

## Senior Recital

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Michael McVay, Accompanist  
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### “Di te mi rido” from *Alcina* ..... G. F. Handel (1685 – 1759)

This fast-paced aria is from the first act of G.F. Handel’s fantasy opera *Alcina*. It is sung by the enchanted knight Ruggiero, as he laughs at the friends who have come to rescue him from the sorceress Alcina, whose island he’s stranded on. Convinced that he is truly in love with her, Ruggiero sings this aria to ridicule his friends as they attempt to remind him of his betrothed, whom he has completely forgotten while under Alcina’s spell. *Alcina* premiered in 1735 as one of many *opere seria* inspired by the Italian epic poem *Orlando Furioso*. Today’s performance will be in the original Italian.

*I laugh at you, you simple fool.  
I follow Cupid, I love a fair face  
And I know nothing of faithlessness.*

*My dear love,  
Who enamors me,  
She hasn’t come back,  
She hasn’t returned yet.  
What is she doing, where is she?*

*I laugh at you, you simple fool.  
I follow Cupid, I love a fair face  
And I know nothing of faithlessness.*

### “Torna di Tito a lato” from *La Clemenza di Tito* ..... W. A. Mozart (1756 - 1791)

The first act of W.A. Mozart’s opera, *La Clemenza di Tito*, ends with an unsuccessful attempt to kill the roman emperor Tito by Sesto, his close friend. When the second act opens, their mutual friend Annio discovers Sesto’s guilt and sings this aria to convince Sesto to make amends with Tito. The show paints Tito as a compassionate and just leader who would forgive even an attempt on his life. *La Clemenza di Tito* premiered in 1791 for the coronation of Holy Roman Emperor Leopold II, explaining Tito’s titular forgiveness and the show’s overwhelmingly complimentary view of the aristocracy. Set to an Italian libretto by Metastasio, Mozart composed the opera in under seven weeks. Today’s performance will be in the original Italian.

*Return to Tito's side  
Return, and the past mistake  
Repeatedly amend with  
Proof of your faith.*

*The bitterness of your grief  
Is a clear sign  
That in your heart  
The image of virtue remains.*

*Return to Tito's side  
Return, and the past mistake  
Repeatedly amend with  
Proof of your faith.*

***La Flute de Pan* ..... Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)**

This piece is the first in Claude Debussy's three-song cycle *Trois Chanson de Bilitis*, a setting of three French poems from a collection by Pierre Louÿs, a poet and Debussy's close friend. Louÿs' poetry collection, *Les Chanson de Bilitis*, was originally marketed as a translation of poetry from the Ancient Greek poet Bilitis, a follower of Sappho, but it was eventually revealed to be a set of original works by Louÿs. Regardless of origin, Debussy enjoyed the collection so much that he composed this song cycle and, later, stage music to accompany the reading of 12 additional poems from the collection. This piece will be performed in the original French.

*For Hyacinthus day he gave me a syrinx  
made of carefully cut reeds, bonded with white wax  
which tastes sweet to my lips like honey.*

*He teaches me to play, as I sit on his lap;  
but I am a little fearful.  
He plays it after me,  
so gently that I scarcely hear him.  
We have nothing to say,  
so close are we to one another,  
but our songs try to answer each other,  
and our mouths join in turn on the flute.*

*It is late;  
Here is the song of the green frogs that begins with the night.  
My mother will never believe  
I stayed out so long to look for my lost sash.*

**“Mon coeur s’ouvre a ta voix” from *Samson et Dalila* .... Camille Saint-Saëns (1835 – 1921)**

Camille Saint-Saëns’ *Samson et Dalila*, a setting of the biblical story of the eponymous characters, has become one of the compositions that define French Grand Opera. Sung in the second act, *Mon coeur s’ouvre a ta voix* is Delilah’s attempt to convince Samson to tell her the secret of his strength and has become one of the most performed pieces in the mezzo-soprano repertoire. *Samson et Dalila* was first performed in Weimar, Germany in 1877 to a German translation of a libretto by Saint-Saëns’ cousin-in-law. Despite its early history, the show is today part of the standard repertoire in its original French, which will be used in this performance.

*My heart opens to your voice  
Like the flowers open  
To the kisses of the dawn!  
But, oh my beloved,  
To better dry my tears,  
Let your voice speak again!  
Tell me that you are returning  
To Delilah forever!  
Repeat to my tenderness  
The promises of old times,  
Those promises that I loved!*

*Ah! Respond to my tenderness!  
Fill me with ecstasy!*

*Like one sees the blades  
Of wheat that wave  
In the light wind,  
So trembles my heart,  
Ready to be consoled,  
By your voice that is so dear to me!  
The arrow is less rapid  
In bringing death,  
Then is your lover  
To fly into your arms!*

*Ah! Respond to my tenderness!  
Fill me with ecstasy!  
I love you!*

**“Wie Melodien Zieht es Mir” ..... Johannes Brahms (1833 – 1897)**

Johannes Brahms’ *Fünf Lieder*, an 1888 song cycle for low voices, set writings from five different German poets. Because each *lied* has text by a different author, the pieces were premiered separately; this has led many soloists to perform them individually, although this was against Brahms’ intentions. “Wie Melodien Zieht es Mir” is the first song in the cycle, and is a setting of a poem by Klaus Groth. This piece is performed in the original German.

*What melodies,  
Steal softly through my mind  
Like spring flowers they blossom  
And drift away like fragrance.*

*Yet when words come and capture them  
And bring them before my eyes,  
They turn pale like grey mist  
And vanish like a breath.*

*Yet surely in rhyme  
A fragrance lies hidden,  
Summoned by moist eyes  
From the silent seed.*

**“Vilja Lied” from *Die Lustige Witwe* ..... Franz Lehár (1870 – 1948)**

Franz Lehár’s operetta *Die Lustige Witwe* premiered in 1905 in Vienna to a libretto by Victor Léon and Leo Stein. It was an immediate comedic success that has inspired many modern productions, often in English translation. One of its most popular arias, the “Vilja Lied” is meant to mimic a traditional slavic folk song. In it, Hanna, the titular merry widow, tells the story of a forest nymph that enchants a man before disappearing. While it takes the guise of a simple story, the aria is a metaphor for her relationship with Danilo, an old flame who has suddenly reappeared in her life. Today’s performance will be in the original German.

*There once lived a Vilja, a wood nymph,  
A hunter once saw her among the rocks.  
The young man hardly could believe his eyes,  
He stared and stared at the nymph.  
And then a sudden shudder  
Took hold of the hunter  
Longingly he began to sigh!*

*Vilja, oh Vilja, you maid of the woods,  
Take me and make me  
Your dearest true love!  
Vilja, oh Vilja what are you doing to me?  
Hear a lovesick man's plea.*

*The nymph stretched her hand out  
And pulled him into her rocky home.  
The boy almost lost all sense  
She loved him and kissed him as no earthly child could.  
When she kissed him to her content  
She disappeared in an instant!  
One more time the man cried out to her*

*Vilja, oh Vilja, you maid of the woods,  
Take me and make me  
Your dearest true love!  
Vilja, oh Vilja what are you doing to me?  
Hear a lovesick man's plea.*

**Song to the Moon from *Rusalka* ..... Antonín Dvořák (1841 – 1904)**

Antonín Dvořák's *Rusalka* is a Czech opera that centers on the traditional Slavic folklore of the Rusalka, or water nymphs. It follows the story of a nymph named Rusalka, who falls in love with a prince while he is out hunting. Knowing he is unaware of her, Rusalka begs the moon to let him know of her love and to make him dream about her. While mostly a rarity after its 1901 Prague premiere, *Rusalka* has been revived in popularity over the past 20 years and is today one of Dvorak's most performed operas. It was set to a Czech libretto by Jaroslav Kvapil, which will be used in today's performance.

*Moon, high and deep in the sky  
Your light sees far,  
You travel around the wide world,  
and see into people's homes.*

*Moon, stand still a while  
and tell me where is my dear.*

*Tell him, silvery moon,  
that I am embracing him.  
For at least momentarily  
let him recall dreaming of me.*

*Illuminate him far away,  
and tell him, tell him who is waiting for him!*

*If his human soul is, in fact, dreaming of me,  
may the memory awaken him!  
Moonlight, don't disappear, disappear!*

**“Solveigs Sang” from *Peer Gynt* ..... Edvard Grieg (1843 – 1907)**

One of few instances in the classical repertoire that is neither an operatic aria nor a proper art song, “Solveigs Sang” was composed as part of the incidental music for the Norwegian play *Peer Gynt*. Henrik Ibsen, the playwright, had asked Edvard Grieg to write several pieces for it, which Grieg would also later adapt into two suites of orchestral music. “Solveig’s Sang,” sung by the character Solveig, is about the play’s titular character Peer Gynt. As she sings the song, Solveig waits faithfully for his return, although he had left her behind years before to wander the world. Solveig talks about her faithfulness to Gynt, and, eventually hearing her song, Gynt returns to her side. This piece is performed in the original Norwegian.

*Perhaps there will go both winter and spring,  
And next summer also and the whole year,  
But eventually you will come, I know this for sure,  
And I shall wait for I promised you that.*

*God strengthen you where you go in the world,  
God give you joy if you stand before his footstool,  
Here shall I wait until you come again,  
And if you wait above, we'll meet there again, my friend!*

**Olga’s Aria from *Eugene Onegin* ..... Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840 – 1893)**

Pyotr Ilyich Tschaikvsky’s opera *Eugene Onegin* premiered in 1879 in Moscow to a libretto by the composer, which borrowed heavily from Alexander Pushkin’s novel in verse with the same title. In it, the young and flighty Olga is contrasted with the protagonist, her quiet and bookish sister, Tanya. In the first act, Olga considers the relationship between her Tanya, and sings this aria to highlight the differences between the two. As she sings, she provides a new light on their respective characters, especially illustrating Olga’s youthful foolishness and Tanya’s romanticism. Tonight’s performance is in the original Russian.

*Ah, Tanya, Tanya,  
You have such fantasies!  
Now I am not like you,  
It cheers me up when I hear people singing.  
“Little bridge across the river  
Take me over to my lover”*

*I've never been a gloomy creature.  
I live my life without a care.  
And so I'm not inclined by nature  
To sigh, and sigh, and sigh  
As if in deep despair.*

*For why be sad  
When there's no reason?  
Our life has only just begun.  
I'm always playful and fond of teasing.  
Yes, like a child I live for fun!*

*This is the way I always mean to be.  
No grief will ever cast a shadow.  
And like the breeze across the meadow  
I shall bring joy to all I see!  
Yes, like the breeze across the meadow  
I shall bring joy to all I see!*

*I've never been a gloomy creature.  
I live my life without a care.  
And so I'm not inclined by nature  
To sigh, and sigh, and sigh  
As if in deep despair.*

*For why be sad  
When there's no reason?  
Our life has only just begun.  
I'm always playful and fond of teasing.  
Yes, like a child I live for fun!*

***Silent Noon* ..... Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872 – 1958)**

Ralph Vaughan Williams was heavily inspired by English folk music when composing his 1903 song cycle *The House of Life*, one of many by the composer. The cycle is a setting of six sonnets by English poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti, borrowing its name from the sequence the sonnets were taken from. *Silent Noon* is the second song in the cycle and is today one of

Vaughan Williams' most performed compositions. This piece is performed in the original English.

***Wild Mountain Thyme* ..... Scottish Folk Song, arr. Michael McVay**

This folk tune is a variant of the traditional Scottish song “The Braes of Balquhither”, which was written by poet Robert Tannahill in the early 1820s. It is also sometimes known as “Will Ye Go, Lassie, Go?” and “The Purple Heather”. This arrangement was composed by pianist Michael McVay and is performed in English.