

## Program Notes and Translations

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868) was an Italian composer who influenced Italian operatic life with his comedic and serious operatic works and his unique style which is seen in many of his other compositions. Rossini was born in Pesaro, located in the Italian region of Marche. Both his parents were musicians, and he began creating and playing instruments, such as the horn, at a young age. By 1804, he was taking courses at a secondary school in Bologna studying cello, piano, singing, and counterpoint. Rossini is known for many aspects of his works, including his ability to combine drama and emotion with lighter more playful moments, his ornamentation and virtuosic writing, and his lyrical and emotional pieces. **“La promessa”** (The Promise) is a secular vocal composition published as part of *Les soirees musicales*, a collection of 12 vocal pieces. This piece sets a poem by Pietro Metastasio (1698–1782). It is about someone professing to their lover that their love is so great that they will continue loving them until they die. This piece has two contrasting sections, with second section speeding up to show the building momentum and excitement.

(Translation)

That I will ever be able to stop loving you

No, don't believe it, dear eyes!

Not even to joke would I deceive you about this.

You alone are my sparks, and you will be, dear eyes, my beautiful fire

as long as I live, ah! (*Translation by Christie Turnage Turner*)

Frank Wildhorn (b. 1958) is an American composer and producer. Wildhorn's works include genres of popular, theatrical, and classical music. He wrote many musicals, such as *The Civil War*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, and *Jekyll & Hyde*. All of these musicals received Tony Awards, and in 1999, he became the first American composer in twenty-two years to have three shows running simultaneously on Broadway. In 1997, *Jekyll & Hyde* was first performed on Broadway. This musical is based on the book *The Strange Case of Jekyll & Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, and the book for the musical was written by Leslie Bricosse. This musical explores the themes of good and evil and follows the tale of a two-faced man and two women, both of whom are in love with the same man. One song from this musical is **“Someone Like You,”** sung by Lucy, who is in love with Jekyll. In the song, she expresses how easy and happy it would be to love someone like him and how she wishes and hopes that he could love someone like her.

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946), a was a famous Andalusian Spanish composer whose work was often inspired by text from various poems. The text of “Asturiana”, however, comes from the traditional folklore of the Asturias region in Northern Spain and is part of a larger work called *Siete canciones populares Españolas* (Seven Spanish Folksongs). This collection contains pieces based on Spanish folk material and are some of the most performed set of Spanish art songs. When composing, Manuel de Falla wanted the piano to accompany the singer's impassioned cries with rich chords and harmonies. In **“Asturiana”**, the narrator is seeking comfort from a pine tree ("Por ver si me consolaba") and in return the tree is comforted ("Por verme llorar, lloraba"). Though the text is limited, the audience can conclude that there is a deep emotional connection between the narrator and the tree. The sadness is conveyed in the piece through the minor key, slow tempo, and melodic lines that mimic sobbing.

(Translation)

To see whether it would console me I drew near a green pine

To see whether it would console me seeing me weep, it wept

And the pine, being green seeing me weep, wept. (*Translation by Claudia Landivar Cody*)

*Little Shop of Horrors* was written by Howard Ashman (1950–1991) and composed by Alan Menken (b. 1949), premiered off-Broadway in 1982 before making its Broadway debut in 2003. Ashman and Menken, both American, are well known for their collaboration in Disney films such as *The Little Mermaid* and are gifted with creating emotional yet memorable melodies that bring characters to life. In “**Somewhere That’s Green**”, the character Audrey expresses her longing for escape from her abusive boyfriend, imagining a perfect life of simplicity that she and Seymour could have in the suburbs. The gentle piano accompaniment contrasts the dark themes of the musical and creates rich harmonies that enhance Audrey’s dream-like disposition.

Coming from a rough childhood, losing both of his parents at an early age, John Ireland (1879–1962) was a well-known English composer during the 20th century. Ireland started studying piano at the RCM in London and studied composition under Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. Ireland’s sensitive and insecure nature shaped his life and his music, infusing his compositions with a distinctive sense of longing and emotional path. This vulnerability became a source of artistic expression. Although Ireland composed many vocal pieces, he delved into instrumental, chamber, and piano music as well. His song “**Memory**,” which was originally a poem by William Blake (1757–1827), conveys themes of longing for a youthful past and outlines how those joyful moments live on in our memories. The piano accompaniment in this piece is expressive, enhancing and reflecting the character of the text.

Widely considered to be the most famous composer of the baroque period, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750) redefined music with his genius counterpoint, musical forms, and use of harmony. As a German composer and organist, Bach’s music inspired and influenced later Western choral, instrumental, and keyboard music. His *Magnificat* is considered one of his greatest choral compositions and was his first choral work in Latin. Bach’s *Magnificat* consists of twelve movements, with five different soloists. “**Quia fecit mihi magna**”, sung by a baritone soloist, praises the glory of God with a grand musical tone, featuring frequent modulations and extended dramatic melismas.

(Translation)

For he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

(*Translation from The Packed Humanities Institute*)

Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924) was a French composer, teacher, pianist, and organist. He was known for his harmonic and melodic innovations, which shaped how later generations of French composers were taught harmony and helped develop the French *mélodie* (Art Song) as a genre. “**Au bord de l’eau**” (At the Water’s Edge) is a song about passionate true love that never passes away, fitting in the themes of the French *mélodie*. Its melodic line imitates that of a stringed instrument, and is echoed at the end of phrases by the piano. The singer praises love that stops all time and all things that change while spending precious moments with her lover. The slow melodic line of this *mélodie* reflects that as if time has stopped for a brief moment.

(Translation)

To sit together on the bank of a flowing stream,  
To watch it flow; together, if a cloud glides by,  
To watch it glide; on the horizon, if smoke rises from thatch,  
To watch it rise; if nearby a flower smells sweet,  
To savour its sweetness; to listen at the foot of the willow, where water murmurs,  
To the murmuring water; not to feel, while this dream passes,  
The passing of time; but feeling no deep passion,  
Except to adore each other, with no cares for the quarrels of the world,  
To know nothing of them; and alone together, seeing all that tires,  
Not to tire of each other, to feel that love, in the face of all that passes,  
Shall never pass! (*Translation by Richard Stokes*)

“**Trees on the Mountain**” by Carlisle Floyd (1926–2021) is from his folk opera *Susannah*, which follows the biblical story of “Susannah and the Elders” and is set in a mountain valley town in Tennessee. Susannah is the town’s social pariah, and is blamed for the community’s problems. After fleeing from her church, the local reverend visits her house to pressure her into making a confession and repenting for a sin she has not committed. She sings this melancholy folk tune, “**Trees on the Mountain**,” to express her sorrow that she has been abandoned. The simplistic yet haunting melody displays Susannah’s desire for acceptance, but also her longing for something more.

John Duke (1899–1984) was an American composer and pianist, renowned for his contributions to the art song genre. Over his career, he composed more than 265 songs, often setting texts by American poets. Duke’s music is celebrated for its sensitivity to the nuances of the text and its ability to convey deep emotional expression. “**A piper**” is an art song composed by John Duke, set to the poem by Seumas O’Sullivan (1879–1958). The song displays a lyrical melody that flows gracefully over a delicate piano accompaniment, which uses arpeggios and subtle harmonic shifts to evoke the sound of the piper’s music. The sound from the piano and voice creates a vivid musical landscape that enhances the poetic imagery.

The American composer Douglas Moore (1893–1969) studied in Paris and Cleveland after serving as a Lieutenant Junior Grade in the U.S. Navy during World War I. In 1940, Moore was appointed Chairman of the Music Department for Columbia University. A significant influence on many of his operas comes from Gilbert and Sullivan’s operettas works as well as early Broadway. Composed in 1956, *The Ballad of Baby Doe* is undeniably Moore’s masterpiece and the work that established him as an ‘opera composer.’ Its immediate and overwhelming popularity has led this true story of fateful love in a Colorado boomtown to be regarded, to some extent, as the ‘great American opera.’ In Act 1, scene 6, Baby Doe, senator Horace Tabor’s new wife, sings “**The Silver Aria**” about the wonders of silver after hearing about a possible decline in its value. This aria features a flowing, legato style, with a moderate tempo that allows for expressive phrasing and dynamic contrasts, highlighting the character’s emotional depth and naivety.

Nicola Vaccai (1790–1848) was an Italian composer and singing teacher. Vaccai was considered an “honorable failure” in his career as an opera composer, but he has many stand-alone arias. In one of these pieces, In “**Non giova il sospirar,**” the singer expresses their frustration with an unfaithful partner and how they can go off and enjoy a new love. The narrator sings that they will find a love more beautiful, and if not beautiful, at least more faithful than their cheating lover. Throughout the piece, the word “sì” and “no” are sung as 16<sup>th</sup> notes, almost resembling mocking, prideful laughter from the narrator.

(Translation)

There’s no use in sighing, no

Do not weep for me, no

Tyrsis is no longer yours, no

Unfaithful, Lycoris go and enjoy a new love, yes

Tyrsis will find a nymph, if not more beautiful,

At least than you more faithful, yes. (*Translation from www.ipasource.com*)

Jerry Bock (1928–2010) was an American composer known for writing and composing many successful musicals. Bock worked thoroughly alongside his longtime partner and lyricist, Sheldon Harnick (1924–2023), to write many of his musicals including *She Loves Me*. The musical tells the story of two co-workers, Amalia and Georg, who have despised each other from the very beginning. Each night, they return home to write to their pen pals, who, ironically, turn out to be each other. Inevitably, they realize they are in love, reflected in the contrasting styles of the score—from short playfulness and spite to long, soaring high notes. This is especially evident in the song “**Vanilla Ice Cream.**” Amalia’s emotions are wonderfully conveyed through the changes in tempo and style with the piece.

One of the greatest and most influential composers in Western music, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) was a composer and pianist during the Classical period. Mozart’s works include over 600 pieces, ranging from symphonies and operas to chamber and choral music. Mozart is also known for his Italian operas and vocal music. “**Ridente la calma**” (Happy Calm) is one of Mozart’s Italian art songs. It sets a poem written by Pietro Metastasio, a renowned poet from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This piece reflects tranquility and happiness through its light accompaniment and graceful melodies. In the middle section of this piece, the focus shifts to the connections that make one’s heart so grateful, which reflects the contentment and excitement in oneself and one’s love.

(Translation)

May a happy calm arise in my soul and may neither a bit of anger nor fear survive in it.

In the meantime, you are coming, my beloved, to grasp

those sweet chains that make my heart so grateful.

May a happy calm arise in my soul and may neither anger nor fear survive in it.

(*Translation by Mario Giuseppe Genesi*)

“**Burn**” is a piece from the musical *Hamilton*, written and composed by Lin-Manuel Miranda (b. 1980), who is an American composer, lyricist, playwright, performer, and producer. Miranda was raised in northern Manhattan and studied Theatre at Wesleyan University, where he wrote an early version of his first hit musical *In the Heights*. After concluding his work on his first musical, he wrote *Hamilton* which went on to receive a slew of awards, including 11 Tonys (from a record-breaking 16 nominations) and a Pulitzer Prize for Drama. *Hamilton* is one of the

most popular musicals of our century. It follows Alexander Hamilton, one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, and his influence on the country as well as his relationship with his wife, Eliza. The song “Burn” is sung by Eliza in the second act, after Hamilton releases letters to the public that he had been exchanging with a mistress to prove he hadn’t done anything illegal. “Burn” is an emotional ballad expressing Eliza’s pent-up anger and hurt.

Stefano Donaudy (1879–1925) started off his career composing music for voice, opera, and orchestra. Some of his operas include *Falchetto* (1892), *Ramuntcho* (1921), and *La Fiamminga* (1922). Stefano and his brother Alberto collaborated on many compositions, including the *36 Arie di stile antico*, which features songs such as “O del mio amato ben”. “**Spirate pur, spirate**” In this piece, the performer is asking the winds to blow about their lover if their lover’s affection is pure. This piece features a soft and gentle tone in the melody symbolizing a sense of peace.

(Translations)

Blow then, blow breezes about my beloved, and ascertain if she holds me dear in her heart,  
Blow, blow then, breezes!

If in her heart she holds me, ascertain, blessed Breezes, breezes blessed and light.

(Translation by Bard Suverkrop)

Jason Robert Brown was born in 1970 in New York. He is a composer, singer, pianist, and lyricist. Jason studied at the Eastman school of music and started to work in musical theater. One of his goals was to blend the sounds of pop and rock with Broadway theater. This can be seen in many of his songs and musical theater pieces. *Songs for a New World* is Jason's first musical where the song “**She Cries**” comes from. This piece has a fast and exciting pace with magnificent piano accompaniment. It tells the story of a man falling helplessly in love with his lover and how her tears affect him deeply.

Franz Schubert (1797–1828) was a well-known Austrian composer celebrated for the emotional depth of his works. In 1823, he was battling an illness, which deeply affected his physical and emotional well-being, leading to feelings of isolation and despair. His financial struggles and lack of widespread recognition added to his distress, yet he remained devoted to his art, producing deeply expressive *Lieder* (German Arts Songs) that conveyed themes of unrequited love and longing. Despite these challenges, he continued to refine his expressive songwriting, capturing themes of love and sorrow that reflected his own inner struggles. His *Lied* “**Du liebst mich nicht,**” written in 1823, is no exception. The text, written by Friedrich Rückert (1788–1866), tells the story of a lover’s heartbreak, lamenting that the beauty of the world feels undeserved after being scorned by love. Schubert’s syllabic text setting mirrors the raw, broken speech of someone overcome with sorrow, enhancing the song’s dramatic intensity. The accompaniment further underscores this anguish, with its delicate yet urgent movement reflecting the lover’s despair. As with many of Schubert’s *Lieder*, “Du liebst mich nicht” masterfully captures the deep connection between music and poetry, immersing the listener in the protagonist’s emotional turmoil.

(Translation)

My heart has been torn apart, you do not love me!

You let me know that you do not love me!

Even though I appeared before you as I begged and implored,

And I was zealous with love, you do not love me!

You spoke it, you said it in words,

You said it with so much conviction, you do not love me!

Should I then miss the stars, should I miss the moon,

Should I miss the sun? You do not love me!

Why is the rose in flower? Why is the jasmine in flower?

Why are the daffodils in flower? You do not love me! (*Translation by Malcolm Wren*)

**“Ballad of Jane Doe”** from *Ride the Cyclone* is a chilling and theatrical solo that unveils the eerie psyche of Jane Doe, a girl with no memory, no past, and an unsettling detachment from reality. After a horrific roller coaster accident, Jane Doe is found beheaded with her head nowhere to be found. With a ghostly, almost psychotic intensity, she spirals through operatic wails and haunting melodies, grappling with the existential terror of being forgotten. The song blends eerie beauty with unhinged desperation, making Jane both tragic and terrifying as she searches for an identity that may never have existed at all. Composed by Jacob Richmond and Brooke Maxwell, the song blends musical theater, cabaret, rock, and classical influences. Richmond’s sharp lyricism and Maxwell’s dynamic orchestration create a spine-chilling, theatrical moment that captures Jane’s unraveling within the surreal world of *Ride the Cyclone*.