

2-19-2005

Junior Recital: Andy Nagraj, baritone

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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JUNIOR RECITAL

Andy Nagraj, baritone

assisted by

Joanne Kong, piano, harpsichord

Mark Hickman, January Stewart, Kelly Linker, oboes

Davis Massey, cello



FEBRUARY 19, 2005, 7:30 PM

PERKINSON RECITAL HALL

PROGRAM

From Cantata BWV 26: *Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig*

“An irdische Schätze das Herze zu hängen” Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

Mark Hickman, January Stewart, and Kelly Linker – oboes
Davis Massey – cello

4:37

7:00

Schubert Settings of Goethe Texts

Ganymed 11:20

Schäfers Klagelied ~~14:30~~

Erlkönig

Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

14:30

~~11:20~~

118:48

The American Art Song

Gambler, Don't You Lose Your Place
The Lass from the Low COUNTRY 23:24

John Jacob Niles

(1892-1980)

The Sadder but Wiser Girl (from *The Music Man*) 26:00
~~SKIPPED~~ Meredith Willson
(1902-1984)

Luck Be a Lady (from *Guys and Dolls*)

Frank Loesser

(1910-1969)

30:08

Lily's Eyes

Marsha Norman and Lucy Simon

(from *The Secret Garden*)

(b. 1947, b. 1940)

Chris Lynn, tenor

33:45

Cantata BWV 26: *Ach wie flüchtig, ach wie nichtig*

An irdische Schätze das Herze zu hängen

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

The father of “common practice,” J.S. Bach represents probably the most important composer in the development of modern music theory and counterpoint. A native of Eisenach (also the childhood home to Martin Luther), Bach’s father died when Johann was just ten years old. At this time, he came under the care of his older brother, an organist, and began his own studies as an organist. Bach held positions as organist and *Kapellmeister* in churches throughout Germany before finally settling down in Leipzig, which was to serve as his home from 1723 until his death. It was here that the primarily self-taught composer, heavily influenced by his participation in the Lutheran church, composed some of his most enduring music. When he died in 1750, Bach was mostly revered as a keyboard virtuoso; by the end of the century, his work as a composer had become canon.

An irdische Schätze das Herze zu hängen is the basso aria from BWV 26, which comes from his second cycle of cantatas. Bach composed five such cycles for his position with the Lutheran church in Leipzig, with a different cantata for each church service. Thus, for a five-year stretch, Bach was composing roughly one cantata per week. Of these cantatas, only approximately three-fifths survive. This particular piece premiered in Leipzig on November 19, 1724. The aria employs a *bourrée* tempo; this dance-like pace is contradictory to the message of destruction and retribution. Contrasted by the much lighter oboes and harpsichord, the voice of the bass warns of the dangers inherent in putting one’s faith in the pleasures and vices of the world. The melismatic passages of the singer represent the shattering of the world of men referred to in the text.

To hang the heart on Earthly treasures
Is one temptation of the foolish world.
How easily the consuming flames break out,
How the swollen flood rushes and tears,
Until all shatters and decays in wreckage.
(Translation by A. Nagraj)

Schubert Settings of Goethe Texts

Music by Franz Schubert (1797-1828)

Text by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832)

Ganymed

Schäfers Klage lied

Erlkönig

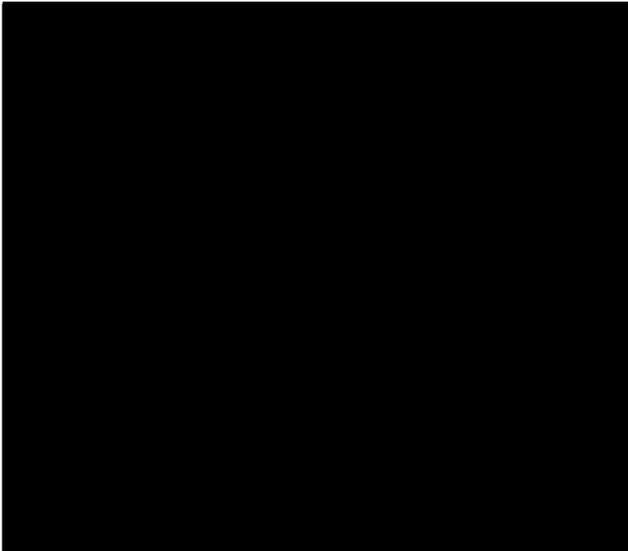
During the course of his short life, the Austrian composer Franz Schubert had one of the most remarkably prolific outputs of any composer in music history. Born and raised in Vienna, his father was a schoolteacher who saw to it that his son had a proper education in all subjects, including music. At seven, Schubert auditioned for court music director Antonio Salieri as a singer; at eight he began taking lessons in violin, counterpoint, figured bass, voice, and organ. His earliest surviving compositions come from around 1809. This early output would precede what were to become known as Schubert's "Miracle Years" – a fifteen month span between 1814 and 1816 during which time "Schubert averaged an almost super-human rate of at least sixty-five measures of new music each day, roughly half of which included an orchestra." (Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians) Following these incredibly prolific years, Schubert's pace slowed down somewhat, but he settled into his life as a professional composer in Vienna. Afflicted throughout much of his life with syphilis, Schubert saw his health begin to deteriorate in 1823. He died in Vienna in 1828, at the age of thirty-one.

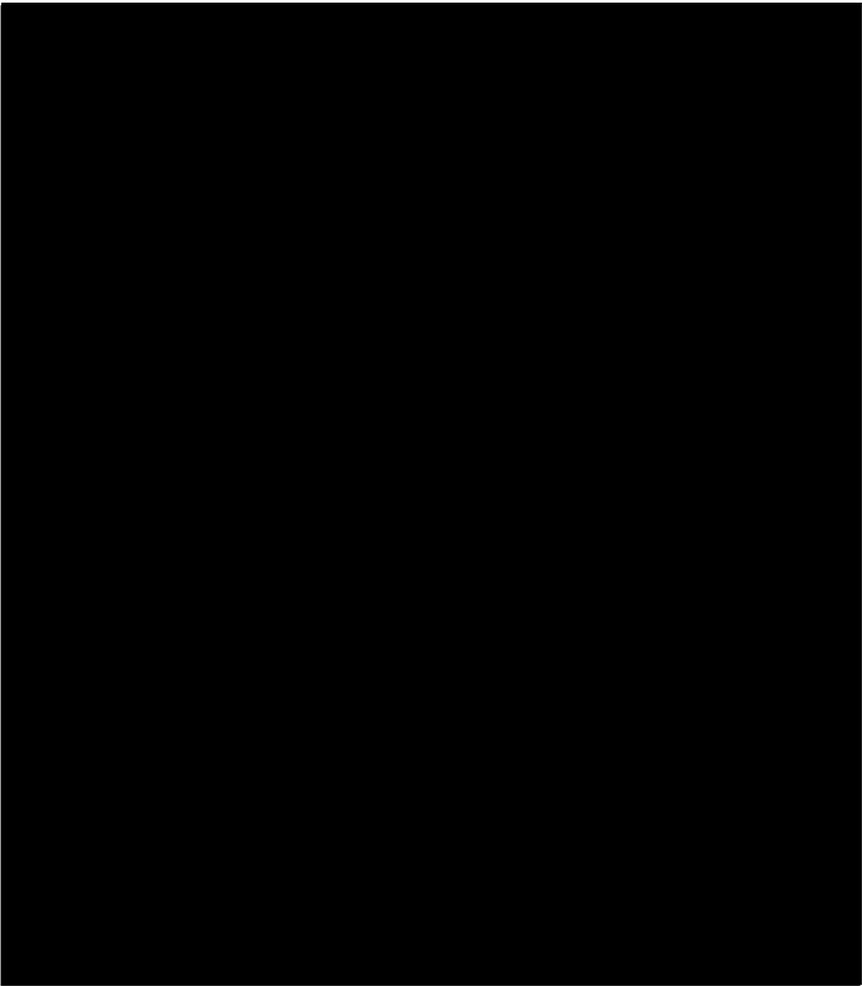
Though a music enthusiast, the German poet and playwright Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was not a staunch supporter of his poetry being set to overly expressive music. "Not only was (Goethe) extremely protective of the rhythm and colour of the words of his texts, but he tended to resist any tendency towards dramatic amplification or emotional over-intensification." (Grove) Thus, the 'collaboration' between Goethe and Schubert was not a friendly one. While Schubert eagerly desired Goethe's acceptance, the poet hated Schubert's settings of his texts. For instance, in *Erlkönig* Goethe "observed that the music expressed the rhythm of the galloping

horse almost too noisily, and that it generated a feeling of apprehension and dread that was almost too strong.” (Grove)

Erlkönig (1815) portrays four characters: the narrator, a father, his son, and the “Erl-King” – death. The father is frantically trying to reach his home with his sick son, who is being lured away by the progressively malevolent Erl-King. The triplet figure in the piano heard throughout the piece represents the galloping of the father’s horse as he races to get home. Of particular note are the vocal ranges that Schubert has used to denote the different characters, and the gradual rise in pitch of the son’s voice as his fear and panic increases. In *Schäfer’s Klagelied* (Shepherd’s Lament; 1814), a shepherd is standing on a hill, gazing down at his flock and bemoaning his loneliness. *Ganymed* (1817) is taken from the Greek myth of Ganymede, a gilded young shepherd boy, who is taken up to Mount Olympus by Zeus (disguised as an eagle) so that he might serve as the cupbearer to the gods. Ganymede’s exultant ascension into heaven is reflected by Schubert in the constantly modulating key signature and by the ascending vocal line.

(Note by A. Nagraj)





The American Art Song

Gambler, Don't You Lose Your Place
The Lass from the Low Countree

Words and Music by John Jacob Niles (1892-1980)

A truly versatile musician, Kentucky-born John Jacob Niles came from a strong tradition of American folk music. Educated in music theory by his mother, Niles turned out his first piece, *Go 'Way from My Window*, at the age of fifteen. After a stint with the U.S. Army

Signal Corps as a reconnaissance pilot, he continued his education at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. Known for his compositions, Niles was also famous as a collector and arranger of Appalachian folk music, as well as an outstanding performer in his own right. His compositions and arrangements have been recorded by artists as varied as Placido Domingo, Barbara Streisand, Linda Ronstadt, and Michael Bolton, among many others.

Gambler, Don't You Lose Your Place comes from Niles' set of *Gambling Songs*, which also includes *The Rovin' Gambler*, *The Gambler's Lament*, *The Gambler's Wife*, and *Gambler's Song of the Big Sandy River*. All of these songs were composed in the 1920s following a pre-World War I trip to the Reel Foot Lake Country with his father. According to Niles himself, the songs "spring from my fascination in general, and in particular, with the gamblers who operated on the Ohio River when I was a young man." *The Lass from the Low Cowntree* is Niles' plaintive song about unrequited love and disparity between the classes.

The Sadder but Wiser Girl
from *The Music Man*

Words and Music by Meredith Willson (1902-1984)

The composer, conductor, lyricist, and flautist Meredith Willson was born in Iowa. Educated at what is now known as the Juilliard School of Music, Willson played flute in John Philip Sousa's band, as well as in the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Arturo Toscanini. But he is best known today for writing the book, lyrics, and music for the 1958 Tony Award-winning musical, *The Music Man*. Referencing his own upbringing in the Midwest and his background in Sousa's band, *The Music Man* tells the story of con man "Professor" Harold Hill's tenure in River City, Iowa. The show is rife with musical theatre standards, including *Seventy-Six Trombones*, *Trouble in River City*, and *'Till There Was You*. *The Sadder but Wiser Girl* is Harold's explanation to his sidekick Marcellus about why he refuses to settle down with a respectable girl.

Luck Be a Lady
From *Guys and Dolls*
Words and Music by Frank Loesser (1910-1969)

Born and raised in New York City, Frank Loesser represents one of the preeminent composers from Broadway's "Golden Age." Although he composed only five musicals during his life, the work he produced stands out among the musical theatre canon: *Where's Charley?*, *The Most Happy Fella*, and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. However, it is 1950's *Guys and Dolls* that is considered Loesser's masterwork and the quintessential Broadway musical. *Guys and Dolls*, set in the fictional world of writer Damon Runyon, tells the story of gambler Sky Masterson's romantic conquest of missionary Sister Sarah Brown. *Luck Be a Lady, Guys and Dolls'* most memorable showpiece, is sung by Sky as he is rolling the dice in the play's climactic crap game.

Lily's Eyes
From *The Secret Garden*

Words by Marsha Norman (1947-), Music by Lucy Simon (1940-)

The most recent of the musicals represented in this set, 1991's *The Secret Garden* is the result of a collaboration between playwright and librettist Marsha Norman and composer Lucy Simon. Norman, a Pulitzer Prize winner for 1983's *'night, Mother*, and Simon, the singer/songwriter sister of musician Carly Simon, came together to produce a Broadway show based on the novel of the same name by Frances Hodgson Burnett. The story is that of Mary Lennox, who must leave behind the home that she knew after her mother and father die, and come to live with her uncle, Archibald Craven, in his English manor. The duet *Lily's Eyes* is sung between Archie and his brother, Dr. Neville Craven, as they both reminisce about Archie's late wife, Lily, and the striking resemblance between Lily and Mary.