

4-21-2007

Senior Recital: Rhiannon Nolt, mezzo-soprano, and Heather Shields, mezzo-soprano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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University of Richmond
Department of Music



Senior Recital

Rhiannon Nolt
Mezzo-soprano

Heather Shields
Mezzo-soprano

Assisted by
Dr. Joanne Kong, piano



April 21, 2007
4:30 p.m.
Perkinson Recital Hall



Rhiannon and Heather are so pleased their friends and families could join them in celebrating their four years of vocal study at University of Richmond. They request that the audience only applaud between sets. Thank you and enjoy the program!

Program

Frauenliebe und Leben, Op. 42

Seit ich ihn gesehen
Er, der Herrlichste von allen
Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben
Du Ring an meinem Finger
Helft mir, ihr Schwestern
Süßer Freund
An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust
Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan

Robert Schumann
(1810-1856)

Нет, только тот, кто знал, Op. 6, No. 6
На сон грядущий, Op. 27, No. 1

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840-1893)

I Loved You Once in Silence
from *Camelot* (1960)

Alan Jay Lerner & Frederick Loewe
(1918-1986) (1901-1988)

How Long Has This
Been Going On?
from *Rosalie* (1928)

George Gershwin & Ira Gershwin
(1898-1937) (1896-1983)

Ten Minutes Ago
from *Cinderella* (1957)

Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II
(1902-1979) (1895-1960)

What Makes Me Love Him?
from *The Apple Tree* (1966)

Jerry Bock & Sheldon Harnick
(b. 1928) (b. 1924)

~ Intermission ~

The Birthnight (Op. 13, No. 4)
On Parent Knees (Op. 13, No. 2)
June on Castle Hill (Op. 13, No. 5)
Hands, Eyes, and Heart
Tired

Gerald Finzi
(1901-1956)

Eli, Eli

Music: D. Zahvi;

Y'rushalayim Shel Zahav

Arranged by Max Helfman

Kol Nidre

Music: N. Shemer;

Shalom Rav

Arranged by Robert Schultz

Ose Shalom

Music: Traditional;

Arranged by Louis Lewandowski

Music: J. Klepper & D. Frelander;

Arranged by E. Kalendar

Music: N. Hirsh;

Arranged by Robert Schultz-

Antonín Dvořák

(1841-1904)

Moravské dvojzpěvy, Op. 20 (1875)

Velet, vtáčku

Slavíkovský polečko malý

Skromná

Prsten

Zajatá

♪ German composer and pianist **Robert Schumann** is considered one of the most prolific composers of the nineteenth century, writing in all genres. His most productive year was 1840, nicknamed Schumann's "year of song."¹ Schumann composed 168 songs during this year, including the song-cycles *Liederkreis*, Op. 39, *Frauenliebe und Leben*, Op. 42, and *Dichterliebe*, Op. 48.

Frauenliebe und Leben is set to poems by Adelbert von Chamisso. Chamisso's texts were written ten years prior to the composition of the music. It is believed that Schumann chose Chamisso's text due to events in his personal life. Schumann had been pursuing Clara Wieck for several years against the will of her father. In 1840, Clara and Robert were finally married after winning a legal battle to gain permission from Clara's father.

Notable elements of the *Frauenliebe* cycle are its cyclical nature and the independence of the piano. The final song, "Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan," features a restatement of the first song, "Seit ich ihn gesehen," in the piano, reminding us of happier times for the protagonist. Throughout the cycle, the piano is independent from the voice, often embodying the mood of each song.



6 Romances, Opus 6



♪ The romances of Opus 6 were composed during **Tchaikovsky's** early Moscow period, which lasted from 1866 until 1869. In his book, Richard Sylvester claims that Tchaikovsky established "those patterns of work to which he held throughout his life" during this period, which saw him completely devoted to his music. In his early Moscow period, Tchaikovsky would not stop working until he had seen a started composition through to its completion. He composed his first symphony during this period, entitled "Winter Dreams," Op. 13. He also composed two operas, *Voyevoda* and *Undine*, and undertook plans for two others. These operas only survive in fragments found in *Swan Lake* and some of his other late works, however, as Tchaikovsky thought they were unsatisfactory and destroyed them. After completing his overture-fantasy *Romeo and Juliet* for teacher Mily Balakirev's approval, Tchaikovsky began to write songs for his own satisfaction.

Written in one week between November 23 and 30, 1869, the six romances of Op. 6 are not a cycle.³ Rather, they are a set of different songs. Song No. 6, "None but the lonely heart," is one of three of Mignon's songs set by Tchaikovsky. The text is a Lev May translation of a famous Goethe lyric from Book 4, Chapter 11 of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, the scene in which Mignon joins in the song of the harpist.⁴ "None but the lonely heart" is the most famous song Tchaikovsky ever wrote and was a favorite in the two Russian capitals during Tchaikovsky's lifetime.

¹"Frauenliebe und Leben," Wikipedia 1 February 2007 accessed 17 February 2007 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frauenliebe_und_leben

²Sylvester, Richard D, *Tchaikovsky's Complete Songs: A Companion with Texts and Translations*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).

Sylvester attributes the song's immediate impact and staying power to its beautiful melody, with its recurring, endless quality. The text of the first stanza is repeated and then followed by a pause; the song proceeds to its conclusion with the text "my heart's on fire." David Jackson has described this moment as "the master-stroke...the moment near the end, when after the climactic pause the voice sings a new counter-melody while the piano reiterates the opening theme. No matter how often the song is heard, this moment never fails to make its effect."⁵

Romances, Opus 27

На сон грядущий Prayer at bedtime

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

♪Tchaikovsky's *Romances*, Op. 27 were dedicated to and written for mezzo-soprano Elizabeth Lavrovskaya. Tchaikovsky had originally set the first of these six songs, "Prayer at Bedtime," to be sung *a cappella* by a mixed choir in 1863. He re-set the text in 1875, returning to it because of "its compassion for a suffering world and the somber meaning of its final benediction."⁶ The song is in two distinct parts. The first stanza is a slow, quiet recitative that ends in a low, descending

line in the piano. The second part of the song is the prayer in 6/8. The vocal line is fluid and full of motion. Momentum is added through the duples in the vocal line, sung against steady eighth notes in the piano. "Prayer at Bedtime" is not well known. Owing to its religious language, it was rarely performed in the Soviet era.

Camelot (1960)

I Loved You Once in Silence

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

³Sylvester.

⁴Sylvester, 26.

⁵Jackson, David M, "Tchaikovsky: Ten songs" in *Song on Record 2*, ed. Alan Blyth. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 162.

⁶Sylvester, 79.

Camelot was Lerner and Loewe's first Broadway production since their huge success with *My Fair Lady* in 1956. Based upon British author T.H. White's novel, *The Once and Future King*, *Camelot* retells the Arthurian legend through the stories of the Knights of the Round Table and the love triangle between King Arthur, his queen Guenevere, and knight Sir Lancelot. Julie Andrews, in the role of Guenevere, again led Lerner and Loewe's cast after her triumphant work as Eliza Dolittle in *My Fair Lady*. Guenevere sings "I Loved You Once in Silence" to Lancelot as he visits her in her chambers. Lancelot, caught visiting the queen by some of the Knights of the Round Table, is accused of treachery and imprisoned. Guenevere is sentenced to burn. At the last moment, however, Lancelot rescues Guenevere and flees with her to France.

Rosalie (1928)

How Long Has This Been Going On?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The musical *Rosalie* was first produced in 1928 and later adapted as an MGM film in 1937. Sigmund Romberg composed all but George's three songs and P.G. Wodehouse worked with Ira on the lyrics. In *Rosalie*, a princess from a faraway land comes to America and falls in love with a West Point military cadet. The film version follows the same story, but replaces the original score with songs by Cole Porter. "How Long Has This Been Going On?" was cut from the show *Funny Face* (1927) and then appeared in *Rosalie* two months later. With the exception of "How Long Has This Been Going On?," none of the songs from *Rosalie* became well known. Forte writes, "it is difficult to image a melodic configuration more unlike that of the model ballad of the time."⁷

Cinderella (1957)

Ten Minutes Ago

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

⁷Forte, Allen, *The American Popular Ballad of the Golden Era, 1924-1950*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, 157.

[REDACTED]

Cinderella was written as a star vehicle for a young Julie Andrews, who had just finished her role as Eliza Dolittle in *My Fair Lady*. CBS-TV decided to mount a musical version of *Cinderella* and managed to contract Rodgers and Hammerstein to write the music, book, and lyrics. Hammerstein's book was faithful to the classic tale. A stage adaptation has been made of the version created for television. "Ten Minutes Ago" is sung twice in the show; first by the Prince, and then by Cinderella, when she enters the ball and they see each other for the first time.

The Apple Tree (1966)

What Makes Me Love Him?

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Apple Tree is a series of three musical playlets. Each playlet has its own storyline, but all three are woven together by dialogue references and common musical themes. The first playlet is based on Mark Twain's *The Diary of Adam and Eve*, the second on Frank R. Stockton's *The Lady or the Tiger?*, and the third on Jules Feiffer's *Passionella*, a *Cinderella*-type story. "What Makes Me Love Him?" is sung by Eve at the end of the first playlet. Finding herself alone with Adam after Abel dies and Cain departs, Eve reflects on her time spent with Adam.



Intermission

Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)

Gerald Finzi, born in London, began his study of music with Ernest Farrar. The death of Farrar, his father's earlier death, as well as the deaths of his three older brothers in World War I would have a marked effect on the introspective nature of Finzi's works, as well as his fascination with death and his staunch anti-war stance. He lived out most of his life in the English countryside- assembling a massive book collection and growing apples. As C.M. Boyd wrote, "Gerald Finzi is a quiet composer, whose music breathes the air of the countryside by which he is surrounded. None of his works has ever stirred listeners towards riotous abuse or excessive enthusiasm."⁸

The three songs performed have all been published posthumously in a set entitled *To a Poet*. Some of these pieces in the set were products of some twenty years of revisions and amendments, and are a reflection of his different interests, concerns, and fears.

⁸Boyd, C. M. "Gerald Finzi and the Solo Song." *Tempo* no. 33 (Autumn, 1954): 15-19, <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0040-2982%28195423%292%3A0%3A33%3C15%3AGFATSS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-F>.

The Birthnight (No. 4)

[REDACTED]

“The Birthnight” was one of the last pieces he composed, completed in 1956. In this short song, Finzi uses Walter de la Mare’s (1873-1956) poem to create a melodious, yet chromatically complex line. The text is reflective of Finzi’s own love of nature and the countryside, as the words describe the “sighing wind,” the “rushing” air, and “antique moss.”

On Parent Knees (No. 2)

“On Parent Knees,” composed by Finzi in 1935, is a simple text commenting on the differences between our birth and our death. The origins of the text are somewhat mysterious, although Finzi attributes the verses to “the celebrated Orientalist,” Sir William Jones (1746-1794). The simplicity of the text is matched and emphasized by a flowing piano line that moves gracefully throughout the short life depicted in the song.

June on Castle Hill (No. 5)

[REDACTED]

“June on Castle Hill” is a departure from the other two pieces of this set. Setting the song in 1940, the relationship between the world’s crisis and this song is clear. A decided pacifist, Finzi used the text of a fellow objector to the war, F.L. Lucas (1894-1967). Both looked at the impending World War II with trepidation and fear for civilization. The ominous sound of trumpets in the distance and a sinister sky above signal Finzi’s fear for the peaceful world at Castle Hill.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)

Ralph Vaughan Williams was given an early education in music while growing up in Surrey, England. However, his earliest attempts at the art form were unsuccessful. A schoolmate once commented about Vaughan Williams: “that foolish young man, Ralph Vaughan Williams, who would go on working at music when he was so hopelessly bad at it.” Persistence paid off for the hard working young man, and decades later, the composer, teacher, and conductor was known for launching a revival of English music.

Indeed, it seems that history will forever remember Ralph Vaughan Williams for his “Englishness.” His nationalism and ability to create an exclusively “English” sound to emphasize “English” themes and concerns is widely discussed amongst scholars and admirers. Nevertheless, the two songs from his “Four Last Songs” selected for this set do not emphasize a theme exclusively English; rather, the theme of love is greater than nationalism. Indeed, it seems that love may have been a prominent Wood - a family friend and aspiring poet.

⁸Ottaway, Hugh & Alain Frogley: ‘Vaughan Williams, Ralph, *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy, <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

theme in Vaughan Williams' life in the later years. Vaughan Williams met Ursula He would marry her in 1953. *Four Last Songs* is all that remains of the projected two final song cycles Vaughan Williams hoped to finish using his wife's poetry.

Hands, Eyes, and Heart (No. 3)

Originally published in a larger poetic work, the text for "Hands, Eyes, and Heart" was published in 1941 in No Other Choice. This song, instructing the body and soul how to show their love, takes listeners to the impossibly beautiful place "where music and silence meet and both are heard."

Tired (No. 2)

As a poem, "Tired" was written in 1943 and published in the Fall of Leaf collection. This comforting lullaby of love is an affirmation of love, declared at the most personal and peaceful of moments.

Eli, Eli

"Eli, Eli" celebrates the beauty surrounding everyday life. The text was written by Hannah Senesh. Understanding her story may change the way one hears the song: born in Hungary, Hannah volunteered for a secret parachute mission with the British Air Force during World War II. After being captured, twenty-three year old Hannah was tortured and eventually executed by firing squad in 1944. Her writings, published after her death, reflect her fascination with the world around her as well as her devotion to humanity.

Y'rushalayim Shel Zahav

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

“Y'Rushalayim She Zahav” became an international phenomenon following the Six Day War in Israel. Written by Naomi Shemer in 1967, it was originally written as a tribute to Israeli Independence Day. However, following the retaking of Jerusalem and the Western Wall, the song took on special significance, with a powerful emotional appeal to Jews both within Israel and around the world.

Kol Nidre

“All vows, obligations, oaths, and anathemas or by any other name, which we may vow, or swear, or pledge, or whereby we may be bound, from this Day of Atonement until the next (whose happy coming we await), we do repent. May they be deemed absolved, forgiven, annulled, and void, and made of no effect; they shall not bind us nor have power over us. The vows shall not be reckoned vows; the obligations shall not be obligatory; nor the oaths be oaths.”⁹

The “Kol Nidre” is performed on the Eve of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The language is not Hebrew, but Aramaic and essentially nullifies all vows made without being fulfilled. Scholars have debated the reasons behind this prayer for millennia. Some believe it is to safeguard against forgotten vows- how can one fulfill something he or she has forgotten? Unfortunately, there are also those that read the “Kol Nidre” as being a Jewish loop hole from ever making a true promise. Yet, as George Robinson writes, there are those that believe that the purpose of “Kol Nidre” is much more universal and benevolent: “What Kol Nidre really is about is the shortcomings of humankind.

It is an admission of our failures to live up to the promises we have made to {G-d} and ourselves as well as to others over the course of the year, an admission that is an important first step towards the self-improvement *teshuvah* requires. It is not G-d’s intentions that we start the New Year already behind in our obligations.”¹⁰

As for who wrote the text, no one knows. Even more mysterious, no one knows where this haunting melody line originated. What is known is it is one of the most cherished songs in all of Jewish repertoire.

Shalom Rav

“O grant abundant peace to Israel your people forever, for You are the King and Lord of peace. May it please you to bless us all Your people Israel with your peace at all times and at all hours.”

In continuing with the ever imperative theme of tranquility for all of humanity, the song “Shalom Rav” is a prayer for peace. This sweet melody was composed by D. Frelander and J. Klepper. Indeed, the serene nature of this song reflects a wish for a better world tomorrow.

Ose Shalom

May He who makes peace in the high places make peace for Israel and for all mankind and say Amen.

Though the text for “Ose Shalom” is not new, its theme of peace became vitally important in the late twentieth century. A prayer for peace, this song was first introduced at the Hassidic Song Festival in 1969, resonating with many who prayed for peace in Israel. Today, it remains one of the most popular songs in synagogues and Jewish communities around the globe.

⁹Translation: From Jewish Encyclopedia. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=340&letter=K>

¹⁰Robinson, George. *Essential Judaism : A Complete Guide to Beliefs, Customs, and Rituals*. New York: Pocket Books, 2000.

Moravské dvojzpěvy, Op. 20 (1875)

Despite a special talent for the violin, many biographers claim that Antonin Dvořák was trained to follow in his father's footsteps as a butcher. Indeed, Antonin Dvořák's early life in a small Czechoslovakian town certainly did not prepare him for a life of music and celebrity. Attending the Prague Organ School in 1857 helped to develop Dvořák's musical skills. A friendship with Johannes Brahms opened many doors which would eventually lead to widespread publication. Dvořák's career would take him all over Europe, and even to the United States. He is remembered as a great composer and teacher, but more importantly, he is understood as a nationalistic composer, emphasizing the Czech language as well as Slavic cultural themes.

The Moravian Duets, five of which will be performed today, are arguably the reason for Dvořák's great success within Czechoslovakia as well as around the world. Written in 1875 for a small dinner, Dvořák sent them to his good friend Johannes Brahms in 1877. Brahms, brimming with excitement over the duets, wrote to his publisher, Fritz Simrock: "{the duets} seem to me very pretty, and a practical proposition for publishing...Play them through and you will like them as much as I do...he is a very talented man. Moreover, he is poor!"¹¹

Indeed, the duets seem to represent a high point in Dvořák's compositions. They are simple, yet characteristic and expressive—using the original text (written by Sušil) from Czech folk songs, yet eschewing the melodies in favor of his own. They transition easily between joy and sadness, defiance and love. Yet, the genius of Dvořák's duets does not lie in imitation. As Milan Křinčl wrote, "Dvořák did not imitate folk

tunes, and yet—guided by an intuition bearing the indelible imprint of his genius—he did attach the color of folk music to his melodies, as well as employing explicitly certain elements characteristic of Moravian folk music."¹²

Velet', Vtáčku



The first, "Velet', Vtáčku" (Op. 32, No. 2) is a sweet desire to be like a song bird, to see a long distance love. Yet, by the end, the voices plead with the songster to tell him to find "another lassie" and to "forget our love" because the distance between them is just too great. As the lonely narrator contemplates her emotions, the vocal lines shift between legato, flowing lines to more agitated, short, chromatic notes.

Slavíkovský Polečko Malý



¹¹Klaus Doge: 'Dvořák, Antonin', *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy, <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>
¹²Křinčl, Milan: Dvořák, Antonin. *Moravian Duets*. Czechoslovakia: Supraphon, 1987. {Sleeve notes}

“Slavíkovský Polečko Malý” (Op. 32, No.5) is a frantic cry against parental interference in love. Announcing their rebelling desire against the wishes of the narrator’s parents (“What care we for Mother’s opinions, must we be our parent’s minions?”), in the end the lovers are assured and say goodnight.

Skromná



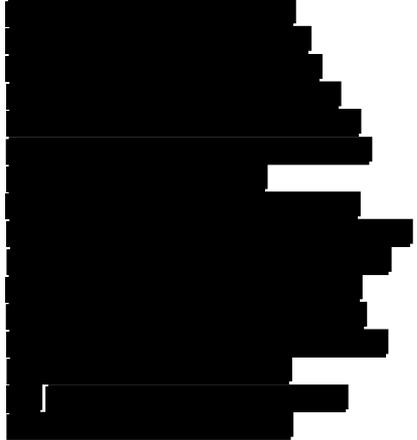
“Skromná” (Op. 32, No.8) is a conversation between the two voices- a love duet. The lower voice plays the male of the two, praising his lady’s beauty and disposition. The upper voice replies that on the contrary- she is no more beautiful than a flower, and it is seen that her modesty is her greatest virtue.

Prsten



“Prsten” (Op. 32, No. 9) begins with a loud command –“Play music, play!” This song contrasts with the songs preceding it, in that it is much faster, and more aggressive as it tells the story of a young woman running away to be with her lover, yet forgets her ring!

Zajatá



“Zajatá” (Op. 32, No.11) is a flowing, intensely melodious narrative about a landlord who falls in love and teases with a maiden working in his fields. The vocal lines represent the rolling hills, characteristic of the beautiful countryside over which the landlord is gazing.

