

2-25-2006

Junior Recital: Stephen Longenecker, baritone

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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JUNIOR RECITAL

Stephen Longenecker,
baritone

assisted by
Joanne Kong, harpsichord/piano
Abbey Bourdon, violin
Davis Massey, cello



FEBRUARY 25, 2006, 5:30 PM
PERKINSON RECITAL HALL

Program

In te, Domine, speravi

Heinrich Schütz
(1585-1672)

Abbey Bourdon, *Violin*,
Joanne Kong, *Harpsichord*,
Davis Massey, *Cello*

Selections from

Die schöne Müllerin, Op. 25

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

1. *Das Wandern*
2. *Wohin?*
6. *Der Neugierige*
11. *Mein!*

~Intermission~

The American Art Song

Early In The Morning

Ned Rorem
(1923- Present)

The Monk and His Cat

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

The Children's Hour

Charles Ives
(1874-1954)

At the River

Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)

American Music for Entertainment

They Can't Take That Away From Me
Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

Long Ago (and Far Away)
Lyrics by Ira Gershwin

Jerome Kern
(1885-1945)

I Get a Kick Out of You

Cole Porter
(1891-1964)

Program Notes

In te, Domine, speravi

Heinrich Schütz
(1585-1672)

Heinrich Schütz is considered “the greatest German composer of the seventeenth century and the first of international stature.”¹ While it is impossible to know for sure how many pieces of music Schütz actually composed (Schütz’s own letters indicate that both war and economic hardships caused much of his works to remain unpublished and consequentially lost forever), his surviving output consists of roughly 500 works including madrigals, motets, histories, passions, secular dramatic works, a requiem, and of course, sacred concertos.

In te, Domine, speravi was published in Schütz’s first *Symphoniae sacrae* of 1629. The term ‘*symphoniae sacrae*’ dates to late 16th-century publications by Italian composers Giovanni Gabrieli and Kaspar Hassler, but Schütz’s music represents a change in style from that of the 16th-century to a new style a few solo voices, with or without obbligato instruments, and basso continuo, and the compositional styles of Monteverdi and Grandi can be traced throughout the works. The first *Symphoniae sacrae* contain 20 sacred Latin concertos in three to six parts which “presented ‘fresh devices’ of Italian composition that ‘tickle the ears of today’.”² Schütz’s setting of this text, the beginning of which is lifted from the Roman Catholic *Te Deum*, is incredibly expressive, and the melodic gestures that pass between the instruments and voice as well as the vivid textual painting make this a unique and very enjoyable piece to perform.

In te, Domine, speravi

In you, Lord, I have trusted

In te, Domine, speravi,
non confundar in aeternum.

In you, Lord, I have trusted,
I will not be confounded into eternity.

In justitia tua libera me.

In your justice, free me.

Inclina aurem tuam,
accelerat ut eruas me.

Bend your ear,
hasten so that you might rescue me.

Translation: Stephen Longenecker

¹ Joshua Rifkin and Eva Linfield: 'Heinrich Schütz,' *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [23 January 2006]), <http://www.grovemusic.com>

² *Ibid.*

Selections from *Die schöne Müllerin*, Op. 25

Franz Schubert
(1797-1828)

1. *Das Wandern* *
2. *Wohin?*
6. *Der Neugierige*
11. *Mein!*

The next four songs on the program are from a twenty-song cycle called *Die schöne Müllerin*, or *The Fair Maid of the Mill*, by Austrian composer Franz Schubert with texts by German poet Wilhelm Müller. The poems are centered on a young miller who, while wandering along a babbling brook, stumbles upon a mill where he falls deeply in love with the miller's beautiful daughter. The first eleven songs narrate the miller's grown affections for the young maiden and her apparent affections for him; but as the cycle continues, the maiden's attention turns towards the handsome woodsman, who quickly wins her love. In the second half of the cycle, the young miller is driven mad by jealousy and despair until the final song, in which the brook, present throughout the cycle, welcomes the miller into its soft bed—the miller has drowned himself.

The poems of Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827) were born from a literary game he played with a circle of artists beginning in 1816, where they staged a *Liederspiel*, derived from the words “to act” and “story.” The artists, inspired by several existing works about a miller maiden who chooses between various suitors, divided the roles of the hunter, the miller maiden, the gardener, and the miller amongst themselves, and Müller, whose name means miller, played the wandering miller in this production. In 1817 pianist Ludwig Berger, inspired by the *Liederspiel*, convinced Müller to compile a set of poems in which the gardener and the miller were merged into one character and told from the young miller's point of view. Müller expanded these poems in 1820 and published them in a compilation of his poems of which he wrote “... my songs lead but half a life, a paper existence of black-and-white, until music breathes life into them ...” It is generally agreed that when Müller died in 1827, two weeks before his 33rd birthday, he was unaware of the “life” Schubert had breathed into his beloved poems.

Franz Schubert was born in Vienna in 1797 and is best known for his enormous musical contributions to German lied, and “the richness and subtlety of his melodic and harmonic language, the originality of his accompaniments, his elevation of marginal genres and the enigmatic nature of his uneventful life have invited a wide range of readings of both man and music that remain among the most hotly debated in musical circles.”¹ Although he lived a tragically short life, Schubert’s musical output is quite unbelievable; he composed over 150 songs in his 18th year alone, and was averaging over 65 bars of new music a day, half with orchestration, during his most productive period. It is highly debated whether Schubert was heterosexual, homosexual, or bisexual, but it is clear he was criticized for his sexually indulgent lifestyle. It is unclear how Schubert discovered the texts to *Die Schöne Müllerin*, but he quickly set the cycle to music and published it in 1823. Not only did 1823 see the publication of one of his most famous cycles, but also it was the year Schubert contracted syphilis, the disease that would kill him six years later. Despite his illness, which would cause extreme agony until his death, Schubert remained productive for the next few years, even seeing a summer free from the symptoms of his painful disease. He died at the height of his career, just shy of his 32nd birthday, leaving behind over 600 lieds, 15 unpublished operas, 6 Masses, 9 symphonies, 2 overtures, 16 quartets, 24 piano sonatas, and a legacy as one of the most expressive and lush composers in musical history.

¹ Robert Winter: ‘Franz Schubert’, *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed [23 January 2006]), <http://www.grovemusic.com>

The American Art Song

Early in the Morning, *The Monk and His Cat*, *The Children's Hour*, and *At the River* were all written by twentieth-century American composers who are largely responsible for creating the American art song. It is from these composers—Charles Ives, Aaron Copland, Samuel Barber, and Ned Rorem—that we have not only important American works like *Adagio for Strings*, *The Unanswered Question*, *Appalachian Spring*, and *Songs from an Unknown Past*, but also a wide variety of art songs that are unique to America in sound and form. The Grove Music Online defines 'art song' as "a song intended for the concert repertory, as opposed to a traditional or popular song,"¹ but this definition is shattered by the music of these four twentieth-century composers, and it is this very deviation from tradition that connects the music of these men under the collected phrase 'American Art Song.' This term refers to a group of musicians who not only were living during the same era, but also were composing at the same time in the same city, and even studying with the same teachers in the same schools, while simultaneously struggling to develop a new sound unique to their social and cultural position in American history. 'American Art Song,' does not simply describe a common musical language among these four composers, but also it reflects the inexorable relationship between this music and the cultural, political, and physical worlds in which it was created.

There is another connection among these men that, up until the book recently published by musicologist Nadine Hubbs: a shared sexual identity. Hubbs writes about a social circle of composers that included not only Rorem, Barber, and Copland, but also Leonard Bernstein, Virgil Thompson, and David Diamond. Although Ives was not a part of this homosexual circle, Hubbs connects Ives' feeling of musical isolation to these socially isolated composers by quoting his *Memos*; "As a boy [I was] partially ashamed of [my love of music]—an entirely wrong attitude, but it was strong—most boys in American country towns, I think, felt the same.... And there may be something in it. Hasn't music always been too much an emasculated art?"²

And so, out of what Ruth Longobardi calls a "postwar America that heavily policed both political and sexual identity,"³ there emerged the marginalized musician and consequently this circle of today's most beloved American composers. In the face of "threats of familial and social ostracism and professional and economic loss, as well as a variety of legal sanctions that attached to being, looking, and acting queer in 1920's-1950's America,"⁴ this unconventional and closeted New York circle created a brand new sound, indescribable within traditional definitions of 'art song.' New York City at the turn of the twentieth century, while stifling one group of voices, gave birth to a musical voice which lies at the heart of the following four pieces and resonates through the halls of American musical history. This is a voice of hope, a voice of beauty, and a voice of change; it is the voice of America present in *The American Art Song*.

¹ 'Art Song', Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy, <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

² Charles Ives in Nadine Hubbs, *The Queer Composition of America's Sound* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, Ltd., 2004), 65.

³ Ruth Longobardi, *Program Notes for James River Singers Present 'Sounds from the American Closet'* (2005)

⁴ *Ibid.*

Early In The Morning

Ned Rorem (1923-Present)

Ned Rorem, who is still composing in New York City, was born 1923 and attended Northwestern University, The Curtis Institute, The Juilliard School, and the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood. He worked as a copyist for Virgil Thompson in exchange for orchestration lessons, and while at Curtis studied composition with Barber's teacher, Rosario Scalero the same year Barber finished teaching there. In his youth, Rorem was heavily influenced by classical composers like Stravinsky and Debussy, as well as jazz artists such as Billie Holliday, and this mix of influences can be heard in his music. *Early in the Morning*, composed in 1955, is a musical setting of a Robert Hillyer poem which reflects upon youth from the perspective of an older man. Rorem, just twenty-two when he wrote the piece, is quite successful in creating a sense of nostalgia, while still capturing the freshness of an early Paris morning. One can hear influence of Rorem's long-time love of French culture in the song's flavor and ambience.

The Monk and His Cat

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

Samuel Barber was born in 1910 and wrote his first operetta when he was ten to a libretto written by his family's cook. A virtuoso pianist, he entered the newly founded Curtis Institute at the age of fourteen where he studied piano with Isabelle Vengerova, as well as composition and conducting; he also taught composition at Curtis from 1936 to 1942. In 1928, Barber was introduced to composer/conductor Gian Carlo Menotti, with whom he developed a close professional relationship and a lifelong personal relationship. *The Monk and His Cat* is from *Hermit Songs*, a collection of ten songs with texts collected from 8th to 13th century Irish manuscripts which Barber set to music between 1952 and 1953. The story of the Monk and his cat, Pangur, was found written in the margins of an illuminated manuscript, and is dated sometime between the 8th and 9th century. Barber dedicated this particular song to his cat-loving piano teacher at Curtis, and throughout the song, the piano oscillates between melodic accompaniment and symbolic representation – the dissonant crunches between sections of text represent a cat walking across the keys of the piano.

The Children's Hour

Charles Ives (1874-1954)

The music of Charles Ives is “marked by an integration of American and European musical traditions, innovations in rhythm, harmony and form, and an unparalleled ability to evoke the sounds and feelings of American life.”¹ Ives was born in 1874 in Danbury, Connecticut and was exposed to music by his father, George, who was an exceptional musician and educated Charles in harmony and counterpoint and encouraged him to experiment with new musical sounds and ideas. As evidenced by the passage quoted earlier, Ives felt isolated by his love of music. After turning to a life as a successful and innovative insurance salesman, Ives composed his enchantingly new and beautiful music as a hobby until 1927, when he quit composing and spent the rest of his life revising his own work. *The Children's Hour* is a setting of a poem by American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and was first written between 1912 and 1913, but like most of his music, it was not performed until a decade or more after its composition. Ives's music is known for its varying styles and forms, which only was intensified by his constant revisions. This song, like many of Ives' earlier works, is more nineteenth-century romantic than innovative.

At the River

Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Copland was born and raised in New York, and is regarded by many, including the United States Army, as “America's most prominent composer.”² While this claim seems steep, Copland was the first composer to embrace the sound of American folk music, as evidenced by his 1950 publication of *Old American Songs*, a collection of traditional American texts and tunes rearranged for voice and piano. Copland's music, more so than any of the other composers in this set, represents an effort to capture a sound that belonged specifically to America, and these efforts earned him an unfading place in America's ears and hearts. At the national memorial service broadcast five days after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, *At the River*, which comes from the 1952 *Old American Songs*, “was chosen by programmers and cited by commentators as one of the most eloquent expressions of the nation's mourning. A work of stark beauty, it evokes a simple dignity and noble melancholy that are perceived as characteristically American.”³ One cannot help but note the beautiful simplicity with which Copland set this traditional hymn.

¹ J. Peter Burkholder: 'Charles Ives', Grove Music Online ed. L. Macy, <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

² Nadine Hubbs, *The Queer Composition of America's Sound* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, Ltd., 2004), 1.

³ *Ibid*, 2.

American Music for Entertainment

At the same time composers like Copland and Barber were developing a new American art song in New York, jazz and theatre composers such as the Gershwin brothers, Jerome Kern, and Cole Porter were developing an American sound with a much different purpose: entertainment. This popular American song is music in which the text and music are on an equal footing, as it furthers a story and pushes the boundaries about what is and is not appropriate for the public venue. The pieces I will perform, all written between 1934 and 1944, demonstrate this musico-poetic equality and the influence of jazz on twentieth century American music. Even today opinions vary regarding the inclusion of these pieces in an 'art song' recital, but musical director and Juilliard faculty member Steven Blier stated it well in his article on the modern recital; "Sing what you love, think of the recital space as a sacred home for your imagination and your soul, and welcome the audience into a world you create for them."¹ While I love all the music on this program, this set has deep personal meaning: this is music I heard in my grandmother's living room before I was old enough to sing, and it brings me joy to perform them.

They Can't Take That Away from Me

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

This piece was written by the famous sibling songwriters for the 1937 film *Shall We Dance*, starring Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire. While both George and Ira had strong solo careers, it is their partnership that most often is associated with the name 'Gershwin.' Together the brothers, while making musical history with their incorporation of jazz music into both the entertainment and classical world, wrote famous songs like *Strike Up the Band*, and *Someone to Watch Over Me*, as well as the classic opera *Porgy and Bess*. At the time of his early death at 38, George Gershwin—who also composed *Rhapsody in Blue*—had plans for another opera and a symphony.

Long Ago, and Far Away

Jerome Kern (1885-1945)

After the death of his brother in 1937, Ira Gershwin continued to share his lyrical talents with America, teaming up with music legends like Jerome Kern in the 1944 film *Cover Girl*, starring Gene Kelley and Rita Hayworth. Written for the film, this song was an instant hit, and has since become a classic. Jerome Kern composed nearly 700 songs for 117 films and stage productions throughout his lifetime. He is best known for his musical *Show Boat*, which changed the course of musical theatre from show girls and variety shows to stories told through music. Kern also composed music for *Swing Time* and spent his life inspiring America with his romantic music and unique sound.

I Get a Kick Out of You

Cole Porter (1891-1964)

Cole Porter is responsible for an amazing output of early American musical theatre music and numerous jazz standards such as *It's De-lovely*, *Night and Day*, and *I've Got You Under My Skin*. His two most popular musicals are *Kiss Me, Kate* and the 1934 production of *Anything Goes*, for which this song was written. Throughout his life, Porter pushed the boundaries of music and lyrics, often broaching subjects other lyricists would not, writing about sex, drugs, and promiscuity. *I Get a Kick Out of You* is popular both in and out of the context of *Anything Goes*, having been performed and recorded by Peggy Lee, Ethel Merman, Frank Sinatra, and more recently Jamie Cullum. The song's controversial reference to drug use has caused several alternate versions to be written, including a "bob-type refrain" and "perfume from Spain," but I have chosen to perform the song in its original form.

¹Steven Blier, "The Revisionist," *Opera News*, June 2005, 34