

HOUGHTON COLLEGE

GREATBATCH SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

Alyssa J. Pyne

collaborative piano

in

Graduate Recital

Assisted by

Luke Ogden, tenor

Victoria Pitre, Soprano

Kaleigh Kenney, mezzo-soprano

Kathleen Weller, clarinet

Daniel Zambrano, cello

Recital Hall

Center for the Arts

Monday, February 18, 2019

8:00 p.m.

Program

Cycle of Holy Songs

Ned Rorem

(b. 1923)

1. Psalm 134
2. Psalm 142
3. Psalm 148
4. Psalm 150

Luke Ogden, tenor

Three Songs, Op. 45

Samuel Barber

(1910-1981)

1. Now have I fed and eaten up the rose
2. A Green Lowland of Pianos
3. O boundless, boundless evening

Victoria Pitre, soprano

Fünf Lieder

Alma Mahler

(1879-1964)

- I. Die stille Stadt
- II. In meines Vaters Garten
- III. Laue Sommernacht
- IV. Bei dir ist es traut
- V. Ich wandle unter Blumen

Kaleigh Kenney, mezzo-soprano

Pause

Trio in B-Flat Major, Op. 11

Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

- I. Allegro con Brio
- II. Adagio
- III. Tema con variazioni

Kathleen Weller, clarinet

Daniel Zambrano, cello

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Alyssa Pyne, a student of Dr. Sharon Johnson, is performing this recital in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Music degree in Collaborative Piano Performance.

As a courtesy to the performer and your fellow audience members, please be certain that all cell phones, watch alarms, and pagers are either turned off or set for silent operation. Flash photography can be very disconcerting to performers and is not permitted during the performance. Thank you for your cooperation.

Program Notes

Ned Rorem was born in Richmond, IN and grew up in Chicago. He studied piano and theory at a young age, and in 1940 began his undergraduate studies at Northwestern University. Later a student at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia, he completed his education at Juilliard after an interlude serving as music copyist for composer Virgil Thomson in New York. In 1949 Rorem travelled to Paris, and though it was only meant to be a short trip, he ended up staying overseas for nine years before settling back in New York City. His time in Paris and love for French composers is evident in his compositional style.

Rorem's compositional output encompasses many genres, including 3 symphonies, 4 piano concerti, 10 operas, an array of choral works, and ballet and theater music; however, his primary output is in the genre of art song, contributing over 500 songs to the repertoire. In addition to his musical writings, Rorem is also an author who has written over 16 books, primarily diaries and his observations on life.

Rorem wrote his *Cycle of Holy Songs* during his stay in Paris in October 1951. These four songs, each based on a Psalm text, are a prime example of Rorem's sensitivity for text-setting and his unique harmonic language. Stephanie Poxon described Rorem's compositional style:

A master at text-setting, Rorem learned early in his craft how to manipulate square phrases in the poetry, and how to make the text flow smoothly and naturally by means of syncopation, meter changes, misplaced accents, and other rhythmic devices. Equally important are his accompaniments; Rorem is a first-rate pianist and this is reflected brilliantly in his songs. Rorem's harmonic language mirrors those of Debussy, Stravinsky, and Hindemith; his songs often include complex chords, such as seventh, ninth, and eleventh chords, which account for the "jazz" flavor found in some of the songs. In addition, Rorem is particularly fond of using contrapuntal techniques—ground bass, ostinatos, imitation, and contrary motion—in his songs.ⁱ

While each of the four songs are unique in their tone, there are common themes, melodic lines, and rhythmic motives that can be traced throughout the cycle—understandable since Rorem wrote all four works within the span of two weeks.

I have always been grateful for the role of the Psalms in my spiritual walk. In them we see raw emotion, human needs, and God's overwhelming faithfulness which leads to abundant praise. I pray that these texts may fuel your own worship and encourage you with the truth of God's excellent greatness!



Samuel Barber, son of a doctor and nephew of Louise and Sidney Homer (Metropolitan Opera contralto and American art song composer, respectively), blossomed both musically and academically at an early age. Mentored by his uncle Sidney Homer, Barber knew he wanted to be a composer by the age of 9. He began studies at the Curtis Institute when only 14, and gained widespread fame for his compositions early in his 20's. His famed string quartet "Adagio for Strings" was written when he was only 26! He wrote in a variety of genres, including works for voice and piano, two operas, and instrumental and orchestral works.

While most would see Barber's life as one of privilege, toward the end of his life he faced many great difficulties, including the flop of his opera *Anthony and Cleopatra*, a strained relationship with his longtime friend Gian Carlo Menotti, and a battle with alcoholism. It is these and other struggles that enabled Barber to project raw emotion, though he does so with beauty and simplicity. Known for his literary sensibilities, Barber's text-setting sought to remain true to the poetry. Barber noted, "I try...not to distort the natural rhythms of a poem, because if this happens the words will be distorted and so will the public's understanding of them. I very much want the words to be comprehensible."ⁱⁱ Carol Kimball commented on his music's accessibility, "His music is characterized by typical American directness and simplicity, making it appealing and easy to understand."ⁱⁱⁱ

Barber's *Three Songs, Op. 45* were written in 1972 during his stay in Italy. They were written for the baritone Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau on commission from the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, and were premiered by Fischer-Dieskau and pianist Charles Wadsworth in April 1974. Though some of Barber's works have been published posthumously, this set was the last to be published during his lifetime.

The first song of the set, "Now have I fed and eaten up the rose," came from a set of poems titled "Thoughts of a Living Burial."^{iv} In it we hear the voice of one from the grave contemplating their food—a solitary rose. The sweeping downward gestures in the piano seem to allude to the narrator's fate. In a complete shifting of mood, the second piece, "A Green Lowland of Pianos," is a comic, satirical text that compares pianos to cows! The poet is poking fun at the concert-hall culture, and there can even be heard a prolongation of the first syllable of "moonish" in order to...well, you know. For the third set, there is yet again a shift in mood from the comic to the contemplative, as the narrator looks on the "boundless evening" to the foreboding night to come.

The three songs in this set are seemingly unrelated, and it can be difficult to uncover why these three texts were chosen together. Each were written by different poets, translated from two different languages (German and Polish), explore both serious and humorous themes, and provide contrast in mood. Barber's settings, as well, contrast in figurations used, keys chosen, tempi, and overall feeling.

It appears that they could not be more different! Perhaps it is these contrasts that enable them to fit together. Through these three songs, one is brought to contemplation, laughter, admiration, and concern, and this variety certainly causes the listener and performer alike to ponder the beautiful world of contrasts Barber created.



Alma Schindler Mahler was the daughter of a painter who encouraged a love for the arts. She played the piano from an early age and began composing songs at age nine, beginning more formal composition training in her late teens. In 1901 she was introduced to the composer Gustav Mahler, and they married about a year later. Even though Gustav was aware of Alma's love of composing, upon their engagement he made it clear to her that "she was to live for his music, not hers."^v Though Alma complied, her talent was difficult to stifle, and the resentment made its way into their relationship, threatening their marriage.

The Mahlers had two daughters, but in 1907 their oldest died from scarlet fever. This hardship, combined with Alma's repressed resentment toward Gustav, drove the couple apart. In 1910 this difficulty reached its peak, and after Alma had an affair, Gustav sought a remedy in allowing Alma to publish her own music. He encouraged her to prepare some of the compositions she had written for publication. Gustav helped Alma prepare her first set, *Fünf Lieder*, before his death in 1911. In total Alma had three sets of songs published, though she likely wrote many more. Unfortunately, her manuscripts were destroyed when she and her third husband were forced to flee the Nazis during WWII, so our knowledge of her works is incomplete.

Fünf Lieder (5 Songs) is the first set of songs Alma published. Though published in 1911, they were written before her marriage to Gustav in 1902. Diane Follet describes Alma's style in this way: "Alma's songs are dramatic, chromatic, and erotic, but every musical gesture is in service of the text. An exquisite sensitivity to the poetry is on display at all times."^{vi} In *Fünf Lieder*, dense, chromatic harmonies prevail. Follet explains:

Her accompaniments are complex, and her rapid harmonic rhythm adds a restless quality...major and minor chords are rare; diminished and augmented sonorities prevail, often with atypical spellings. Linear motion dictates the use of enharmonic equivalents and allows Alma to move between distant keys. Her harmonies, like her texts, are bold and ambiguous.^{vii}

The first of the set, *Die stille Stadt*, sets the scene of a traveler looking over a fog-drenched town, the only clarity being found in a child's song. Alma opens this song with harmonic ambiguity as well, utilizing Wagner's Tristan chord in the opening measure.^{viii} The piano part helps to portray the fog. The second of the set, *In meines Vaters Garten*, is the longest and most lighthearted, almost fanciful. While the piano and voice move along much more quickly, the harmonies remain dense and continue to modulate frequently (I would not recommend playing "which key will we be in next?!"—she is highly unpredictable!). The final three songs of the set display beautifully Alma's unique harmonic voice, her care in setting the text, and her facility in writing for piano.

Translations

I. Die stille Stadt

Liegt eine Stadt im Tale,
ein blasser Tag vergeht,
es wird nicht lang mehr dauern,
bis weder Mond noch Sterne,
nur Nacht am Himmel steht.

Von allen Bergen drücken
Nebel auf die Stadt,
es dringt kein Dach, noch Hof noch Haus,
kein Laut aus ihrem Rauch heraus,
kaum Türme noch und Brücken.

doch als dem Wanderer graute,
da ging ein Lichtlein auf im Grund
und aus dem Rauch und Nebel
begann ein Lobgesang
aus Kindermund.

I. The Quiet Town

A town lies in the valley;
A pallid day fades.
It will not be long now
Before neither moon nor stars
But only night will be seen in the heavens.

From all the mountains
Fog presses down upon the town;
No roof may be discerned, no yard nor house,
No sound penetrates through the smoke,
Barely even a tower or a bridge.

But as the traveler became filled with dread
A little light shone out,
And through smoke and fog
A song praise began,
Sung by children.

II. In meines Vaters Garten

In meines Vaters Garten
blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf
in meines Vaters Garten
stand ein schattender Apfelbaum
süßer Traum!
stand ein schattender Apfelbaum.

Drei blonde Königstöchter
blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf
drei wunderschöne Mädchen
schliefen unter dem Apfelbaum
süßer Traum!
schliefen unter dem Apfelbaum.

Die allerjüngste Feine
blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!
die allerjüngste Feine
blinzelte und erwachte kaum.
Süßer Traum
blinzelte und erwachte kaum.

Die zweite fuhr sich über das Haar,
blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf
sah den roten Morgentraum.
Süßer Traum!

Sie sprach: Hört ihr die Trommel nicht?
Blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!
Süßer Traum!
hell durch den dämmernden Traum!

Mein Liebster zieht in den Kampf
blühe mein Herz, blüh' auf.
Mein Liebster zieht in den Kampf hinaus,
küßt mir als Sieger des Kleides Saum
Süßer Traum
küßt mir des Kleides Saum.

Die Dritte sprach und sprach so leis
blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf!
Die Dritte sprach und sprach so leis:
Ich küsse dem Liebsten des Kleides Saum
Süßer Traum,
ich küsse dem Liebsten des Kleides Saum.

In meines Vaters Garten
blühe, mein Herz, blüh' auf
in meines Vaters Garten
steht ein sonniger Apfelbaum
süßer Traum,
steht ein sonniger Apfelbaum!

II. In my Father's Garden

In my father's garden
Blossom, my heart, blossom forth!
In my father's garden
Stands a shady apple tree
Sweet dream, sweet dream!
Stands a shady apple tree.

Three blonde King's daughters
Blossom, my heart, blossom forth!
Three beautiful maidens
Slept under the apple tree.
Sweet dream, sweet dream!
Slept under the apple tree.

The youngest of the three
Blossom, my heart, blossom forth!
The youngest of the three
Blinked and hardly woke.
Sweet dream, sweet dream!
Blinked and hardly woke.

The second cleared her hair from her eyes
Blossom, my heart, blossom forth!
And saw the red morning's hem
Sweet dream, sweet dream!

She said: didn't you hear the drum
Blossom, my heart, blossom forth!
Sweet dream, sweet dream
Clearly through the twilight air!

My beloved joins in the strife.
Blossom, my heart, blossom forth!
My beloved joins in the strife out there.
Kiss for me as victor his garments hem.
Sweet dream, sweet dream!
Kiss for me the garment's hem.

The third spoke and spoke so softly
Blossom, my heart, blossom forth!
The third spoke and spoke so softly:
"I kiss the beloved's garment hem."
Sweet dream, sweet dream,
"I kiss the beloved's garment hem."

In my father's garden
Blossom, my heart, blossom forth!
In my father's garden
Stands a sunny apple tree
Sweet dream, sweet dream!
Stands a sunny apple tree!

III. Laue Sommernacht

Laue Sommernacht, am Himmel
stand kein Stern, im weiten Walde
suchten wir uns tief im Dunkel,
Und wir fanden uns.

Fanden uns im weiten Walde
in der Nacht, der sternenlosen,
hielten staunend uns im Arme
In der dunklen Nacht.

War nicht unser ganzes Leben
nur ein Tappen, nur ein Suchen,
da in deine Finsternisse,
Liebe, fiel Dein Licht,
Fiel dein Licht!

IV. Bei dir ist es traut

Bei dir ist es traut,
zage Uhren schlugen wie aus alten Tagen,
kann mir ein Liebes sagen,
aber nur nicht laut!

Ein Tor geht irgendwo
draußen im Blütentreiben,
der Abend horcht an di Scheiben,
laß uns leise bleiben,
keiner weiß uns so!

V. Ich wandle unter Blumen

Ich Wandle unter Blumen
Und blühe selber mit,
ich wandle wie im Traume
und schwanke bei jedem Schritt.

O halt mich fest, Geliebte!
Vor Liebestrunkenheit
fall' ich dir sonst zu Füßen
und der Garten ist voller Leut!

III. Mild Summer's Night

Balmy summer night, in Heaven
There are no stars, in the wide forests
We searched ourselves deep in darkness,
And we found ourselves.

Found ourselves in the wide forests
In the night, saviors of the stars,
Held ourselves in wonder in each other's arms
In the dark night.

Was not our whole life
Just a groping, just a seeking,
Then in its darkness
Love, fell your light,
Fell your light!

IV. With You it is Pleasant

I am at ease with you,
Faint clocks strike as from olden days,
Come, tell your love to me,
But not too loud!

Somewhere a gate moves
Outside in the drifting blossoms,
Evening listens in at the window panes,
Let us stay quiet,
So no one knows of us!

V. I Stroll Among Flowers

I wander among the flowers
And blossom myself along with them;
I wander as if in a dream
And sway with every step.

Oh hold me tightly, my beloved!
Or, drunk with love,
I will collapse at your feet;
and the garden is full of people!

(Adapted from the translation of Alex Burns, <https://classicalexburns.com>)



Ludwig van Beethoven, a composer who seems to need no introduction, was born in northwestern Germany into a family of court musicians. His father encouraged his serious study of music from a young age, hoping he could be the next prodigy like Mozart.^{ix} He moved to the musical capital of Vienna in 1792 and studied with Haydn. With an output of impressive size, many of his works were instantly popular and continue to be seen as standards in the repertoire.

Because of his familiarity with the piano and his striking improvisatory ability at the keyboard, the majority of Beethoven's earlier compositions were works for either solo keyboard or chamber works including keyboard. His early compositions also avoided the genres of his predecessors Haydn and Mozart: the string quartet, opera, and symphony.

Beethoven's *Trio in B-flat, Op. 11* was composed in 1798, placing it fairly early in Beethoven's output. The trio is sometimes referred to as the "Gassenhaur," which means "popular song,"^x referring to the popular tune Beethoven used in the final movement for the

theme and variations. The trio has three movements. The first, “Allegro con brio,” is in traditional sonata form, but Beethoven incorporates some harmonic surprises by beginning the second theme group of the exposition in D major before bringing it back to the dominant key, F major. The movement opens with all three players in unison octaves, and Beethoven’s bold themes continue throughout. The development is marked by quick piano arpeggios. The second movement, “Adagio,” opens with a lush cello solo that is then carried into the clarinet. This movement is also in sonata form, though it is much shorter than the opening movement. The development here is also marked by arpeggios in the piano part, and the recapitulation is rather embellished. The final movement is a set of theme and variations on the popular tune *Pria ch'io l'impegno* (“Before beginning this awesome task, I need a snack”)^{xi} from Joseph Weigl’s comic opera *L'Amor Marinaro*. The original song talked about the need for eating before making important decisions (solid life advice!), and the melody was the basis for Beethoven’s variations. There are nine variations and a coda, providing ample time for Beethoven to show off his variation technique.

ⁱ Stephanie Poxon: Ned Rorem, <https://songofamerica.net>

ⁱⁱ Carol Kimball: *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature*, (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation), 284

ⁱⁱⁱ *Ibid.*, 283

^{iv} Richard Walters, Ed.: *Samuel Barber: 65 Songs*, (Milwaukee: G. Schirmer, Inc.), 37

^v Diane W. Follet: “Redeeming Alma: The Songs of Alma Mahler,” *College Music Symposium* Vol. 44 (2004), 29

^{vi} *Ibid.*, 30

^{vii} *Ibid.*, 31

^{viii} *Ibid.*, 33

^{ix} J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, & Claude V. Palisca: *A History of Western Music*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.), 572

^x “Gassenhaur,” <https://dictionary.cambridge.org>

^{xi} Richard E. Rodda: “Piano Trio No. 4 in B-flat major, Op. 11: About the Work,” <http://www.kennedy-center.org>