



Hugh Hodgson School of Music

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

presents a
Graduate Recital

Xiaohan Chen, *mezzo-soprano*
Greg Hankins, *piano*

April 23, 2024

3:00 pm, Edge Recital Hall

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“Zhuixun”

Xuean Liu
(1905-1985)

The song "Zhuixun (Pursuit)" was created in the 1930s, during China's turbulent anti-war period. The lyrics were written as a poem by Jianwu Xu in Chengdu, Sichuan, during the mid-stage of the anti-war movement. On the surface, it depicts the pursuit and yearning for a beloved, but in reality, it expresses people's desire for a better life through the lens of love. It inspired the vast populace who were engulfed in darkness at that time.

nǐ shì qíng kōng de liú yún
你是晴空的流云，

You are the drifting cloud in the clear sky,

nǐ shì zǐ yè de liú xīng
你是子夜的流星。

you are the shooting star in the midnight.

yī piàn shēn qíng jǐn jǐn shēn suǒ zhe wǒ de xīn
一片深情，紧紧封锁着我的心。

A deep affection, tightly sealing my heart.

yī xiàn guāng míng shí shí zhào yào zhe wǒ de xīn
一线光明，时时照耀着我的心！

A ray of light, constantly shining upon my heart!

wǒ nǎ néng rěn de zhù yō wǒ nǎ néng zài děng dài yō
我哪能忍得住哟？我哪能再等待哟！

How can I bear it? How can I wait any longer!

wǒ yào wǒ yào zhuī
我要，我要追寻；

I want, I want to pursue;

zhuī xún nà wú xiàn de shēn qíng,
追寻那无尽的深情，

To pursue that endless deep affection,

zhuī xún nà yǒng yuǎn de guāng míng
追寻那永远的光明！

to pursue that eternal light!

2 songs from Op.43

Johannes Brahms
(1833-1897)

1. Von ewiger Liebe

Johannes Brahms, a prominent composer in the Romantic period, crafted German art songs that not only boast captivating melodies but also integrate orchestral-like elements into the piano accompaniment. “Von ewiger Liebe” stands out as a deeply emotive piece, featuring three distinct personas: the narrator, the boy, and the girl. Through the melancholic tones of the piano's minor key, the narrator sets a solemn tone, depicting the anxious boy amidst the woods and the girl's efforts to console him. The contrast in musical dynamics and rhythm serves to delineate the emotions of each character, with the intense piano passages accentuating the boy's anxiety and transitioning to a calm 6/8 rhythm when focusing on the girl.

Von ewiger Liebe Dunkel, wie dunkel in Wald und in Feld! Abend schon ist es, nun schweiget die Welt.	Eternal Love Dark, how dark in forest and field! Evening already, and the world is silent.
Nirgend noch Licht und nirgend noch Rauch, Ja, und die Lerche sie schweiget nun auch.	Nowhere a light and nowhere smoke, And even the lark is silent now too.
Kommt aus dem Dorfe der Bursche heraus, Gibt das Geleit der Geliebten nach Haus,	Out of the village there comes a lad, Escorting his sweetheart home,
Führt sie am Weidengebüsche vorbei, Redet so viel und so mancherlei:	He leads her past the willow-copse, Talking so much and of so many things:
„Leidest du Schmach und betrübtest du dich, Leidest du Schmach von andern um mich,	‘If you suffer sorrow and suffer shame, Shame for what others think of me,
Werde die Liebe getrennt so geschwind, Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind.	Then let our love be severed as swiftly, As swiftly as once we two were plighted.
Scheide mit Regen und scheide mit Wind, Schnell wie wir früher vereinigt sind.“	Let us depart in rain and depart in wind, As swiftly as once we two were plighted.’
Spricht das Mägdelein, Mägdelein spricht: „Unsere Liebe sie trennet sich nicht!	The girl speaks, the girl says: ‘Our love cannot be severed!
Fest ist der Stahl und das Eisen gar sehr, Unsere Liebe ist fester noch mehr.	Steel is strong, and so is iron, Our love is even stronger still:
Eisen und Stahl, man schmiedet sie um, Unsere Liebe, wer wandelt sie um?	Iron and steel can both be reforged, But our love, who shall change it?
Eisen und Stahl, sie können zergehn, Unsere Liebe muß ewig bestehn!	Iron and steel can be melted down, Our love must endure for ever!’
Text: August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben	Translation: Richard Stokes

2. Die Mainacht

This is the second of four songs in Johannes Brahms' Op. 43, composed in 1866 when he was 33 years old. It follows a ternary (ABA) structure. This piece notably elevates the characteristics of folk songs to the realm of art songs. The poet contrasts their own loneliness and the disappointment in love with the sweet pair of doves. Brahms injects dissonance into the serene music, expressing his complex emotions.

Die Mainacht Wann der silberne Mond durch die Gesträuche blinkt, Und sein schlummerndes Licht über den Rasen streut, Und die Nachtigall flötet, Wandl' ich traurig von Busch zu Busch.	May Night When the silvery moon gleams through the bushes, And sheds its slumbering light on the grass, And the nightingale is fluting, I wander sadly from bush to bush.
Überhüllet vom Laub, girret ein Taubenpaar Sein Entzücken mir vor; aber ich wende mich, Suche dunklere Schatten, Und die einsame Träne rinnt.	Covered by leaves, a pair of doves Coo to me their ecstasy; but I turn away, Seek darker shadows, And the lonely tear flows down.
Wann, o lächelndes Bild, welches wie Morgenrot Durch die Seele mir strahlt, find' ich auf Erden dich? Und die einsame Träne Bebt mir heißer die Wang' herab.	When, O smiling vision, that shines through my soul Like the red of dawn, shall I find you here on earth? And the lonely tear Quivers more ardently down my cheek.
Text: Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty	Translation: Richard Stokes

“Cruda Sorte! Amor tiranno!” from *L’italiana in Alegeri*

**Gioacchino Rossini
(1792-1868)**

Rossini was an Italian composer, renowned for his exceptional musical talent from a young age. He began composing operas in 1806. At the age of 21, he achieved great success with the opera *L’italiana in Algeri*. The opera narrates the story of the chief of Algiers and his wife, along with the intricate relationships involving an Italian slave and his lover. “Cruda Sorte” is the aria of the Italian girl Isabella, characterized by a lively and brisk rhythm, with florid passages adding intense drama. The distinct contrasts in dynamics further highlight the journey of this Italian girl from initial confusion upon being stranded on a desert island to confidently taking control of her situation.

Cruda sorte! Amor tiranno!
Questo è il premio di mia fe’?
Non v’è orror, terror, nè affanno
Pari a quel ch’io provo in me.
Per te solo, o mio Lindoro,
Io mi trovo in tal periglio.
Da chi spero, o Dio, consiglio?
Chi conforto mi darà?

Qua ci vuol disinvoltura,
Non più smanie, nè paura:
Di coraggio è tempo adesso,
Or chi sono si vedrà.
Già so per pratica
Qual sia l’effetto
D’un sguardo languido,
D’un sospiretto...
So a domar gli uomini
Come si fa.
Sian dolci o ruvidi,
Sian flemma o foco
Son tutti simili
a presso a poco...
Tutti la chiedono,
Tutti la bramano,
Da vaga femmina
Felicità.

Text: Angelo Anelli

Cruel fate! Tyrannical Cupid!
Is this the reward for my constancy?
No horror, terror or anguish exists
compared to that which I now suffer.
For you alone, my Lindoro,
I find myself in such peril.
From whom, oh God, can I hope for
counsel?
Who will give me comfort?
Keeping cool is what's wanted here,
no more rages or terror:
now is the time for courage;
now they'll see who I am.
From experience I already
know the effect
of a languishing look,
of a slight sigh...
I know what to do
to tame men.
Be they gentle or rough,
cool or ardent,
they're all alike.
more or less...
They all seek,
they all long for,
from a pretty woman.
Happiness.

Translation: Ates Uslu

Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson

**Aaron Copland
(1900-1990)**

1. Nature, The Gentlest Mother (*To David Diamond*)

This song cycle was completed in 1950, marking Copland's longest song set. Each song is dedicated to a composer friend, with each titled after the first line of the poem. At the beginning of the first song, the accompaniment unfolds the beautiful countryside scenery, even mimicking the sounds of birds several times. Both the piano and vocal parts are highly lyrical, mostly comprising long phrases that showcase the gentle nature akin to a mother's tenderness. The music suddenly accelerates in the middle section, presenting lively squirrels and birds, and also describing crickets and flowers. Finally, it returns to a gentle melody, displaying the inclusivity of nature.

Nature, the gentlest mother
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest, –
Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon, –
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky,

With infinite affection
And infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

2. There Came a Wind Like a Bugle (*To Elliott Carter*)

The second song in this song cycle is powerful and dramatic, effectively capturing the essence of Emily Dickinson's poetry through Copland's expressive music. This piece conveys the urgency and tension found in Dickinson's poetry through its driving rhythms and dramatic dynamic changes.

There came a wind like a bugle,
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass

We barred the window and the doors
As from an emerald ghost
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed.

On a strange mob of planting trees,
And fences fled away,
And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked that day,

The bell within the steeple wild,
The flying tidings whirled.
How much can come and much can go,
And yet abide the world!

3. Why Do They Shut Me Out of Heaven? (*To Ingolf Dahl*)

The initial intense chord establishes a mood of tension within the song, while the vocal melody mirrors the evocative and reflective ambiance of the poem through its lyrical quality. Emily Dickinson's verses delve into the sensation of exclusion from heaven, with the expressive harmony and poignant lyrics conveying a profound sense of longing and solitude.

Why do they shut Me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?
But I can say a little "Minor"
Timid as a Bird!

Wouldn't the Angels try me
Just once more
Just see if I troubled them
But don't shut the door!

Oh, if I were the Gentleman
In the "White Robe"
And they were the little Hand that knocked
Would I forbid?

Why do they shut Me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?

4. The World Feels Dusty (*To Alexei Haieff*)

This short song evokes people's poignancy and introspection, with a flowing rhythm, accompanied by deep bass, gradually rising to intense high notes, then unexpectedly descending to even lower tones. The wide range of pitches reflects the profound weariness and resignation expressed in the lyrics.

The World feels Dusty
When We stop to Die
We want the Dew then
Honors taste dry

Flags vex a Dying face
But the least Fan
Stirred by a friend's Hand
Cools like the Rain

Mine be the Ministry
When they Thirst comes
Dews of Thyself to fetch
And Holy Balms

5. Heart, We Will Forget Him! (*To Marcelle de Manziarly*)

The music unfolds in a gentle and contemplative manner, exploring themes of love, loss, and emotional resilience. The poem reflects the pain of unrequited love and the determination to move forward despite lingering feelings.

Heart, we will forget him
You and I, tonight.
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste! lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him!

6. Dear March, Come In! (*To Juan Orrego-Salas*)

Aaron Copland holds a special fondness for this piece, finding it particularly uplifting. In the poem, March is personified as a welcomed guest, warmly greeted by the poet upon arrival. The poem captures the collective anticipation for spring and the rejuvenation of nature following winter. With its lively melodies and energetic rhythms, the music vividly depicts the freshness of spring, stirring a longing for vitality among listeners.

Dear March, come in!
How glad I am!
I looked for you before.
Put down your hat –
You must have walked –
How out of breath you are!
Dear March, how are you?
And the rest?

Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March, come right upstairs with me,
I have so much to tell!

I got your letter, and the bird's;
The maples never knew
That you were coming, – I declare,
How red their faces grew!
But, March, forgive me –
And all those hills
You left for me to hue,
There was no purple suitable,
You took it all with you.

Who knocks? that April?
Lock the door!
I will not be pursued!
He stayed away a year, to call
When I am occupied.
But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come,
And blame is just as dear as praise
And praise as mere as blame.

7. Sleep Is Supposed to Be (*To Irving Fine*)

The poet likens death to "sleep," approaching it with a sense of curiosity. The piano's dotted rhythm disrupts the song's flow, giving the lyrical sections a more conversational quality. The song's tension is mostly carried by the singer's vocal expressions, as many high notes convey intense emotions. As the song concludes, the composer highlights a "long pause before starting No. 8," embracing the silence following death with a dignified demeanor, effectively distinguishing the emotional tones between the two songs.

Sleep is supposed to be,
By souls of sanity,
The shutting of the eye.

Sleep is the station grand
Down which on either hand
The hosts of witness stand!

Morn is supposed to be,
By people of degree,
The breaking of the day.

Morning has not occurred!
That shall aurora be
East of Eternity;

One with the banner gay,
One in the red array, –
That is the break of day.

8. When They Come Back (*To Harold Shapero*)

In this song cycle, this is the fourth song about nature and spring (the other three being the first, second, and sixth). The song expresses both fear that spring will never return and the longing for its eventual comeback. Throughout the piece, the vocal melody often employs evenly spaced eighth notes, resembling speech. The overall style is also relatively gentle and steady, reflecting the poet's quiet contemplation.

When they come back if Blossoms do
I always feel a doubt
If Blossoms can be born again
When once the Art is out

When they begin, if Robins may,
I always had a fear
I did not tell, it was their last Experiment
Last Year,

When it is May, if May return,
Had nobody a pang
Lest in a Face so beautiful
He might not look again?

If I am there,
One does not know
What Party one may be
Tomorrow, but if I am there
I take back all I say

9. I Felt a Funeral in My Brain (*To Camargo Guarnieri*)

With the piano simulating the tolling of bells, the poet describes inner turmoil. It's as if they're witnessing their own funeral. Continuously hearing the tolling of bells resounding in their ears. Through these dissonant harmonies, a sense of mental crisis is expressed.

I felt a funeral in my brain,
And mourners to and fro,
Kept treading, treading, till it seemed
That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated
A service like a drum
Kept beating, beating, till I thought
My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,
And creak across my soul
With those same boots of lead, again.
Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,
And Being but an ear,
And I and silence some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here.

10. I've Heard an Organ Talk Sometimes (*To Alberto Ginastera*)

The beginning of the piece replicates the introduction of an organ, and as the song progresses, the incorporation of the organ's sacred resonance lends certain sections a church-like ambiance. The term "Bernardine" refers to a conservative faction within Catholic tradition that emphasizes physical labor, adding a sense of mystery to the entire poem.

I've heard an Organ talk, sometimes
In a Cathedral Aisle,
And understood no word it said
Yet held my breath, the while

And risen up and gone away,
A more Berdardine Girl
Yet know not what was done to me
In that old Hallowed Aisle.

11. Going to Heaven! (*To Lukas Foss*)

This piece is also one of the composer's most satisfying works in this song cycle, once again exploring death in a calm, curious manner. The colloquial, highly repetitive lyrics "going to heaven" express the desire to go to heaven. As the song approaches its end, the accompaniment suddenly stops, leaving only the singer to freely and slowly sing, conveying a sense of lingering attachment and hesitation towards the earth before departing for heaven.

Going to Heaven!
I don't know when,
Pray do not ask me how, –
Indeed I'm too astonished
To think of answering you!
Going to Heaven! –
How dim it sounds!
And yet it will be done
As sure as flocks go home at night
Unto the shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you're going too!
Who knows?
If you should get there first
Save just a little place for me
Close to the two I lost!
The smallest "robe" will fit me,
And just a bit of "crown";
For you know we do not mind our dress
When we are going home.

Going to Heaven!
I'm glad I don't believe it
For it would stop my breath,
And I'd like to look a little more
At such a curious earth!

I am glad they did believe it
Whom I have never found
Since the mighty autumn afternoon
I left them in the ground.

12. The Chariot (*To Arthur Berger*)

At first, Copland didn't plan to compose a song cycle. Instead, he was interested by Emily Dickinson's poem "The Chariot," which sparked his interest in gradually composing additional songs. As he himself said: "Originally, I had no intention of composing a song cycle using Emily Dickinson's poems. I fell in love with one poem, 'The Chariot.' Its first lines absolutely threw me...The idea of this completely unknown girl in Massachusetts seeing herself riding off into immortality with death himself seemed like such an incredible idea! I was struck with that, especially since it turned out to be true. After I set the poem, I continued reading Emily Dickinson. The more I read, the more her vulnerability and loneliness touched me. The poems seemed the work of a sensitive yet independent soul. I found another poem to set, then one more, and yet another..."

Because I could not stop for Death —
He kindly stopped for me —
The carriage held but just ourselves —
and Immortality.

We slowly drove — he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labour, and my leisure too
For His Civility —

We passed the school, where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done.
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.

We paused before a house that seemed
a swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

“Sein wir wieder gut” from *Ariadne auf Naxos*

**Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)**

Ariadne auf Naxos is a comedic opera with a libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal. The opera tells the story of a composer who is about to premiere his work at a banquet hosted by his patron, only to learn that he must perform alongside a troupe of comedians. As the situation becomes increasingly chaotic, the young composer engages in a heartfelt conversation with the leading lady, reigniting his contemplation of music. He embraces his music teacher with excitement and sings this aria, expressing his love and reverence for music.

Sein wir wieder gut.
Ich sehe jetzt alles mit anderen Augen!
Die Tiefen des Daseins sind unermesslich!

Let us make up!
I see everything now in a different light!
The depths of existence are immeasurable!

Mein lieber Freund!
Es gibt manches auf der Welt,
Das läßt sich nicht sagen.
Die Dichter unterlegen ja recht gute Worte,
Jedoch Mut ist in mir, Mut Freund!
Die Welt ist lieblich
Und nicht fürchterlich dem Mutigen.
Was ist denn Musik?
Musik ist eine heilige Kunst zu versammeln
Alle Arten von Mut wie Cherubim
Um einen strahlenden Thron
Und darum ist sie die heilige unter dem
Künsten
Die heilige Musik!

My dear friend!
There is much in the world,
That allows itself not to be expressed.
The poets set-down certainly very good words,
and yet courage is in me, courage friend!
The world is lovely
And not frightening to the courageous.
What is then music?
Music is a holy art,
It brings together all types of courage like angels
Around a shining throne,
And for that reason is it the most holy among the
arts!
The holy music!

Text: Hugo von Hoffmannsthal

Translation: Bard Suverkrop