

A Master's Voice Recital

Colin B. Johnson, bass-baritone
Joy Schreier, piano

with Trevor Johnson, oboe
Adam Wilcox, boy soprano
and Leyla Feyzulayeva, violin

Program Notes with Texts and Translations

Saturday March 28th, 2015
5 p.m.



Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals who were instrumental in making this recital possible.

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Joy for hours and hours of coaching and refinement and her unmatched skills as a collaborative pianist.

My entire recital committee Dr. Hoyt, Dr. Green, and Dr. Jones.

Dr. Meyer for his great vocal wisdom and encouragement. It is a privilege to work with him.

Especially to my wife, Natalie, whose devotion, love and support is what keeps me going. I love you.

Program Notes

Jacopo Peri was an Italian singer and composer during the late Renaissance into the early Baroque period. His first major work was *Dafne*, in which he collaborated with the poet Ottavio Rinuccini. This work was seen as a new form, opera. Rinuccini and Peri next worked on *Euridice*. Unlike *Dafne*, it has survived to today. “Gioite al canto mio” is sung by Orpheus after he rescues his beloved bride, Euridice, from the underworld and joyously presents the beauties of the living world to her.

Cantata BWV 56 *Ich will den Kreuzstab gerne tragen*, (I will gladly carry the suffering cross) was written by Johann Sebastian Bach in Leipzig in 1726. It is a solo cantata for bass for the 19th Sunday after Trinity. The third movement “Endlich wird mein Joch,” expresses the blissful prospect of salvation through the call and reply of the oboe and voice.

Johannes Brahms’ *Vier ernste Gesänge*, was the only piece of music published in the last year of Brahms’s life. They were presented to the publisher on his last birthday. This was a depressing point in his life as he faced his own mortality as well as the mortality of his cherished Clara Schumann. He composed these songs during Clara’s final battle with illness. As with the *Requiem*, Brahms was unambiguous that these songs were “serious” and not “sacred.” The songs progress from anguish to love. The first is a dirge comparing the spirits of man and beast. The piano paints the picture of a dust storm from which we came and to which we shall return. In the second song, the melodic line consists of many descending intervals. Through this Brahms inhabits the oppression of the evil done in the world. The piano suggests the acceptance of death in the third song, a letting go from pain and anguish. The last song sets the popular scripture *1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 12-13*. It would seem to stand alone from the other songs with a powerful positive message. Brahms delivers his most moving faith in humanity, if not in divinity. The songs are meant for low male voice, made clear by Brahms by use of the bass clef, which he almost never used in the vocal staves of his own handwritten scores.

In many of his works, Ives explores spirituality and religion. His religious background growing up was as a congregationalist. His father was employed as a musician in several Baptist and Catholic Churches in the Danbury area. Later in his life, Transcendentalism, an American literary, political, and philosophical movement, became integral in his religious beliefs, through the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau. In *Religion*, Ives borrowed themes from the George Roots tune, *The Shining Shore* and *Nearer my God to Thee*. The large, vast richness of the opening block chords plays on the Bixby text of the sheer volume of our life that is not understood. Mere words cannot express this, with the text “the lips deny; God knows the why.” Ives also breaks the conventional western precedent with parallel harmonic progressions. *God Bless and Keep Thee* is a short love song with text presumably written by one of Ives’ classmates at Yale University. This simple melody of a prayer is supported by rich and unconventional accompaniment in the piano. *General William Booth Enters Into Heaven* is one of Ives’ most well known and powerful compositions. The song gives homage to General William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. The poet, Lindsay, envisions Booth leading the degenerates of society to Jesus where he cures them for all of their afflictions. The bombastic music definitely evokes Ives’ familiarity with marching bands. The dissonances and tonal clusters depict the freakish and frightful nature of the procession of people Booth is leading. The frequently repeated text, “Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?” comes from the Salvation hymn tune *Fountain*. It is intended to compare Jesus’ torment to the cohorts of Booth. The driving beat of the piece subsides into tranquility when Jesus appears and cures Booth’s masses. In all these songs Ives’ breaks the conventional European composition techniques making him a true American maverick.

Per questa bella mano K. 612 was written in Vienna in March 1791, shortly before Mozart began work on *Die Zauberflöte*. This concert aria begins with an elegant, waltzing Andante tempo and finishes with a brisk

allegro and an exciting conclusion with an enthusiastic proclamation of rapturous love. Mozart brings forth a virtuosic nature with this composition and is a test with its leaps, arpeggios, and scales.

Quatre Chansons du Don Quicotte were originally composed for George Pabst's film based on Cervantes' *Don Quixote* in 1933. They were sung by Russian bass Feodor Chaliapin in English. The vocal contour of these stylish songs has a Spanish flavor. In the first song, our protagonist is enamored with a castle which to him symbolizes strength, devotion and love. The piano is very simplistic and minimal leaving Don Quichotte free to pontificate. After which he sings a seductive love song to his muse, Dulcinée. The song of the Duke captures the nobility of Don Quichotte. In the final piece, we see his true courage as he faces death itself.

Tom Cipullo's work has been described as having "inexhaustible imagination, wit, expressive range and originality." Known mostly for vocal music, he has also composed orchestral, chamber, and solo instrumental works. Much of his artistic subject matter invokes difficult moral questions, such as his touted 2006 opera, *Glory Denied*, which tells the story of America's longest-held Vietnam prisoner of war Jim Thompson. *Landscapes with Figures* is an evocative tone poem. A picturesque scene is described in text and music with underlying currents of abuse. The violinist portrays a seagull while a boy and his father paint their surroundings.

Texts and Translations

Gioite al canto mio

*Gioite al canto mio, selve frondose,
Gioite amati colli, e d'ogni intorno
Eco rimbombi dalle valli ascose;
Risorto è il mio bel sol di raggi adorno,
e co' begl'occhi onde fa scorno a Delo,
raddoppia foco all'alme, e luce al giorno,
e fa servi d'amor la terra, e 'l cielo.
Libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini*

Rejoice at my singing, o leafy woods,
rejoice, o beloved hills, and from all around
I hear echoes of hidden valleys coming here.
My beautiful beamful sun has risen again
and with its beautiful eyes, which humiliate Delos,
redoubles the fire for the souls and the light for the day,
and subjects to love the earth and the sky.
English Translation by Alex Fatt

Endlich, Endlich wird mein Joch

*Endlich, endlich wird mein Joch
Wieder von mir weichen müssen.
Da krieg ich in dem Herren Kraft,
Da hab ich Adlers Eigenschaft,
Da fahr ich auf von dieser Erden
Und laufe sonder matt zu werden.
O gescheh es heute noch!
Isaiah 40:31*

Finally, finally will my yoke
again have to fall away from me
and then I shall get strength in the Lord,
then I shall have an eagle's nature,
then I shall ascend from this earth
And run without becoming weary.
If only this could happen today!
English Translation by Francis Browne

Vier ernste Gesänge op. 121

Denn es gehet dem Menschen wie dem Vieh

Ecclesiastes 3:19-22

Denn es gehet dem Menschen wie dem Vieh;
wie dies stirbt, so stirbt er auch;
und haben alle einerlei Odem;
und der Mensch hat nichts mehr denn das Vieh:
denn es ist alles eitel.

Es fährt alles an einen Ort;
es ist alles von Staub gemacht,
und wird wieder zu Staub.
Wer weiß, ob der Geist des Menschen
aufwärts fahre,
und der Odem des Viehes unterwärts unter die Erde
fahre?

Darum sahe ich, daß nichts bessers ist,
denn daß der Mensch fröhlich sei in seiner Arbeit,
denn das ist sein Teil.
Denn wer will ihn dahin bringen,
daß er sehe, was nach ihm geschehen wird?

For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts;
even one thing befalleth them:
as the one dieth, so dieth the other;
yea, they have all one breath;
so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast:
for all is vanity.

All go unto one place;
all are of the dust,
and all turn to dust again.
Who knoweth the spirit of man
that goeth upward,
and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the
earth?

Wherefore, I perceive that there is nothing better,
than that a man should rejoice in his own works;
for that is his portion:
for who shall bring him
to see what shall be after him?

Ich wandte mich und sahe an alle

Ecclesiastes, 4:1-3

Ich wandte mich und sahe an
alle, die Unrecht leiden unter der Sonne;
und siehe, da waren Tränen derer,
die Unrecht litten und hatten keinen Tröster;
und die ihnen Unrecht taten waren zu mächtig,
daß sie keinen Tröster haben konnten.

So I returned, and considered
all the oppressions that are done under the sun:
and behold, the tears of such
as were oppressed, and they had no comforter;
and on the side of their oppressors there was power;
but they had no comforter.

Da lobte ich die Toten,
die schon gestorben waren
mehr als die Lebendigen,
die noch das Leben hatten;
und der noch nicht ist, ist besser als alle beide,
und des Bösen nicht inne wird,
das unter der Sonne geschieht.

Wherefore I praised the dead
which are already dead
more than the living
which are yet alive.
Yea, better is he than both they, which hath not yet been,
who hath not seen the evil work
that is done under the sun.

O Tod, wie bitter bist du

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 41:1-2

O Tod, wie bitter bist du,
wenn an dich gedenket ein Mensch,
der gute Tage und genug hat
und ohne Sorge lebet;
und dem es wohl geht in allen Dingen
und noch wohl essen mag!
O Tod, wie bitter bist du!

O death, how bitter
is the remembrance of thee to a man
that liveth at rest in his possessions,
unto the man that hath nothing to vex him,
and that hath prosperity in all things:
yea, unto him that is yet able to receive meat!
O death, how bitter [art thou]!

O Tod, wie wohl tust du dem Dürftigen,
der da schwach und alt ist,
der in allen Sorgen steckt,
und nichts Bessers zu hoffen,
noch zu erwarten hat!
O Tod, wie wohl tust du!

O death, acceptable is thy sentence unto the needy,
and to him whose strength faileth, that is now in the last age,
and is vexed with all things,
and to him that despaireth,
and hath lost patience!
O death, how acceptable is thy sentence!

Wenn ich mit Menschen- und mit Engelzungen redete

1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 12-13

Wenn ich mit Menschen- und mit Engelzungen redete,
und hätte der Liebe nicht,
so wär' ich ein tönend Erz,
oder eine klingende Schelle.
Und wenn ich weissagen könnte,
und wüßte alle Geheimnisse
und alle Erkenntnis,
und hätte allen Glauben, also
daß ich Berge versetzte,
und hätte der Liebe nicht,
so wäre ich nichts.
Und wenn ich alle meine Habe den Armen gäbe,
und ließe meinen Leib brennen,
und hätte der Liebe nicht,
so wäre mir's nichts nütze.

Wir sehen jetzt durch einen Spiegel
in einem dunkeln Worte;
dann aber von Angesicht zu Angesichte.
Jetzt erkenne ich's stückweise,
dann aber werd ich's erkennen,
gleich wie ich erkannt bin.

Nun aber bleibet Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe,
diese drei;
aber die Liebe ist die größte unter ihnen.
Based on King James Bible

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
and have not charity,
I am become as sounding brass,
or a tinkling cymbal.
And though I have the gift of prophecy,
and understand all mysteries,
and all knowledge;
and though I have all faith,
so that I could remove mountains,
and have not charity,
I am nothing.
And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,
and though I give my body to be burned,
and have not charity,
it profiteth me nothing.

For now we see through a glass,
darkly;
but then face to face:
now I know in part;
but then shall I know
even as also I am known.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity(love),
these three;
but the greatest of these is charity(love).

Translations by Kelly Dean Hansen

Religion

There is no unbelief.
And day by day and night by night, unconsciously,
The heart lives by faith the lips deny;
God knows the why.

by James Thompson Bixby, Dr. (1843 - 1921)

quotations from "Modern Dogmatism" in his essays "The New World" etc.

God bless and keep thee

I know not if thy love be as a flower
in autumn, and has faded now from me
I know not, if I came now as of yore,
You would greet me

I can but pray:

"God bless and keep thee,
God bless and keep thee,
keep thee, my love for e'er and e'er."

I know not if thy love be as a fortress
And has withstood all other loves for me
I only know my love for thee is changeless

I still love thee

Each day I pray:

"God bless and keep thee,
God bless and keep thee,
keep thee, my love for e'er and e'er."

by Anonymous

General William Booth Enters Into Heaven

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)
The Saints smiled gravely and they said, "He's come,"
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Walking lepers followed rank on rank,
Lurching bravos from the ditches dank
Drabs the alleyways and drug fiends pale
Minds still passion ridden, soul flowers frail:
Vermin eaten saints with moldy breath,
Unwashed legions with the ways of Death
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Ev'ry slum had sent its half a score
The world round over. (Booth had groaned for more).
Ev'ry banner that the wide world flies
Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes,
Big voiced lassies made their banjoes bang,
Tranced, fanatical they shrieked and sang;
"Are you? Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?"

Hallelujah! It was queer to see
Bull necked convicts with that land made free.
Loons with trumpets a blare, blare, blare,
On, on, upward thro' the golden air!
(Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

Booth died blind and still by Faith he trod,
Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God!
Booth led boldly and he look'd the chief
Eagle countenance in sharp relief,
Beard a-flying, air of high command
Unabated in that holy land.

Jesus came from the court house door,
Stretched his hands above the passing poor.
Booth saw not, but led his queer ones
Round and round the mighty courthouse square.
Yet! in an instant all that blear review
Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new.

The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled,
And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet world.
Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?
by Vachel Lindsay (1879 - 1931)

Intermission

Per questa bella mano K. 612

*Per questa bella mano,
Per questi vaghi rai
Giuro, mio ben, che mai
Non amerò che te.
L'aure, le piante, i sassi,
Che i miei sospir ben sanno,
A te qual sia diranno
La mia costante fé.
Volgi lieti o fieri sguardi,
Dimmi pur che m'odi o m'ami,
Sempre acceso ai dolci dardi,
Sempre tuo vo' che mi chiami,
Né cangiar può terra o cielo
Quel desio che vive in me.*

by Anonymous

For this beautiful hand
For these lovely eyes
I swear, my dear, that
I shall love none but you.
The breeze, the stones and trees
that know well my sighs
will tell you all you want
that I am undyingly true.
Give me happy or haughty looks
Even tell me you hate or love me
Always, you may have ambrosial arrows,
Always, it is your voice above me.
Neither earth nor heaven can dim
The longing that lives within.
English Translation by Christian Anderson

Chansons de Don Quichotte

Chanson du départ de Don Quichotte

*Ce château neuf, ce nouvel édifice
Tout enrichi de marbre et de porphyre,
Qu'amour bâtit château de son empire,
Où tout le ciel a mis son artifice,
Est un rempart, un fort contre vice,
Où la vertu maîtresse se retire,
Que l'œil regarde, et que l'esprit admire,
Forçant les cœurs à lui faire service.
C'est un château, fait de telle sorte
Que nul ne peut approcher de la porte
Si des grands Rois il n'a sauvé sa race,
Victorieux, vaillant et amoureux.
Nul chevalier, tant soit aventureux,
Sans être tel ne peut gagner la place.*
Text by Pierre de Ronsard (1524 - 1585)

Don Quixote's Song of Departure

This new castle, this new edifice
all adorned with marble and porphyry,
this castle, built by love from its empire,
upon which all of heaven has used its skill,
is a rampart, a fortress against evil
where virtue, mistress, retires,
that the eye observes and that the spirit admires,
bringing hearts to servitude.
It is a castle, built in such a way
that none can approach the entrance
if he has not saved his lineage from the great Kings,
victorious, brave and amorous.
No knight, however adventurous he may be,
without being such, can enter the place.
English translation by Christopher Goldsack

Chanson à Dulcinée

*Un an me dure la journée
Si je ne vois ma Dulcinée.*

*Mais, Amour a peint son visage,
Afin d'adoucir ma langueur,
Dans la fontaine et le nuage,
Dans chaque aurore et chaque fleur.*

*Un an me dure la journée
Si je ne vois ma Dulcinée.*

*Toujours proche et toujours lointaine,
Étoile de mes longs chemins.
Le vent m'apporte son haleine
Quand il passe sur les jasmins.*
Text by Alexandre Arnoux

Song for Dulcinea

A day lasts a whole year
if I do not see my Dulcinea.

But, so as to soften my languor,
Love has painted her face,
in the fountain and the sky,
in each dawn and each flower.

A day lasts a whole year
if I do not see my Dulcinea.

Ever close and ever far,
star of my long paths.
The wind carries her breath to me
when it passes over the jasmines.
English translation by Christopher Goldsack

Chanson du Duc

*Je veux chanter ici la Dame de mes songes
Qui m'exalte au dessus de ce siècle de boue
Son cœur de diamant est vierge de mensonges
La rose s'obscurcit au regard de sa joue*

*Pour Elle, j'ai tenté les hautes aventures
Mon bras a délivré la princesse en servage
J'ai vaincu l'Enchanteur, confondu les parjures parjures
Et ployé l'univers à lui rendre hommage.*

*Dame par qui je vais, seul dessus cette terre,
Qui ne soit prisonnier de la fausse apparence
Je soutiens contre tout Chevalier téméraire
Votre éclat non pareil et votre précellence.*

Text by Alexandre Arnoux

Chanson de la mort

*Ne pleure pas Sancho, ne pleure pas, mon bon.
Ton maître n'est pas mort.
Il n'est pas loin de toi.
Il vit dans une île heureuse
Où tout est pur et sans mensonges.
Dans l'île enfin trouvée où tu viendras un jour.*

*Dans l'île désirée, O mon ami Sancho!
Les livres sont brûlés et font un tas de cendres.
Si tous les livres m'ont tué
Il suffit d'un pour que je vie
Fantôme dans la vie, et réel dans la mort.
Tel est l'étrange sort du pauvre Don Quichotte.*

Text by Alexandre Arnoux

Song of the Duke

I want to sing here of the Lady of my dreams,
who lifts me above this century of mud.
Her heart of diamond is untarnished by lies.
The rose pales at the sight of her cheek.

For Her, I have attempted the high adventures.
My arm has delivered the princess in servitude.
I have conquered the Enchanter, confounded the perjuries
and bent the universe to offer her homage.

Lady for whom I, who alone is not a prisoner
of the false appearance, go over this earth,
I maintain, against any rash Knight,
your unequalled splendour and your excellence.
English translation by Christopher Goldsack

Song of death

Do not cry Sancho, do not cry, good friend.
Your master is not dead.
He is not far from you.
He lives in a happy isle
where all is pure and free of lies.
In the isle at last discovered to which where you will come
one day.

In the desired isle, o my good friend Sancho!
The books are burned and make a heap of ash.
If all the books have killed me
just one is enough for me to live on,
a ghost in life and real in death.
Such is the strange destiny of poor Don Quixote.
English translation by Christopher Goldsack

Landscapes with Figures

A boy stands in a field in Massachusetts, beside
his father, who is at an easel, painting what they
see: the summer house, the harbor with its boats,

the dunes reaching beyond Truro to Provincetown.
Night after night, he's had the same dream, someone
with a mask walking behind him in an empty bedroom,

and when he turns around, it's his own face, only
different, in the same way the painting differs
from the afternoon. His father changes things,

moves them around, so that the neighbor's cottage
has become a boulder, so that a lighthouse grows
out of the bare sand. The boy is angry with

the picture, because it is not real. He turns away
to watch his mother, her arms full of white shirts,
pinning them to the clothesline so the wind fills

them like a flock of heavy teachers trying to fly.

His father paints her, paints the row of shirts,
wipes his brush, walks over as if to help her, but

they start fighting again, and the boy sees shirts
blowing across the poison ivy, along the beach.
One of the shirts blows in the water as if someone

Had drowned and was drifting in the high tide.
When his father hits her, she cries out once with
the same cry that the herring gulls use during a

storm, then she grows smaller, she lies down like
an empty shirt in the mown field. His father walks
away, [stands on the beach,] raises both arms as if

he could erase the sunset, could submerge the last
children on the diving float, who are even now
pushing each other in and laughing because they

can't see what is happening: the woman rising to
her feet, wiping her blue skirt as she walks out
to join her husband; the boy making an orange stripe

on an unfinished landscape, with the largest brush,
like a meteor only in broad daylight, like a story
of the sun falling till it hits the sea.

Text by William Carpenter, from *Rain*

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