4-15-2000

Senior Recital: Kristen Alexander, soprano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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SENIOR RECITAL

Kristen Alexander, soprano

assisted by
Joanne Kong, piano, harpsichord
Mary Richerson, soprano
Tina Jeong, piano

APRIL 15, 2000, 3:00 PM
PERKINSON RECITAL HALL
PROGRAM

Vinto sono, from La Statira
Cara, cara e dolce

Alessandro Scarlatti
(1660-1725)

Madrigal

Vincent D’Indy
(1851-1931)

Crepuscule

Jules Massenet
(1843-1912)

Si mes vers avaient des ailes

Reynaldo Hahn
(1875-1947)

Barcarolle, from The Tales of Hoffmann

Jacques Offenbach
(1819-1880)

Mary Richerson, soprano
Tina Jeong, piano

Sagt mir, o schoenste
Erlaube mir
Schwesterlein
Da unten im tale
Feinsliebchen

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

Will There Really Be a Morning?
Fewer Words
Souvenir
A Horse With Wings

Ricky Ian Gordon
(b. 1956)
Alessandro Scarlatti

Though Scarlatti wrote in all of the large musical forms of his day, his most acclaimed works are the cantatas and operas. He wrote over 800 cantatas, most for solo voice and piano. According to the autograph score of his last opera, *Griselda*, he also composed some 114 operas, though only 30 or so have remained salvagable. However, even with this stunning amount of output, Alessandro Scarlatti has remained a lesser known composer to this day, perhaps because most of his works are vocal. Because his cantatas were written for specific occasions such as gatherings of friends or for particular theatres or palaces of patrons, they were seldom, if ever, repeated. Operas themselves were performed only one or two seasons and were either put away or suffered drastic changes to meet the demands of the changing times and tastes in music. Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni commissioned the music and wrote the libretto for the opera *La Statira*. The story is about two episodes in the life of Alexander the Great. Most of the arias, including this one, are written in binary form and contain a second strophe. “Vinto sono” describes the anguish of being held in cupids binds, as love is unrequited.

The source of “Cara, cara e dolce” is undetermined. The melismatic runs at the ends of the phrases express the joy of freedom described in the text.

**Vinto sono**

I am smitten by love’s magic,
the blindfolded Cupid with arrows and bows has enslaved me,
Piercing shafts from the eyes of my loved one make me languish,
cause heartache and anguish.

**Cara, cara e dolce (Dear, Sweet Liberty)**

My soul is consoled by you,
I no longer live in servitude
if my heart is free and can go where it will.

Fly, flee from me, yet somehow do you return?
The God of Love has seen that my heart is already free
and you do not have the power to snare my foot in your trap.

(translated by Jennifer Cable)

**Vincent D’Indy**

In 1872, at the advice of his mentor Henri Duparc, D’Indy submitted some of his compositions to Cesar Franck. Unfortunately Franck’s reaction to the submissions was “You have ideas, but you cannot do anything!” Franck’s reaction may have been a bit harsh, as “Madrigal” was one of this first group of songs. The vocal line of “Madrigal” is simple, repeating three times with only slight changes in the melody.
Jules Massenet

Included in a song collection of pastoral poems published in 1872, “Crepuscule” describes the lilies and lady-birds as they lay themselves to rest in the twilight. The simple chordal accompaniment gently whispers in the background, alternating the meter between two and three. This alternating meter along with the slowing tempo and repeated vocal line evoke the feeling of life on this countryside rocking the listener to sleep alongside the birds.

Reynaldo Hahn

“Si mes vers” was written when Hahn was a mere 13 years old, by which time he had already made a strong reputation for himself. His songs are described as “elegantly written and precious in style, with a somewhat facile, but real, charm.” “Si mes vers” is a wonderful example of this. Listen for the word painting at the ends of the phrases as the vocal line ascends up into the higher register, giving it ‘wings” to fly away as the piano softly, yet expressively, presses the line ahead, reflecting the inner excitement and passion described by the text.
Jacques Offenbach

The “Barcarolle” is taken from Offenbach’s opera comique, Les Contes de Hoffmann. It is a fantasy opera in four acts that portrays three stories of author E.T.A. Hoffmann’s love life. Offenbach began work on Hoffmann in 1877 and left the work unfinished at his death in 1880. At Offenbach’s request, Guiraud translated the piano score and added recitative to complete the work. The “Barcarolle” is performed at the opening of the fourth act as Giulietta, a courtesan, and soon to become Hoffmann’s third love, is throwing a party in her palace overlooking the Grand Canal. Surrounded by their friends, Giulietta and her friend Nicklausse sing the “Barcarolle” as they are seated in a gondola. This song sets the mood for the night of love and deceit that is about to unfold and lead to utter despair for Hoffmann.
Johannes Brahms

Brahms published seven volumes of folk song adaptations, each volume containing seven songs, in 1894. He once said of them, “This is probably the first time I have looked with tenderness on anything to have come to my pen.” Wishing to recognize that the songs were not his original creation, he left these miniatures for solo voice and piano without an opus number. His arrangements were created from his late Romantic point of view, employing rapid alternations in parallel keys and frequent alterations in rhythm causing irregularities not found in customary German folk songs. These adaptations were written not only for their simple musical beauty, but also as a way for Brahms to reintroduce the beautiful, but long-forgotten, melodies to the public. Many of these Brahmsian adaptations, such as “Erlaube mir” and “Da unten im tale”, have become generally recognizable today, while the originals have lost their familiarity.

Deutsche Volkslieder (German Folk Songs)
Ricky Ian Gordon

Ricky Ian Gordon is a composer of unusual scope, equally comfortable writing for the concert hall, opera, dance, theatre and film. His music is greatly inspired by specific encounters in his life, such as “Fewer Words”, which was written after he saw a performance in which he said the composer had much talent but used too many words. Gordon’s response was written in “the hurt of the moment”. Gordon uses large interval leaps and word painting to enhance the vocal line, adding to both the intensity and beauty of emotion.