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Junior Recital: Jennimarie Swegan, soprano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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**UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC**

Presents in Concert

Jennimarie Swegan
Soprano

JUNIOR RECITAL

Assisted by

Davis Massey, *cello*
Dr. Joanne Kong, *piano and harpsichord*
Dane Harrison, *piano*

February 15, 2014

Perkinson Recital Hall



Acknowledgements

I hope that my parents and grandparents hear my gratitude to them in every note I sing. Their support is unconditional and abundant. I'm also singing my thanks to the UR Music Department, which has welcomed, encouraged, and challenged me daily. Dr. Cable is an extraordinary lady, from whom I am honored to learn. Dr. Kong and Dane Harrison have been meticulous and insightful collaborators. Dr. Anthony Russell was very kind to help me decipher some archaic Italian. Sam is mein Licht, the brightest.



PROGRAM

Jennimarie Swegan, *soprano*

Già la notte s'avvicina

Nicola Porpora
(1686-1768)

Davis Massey, *cello*
Dr. Joanne Kong, *harpsichord*

Theodora

Angels, ever bright and fair

George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

Le nozze di Figaro

Un moto di gioia

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

Johannes-Passion

Ich folge dir gleichfalls

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Dr. Joanne Kong, *piano*

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy
(1809-1847)

Nimmersatte Liebe

In dem Schatten meiner Locken

Hugo Wolf
(1860-1903)

Dane Harrison, *piano*



JENNI SWEGAN is a junior majoring in music and English literature. A Pittsburgh native, she has studied voice with Elissa Winkler and Maria Fortuna, and presently with Dr. Jennifer Cable. She has performed at the College Music Society national conference, and presented her research on Handel's oratorio *Theodora* to the Capital Chapter of the American Musicological Society. At UR she has participated in chamber ensembles and performs with Schola Cantorum. She was one of two student winners of the 2013 Concerto Competition, performing an aria from Mozart's *Idomeneo* with the University Orchestra conducted by Alexander Kordzaia.

Jenni is a Richmond Artist Scholar and a Withers Merit Scholar. She is also a member of GreenUR, a tutor at Overby-Sheppard Elementary School, and an assistant at the Third Practice Electroacoustic Festival.

Già la notte s'avvicina

Aria: Già la notte s'avvicina

Già la notte s'avvicina.
Vieni o Nice, amato bene
Della placida marina
Le fresch'aire a respirar.

Already the night draws near
Come, o Nice, beloved goodness
To the placid sea
To breathe the cool breezes.

Non sa dir qual sia diletto
Chi non posa in queste arene
Or che un lento Zeffiretto
Dolcemente increspa il mar.

None can say what delight is
Who do not rest in these sands
Or what light breeze
Sweetly ripples the sea.

Recitative: Lascia una volta o Nice

Lascia una volta o Nice,
Lascia le tue capanne.
Unico albergo
Non è già del piacere
La selvaggia dimora;
Hanno quest'onde i lor diletta ancora.

Leave, for once, o Nice
Leave behind your huts
That wild dwelling
Is not the only place
Where pleasure belongs;
The waves still have their delights.

Qui, se spiega la notte il fosco velo
Nel mare emulo al cielo,
Più lucide, più belle,
Moltiplicar le stelle,
E per l'onda vedrai gelida e bruna
Rompere i raggi, e scintillar, la luna

Here, if the night unfolds its dark veil
In the sea, akin to the sky
Brighter, more beautiful
Multiplying stars
And through the wave,
frozen and brownish,
You'll see the moon breaking its rays,
and shining up.

— cont'd.

Il giorno al suon d'una ritorta conca
Che nulla cede alle incerate avene,
Se non vuoi le mie pene,
Di Teti e Galatea, di Glauce e Dori
Ti canterogli amori
E tu vedrai dal mar sul vicin prato
Pascere le molle erbette
Le tue care agnette,
Non offese dal sol fra ramo, e ramo
E con la canna, e l'amo
I pesci in tanto insidiar potrai:
E sarà la mia Nice
Pastorella in un punto e pescatrice.

The day at the sound of a twisted conch,
Which cedes nothing to the shepherd's pipe,
If you do not want my suffering,
The loves of Teti and Galatea, of Glauce e Dori
I will sing for you
And you'll see from the sea in the nearby meadow
Grazing on the soft grass
Your beloved little lambs,
Sheltered from the sun, between branches
And with a fishing rod, and hook
From time to time you'll be able to catch a fish:
And it will be my Nice
Shepherdess sometimes, and fisherwoman.

Aria: Non più fra sassi algosi

Non più fra sassi algosi
Staranno i pesci ascosi
Tutti per londa amara
Tutti verranno a gara
Fra i lacci del mio ben.

No longer behind mossy rocks and seaweed
Will the fish be hidden.
Through the bitter wave
All will race
Between the threads of my net.

E l'umidette figlie
De' tremuli cristalli
Di pallide conchiglie
Di lucidi coralli
Le colmeranno il sen.

And the little wet daughters
Of the trembling crystals
Of pale shells,
Of shining corals
They will fill up your breast.

Text by Pietro Metastasio

Nicola Porpora, born in Naples in 1686, was internationally renowned as both an opera composer and a voice teacher. He began serious composition lessons at age ten and student-teaching at thirteen. His vocal pedagogy was meticulous and technique-driven—one of his most famous students, Caffarelli, recalled practicing the same page of exercises for five years. Despite Porpora's renown, his operatic career was marked by rivalries, most notably with Handel in London. Porpora arrived there in 1733, invited by a group of nobles intent on unseating Handel's opera company. Porpora never surpassed his rival, and both groups collapsed a few years later. While in England, however, he also composed the secular cantatas that number among his best-remembered works.

— *cont'd.*

Gia la notte s'avvicina (La pesca) is one of these. Comprised of two arias and a recitative, it sets a text by the celebrated poet and librettist Pietro Metastasio, with whom Porpora often collaborated. The intricacy and elegance of its melodies reflect the composer's intimate knowledge of the voice. The poem's speaker, a fisherman, spends the first aria and the recitative imploring his beloved shepherdess, Nice, to accompany him to the sea. The second aria celebrates the beauty of the sea, which the two lovers seem to be beholding together at last. Metastasio's poems are steeped in dazzling maritime (and subtly suggestive) imagery, which Porpora's setting brings to vivid musical life.

Three Eighteenth-Century Arias

Angels, ever bright and fair

Angels, ever bright and fair,
Take, oh, take me to your care!
Speed to your own courts my flight,
Clad in robes of virgin white.

Text by Thomas Morell

George Frideric Handel was a German-born composer who spent most of his career in London. Born in 1685, he was one of the most innovative, prolific, and commercially successful composers of the Baroque era. While he established his reputation writing Italian operas (with the London opera company that Porpora failed to unseat), his output spanned a dazzling range of musical genres. Among his most notable contributions was the development of the oratorio, a new genre that occupied his full attention from the late 1730s until his death in 1759. Handel's oratorios were unstaged, religious narratives, produced annually by the business-savvy composer during Lent, when staging such productions was banned.

"Angels, ever bright and fair" comes from Handel's penultimate and least successful oratorio, *Theodora*. The title character is a young Christian princess in ancient Roman Antioch, revered for her piety by her Christian friends. When she refuses to take part in a pagan worship ceremony, the governor orders that she be raped and executed, and the oratorio follows her to the brink of a heroic martyrdom. In this aria, just after the Romans have issued her sentence, she begs for death rather than the loss of her purity. Set in a major key, its music evokes more the rapture to which *Theodora* aspires than the sorrow she expresses. It is one of the oratorio's few often-performed arias, but Handel himself considered *Theodora* one of his best works. He even remarked to the librettist, Thomas Morell, that he considered its choral writing superior to that of his *Messiah*. With music that impressed even Handel himself, the oratorio's abject box-office failure during the composer's lifetime remains puzzling. The late twentieth century, however, has seen a revival of interest in *Theodora* and other lesser-known oratorios, perhaps because fully staged productions can now amplify the emotional resonances of their music.

Un moto di gioia

Un moto di gioia
mi sento nel petto,
che annunzia diletto
in mezzo il timor!

A sense of joy
I feel in my heart,
announcing happiness
in spite of my fear.

Speriam che in contento
finisca l'affanno,
non sempre è tiranno
il fato ed amor.

Let us expect that contentment
will end our worry,
that fate and love
will not always be tyrants.

Text by Lorenzo da Ponte

Mozart was born in 1756, as the Baroque era was giving way to the Classical. He was a child prodigy as a keyboardist, violinist, and composer, performing for European royalty from an early age. He worked as a court musician for a few years, but settled in Vienna to work for the rest of his life as a freelance composer. He was well-known in his day, but his income was unstable. His prolific output spans virtually every genre available to him, but his operas are among his most influential works. *Le nozze di Figaro*, written in 1786 with librettist Lorenzo da Ponte, was successful during his lifetime and remains a mainstay of operatic repertoire. A comic opera, it picks up the plot of *The Barber of Seville* several years later, recounting a single “day of madness” (its subtitle, “*La folle giornata*”).

Susanna and Figaro, two servants, are happily engaged, with a wedding planned for later in the day—but the scheming Count Almaviva intends to exercise his feudal right and sleep with Susanna before Figaro can. The two conspire with the Countess to expose the plot and, in *opera buffa* fashion, they succeed. Susanna sings “Un moto di gioia” in Act II, while she disguises the Count’s page in women’s clothes. Mozart originally wrote a different aria for the scene, then replaced it with this one in a 1789 revival. The entire aria develops melodic themes stated in its opening phrases, repeating each line of text numerous times—all, perhaps, evoking Susanna’s exultant confidence.

Ich folge dir gleichfalls

Ich folge dir gleichfalls
mit freudigen Schritten
Und lasse dich nicht,
Mein Leben, mein Licht.
Befördre den Lauf,
Und höre nicht auf,
Selbst an mir zu ziehen,
zu schieben, zu bitten.

I follow you likewise
with joyful steps
And will not leave you,
My life, my light.
Go on your way,
And do not stop,
Keep pulling me,
pushing me, calling me to you.

Author of text unknown

Johann Sebastian Bach was born in the same year as Handel, and his death in 1750 is often considered the end of the Baroque era. Like Handel, he was prolific in a wide range of musical genres. Bach, however, spent most of his career in residence at courts and churches in Germany. He was famous during his life primarily as a keyboard virtuoso, but by the nineteenth century he was regarded as one of his era's most gifted composers. Today, we continue to revere his music for its technical mastery, intellectual richness, and sheer volume. Among Bach's colossal output were two sacred oratorios, written for Good Friday vespers services in Leipzig. His *Johannes-Passion*, written in 1724, recounts the Passion according to the Gospel of John. Choruses and recitatives present the narrative with text from the Luther Bible, and arias provide commentary, with poems of unknown authorship.

"Ich folge dir gleichfalls," written for soprano and flutes, has Simon Peter as its speaker. The Evangelist, or narrator, has just recounted Jesus's capture and Peter's decision to follow him to the high priest's palace. Even in such somber circumstances, Bach's setting faithfully reflects the joy its text expresses. Even beyond the poem's general sentiment, though, the music illustrates individual ideas with Bach's unique creative finesse. For example, long and fast-moving vocal lines illustrate the word "folge" ("follow") throughout, and repetitions of melody and text suggest a disciple's dogged determination. Bach also paints the words for pushing, pulling, and calling with musical gestures that evoke those physical gestures brilliantly.

Romantic and Late-Romantic Lieder

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges

Auf Flügeln des Gesanges,
Herzliebchen, trag' ich dich fort,
Fort nach den Fluren des Ganges,
Dort weiß ich den schönsten Ort.

Dort liegt ein rotblühender Garten
Im stillen Mondenschein;
Die Lotosblumen erwarten
Ihr trautes Schwesterlein.

Die Veilchen kichern und kosen,
Und schau'n nach den Sternen empor;
Heimlich erzählen die Rosen
Sich duftende Märchen ins Ohr.

On wings of song,
Darling, I'll carry you
To the fields of the Ganges,
Where I know the most beautiful place.

There lies a red-flowering garden
In the serene moonlight;
The lotus flowers await
Their beloved sister.

The violets giggle and caress,
And look up at the stars;
Secretly the roses tell
Their fragrant fairy-tales.

— cont'd.

Es hüpfen herbei und lauschen
Die frommen, klugen Gazell'n;
Und in der Ferne rauschen
Des heiligen Stromes Well'n.

They pass and listen,
The gentle, bright gazelles
And in the distance
Murmur the holy stream's waves.

Dort wollen wir niedersinken
Unter dem Palmenbaum,
Und Liebe und Ruhe trinken,
Und träumen seligen Traum.

There we will lie down
Under the palm tree,
And drink love and peacefulness,
And dream our blissful dream

Mendelssohn completed "Auf Flügeln des Gesanges" in 1835, when he was not yet 27, just after he had left a frustrating position in Düsseldorf to conduct in Leipzig. He is remembered today as a master of Romantic Lieder, but this song is one of his most enduring works. With an elegant melody built on lilting piano arpeggios, it has lent itself well to instrumental arrangements by Liszt, Jascha Heifetz, and many others.

The text is by Heinrich Heine, a well-known nineteenth-century lyric poet. Unlike Wolf, Mendelssohn did not shy away from other composers' source material—much of Heine's work had already been set by Schumann and Schubert. "Auf Flügeln" describes a journey to distant lands, including the Ganges River, with the speaker promising to transport the beloved "on wings of song." Each verse paints new details into the picture of this exotic paradise, in faintly sensual floral imagery. The piano's ascending arpeggios evoke flight, or the flow of a river, and the vocal line soars with its own smooth momentum. Mendelssohn preserves the poem's strophic steadiness, but repeats phrases that seem to merit particular emphasis.

Nimmersatte Liebe

So ist die Lieb! So ist die Lieb!
Mit Küssen nicht zu stillen:
wer ist der Tor und will ein Sieb
mit eitel Wasser füllen?
und schöpfst du an die tausend Jahr
und küssest ewig, ewig gar
du tust ihr nie zu Willen.

This is how love is! This is how love is!
Not to be stilled with kisses:
who is such a fool as to try to fill
a sieve with water?
You could pour for a thousand years,
you could kiss for ever and ever,
and never find love's fulfillment.

Die Lieb, die Lieb, hat alle Stund
neu wunderlich gelüsten;
wir bitten uns die Lippen wund
da wir uns heute küßten.
Das Mädchen hielt in guter Ruh,
wie's Lämmlein unterm Messer;
ihr Auge bat: nur immer zu,
je weher dester besser!

Love, love has at every hour
new and strange desires;
we bit our lips sore
when we kissed today.
The girl kept quite still,
like a lambkin under the knife;
her eyes were pleading: go on,
the more it hurts, the better!

So ist die Lieb, und war ach so,
wie lang es Liebe gibt,
und anders war Herr Salomo,
der Weise, nicht verliebt.

This is how love is, and always was,
as long as love has existed;
and not even Solomon himself,
for all his wisdom, ever loved otherwise.

Text by Edward Mörike

"It is now just seven o'clock in the evening and I am happy as a king. Another new song is successfully completed. Dear fellow, when you hear it the Devil will take you with pleasure." (trans. Eric Sams) Thus begins an 1888 letter by Hugo Wolf, announcing his delight with "Nimmersatte Liebe." The willful young composer had left the Vienna Conservatory in 1877 to pursue stylistic independence, but he saw little success in the decade that followed. When he isolated himself in a friend's summer home at the beginning of 1888, even Wolf was surprised by the burst of feverish creativity that occupied his next few months. "Nimmersatte Liebe" ("Insatiable Love") was one of more than forty songs he set to the poetry of Edward Mörike during that period. Mörike's work offered Wolf a wide thematic range, a tendency toward dark eroticism, and a body of text that had never been set by any of Wolf's major predecessors. The vibrant, varied subtleties of Wolf's "Mörikeana" propelled him into the public eye for the first time, establishing him as a master of *Lieder*.

"Nimmersatte Liebe" bears many of the compositional and thematic elements that distinguish Wolf's Mörike songs. The text wavers between exuberant desire and an almost predatory sensuality, and Wolf's bold chromatic harmonies complement those tensions. The piano collaborates on equal footing with the voice, particularly to convey a quickening heartbeat as the middle section's drama intensifies. Wolf introduces the piece with an unmistakably interrogative gesture, which remains unresolved until it repeats at the song's final cadence. This unanswered question gives the music its momentum, drawing us into the speaker's mounting fervor—but its structural symmetry and the stability of its ultimate resolution lend the piece a disconcerting ambiguity of mood. It ends, in fact, on a note more jocular than erotic. According to Eric Sams, at Mörike's allusion to King Solomon's vast harem, Wolf slyly inserts what he refers to as a "regular student's song," a musical chortle at the banality of our speaker's insatiable desire.

In dem Schatten meiner Locken

In dem Schatten meiner Locken
schief mir mein Geliebter ein.
Weck ich ihn nun auf? Ach nein!

Sorglich ströhlt ich meine krausen
Locken täglich in er Frühe,
doch umsonst ist meine Mühe,
weil die Winde sie zersausen.
Löckenschatten, Windessausen
Schläferten den Liebsten ein.
Weck ich ihn nun auf? Ach nein!

Hören muß ich, wie ihn gräme,
daß er schmachtet schon so lange,
daß ihm Leben geb und nehme
diese meine braune Wange.
Und er nennt mich seine Schlange,
und doch schlief er bei mir ein.
Weck ich ihn nun auf? Ach nein!

In the shadow of my tresses,
my beloved has gone to sleep.
Should I wake him now? Ah, no!

Carefully I comb my tangled
locks each day in the morning,
but my effort is in vain,
for the wind dishevels them.
Shading curls, whirling wind,
lulling my darling to sleep.
Should I wake him now? Ah, no!

I must bear it when he is grim,
for he has pined for me so long,
for life is given and taken from him
by these brown cheeks of mine.
And he calls me his serpent,
yet he fell asleep by my side.
Should I wake him now? Ah, no!

In 1889, Wolf's unorthodox poetic interests led him from Mörike to Spanish folk poetry. The *Spanisches Liederbuch* was the first new collection the composer undertook after the Mörike songs had solidified his mastery. Spanish exoticism, fashionable in Germany at the time, had already captivated many of Wolf's most admired predecessors—his anthology of German translations was the same one that Schumann had used half a century earlier. In typical Wolf fashion, his 44 Spanish songs favored poems that other composers had overlooked; "In dem Schatten meiner Locken" is one of the many anonymous texts he included.

Its music is among the most overtly Spanish of the series, with piano motives built on the habañera rhythm (and some harmonies highly suggestive of Bizet's *Carmen*). According to Susan Youens, Wolf considered the *Spanisches Liederbuch* a preparatory exercise for the operas he hoped to compose, and "In dem Schatten" bears striking resemblances to a traditional aria. The poem halts the flow of the narrative it implies, depicting the thoughts of a young woman whose lover is napping in the folds of her unmanageable hair. Ostensibly, nothing happens: she considers waking him and repeatedly decides against it, she bemoans her perpetually windswept tresses, and she offers us coy glimpses of her lover's anguish. But the characteristically Wolfian setting illuminates and augments the poem—rich chromatic passages and sudden shifts in tone imbue a static scene with dazzling emotional complexity.

THE 2013-2014 DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC CONCERT SERIES
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Spring 2014

Mon., February 17 — 7:30 p.m.

Bruce B. Stevens, *organ*
*Cannon Memorial Chapel

Mon., March 24 — 7:30 p.m.

Garth Newel Piano Quartet

Sun., March 30 — 3 p.m.

Richard Becker and Doris Wylee-
Becker
Dual Piano Recital

Wed., April 2 — 7:30 p.m.

UR Jazz Ensemble
Mike Davison, director

Thurs., April 3 — 7:30 p.m.

UR Wind Ensemble
David Niethamer, director

Sun., April 6 — 3 p.m.

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*UR Schola Cantorum, Women's Chorale,
and Second Presbyterian Church Choir;*
Jeffrey Riehl, conductor
*Cannon Memorial Chapel

Wed., April 9 — 7:30 p.m.

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Alexander Kordzaia, conductor

Mon., April 14 — 7:30 p.m.

Jennifer Johnson Cano, *mezzo-soprano,*
and Christopher Cano, *piano*

Thurs., April 17 — 7:30 p.m.

UR Jazz and Contemporary Combos
Mike Davison, director

Sat., April 19 — 3 p.m.

Earth Day Global Sounds
Andrew McGraw, director
*North Court (outside location)

Mon., April 21 — 7:30 p.m.

UR Chamber Ensembles

