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Senior Recital: For the Love of Women: Mierka Ross, mezzo-soprano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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The University of Richmond
Department of Music

Presents in concert

Mierka Ross,
mezzo soprano

Senior Recital

For the Love of Women:

*Musical reflections from a murderer, a madman,
an organist and a professor*

Assisted by:

Dr. Joanne Kong, *piano and harpsichord*

Saturday, February 6, 2010

3:00 p.m.

Perkinson Recital Hall



For the Love of Women:

Musical reflections from a murderer, a madman, an organist and a professor

Often we listen to music without knowing its historical origin. By labeling my recital as I have, I hope to draw attention to the irrelevance we often place on a composer's personal life during our momentary reverence of a work. In a normal recital I could perform these songs without giving you any background on the composer's personal life and instead discuss his or her massive contributions to musical performance. In this case, I hope to challenge the listener to think about the composer's personal life instead of just listening to the piece of music as a work separated from its composer.

Each of the composers I address has a specific relationship to women that may or may not be reflected in his art songs, ranging from murderous actions to instructing young women in the study of music.

When we listen to the music produced by these composers, is their interaction with the women in their lives evident? Today, I hope that you focus on these people who set the pieces to music. Try to make a connection between what the music says of the composer or what it doesn't say, and look for the reason that these composers survive as staples today, regardless of their good or frightening comportment.

Thank you for supporting me today.

*Another thank you to the Lied and Art Song text Page
(<http://www.recmusic.org/lieder/>) which is endlessly convenient for the
speedy translations, particularly those of the French and the German
in this program. I translated the Italian on my own.*

*I would also like to extend a hearty thank you to the University of Richmond Music
Department for its generous assistance throughout my undergraduate studies.*

Program

Scopri (o) lingua el cieco ardore
Non val aqua al mio gran foco
Se mi e grave el tuo partire
Se ben hor non scopro el foco

Bartolomeo Tromboncino
(1470-1535)

Die Soldatenbraut, Op. 69, No. 4
Jasminenstrauch, Op. 27, No. 4
Erstes Grün, Op. 35, No. 4
Lied der Braut, Op. 25, No. 12
Die Kartenlegerin, Op. 31, No. 2

Robert Schumann
(1810- 1856)

Intermission

Clair de lune, Op. 46, No. 2
En sourdine, Op. 58, No. 2
Ici bas, Op. 8, No. 3
Mandoline, Op. 58, No. 1

Gabriel Fauré
(1845-1924)

In the Fields
Loveliest of Trees
O it was out by Donnycarney
Penguin Geometry

John Duke
(1899-1984)



BARTOLOMEO TROMBONCINO: The murderer

Tromboncino, who worked for Isabella d'Este (one of the most powerful women in sixteenth century Italy), went a step further than Schumann and actually did murder his wife. He was pardoned through the graces of Isabella, who appreciated his music too much to let him go. (Note: Tromboncino is not as widely known as the others. However, I can assure you that he was quite a celebrity in the early sixteenth century.)

Scopri (o) lingua el cieco ardore

Discover o tongue the blind ardor
Speak now, don't stay mute any longer
Since the flame has grown
And has almost already made cinders of my heart

She knows how to show love for me but she feigns it every time
Just for the pleasure of deceiving me and the flame grows every time
If she would love me in my death, death does not displease me
As it would bring peace and refuge to my sad heart

Non val aqua al mio gran foco

Water does nothing to my big flame, with my tears it doesn't dim
In fact each tear strengthens it, no matter how many tears flow

My fire is like this, with my tears it only grows
It's better to take rest if my intent does not succeed
But my fire is like the fish, which has its home in salt water

I have Mt. Etna in my chest and in my eye a large lake
Mostly for my punishment they go with my suffering
Crying and burning and misery, with my ardor they have torn me

Se mi e grave el tuo partire

Your parting is so heavy to me. God knows that I die every hour
Again this sorrows me so that I want to leave life

If I don't see your beautiful light, I am like drifting wood in a lake
From my tears a river is born in which I am submerged
The sky seems perverse to me as I want to leave life

Se ben hor non scopro el foco

Even if I don't find the fire in the loving pain of mine
This laborious and sour pain will be discovered
Will be discovered in time and place

There will be a time of fortune where the flock is led to the gate
If now I suffer a pain, I am still not dead
The sadness that I suffer now will be discovered in time and place

After the sour storm, the sun returns to the jocund sky
If my life was sad, I will not always stay in the depths
My pain is only earthly and will be discovered in time and place

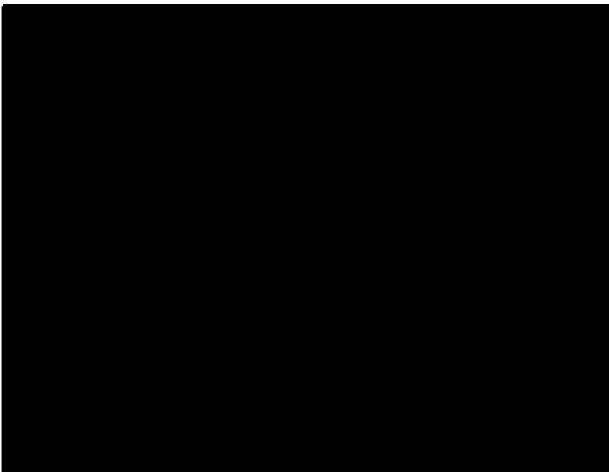


ROBERT SCHUMANN: The madman

Schumann, a prolific composer, was known to have gone insane towards the end of his life and committed himself to a mental institution fearing that he would harm his wife Clara. The cause of his dementia had been prompted long before his proposal to Clara, when he had contracted syphilis and was treated with either mercury or arsenic. It was his delayed poisoning that resulted in his visions. While his earlier visions had been angelic, his later visions of the 1850s were demonic, and for this reason he took the precautions of willingly entering an asylum before his symptoms increased and his sense of reason deteriorated.


Die Soldatenbraut

Poem by: Eduard Mörike

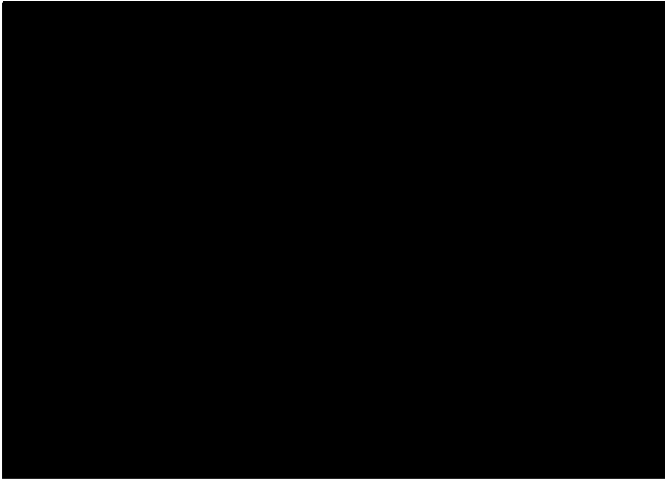


Jaminenstrauch

Poem by: Friedrich Rückert




Erstes Grün



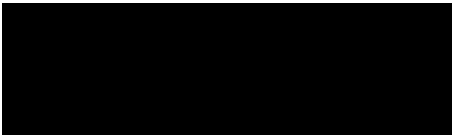
Lied der Braut

Poem by: Friedrich Rückert



Die Kartenlegerin

Poem by: Adelbert von Chamisso

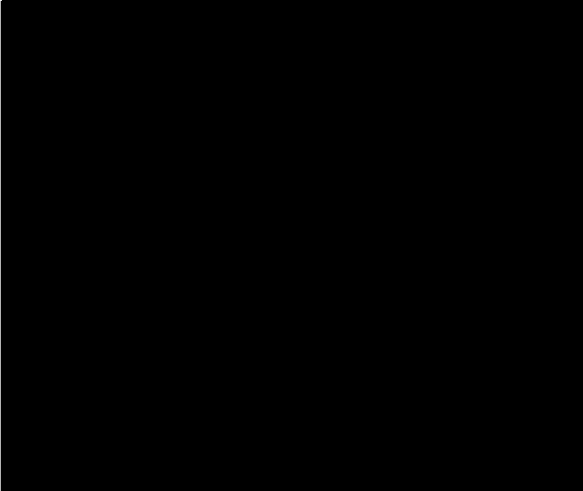


GABRIEL FAURÉ: The organist

Although Fauré suffered from bouts of depression, he was able to live with this through his work focusing specifically on his profession as an organist, and composing in his spare time. He was very much in love with Marianne Viardot for five years but their engagement fell apart. Instead, he married Marie Fremiet, with whom he had two children and to whom he dedicated some of his most beautiful art songs. His affection for his wife was constant.

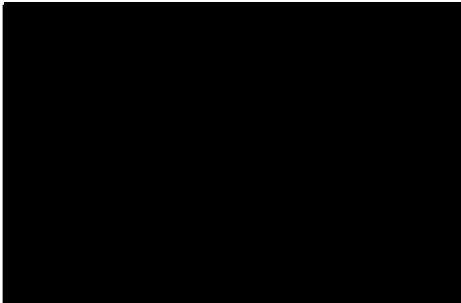
Clair de Lune

Poem by: Paul Verlaine



En Sourdine

Poem by: Paul Verlaine





JOHN DUKE: The professor

As he is much more recent than the others, there is a smaller body of research on John Duke. He spent time focusing on the American art song and studied under the famed Nadia Boulanger. After marrying, he accepted a teaching position at Smith College, a women's college in Northampton, Massachusetts, where he devoted the rest of his working life to instructing young women musicians in music and composition.

In the Fields

Poem by: Charlotte Mew