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Jeanette Thompson, soprano and Kenneth Merrill, piano

Department of Music, University of Richmond

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Wednesday, February 19, 1997 at 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music
George M. Modlin Center for the Arts
at the University of Richmond

Jeanette Thompson, *soprano*

Kenneth Merrill, *piano*

This concert, which is co-sponsored by the
Modlin Center for the Arts and the Department of Music,
is presented in recognition of Black History Month.

JEANETTE THOMPSON, *soprano*
Kenneth Merrill, *piano*

I.

The Year's at the Spring, Op. 44, No. 1	H. H. Amy Beach
Ah, Love, but a day! Op. 44, No. 2	
I send my heart up to thee! Op. 44, No. 3	

II.

FRAUENLIEBEN UND -LEBEN	Robert Schumann
Seit ich ihn gesehen	
Er, der herrlichste von allen	
Ich kann nichts fassen nicht glauben	
Helfen mir schwestern	
Du ring am meinem finger	
Susser Freund, du blickest mir	
An meinem herzen, an meinem Brut	
Nun hast du mir in schmerzen	

III.

"Julia de Burgos" (SONGFEST)	Leonard Bernstein
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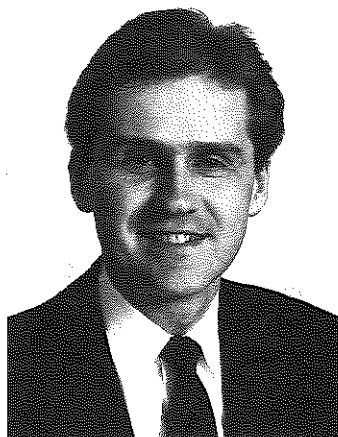
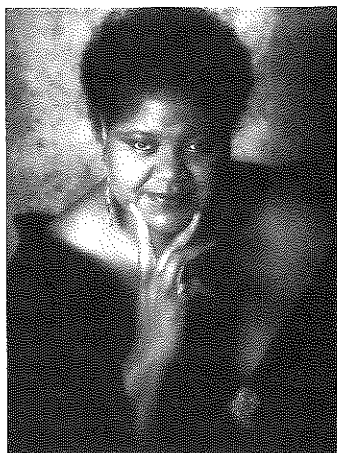
-PAUSE-

IV.

Les Chemin de l'Amour	Francis Poulenc
Hotel	Francis Poulenc
Will There Really Be A Morning	Ricky Ian Gordon
Litany	
Joy	

V.

Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel	arr. Edward Boatner
A City Called Heaven	arr. Edward Boatner
Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless	arr. Thompson Carter
I Wanna Be Ready	arr. Jeanette Thompson



Jeanette Thompson, who recently made her Carnegie Hall debut singing Verdi's *Messa da Requiem*, is becoming an international star of high acclaim. She recently returned from Turkey where she performed Strauss' *Vier letzte lieder* under the baton of Emin Yasclilem. She completed a tour with the Nieuw Vlaams SymfonieOrkest under the direction of Maestro Fernand Terby. Her skyrocketing career has taken her all over the globe with recitals, orchestra concerts and operatic appearances in places such as Belgium, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Puerto Rico, and throughout the United States. In 1991, she made the sound track and guest starred in the movie, *Deux Ramoneurs chez Une Cantatrice* (a Belgian release), which premiered in October of 1991. She performed the role of Donna Anna in *Don Giovanni* with the State Opera of Istanbul in Turkey. She also released a Mozart *Arias and Duets* compact disc with such noted artists as Stuart Burrows, Edda Moser, Roslind Plowright, etc. She also sang Giulietta in Offenbach's *Tales Of Hoffman* in

Regensburg, Germany. If visiting any French speaking nation you may have seen her as celebrity guest on Amnesty International or The Jerry Lewis Telethon (European division). She has appeared under the baton of such noted conductors as Marc Soustrot, Enrique Batiz, John De Main, Marin Alsopp, André Vandernoot and Rengim Gokmen to name a few. Ms. Thompson has been acclaimed by critics from all over the world as an expressive, impressive soprano with style, honesty and heart who exudes professionalism and has an imposing, endearing stage presence. She is the 1988 Gold Medal Winner of the prestigious Concours de la Reine Elisabeth de Chants in Brussels and has the distinction of having been invited to perform in a concert for the Queen and King of Belgium.

A native of Florida, Ms. Thompson received her undergraduate degree from Florida State University in Tallahassee and her Masters Degree from Rice University in Houston, Texas. She was a member of the Lehigh University music faculty from 1984

until 1987 where she performed to world premier of *Gabriel* (a Christmas cantata for choir and solo soprano) by Steven Sametz, which was written expressly for her. Since the world premier of *Gabriel*, noted composers David Winkler and Craig Bohmler have also written works for Ms. Thompson. She played the title role in Verdi's masterpiece, *Aida*, in Birmingham, Alabama, where critics acclaimed her "the unchallengeable star of the evening." At special invitation by Price Rene Simo and the Office of Cultural Affairs of Cameroon, she made her debut in Africa doing solo recitals in Cameroun, Kenya and Zaire. Ms. Thompson also has the distinction of having been invited by Florida Governor Robert Graham to sing at his Inauguration.

She is the first place winner of several opera competitions including: Internationale Citta di Ercolano di Canti in Italy, the Baltimore Opera Competition, the Florida Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the Bergen Philharmonic Young Artists Competition, the Birmingham Opera Competition, the Florida Suncoast Opera Competition and the Palm Beach Opera Competition. In addition, she is the recipient of the Grady-Harlan Most Outstanding Singer Award (chosen out of 700 singers).

Ms. Thompson's recordings include *Jeanette Thompson sings Negro Spirituals* on Pavane Records Label; *Mozart's Arias and Duets* on Noblese Label; "O Holy Night" on Celebration Label (featured soloist); and a private release in Belgium only of a solo recital.

Kenneth Merrill, a native Arkansan, received his bachelor of music degree from the University of Arkansas, where he studied piano with Jerome Rappaport. He subsequently received his masters of music at The Juilliard School, where he studied piano with Josef Raieff and accompanying with Martin Isepp. He also studied chamber mu-

sic with Antonio Janigro at the Mozarteum in Salzburg and worked with Gérard Souzay and Dalton Baldwin at the festival in Aiz-en-Provence.

Mr. Merrill divides his time between teaching and performing. He is currently on the coaching staff of The Juilliard Vocal Arts Department and is musical director of the Juilliard Opera Theatre. He is also on the faculty at the Manhattan School of Music. From 1987 to 1994 he was associate professor of vocal accompaniment and opera at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Since 1980 he has been associated with the Aspen Music Festival, where he acts as head coach of the Aspen Opera Theatre. He has appeared in concert with such artists as Gérard Souzay, Anna Moffo, Robert Merrill, Eleanor Steber, James King, Jan DeGaetani, Leslie Guinn, John Aler, Faith Esham, Neil Rosenshein, Charlotte Hellekant, and Jeanette Thompson. In 1982 he accompanied Anna Moffo and Robert Merrill in a recital at the White House.

As a conductor, he has led productions of Britten's *The Burning Fiery Furnace*, Britten-Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* and Mozart's *The Impresario* at The Juilliard School. He has also conducted from the harpsichord Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Cavalli's *La Calisto*, and Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. He is harpsichordist with the Baroque performing ensemble Affetti Musicale, which he co-founded in 1993. He has performed harpsichord-continuo in all the operas of Mozart and many of the operas of Handel and Rossini. Just last year he headed the musical preparation and played continuo in the Houston Grand Opera production of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* with Cecilia Bartoli in the title role, a performance which was telecast on PBS and commercially released on London CD and Video.

SELECTED TEXT

"The Year's At the Spring"

words by Robert Browning

The year is at the spring, and day is at the morn: morning is at seven; the hill-side is dewpearled; the year is at the spring; and day is at the morn; the lark is on the wing; the snail is on the thorn; God is in his heaven, all is right with the world.

"Ah, Love But a Day"

words by Robert Browning

Ah love but a day and the world has changed, the sun's away and the bird estranged, the wind has stopped and the sky is deranged. Summer, summer has stopped. Look in my eyes, will thou changed too.

"I Send my heart up to thee!"

words by Robert Browning

I send my heart up to thee, all my heart in this my singing. For the stars help me, and the sea bears part; the very night is clinging closer to Venice streets to leave one space above me, whence thy face may light my joyous heart to thee its dwelling

"Frauenliebe und -leben" ("Woman's Love and Life")

music by Robert Schumann

text by Adalbert von Chamisso

Since seeing him, I think I am blind; wherever I look, him only I see; as in a waking dream he floats before me, rising out of darkest depths only more brightly.

For the rest, dark and pale is all around, for my sisters' games I am no longer eager, I would rather weep quietly in my room; since seeing him, I think I am blind.

He, the most wonderful of all, so gentle, so good. Sweet lips bright eyes, clear mind and firm resolve.

As there is the blue depths that star, clear and wonderful, so is he in my heaven, clear and wonderful, majestic, remote.

Wander, wander your ways; just to watch your radiance, just to watch it in humility, just to be blissful and sad!

Hear not my silent prayer for your happiness along; me, lowly maid, you must not know, lofty, wonderful star.

Only the most worthy woman of all may your choice favor and that exalted one will I bless many thousands of times.

Then shall I rejoice and weep, be blissful, blissful then; even if my heart should break, then break, O heart, what matter?

I cannot grasp it, believe it, I am in the spell of a dream; how, from amongst all, has he raised and favoured poor me?

He said, I thought, 'I am forever yours,' I was, I thought, still dreaming, for it can never be so.

O let me, dreaming, die, cradled on his breast; blissful death let me savour, in tears of endless joy.

Ring on my finger, my little golden ring, devoutly I press you to my lips, to my heart.

I had finished dreaming childhood's tranquil pleasant dream, alone I found myself, forlorn in boundless desolation.

Ring on my finger, your have first taught me, unlocked my eyes to life's deep, boundless worth. I will serve him, live for him, belong wholly to him, yield to him and find myself transfigured in his light.

Help me, sisters, in kindness to adorn myself, serve me, the happy one, today, eagerly

twine about my brow the flowering myrtle.

When I, content, with joyous heart, lay in my beloved's arms, still would he call with yearning heart, impatiently for today.

Help me, sisters, help me banish foolish fear; so that I, clear-eyed, may receive him, the source of joy.

You, my beloved, have appeared before me, will you, sun, give me your radiance? Let me in reverence, let me in humility, let me bow to my lord.

Sisters, strew flowers for him, offer budding roses. But you, sisters, I salute sadly, departing, joyous, from your throng.

Sweet friend, you look at me in wonder, cannot understand how I can weep; these moist pearls let, as a strange adornment, tremble joyous bright in my eyes.

How anxious my heart, how full of bliss! If only I knew words to say it; come, hide your face, here, against my breast, for me to whisper you my full joy.

Now you know the tears that I can weep, are you not to see them, beloved man? Stay against my heart, feel its beat so that I may press you ever closer.

Here by my bed is the cradle's place, where, silent, it shall hide my sweet dream. The morning will come when that dream will awake, and your image laugh up at me.

At my heart, at my breast, you my delight, you my joy! Happiness is love, love is happiness, I have said and will not take back I thought myself rapturous but now I am delirious with joy. Only she who suckles, only she who loves the child she nourishes; only a mother knows what it means to love and be happy. Oh, how I pity the man who cannot feel a mother's bliss. You dear, dear angel, you look at me and smile. At my

heart, at my breast, you my delight, you my joy!

Now you have caused me my first pain, but it has struck me hard. You, harsh, pitiless men are sleeping the sleep of death.

The deserted one stares ahead, the world is void. Love have I lived, I am living no longer.

Quietly I withdraw into myself, the veil falls; there I have you and my lost happiness, my world.

"To Julia De Burgos" from *SONGFEST*

The talk's around that I wish you ill because, they say, through verse I give the world your I.

They lie, Julia Burgos. They lie, Julia. What rises from my lines is not your voice; it's my voice. For you are but drapery; the essence is I, and between those two the deepest chasm lies.

You are the frosty doll of social deceit, and I, a virile flash of human truth. You are the syrup of genteel hypocrisy; not me. In every poem I strip my heart bare.

You are selfish, like your universe; not me. I gamble it all to be exactly as I am. You are that oh so lofty lady of consequence; not me. I am the life, the power, the woman.

You are the property of your spouse, your boss; not me. I'm no one's, or everyone's for to every single one through my cleaned senses, through my thoughts I offer myself. You curl your hair and paint your face; not me.

I get the wind to curl me, the sun to paint me. Housebound lady, you are resigned, compliant, Bound to the bigotries of men; not me. For I am runaway to Rosinante,

unbridled, Sniffing out horizons of God's retribution.

"Will There Really Be a Morning"

words by Emily Dickinson

Will there really be a morning? Is there such a thing as day? Can I see it from the mountains, if I were as tall as they? Has it feet like waterlillies, has it feathers like a bird, Does it come from famous places, of which I have never heard. Oh some scholar, oh some sailor, oh some wiseman from the skies, Please to tell this little pilgrim where a place called morning lies.

"Litany"

words by Langston Hughes

Gather up in the arms of your pity; the sick, the depraved, the desperate, the tired, all the scum of our weary city, gather up in the arms of your pity. Gather up in the arms of your love, those who expect no love from above.

"Joy"

words by Langston Hughes

I went to look for joy, slim dancing joy, gay laughing joy, bright-eyed joy. And I found her driving the butcher's cart in the arms of the butcher boy... Such company as keeps this young nymph joy!

NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

Rebecca Yarowsky

A child prodigy, **Amy Cheney Beach** (1867-1944) gave her first public recital at the age of seven. In fact, the signs of her genius were apparent much earlier. Her mother, also a pianist as well as a singer, noted: "Her gift for composition showed itself in babyhood—before two years of age, she would, when being rocked in my arms, improvise a perfectly correct alto to any soprano air I might sing." At the age of 18 (in 1885), she made her debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. That same year, the composer married a surgeon, Dr. Henry Harris Aubrey Beach, who was a quarter of a century her senior. Dr. Beach supported his wife's creative ambitions wholeheartedly. Because they shared the conviction that she should concentrate primarily on writing music, Beach did so, devoting her energies solely to her art. The marriage was a happy one and Beach, as an expression of her love, used her husband's initials in her professional name, thus becoming known as Mrs. H.H.A. Beach.

Boston in the 1890s enjoyed a reputa-

tion for fostering the talents of aspiring composers as well as encouraging women to pursue lives beyond the domestic confines of hearth and nursery. In 1892, Beach's *Mass in E-flat Major* was premiered by Boston's Handel and Haydn Society; several years later her *Gaelic Symphony* received its debut. The *Gaelic Symphony* is the first symphony known to have been composed by an American woman. Upon the death of her husband in 1910, the composer once again took to the concert stage, touring Europe and performing her Piano Concerto to enthusiastic audiences in Hamburg, Leipzig and Berlin. Nicholas Slonimsky describes Beach's art songs as written in "an endearingly Romantic manner." Her trio of songs numbered Opus 44, based on poems by Robert Browning, enjoyed no small degree of popularity during Amy Beach's lifetime.

In the lieder of **Robert Schumann** (1810-1856), those qualities that typify the "art song" as a distinct genre are dazzlingly in

evidence. Usually drawn directly from a poem or cycle of poems (*Liederkreis*), the text, unlike that of opera, contributes fully to the meaning of the work. The vocal prowess that characterizes coloratura singing is eschewed. In a democratic partnership, the piano and voice abide throughout on an equal footing. The music serves not merely to accompany but to illuminate and lend new meaning to the words. As Francis Poulenc would note almost a century after Schumann penned his most memorable lieder, "The 'accompaniment' of a song is as important as the piano part of a sonata."

Frauenliebe und -leben, based on a cycle of poems by Adelbert von Chamisso, was composed in July of 1840 just as Schumann's emotionally charged, painful and protracted struggle with Friedrich Wieck for the hand of Wieck's daughter, Clara, was drawing to a successful close. The couple's marriage was imminent. As one writer on music has noted, Schumann literally "burst into song." Over a twelve-month period (from February 1840 through February 1841), he composed more than 120 songs, ending his twelve-year hiatus from song-writing. *Frauenliebe und -leben* celebrates the joys of womanhood as they unfold through a panorama of courtship, marriage and children.

In "Seit ich ihn gesehen" ("Since I Have Seen Him"), the first song of the cycle, a young girl speaks of her budding passion with all its intoxicating contradictions — from hesitating timidity to unquestioning certainty. The piano, as eloquent as the singer herself, conveys the emotional gamut. With the phrase "blind zu sein" (in the fourth measure), the piano's quarter-note chord falls on the second half of the second beat. The listener is thus given the impression that the singer's anxious, love-stricken heart has likewise skipped a beat.

Composer and conductor **Leonard Bernstein** (1918-1990), whose talents were expressed freely and fluently in a variety of musical genres, completed *Songfest* in 1977. The work, subtitled "A Cycle of

American Poems for Six Singers and Orchestra," takes for its text a selection of thirteen American poems spanning three centuries. Included is a piece written by Puerto Rican poet Julia de Burgos (1914-1953) and translated by Bernstein's daughter Jamie. Entitled "A Julia de Burgos" the poet dedicates the poem to herself, detailing the dichotomies that beset her. Delivered in a tone of "suppressed rage," the poem describes the seemingly irreconcilable conflicts inherent in the dual roles of wife and artist.

Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) was a member of "Les Six" the group of French composers whose original mentor was Erik Satie. The remaining "cinq" were Milhaud, Cocteau, Auric, Honegger, Tailleferre and Durey. Poulenc has come to be regarded as one of the 20th century's most accomplished and exquisite practitioners of the art song. "I find myself able to compose music," he remarked, "only to poetry with which I feel total contact—a contact transcending mere admiration." Indisputably Gallic in tone, Poulenc's songs capture the spirit of a now-vanished age; that vitality of experiment and daring that belonged to the Paris of Picasso and Cocteau. The songs are whimsical, melancholy, comic—refreshingly inventive. The poems of Guillaume Apollinaire often served as the texts to Poulenc's songs. "I heard the sound of his voice," Poulenc wrote. In 1940, Poulenc selected Apollinaire's *Banalités* for his musical setting. The song cycle includes "Hôtel," a sophisticated, world-weary bit of irony that the composer suggested be sung in a *très calme et paresseux* (very calm and lazy) manner. "Anything that concerns Paris I approach with tears in my eyes and my head full of music," Poulenc remarked. The setting is a room in the city's Bohemian quarter of Montparnasse. Also composed in 1940 was "Les Chemins de l'Amour" taken from French playwright Jean Anouilh's *Léocadia*.

Ricky Ian Gordon is a contemporary composer of diverse and considerable musical talents. His setting of verse to music

and, in particular, his adaptation of poems by Langston Hughes have earned Gordon widespread acclaim.

When Africans were taken from their families and homeland to be enslaved in America, they brought with them a rich tradition of song and dance—a tradition over which the slaveholder was powerless to exercise his dominion. For Africans, the affirmation of the spirit through music was as essential a daily ritual as eating, sleeping and working. Spirituality, in other words, was not as it was for the slaves' "masters," confined to a particular time and place. Nor was it a mantle that might be donned or discarded at will. Intertwined, music and spirituality were at the very core of existence and **spirituals** therefore express the entire complex range of human experience. For a people who lived what they believed, the hypocrisy of their captors must have been immediately and strikingly evident. "Everybody talkin' 'bout Heaven ain't going there," is the way one song put it.

Heaven was a place, a "city," that offered a home to all men and women. The gatekeeper based admission not on color but on deed. And while slaveowners may have hoped that Christianity and its threat of retribution would effectively keep slaves "in their place," the Old Testament urged otherwise with its tales of slavery and divinely-sanctioned rebellion and emancipation.

"Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel?" makes clear that justice is the prerogative of all God's children, challenging the slaveowner with an example from the religion he claimed to practice. Made fearful by the incendiary messages contained within some songs, the slaveowner sought to contain the subversion by outlawing a number of suspect spirituals or "contrabands."

"Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child" reflects the very real isolation felt by the "stranger in a strange land," taken from country, heritage and family to a world where those fundamental and sustaining connections were no longer supposed to matter. On an immediate level the song addresses the despairing loneliness of the orphan whose mother has died or been sold off to a distant slaveowner.

Liberation, the freedom that was promised when the shackles of slavery were at last broken and thrown off—such a great and cataclysmic event was one for which "I Wanna Be Ready." As John Lovell, Jr. notes in *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame*: "The slave was not just waiting to have greatness thrust upon him. He was willing to put forth the effort to deserve. Whatever the final rewards, he wanted to earn them. . . Through his own merits he wanted to be worthy of his great goal."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Michael Davison, trumpet and Anne Lewis, piano

Sunday, February 23, 1997, 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

Dr. Michael Davison will perform a solo trumpet recital with guest pianist Anne Lewis. The program includes **Concerto for Trumpet and Piano** by Alexander Arutunian, **Rhapsody in Blue** by George Gershwin, **Sonatas #64 & 63** by Johann Pezel (with oboist Michael Lesicky), **La Mandolinata** by Herman Bellstedt (cornet solo), and a Virginia premier of a work by Meg Bowles called **Night Sun Journey** for CD and trumpet. This work includes a special CD-ROM prepared by Ms. Bowles for Dr. Davison especially for this performance. Tickets are not required for this concert.

Shanghai Quartet with Ruth Laredo, piano

Monday, February 24, 1997, 8pm

Carpenter Center for the Arts

Sponsored by the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation

The University of Richmond's quartet-in-residence appears with "America's first lady of the piano" (NY Daily News), Ruth Laredo, in a program featuring the Brahms Piano Quintet in F minor, Op. 34. Tickets are required for this free concert.

Passionate Visions

University Dancers' Twelfth Annual Concert

Choreographed by Myra Daleng

February 27, 28 & March 1, 1997, 8pm, and March 2, 1997, 2pm

Jepson Theatre

Passionate Visions will be dramatic, creative and about the passion for life and dance--dance for and about the human experience. It's a dance performance with live music, special effects, adventure, beauty and fun for all. **Passionate Visions** is a celebration of dance with humor and pathos, plus a visual spectacle of sound, light and movement. *Admission is free, but reservations are strongly suggested.*

Beverly Sills, speaker

Jepson Leadership Forum

Tuesday, March 4, 1997, 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

Co-sponsored by WILL and the Modlin Center for the Arts

Considered one of the greatest coloratura sopranos of the twentieth century, Ms. Sills is Chairperson of the Board of Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts; the first woman elected to that position. She will speak on the impact artists have in influencing and shaping our society and culture. Tickets are required for this free lecture.

Affetti Musicali/Chorus Ad Hoc

Saturday, March 8, 1997, 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

Members of the period instrument chamber ensemble Affetti Musicali will join James Erb and the Chorus Ad Hoc in a program highlighting two great Baroque masters. The program will feature madrigals of Monteverdi and the oratorio **Jepthe** by Carissimi. Tickets are not required.

CURRENTS

Friday, March 21, 1997, 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

CURRENTS, the resident professional ensemble for new music at the University of Richmond, will present a concert featuring several premieres and other works by Luciano Berio, Fred Cohen, Witold Lutoslawski, Steven Stucky and Michael Torke. Tickets are not required.

Richard Becker, piano

Sunday, April 6, 1997, 8pm

Camp Concert Hall, Booker Hall of Music

Mr. Becker will perform a program featuring works by Beethoven, Brahms, Chopin and Liszt. Tickets are not required for this free concert.

Modlin Center for the Arts

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Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of house management.