

Program Notes and Translations: “Anonymous Was a Woman” Faculty Recital

Jennifer Piazza-Pick, soprano

Lev Ryabinin, piano

Isabella Colbran was the daughter of Gianni Colbran, the court musician of the King of Spain. With musical training beginning at age six, she was able to make her concert debut in Paris in 1801. Considered one of the best sopranos in Europe, her voice highly influenced the music of her husband, Giacchino Rossini, whom she married in 1822. Rossini wrote 18 operas for Colbran, including *Otello* and *La donna del lago*. Although the couple divorced in 1837, Colbran continued to live with Rossini’s father until her death. Her four collections of songs show her sense of drama and the influence of opera.

Povero cor tu palpiti (My poor heart you palpitate), text by Pietro Metastasio

Povero cor tu palpiti	My poor heart, you palpitate so,
ne a torto in questo dì	How right you are to tremble,
tu palpiti così povero core	You throb so, poor heart,
si tratta o dio di perdere	For fear of losing forever,
per sempre il caro ben	Of losing forever that dear beloved
che di sua mano	That love’s hand
in sen m’inpresse amore.	Has engraved in my heart.

Translation C. Kimball

La speranza al cor mi dice (Hope tells my heart), text by Pietro Metastasio

La speranza al cor mi dice	Hope tells my heart
che sarò felice ancor.	That I will know joy again,
Ma la speme inganna trice	But love’s deceit appears, and with it, fears,
poi mi dice il mio timor.	Yet hope comes again and foretells joy to
	come.

Translation C. Kimball

Già la notte s’avvicina (Already night is approaching), text by Pietro Trapassi as Pietro Metastasio

Già la notte s’avvicina:	Already night is approaching:
Vieni o Nice, amato bene,	Come o Nice, my beloved,
Della placida marina	From the calm seascape
Le fresch’aure a respirar.	Let us breathe the fresh zephyrs.

Non sa dir che sia diletto
Chi non posa in queste arene
Or che un lento zeffiretto
Dolcemente in crespe il mar.

No one can say that he is loved
Unless he stands on these sands
Now that a slow little breeze
Gently ripples the sea.

Translation Margaret Smythe ©

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Spanish-born singer and composer **Pauline Viardot** was from the famous García family and spent much of her life in France. Her father was the elder Manuel García, Rossini's Count Almaviva in *The Barber of Seville*; her brother was the vocal pedagogue Manuel García II; and her sister was singer and composer Maria Malibran. Viardot inspired composers such as Chopin, Berlioz, Meyerbeer, Gounod, Saint-Saëns, Liszt, Wagner and Schumann. She was active as a teacher and maintained an important salon in Paris. Viardot wrote more than 100 songs and *mélodies*, most of which were published in her lifetime. She was fluent in five languages and her selection of texts reflects her extensive travels and literary knowledge. *Aime-moi* is the second of her transcriptions of 12 of Chopin's mazurkas. Chopin, her good friend, was enthusiastic about the transcriptions. Viardot chose only to set the first two verses of *Les Filles de Cadix*. The poem likely appealed to her Spanish sensibilities.

Aime-moi (Love me), text by Louis Pomey

Tu commandes qu'on t'oublie,
J'ai grand peine à t'obéir;
Mais ainsi le veut me mie
Son désir et mon désir.
Vraiment, mon désir,
Lorsque joyeux je m'élançe,
Tu rougis et veux me fuir;
Mon amour est une offense
Pourquoi donc t'en souvenir?
Mais quoi! des pleures, ma belle;
Écoute, apaise-toi;
Plus de folle le querelle
Je t'adore. Aime-moi.

Mais quoi! Tu pleures, ma belle
Sois clémente, apaise-toi,
Plus d'inutile querelle
Je t'adore; Sois à moi!

You command one to forget you,
I take great pains in obeying you;
But thus my ladylove wants it
her wish is my wish.
Truly, truly my desire.
While, happy, I rush forward,
You blush and want to flee;
My love is an offense
why then do you remember it?
But what! tears, my beauty;
Listen, calm down;
No more crazy quarrelling
I adore you, love me.

But what! You weep, my beauty
Be merciful, calm down,
No more useless quarrelling
I adore you; be mine.

Translation Barbara Miller ©

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Les Filles de Cadix (The girls of Cadiz), text by Alfred de Musset

Nous venions de voir le taureau,
Trois garçons, trois fillettes,
Sur la pelouse il faisait beau,
Et nous dansions un boléro
 Au son des castagnettes.
'Dites-moi, voisin,
Si j'ai bonne mine
Et si ma basquine
Va bien, ce matin.
Vous me trouvez la taille fine?...
Ah! Ah!
Les filles de Cadix aiment assez cela.'

Et nous dansions un boléro,
Un soir c'était Dimanche.
Vers nous s'en vint un hidalgo
Tout cousu d'or, plume au chapeau,
Et le poing sur la hanche:
'Si tu veux de moi,
Brune au doux sourire,
Tu n'as qu'à le dire,
Cet or est à toi.
 -Passez votre chemin, beau sire.
Ah! Ah!
Les filles de Cadix n'entendent pas cela.'

We had just seen the bullfight,
Three boys, three girls,
It was bright on the square
And we danced a bolero
 To the sound of castanets,
'Tell me, neighbor,
If I look good
And if my skirt
Looks nice on me this morning.
Do you find my waist slender?...
Ah! Ah!
The girls of Cadiz rather like that.'

And we danced a bolero,
One evening, it was Sunday.
A hidalgo came toward us
Clothes of golden thread, a plume in his hat,
And, with fist on hip:
'If you want me,
Dark-haired beauty with the gentle smile,
You've only to say so,
And this gold is for you.
 -Go on your way, fine sir.
Ah! Ah!
The girls of Cadiz don't listen to such as that.'

Translation C. Kimball

Alma Mahler was raised in a home that regularly hosted cultural leaders in Vienna. Educated as a composer by Alexander Zemlinsky, she had three husbands: Gustav Mahler, architect Walter Gropius, and writer Franz Werfel. When she married Mahler in 1902, he had already insisted that she give up composing. This caused Alma great distress. In response to a crisis in their marriage after she met Gropius, Gustav decided to help her publish her *Fünf Lieder*. These songs set texts of her contemporaries, and they are representative of the musical style in Vienna at the turn of the twentieth century.

Die stille Stadt (The quiet town), text by Richard Dehmel

Liegt eine Stadt im Tale,
Ein blasser Tag vergeht,
Es wird nicht lang mehr dauern,
Bis weder Mond noch Sterne
Nur Nacht am Himmel steht.

In the valley lies a town,
A pale day fades away,
Before long there will be
Neither moon nor stars,
Only the night.

Von allen Bergen drücken
Nebel auf die Stadt,
Es dringt kein Dach noch Hof nach Haus
Kein Laut aus ihrem Rauch heraus,
Kaum Türme nach und Brücken.

From all the mountains
Fog covers the town,
Neither roof, nor courtyard, nor house,
No sound rises from the thick mist,
Hardly a steeple or a bridge.

Doch als der Wanderer graute,
Da ging ein Lichtlein auf im Grund
Und aus dem Rauch und Nebel
Begann ein Lobgesang
Aus Kindermund.

But as the wanderer shivered,
A little light flashed down below
And from the mist and fog
A song of praise was heard
From children's lips.

Translation C. Kimball

Laue Sommernacht (Mild summer's night), text by Gustav Falke

Laue Sommernacht,
Am Himmel stand kein Stern,
Im weiten Walde suchten wir uns
Tief im Dunkel, und wir fanden uns.

Mild summer's night,
Not a star in the sky,
In the wide forests we were looking
Deep in the dark, and we found ourselves.

Fanden uns im weiten Walde
In der Nacht, der sternenlosen,
Hielten staunend uns im Arme
In der dunklen Nacht.

Found ourselves in the wide forests
In the night, the starless night,
And held each other astonished, in our arms
In the dark night.

War nicht unser ganzes Leben
Nur ein Tappen, nur ein Suchen,
Da in seine Finsternisse,
Liebe, fiel dein Licht!

Was not our whole life
Just a groping, only a searching,
Then into this darkness
Love, your light shone!

Translation C. Kimball

Bei dir ist es traut (With you it is safe), text by Rainer Maria Rilke

Bei dir ist es traut,
Zage Uhren schlagen
Wie aus alten Tagen,
Kann mir ein Liebes sagen,
Aber nur nicht laut!

With you it is safe,
Timid clocks strike,
As in days of old,
Say something sweet to me,
But not too loudly!

Ein Tor geht irgendwo
Draußen in Blütentreiben,
Der Abend horcht an den Scheiben,
Laß uns Leise bleiben,
Keiner weiß uns so!

A gate squeaks somewhere outside
Out there in the blossoming flowers,
The evening listens at the window panes,
Let us keep quiet,
So no one knows we're here!

Translation C. Kimball

Ich wandle unter Blumen (I wander among flowers), text by Heinrich Heine

Ich wandle unter Blumen
Und blühe selber mit,
Ich wandle wie im Traume
Und schwanke bei jedem Schritt.
O halt mich fest, Geliebte!
Vor Liebestrunkenheit
Fall' ich dir sonst zu Füßen
Und der Garten ist voller Leut!

I wander among flowers
And I blossom too with them,
I wander as if in a dream
And sway with every step.
Oh hold me tight, beloved!
Or else, drunk with love
I shall fall at your feet
And the garden is full of people!

Translation C. Kimball

B. E. Boykin is currently the Assistant Director of the Spelman College Glee Club, as well as the Director of the Treble Choir at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Additionally, Boykin is also the newly appointed Interim Director of Choral Activities at Agnes Scott College. She is currently a PhD candidate at Georgia State University with an emphasis in Music Education. Boykin's choral piece, *We Sing as One*, was commissioned to celebrate Spelman College's 133rd Anniversary of its founding at the 2014 Founders Day Convocation. She has also been featured as the conductor/composer-in-residence for the 2017 Harry T. Burleigh Commemorative Spiritual Festival at Tennessee State University. Boykin's instrumental and choral works are currently being published and distributed through her own publishing company, Klavia Press. With a deep love of the poetry of Maya Angelou, she narrowed down the poems that have been used in the newly published *Moments in Sonder*. Boykin captures these short poems in beautiful musical moments. The twelve songs in the collection are not in any specific order, allowing singers the flexibility of choice.

Juliana Hall has been hailed as "one of our country's most able and prolific art song composers" (NATS Journal of Singing). Hall began formal composition studies as a 26-year-old graduate student majoring in piano performance at the Yale School of Music and did her master's degree with Dominick Argento at the University of Minnesota. Performances of her works at music festivals around the world include Norfolk Chamber Music, Ojai Music, Orvieto Musica, and Sparks & Wiry Cries' songSLAM Festivals, as well as the London Festival of American Music, Schumannfest Düsseldorf, and Tanglewood. Hall's music has been broadcast over the BBC and NPR radio networks. Premiered in 2019 by soprano Laura Dixon Strickling for Calliope's Call, Hall worked closely with librettist and soprano Caitlin Vincent when setting *Sentiment*, a monodrama for unaccompanied soprano. Vincent said, "The general premise is emotions but also about the version of ourselves we try to present to the world. Each song leads into the next: giddy happiness followed by the inevitable plunge into depression, then anger and embarrassment for revealing too much to the audience, remorse for lashing out, and finally a plea for the world to see only the singer's 'best' side."

Lori Laitman has composed multiple operas and choral works. She has also written over 250 songs, with texts by classical and contemporary poets, including those who perished in the Holocaust. Her music is widely performed and has generated substantial critical acclaim. Laitman regularly receives commissions from prestigious organizations, such as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Music of Remembrance, Washington Master Chorale, and the Eastman School of Music. *Dreaming* was written with encouragement from the composer's friend, soprano Lauren Wagner. The result was a funny encore song, for which the composer wrote her own lyrics. It was premiered at Strathmore Hall in Bethesda, MD in March, 1992.