

HOUGHTON COLLEGE

GREATBATCH SCHOOL OF MUSIC

presents

Rebekah E. Scharf

Mezzo-Soprano

in

Senior Voice Recital

Assisted by

Ryan Nickelsen, Piano

Rachel Huchthausen, Violin

Recital Hall

Center for the Arts

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

8:00 p.m.

Program

The Red Dress	Ricky I. Gordon (1956-Present)
Morgen! Nacht	Richard G. Strauss (1864-1949)
Giulio Caesar Piangerò la sorte mia	George F. Handel (1685-1759)
Cowboy Songs Bucking Bronco Lift Me into Heaven Billy the Kid	Libby B. Larsen (1950-Present)
The Last Five Years See I'm Smiling	Jason R. Brown (1970-Present)

Pause

Romance Les Cloches Paysage Sentimental	Ricky I. Gordon (1862-1918)
Five Hebrew Love Songs Temuná Kalá Kullá Laróve Éyze Shéleg Rakút	Eric Whitacre (1970-Present)
Rachel Huchthausen, Violin	
Songs for A New World Christmas Lullaby	Jason R. Brown (1970-Present)

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Rebekah Scharf, a student of Dr. Kimberly Prins Moeller, is performing this recital in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education in voice.

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. Thanks for your consideration.

Program Notes

The Red Dress

Composed in 1995 by Rick Ian Gordon, with text by Dorothy Parker, *The Red Dress* is a song about a young girl who dreamed of growing up and owning a beautiful red dress, and with it a wonderful man to be in love with. In the end, the young girl is grown up and has the red dress, but she calls it a “silly gown” indicating that having the dress is not as glamorous as it has seemed when she was younger. The red dress seems to be a symbol for the girl’s hopes and dreams for her future, and coming to find that the life she had hoped for is not as wonderful as she had imagined.

In an interview, Gordon mentioned that *The Red Dress* was written in only an hour. He explained that it was a particularly easy song to write due to the strophic text. The song is in an A-A’ format, meaning that the two sections of the song are very similar, with only text and key being the big changes. The song begins in the key of E major, and then ends in A major, with a beautiful piano accompaniment leading the way.

Morgen!

Morgen!, written by Richard Strauss, is the fourth song in a cycle, “Op. 27”, which Strauss originally wrote for his wife as a wedding present.

Alan Jefferson wrote in *The Lieder of Richard Strauss* that the “chief beauty of [*Morgen!*] lies in its simplicity, and in the repetition of the accompaniment which leads us to sense an endless and preordained motion.” The piano plays an important role in the piece, far beyond just accompaniment, introducing the melody line during the introduction which the vocal line takes over upon entry, and the piano continues the melody into the second musical strophe.

German	English
Und morgen wird die Sonne wieder scheinen	And tomorrow the sun will shine again
Und auf dem Wege, den ich gehen werde,	And on the path that I shall take,
Wird uns, die Glücklichen, sie wieder einen	It will unite us, happy ones, again,
Inmitten dieser sonnenatmenden Erde ...	Amid this same sun-breathing earth ...
Und zu dem Strand, dem weiten, wogenblauen,	And to the shore, broad, blue-waved,
Werden wir still und langsam niedersteigen,	We shall quietly and slowly descend,
Stumm werden wir uns in die Augen schauen,	Speechless we shall gaze into each other’s eyes,

Und auf uns sinkt des Glückes stummes Schweigen	And the speechless silence of bliss shall fall on us
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Translation by © Richard Stokes, author of *The Book of Lieder* (Faber, 2005)

Nacht

Composed in 1885, *Nacht* is one of Strauss' first songs. The song describes a lover's fear that just as the darkness of night steals all color and beauty from all things truly lovely in the world, night will also steal their beloved away from them.

This setting of a poem by Herman von Gilm is the second song in Strauss' Op. 10. Strauss beautifully managed to convey the power of beauty-stealing night through the opening rhythmic beat in the piano, and through the use of minor seconds

German	English
Aus dem Walde tritt die Nacht,	Night steps from the woods,
Aus den Bäumen schleicht sie leise,	Slips softly from the trees,
Schaut sich um in weitem Kreise,	Gazes about her in a wide arc,
Nun gib Acht!	Now beware!
Alle Lichter dieser Welt,	All the lights of this world,
Alle Blumen, alle Farben	All the flowers, all the colours
Löscht sie aus und stiehlt die Garben	She extinguishes and steals the sheaves
Weg vom Feld.	From the field.
Alles nimmt sie, was nur hold,	She takes all that is fair,
Nimmt das Silber weg des Stroms	Takes the silver from the stream,
Nimmt vom Kupferdach des Doms	Takes from the cathedral's copper roof
Weg das Gold.	The gold.
Ausgeplündert steht der Strauch:	The bush stands plundered:
Rücke näher, Seel' an Seele,	Draw closer, soul to soul,
O die Nacht, mir bangt, sie stehle	Ah the night, I fear, will steal

Dich mir auch.	You too from me.
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Translation by © Richard Stokes, author of *The Book of Lieder* (Faber, 2005)

Piangerò la sorte mia

Written by George Frideric Handel as part of his opera *Giulio Cesare*, *Piangerò la sorte mia* is sung by Cleopatra as a lament for losing a fierce battle, and also a lament over her lover whom she presumes to be dead (but is not actually dead). The *da capo* form presents a slow A section as Cleopatra is overcome by sadness, followed by an aggressive B section demonstrating the anger stage of her grief. The A section returns with ornamentation as Cleopatra is lost in her desperation.

Italian	English
Piangerò la sorte mia sì crudele e tanto ria finché vita in petto avrò.	I shall weep over my cruel fate so long as there remains life in my breast.
Ma poi morta d'ogn'intorno il tiranno e notte e giorno fatta spetbro agiterò.	But once I have perished, I shall become a ghost and torment that tyrant from all directions, day and night.

Translation by Andrew Schneider , copyright © 2018

Cowboy Songs

Libby Larsen's *Cowboy Songs* tell three different stories, all relating to cowboys and cowgirls of the old west. Two of the texts, "Bucking Bronco" and "Lift Me Into Heaven," are drawn from cowgirl or cowboy poetry, while "Billy the Kid" is based on an anonymous text.

"Bucking Bronco" is written and attributed to the cowgirl figure Belle Starr. It is said that though she was married, this text was not based on her husband, but rather another cowboy that she was in love with. A fun feature of this song is the gallop of the bronco in the left hand of the piano.

"Lift Me Into Heaven" is infused with the traditional lament of the cowboys with a blues in 6 feel. The music of this second song in the set is linked to the first song, as it is a variation on the rhythm because the rhythm of "Bucking Bronco" is elongated. The musical composition brings out the textual desires for release and a sense of indecisive yearning by using the leaning tone half step interval. Finally, the text of the song is repeated once per musical section, leading the musical arch to have an emotional impact of meditative/curious - anxious/conflicted - peaceful/accepting.

The final song in this cycle, "Billy the Kid," tells the story of notorious gunslinger William Henry McCarty Jr. The song integrates a popular cowboy song called "Goodbye Old

Paint” in the accompaniment, which then becomes the melody. A vocal line in measure three of the piece becomes a musical motif woven throughout the rest of the piece.

See I’m Smiling

See I’m Smiling is from Jason Robert Brown’s musical *The Last Five Years*. The musical tells the story of Cathy and Jamie and their relationship over the span of 5 years. The telling is unique in that it shows the relationship from both points of view in opposite directions, with Cathy beginning at the end of the relationship and going backwards in time, while Jamie begins at the start of the relationship and goes forwards. They meet once in the middle for their wedding, and a rumor suggests that Brown based the musical loosely on his own past relationship.

See I’m Smiling is Cathy’s second song in the show. Cathy is performing in a summer stock theatre in Ohio and Jamie comes to visit for what Cathy thought would be a weekend, but finds out it was only for that day. She then gets upset and goes on to speak her mind about how she feels that Jamie puts everything else before her.

Romance

Romance and *Les Cloches* make up Claude Debussy’s 1891 published work *Deux Romances*. Both are settings of poems written by poet Paul Bourget, and each has distinctive motives that are introduced at the beginning of each piece and heard throughout.

Due to its compositional style, *Romance* is believed to have been composed years before its publication, perhaps in 1885. The delicate music reflects the image of the lilies whose scent represents the memory of a lost love. The phrases of the piece form arches that remain between piano and pianissimo, bringing out a delicate texture that expresses the singer’s questions as they recall the past hope and peace they once knew.

French	English
L’âme évaporée et souffrante,	The spent and suffering soul,
L’âme douce, l’âme odorante	The sweet soul, the soul steeped
Des lis divins que j’ai cueillis	In the divine lilies I gathered
Dans le jardin de ta pensée,	In the garden of your thoughts,
Où donc les vents l’ont-ils chassée,	Where have the winds dispersed it,
Cette âme adorable des lis?	This adorable lilies’ soul?
N’est-il plus un parfum qui reste	Does not a single scent remain
De la suavité céleste	Of the heavenly softness

Des jours où tu m'enveloppais	Of the days when you enclosed me
D'une vapeur surnaturelle,	In a supernatural mist,
Faite d'espoir, d'amour fidèle,	Made of hope, of faithful love,
De béatitude et de paix?	Of bliss and of peace?

Translation by © Richard Stok

Les Cloches

The introduction to *Les Cloches* represents ringing bells, which continues into the piece, as the vocal range and dynamics broaden to simulate the bells speaking of happier years, until the ending when the unaccented rhythm and minor second interval in the final line are set to create a tension and release that signifies the days gone by.

French	English
Les feuilles s'ouvraient sur le bord des branches, Déliatement.	The leaves opened upon the edge of the branches, Delicately.
Les cloches tintaient, légères et franches, Dans le ciel clément.	The bells rang, light and free, In the clear sky.
Rythmique et fervent comme une antienne, Ce lointain appel	Rhythmically and fervently, like an antiphon, This distant call
Me remémorait la blancheur chrétienne Des fleurs de l'autel.	Reminded me of the Christian whiteness Of altar flowers.
Ces cloches parlaient d'heureuses années, Et, dans le grand bois, Semblaient reverdir les feuilles fanées	These bells told of happy years, And, in the great forest, Seemed to revive the withered leaves
Des jours d'autrefois.	Of days gone by.

Translation by © Richard Stokes, author of *A French Song Companion* (Oxford, 2000)

Paysage Sentimental

The final song in this set is another setting of a text by Paul Bourget, *Paysage Sentimental*, written around 1880. The relaxed charm of the setting also contains hints of multiple different composers of the same time, such as Massenet's lightness, Brahms's evolving ostinato technique, and Borodin's melodic style.

French	English
<p>Le ciel d'hiver, si doux, si triste, si dormant, Où le soleil errait parmi [des] vapeurs blanches, Était pareil au doux, au profond sentiment Qui nous rendait heureux mélancoliquement Par [cette après-midi de rêves] sous les branches...</p> <p>Branches mortes qu'aucun souffle ne remuait, Branches noires [avec] quelque feuille fanée, -- Ah! que [mon âme s'est à ton âme] donnée Plus tendrement [encor] dans ce grand bois muet, Et dans cette langueur de la mort de l'année !</p> <p>La mort de tout, sinon de toi que j'aime tant, Et sinon du bonheur dont mon âme est comblée, Bonheur qui dort au fond de cette âme isolée, Mystérieux, paisible et frais comme l'étang</p> <p>Qui pâlisait au fond de la pâle vallée.</p>	<p>The winter sky, so sweet, so sad, so slumbrous, where the sun wandered among pale mists, was like the sweet, deep feeling that made us happy in a melancholy way on that afternoon of kisses under the branches,</p> <p>dead branches not stirred by any breeze, black branches with a few withered leaves.</p> <p>Ah, how your lips were given to my lips more tenderly still in this great, mute woods and in this languor of the year's death,</p> <p>the death of everything except that I love you, and except for the happiness filling my soul, happiness that rests deep in this isolated soul, mysterious, peaceful and cool, like the pond that grew pale at the bottom of the pale valley.</p>

Translation by John Glenn Paton, copyright ©2010

Five Hebrew Love Songs

Composed in 1996, the *Five Hebrew Love Songs* were commissioned by Whitacre's friend Friedemann Eichorn who asked Whitacre to write some troubadour songs for piano, violin and soprano for a concert he, Whitacre and Whitacre's then-girlfriend (now wife) Hila Plitman were presenting. To write the songs, Whitacre asked Plitman to write "postcards" in her native language of Hebrew. In return, she gave him five beautiful poems that depict different moments they shared in their relationship. The title of the second, "Kalá Kalla" (meaning "Light Bride"), is a pun that Whitacre came up with when Plitman was first teaching him Hebrew. In the fourth

movement, “Éyze Shéleg,” Whitacre included the exact pitches of the bells that woke them up when they were in Germany, and they are the exact pitches. The *Five Hebrew Love Songs* offer a playful, sweet, radiant image of love throughout.

Hebrew	English
<p>i.</p> <p>TEMUNÁ</p> <p>Temuná belibí charuntá;</p> <p>Nodédet beyn ór uveyn ófel:</p> <p>Min dmamá shekazó et guféch kach otá,</p> <p>Usaréch al paña’ich kach nófel.</p>	<p>I.</p> <p>A PICTURE</p> <p><i>A picture is engraved in my heart;</i></p> <p><i>Moving between light and darkness:</i></p> <p><i>A sort of silence envelopes your body,</i></p> <p><i>And your hair falls upon your face just so.</i></p>
<p>ii.</p> <p>KALÁ KALLÁ</p> <p>Kalá kallá</p> <p>Kulá shelí,</p> <p>U’ve kalút</p> <p>Tishákhilí!</p>	<p>ii.</p> <p>LIGHT BRIDE)</p> <p><i>Light bride</i></p> <p><i>She is all mine,</i></p> <p><i>And lightly</i></p> <p><i>She will kiss me!</i></p>
<p>iii.</p> <p>LARÓV</p> <p>“Laróv,” amár gag la’shama’im,</p> <p>“Hamerchák shebeynéynu hu ad;</p> <p>Ach lifnéy zman alu lechán shna’im,</p> <p>Uveynéynu nishár sentiméter echad”</p>	<p>iii.</p> <p>MOSTLY</p> <p><i>“Mostly,” said the roof to the sky,</i></p> <p><i>“the distance between you and I is endlessness;</i></p> <p><i>But a while ago two came up here,</i></p> <p><i>And only one centimeter was left between us.”</i></p> <p><i>What snow!</i></p>
<p>iv.</p>	<p>iv.</p> <p>WHAT SNOW!</p>

ÉYZE SHÉLEG!	Like little dreams
Ézye shéleg!	Falling from the sky.
Kmo chalomót ktaníim	
Noflím mehashamá im.	v.
v.	TENDERNESS
RAKÚT	He was full of tenderness; She was very hard.
Hu hayá malé rakút;	And as much as she tried to stay thus, Simply, and with no good reason,
Hi haytá kasha	He took her into himself, And set her down
Vechól káma shenistá lehishaér kach,	In the softest, softest place.
Pashút, uvlí sibá tová,	
Lakách otá el toch atzmó,	
Veheníach Bamakóm hachí rach.	

Translation by Hila Plitmann, b.1973

Christmas Lullaby

Christmas Lullaby is from *Songs For a New World*, another musical by Jason Robert Brown. Rather than having a specific story line, the show presents multiple stories that each have to do with some sort of change in life. In *Christmas Lullaby*, this change is that of bringing new life into the world.

Christmas Lullaby is meaningful to me for several reasons, the first of which is that it was my soloist debut with Lyric Theatre at Houghton. However, its importance goes deeper for me. The character starts hesitant, but then is filled with wonder and joy. Though it is in reference to her pregnancy, for me, it shows a girl who has never been confident in who she is or what she can do or who she can become, but eventually finds she is ready and excited for whatever is to come. I relate to that idea of the song. I once was hesitant, but now, I am ready for whatever God has in store.