is mostly known for his piano works and songs. Schumann’s love for literature provided him with a deep understanding of his musical works, which often followed literature models. His compositions are known for inspiring several generations of future musicians. “**Du bist wie eine Blume**” (**You are like a Flower**) is the 24th song from a song cycle titled *Myrthen*, Op. 25. The text was written by Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) who was a German poet known for his lyrical work. It expresses one’s love for another by comparing them to a flower. The text explains the purity and fairness of their lover and how they wish they could preserve them the way they are. The year 1840 was significant in his life as he married Clara and composed about half of his songs during this period, dedicating them to her. This specific collection was also intended as a wedding gift for her.

Du bist wie eine Blume, so hold und schön und
rein;
Ich schau’ dich an, und Wehmut Schleicht mir
ins Herz hinein.
Mir ist, als ob ich die Hände Aufs Haupt dir
legen sollt’,
Betend, dass Gott dich erhalte So rein und schön
und hold.

(Text by Heinrich Heine)

You are like a flower, so sweet and fair and
pure;
I look at you, and such sadness steals into my
heart.
I feel as if I should lay my hands upon your
head,
Praying that God preserve you, so pure and fair
and sweet.

(Translation from *Lieder.net*)

Andrew Lloyd Webber (b. 1948) is a well-known composer for musical theatre, specifically in London. He is commonly known for musicals, including *Phantom of the Opera* and *Cats*. Webber has won seven Tonys, seven Oliviers, 14 Ivor Novellos, and an Oscar for his works. Although each of his musicals are unique, Webber often uses elements such as pastiche, the rock riff, and the lyric ballad in his music. “**I Don’t Know How to Love Him**” is from Webber’s musical *Jesus Christ Superstar* composed in 1970. This musical is considered a “rock opera” versus an ordinary musical according to Webber. *Jesus Christ Superstar* tells the story of Jesus’ final days before the Crucifixion. One of the characters, Mary Magdalene, begins to fall in love with Jesus as she cares for him. In the first act, Mary Magdalene sings this tender and intense song when she begins to realize that Jesus is unlike the average man.

Cynthia Lauper (b. 1953) is a singer, songwriter, actress, and activist. She became a major hit in the 1980s and is most known for songs such as “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun” or “True Colors”. Lauper has won a Grammy, two American Music Awards, an Emmy, and three MTV Music Awards in her career. She is also known for the musical *Kinky Boots*. This musical is about a partnership between Charlie Price and a drag queen named Lola to produce a new line of high-heeled boots to save Charlie’s business. “**History of Wrong Guys**” is sung by Lauren when she realizes she has a developing crush on Charlie. In this song, she reflects on her bad choices of men and the history of her getting her heartbroken.

Enrique Granados (1867–1916) moved to Barcelona, Spain at a very young age due to his father being in the army. He began music lessons with an army bandmaster and later took formal lessons becoming the pupil of one of the leading piano instructors. Granados remained a self-taught composer but studied with a musicologist during the time who became a leading mentor. His overall style reflects much of European traditions mixed with Spanish folk elements. In “**El majo tímido**” (**The Timid Man**), Granados uses text from poet Fernando Periquet (1873–1940). The text expresses a timid man who is gazing at a woman but is too shy to go to her, so he disappears into the night. The singer then sings about this man as he disappears, hoping that this is not how life will go for her.

Llega a mi reja y me mira
por la noche un majo
que, en cuanto me ve y suspira,
se va calle abajo.
¡Ay qué tío más tardío!
¡Si así se pasa la vida estoy divertida!
(Text by Fernando Periquet)

Coming to my window grate to look at me in the
evening is a gent
Who, when he has seen enough, sighs and
disappears down the road.
Ah, what a fleeting fellow! If this is how life
will go, it’ll kill me!
(Translation from IPASource.com)

Alessandro Stradella (1644–1682) was a composer from Tuscany. He started off composing oratorios, prologues, and substitute arias before he began composing instrumental works. Components of his works include contrapuntal texture, varied rhythms, and striking chord progressions in a tonal context. “**Sel nel ben sempre incostante**” (**If Times are Good, Fortune Wanders**) is an aria from the opera *Ricordi* depicting changing times, whether good or bad. This piece resembles that nothing in life must remain stable; whether times are good or bad, they remain in motion.

Se nel ben, se nel ben, sempre inconstante
fortuna vagante,
Di far si stabile us non ha, anco mutabile nel mal
sarà.

(Text by Anonymous)

If times are good, fortune wanders,
always changing,
It's not accustomed to remaining stable,
yet bad times are changeable too.

(Translation from Lieder.net)

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) was a French composer, teacher, pianist, and organist. At an early age, he was prepared to become an organist and choirmaster in the church, which heavily influenced his later composition of music. His style is often seen as a bridge between Romanticism and the 20th century. **“Chanson d’amour” (Love Song)** was composed in 1882 with text from poet Armand Silvestre (1837–1901). The text demonstrates the singer expressing their love for another person. The accompaniment is light and moves in eighth notes to help the singer express their overflowing love and passion.

J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ton front, Ô ma rebelle, ô
ma farouche,
J'aime tes yeux, j'aime ta bouche Où mes baisers
s'épuiseront.
J'aime ta voix, j'aime l'étrange Grâce de tout ce
que tu dis,
Ô ma rebelle, ô mon cher ange, Mon enfer et
mon paradis!
J'aime tout ce qui te fait belle, De tes pieds
jusqu'à tes cheveux,
Ô toi vers qui montent mes vœux, Ô ma
farouche, ô ma rebelle!

(Text by Armand Silvestre)

I love your eyes, I love your brow, o my rebel, O
my wild one,
I love your eyes, I love your mouth where my
kisses shall dissolve.
I love your voice, I love the strange charm of all
you say,
O my rebel, O my dear angel, my inferno and
my paradise.
I love all that makes you beautiful from your
feet to your hair,
O you the object of all my vows, o my wild one,
O my rebel.

(Translation from IPASource.com)

Sara Bareilles (b. 1979) is a singer/songwriter and pianist from California. She attended the University of California as a communications major, but she always had a passion for music. She began to release pop music in 2003 with popular songs such as “Love Song” and was nominated for three Grammys for her different works. In 2016, she went on to compose music for the Broadway production *Waitress*. **“I Didn’t Plan It”** is sung by the character Becky when Jenna discovers she is having an affair. Becky sings this song to embrace unpredictability and celebrating the things that come along when we least expect them to. This song encapsulates a whirlwind of emotions that touch on self-discovery, transformation, and excitement.

Noah Kahan (b. 1997) is a pop-folk singer and songwriter from rural Vermont. He is known for his emotionally rooted music with themes of small-town claustrophobia, self-discovery, and mental health. Kahan grew up on a 133-acre tree farm and his family heavily inspired his love and writing for music. He released his first studio album in 2019, but recently got a lot of attention with the release of his album *Stick Season*. With Kahan’s recent success he was nominated for “Best New Artist” at the 2024 Grammys. **“Call Your Mom”** comes off Kahan’s deluxe version of *Stick Season: We Will All Be Here Forever*. This song is an emotional work about supporting someone who is spiraling and struggling with mental health issues. The singer encourages their loved one to stay alive and not give up while they provide support and promise to be by their side.