Maureen Seymour
Soprano

A Senior Recital

with

Valerie Ore, piano

Thursday, May 7, 2009
7:00pm
Beam Music Center
Doc Rando Recital Hall
Handel is best known for his Messiah, as well as many operas. “For illustration of the widest range of Handel’s techniques, however, the best exemplar is Giulio Cesare (1724), which has a fast moving plot, full of incident, and some of Handel’s best arias, as well as scenes that are spectacular from both musical and dramatic standpoints.” Handel’s characterization of Cleopatra is equal to Shakespeare’s, she is “one of the most subtly drawn characters in the opera.” V’adoro, pupille is one of her arias; taking place at the beginning of Act II, in an attempt to seduce Cesare.

V’adoro, pupille

I adore your eyes

I adore your eyes, thunderbolts of love,
Those sparks are welcome in my heart.
My sad heart longs for your compassion,
For it always calls to you, my beloved treasure.

Translation by: Maureen Seymour

Robert Schumann and Franz Schubert are two of the most celebrated composers of Lieder, a form of German art song that became exceedingly popular during the Romantic period. These songs were intended to be performed in intimate gatherings. “It remains the ideal art-form for friends or lovers.” In Die Lotosblume, Schuman exemplifies the lotus flower’s faith in her unearthly lover; despite love’s pain. This same devotion is seen in Widmung. Both of these songs are from his cycle, Myrthen, which was a wedding present for Clara Schumann. “An die Nachtigall is not much sung. It is no doubt too small and brief to carry weight outside an intimate circle; but there is exquisite writing in its two-score bars.” It’s smallness is perhaps what makes it such a perfect Lied. Der Tod und das Mädchen begins with a piano accompaniment in the form of a funeral march. The maiden’s plea quickly turns the piano to imitate her panicked heartbeat, but then goes back to the funeral march; this time in a Major key, sounding much like a lullaby. In her plea, she seems much more unwilling to die than willing to live. Perhaps this is why she gives in to death. She convinces death to be kind. “Death’s claim of kindness is not automatic, not something in his essence, but something that develops in response to the maiden’s plea.” Du bist die Ruh and Widmung are poems based upon similar ideas, both written by Friedrich Rückert. “You are the rest” is a phrase of text seen in both, and each song has its own gentle quality, though Widmung is most certainly more openly enthusiastic. “The poem [of Du bist die Ruh], idealizing the gratified lover’s peace, is pitched in a key almost of mysticism, in the oriental way... He simply embraced the idea of peace in a singularly pure and beautiful spirit.”
Die Lotosblume

The Lotosflower

The lotusflower fears
the suns splendor,
and with a drooping head
she dreamily awaits the night.

Du bist die Ruh

You are the rest

You are the rest, the gentle peace,
You are the longing, and what calms it.
I dedicate to you, full of love and pain,
a home here, in my eye and my heart.

An die Nachtigall

To the Nightingale

He lies and sleeps upon my heart,
my good guardian spirit sang him to sleep;
and I can be cheerful and jest,
I can rejoice in every flower and leaf.

You are the rest, the gentle peace,
you are the peace,
you are the rest, you are the peace.
Yom der Friede mild,
you are the rest, the gentle peace.

Der Tod und das Mädchen

Death and the Maiden

The Maiden:
Pass over me, ah, pass over me,
Go, wild Bone man!
I am still young,
Go, dear, and do not touch me.

Death:
Give your hand, beautiful and delicate vision,
I am a friend and do not come to punish.
Have courage! I am not wild,
In my arms you shall gently fall asleep.

"Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947) was a brilliant member of a brilliant artistic era in France. He is now remembered for only a few of his more than one hundred mélodies, but during his life he also achieved recognition and fame for his operas, operettas, concertos, quartets, ballet music, and piano pieces." He was also the director of the Paris Opéra, a conductor at the Salzburg Festival, and a music critic for the newspaper Figaro. His song, "Si mes vers avaient des ailes," was written when he was only fifteen years old. "L'Heure exquise" is perhaps his most famous mélodie, it is a part of Chansons grises, a song set based upon the texts of Paul Verlaine, he wrote this when he was eighteen. "Hahn's writing for both voice and piano produces and quasi-hypnotic effect and emphasizes the hushed atmosphere of Verlaine's text, a moment suspended in time."
Si mes vers avaient des ailes
Mes vers furient, doux et frêles,
Vos vers votre jardin si beaux,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes
Comme l’oiseau.

Il s voleraient, étincelles,
Vos vers votre foyer qui rit,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes
Comme l’esprit.

Pres de vous, pur et fidèles,
Ils accouraient nuit et jour,
Si mes vers avaient des ailes
Comme l’amour.

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Tosti wrote many songs in Italian, French and English. He attended to Naples conservatory in 1856 and first visited London in 1875, and was the teacher to the royal family. He was knighted in 1908. Tosti wrote over 350 songs, in Italian, French, and the Neapolitan dialect; he composed many of the songs with his own voice in mind, he was a lyric tenor. "[He] knew how to write engaging, flowing melodies that displayed the voice, and while those *romanza da camera* were not always of the highest artistic quality, they had an immediate appeal and were included in the concerts of the best-known opera stars of the period.*
I don't love you

Do you still remember when we met; Those promises you made, do you remember? Insane with love, I followed you. And near you I dreamt, insane with love.

I dreamt, happily, of caresses and kisses A chain disappeared in the heavens: But the words you gave were lies. Because your soul is made of ice.

Do you not remember; do you not remember? My faith, the immense wish, My dream of love no longer involves you: I don't seek your kisses. I do not think of you; I dream of another ideal; I don't love you.

Of the loved days that we spent together, I sprinkled fire on your path; You were the only feeling in my heart; And of my mind, the only thought.

You have seen me beg and turn pale, You have seen me cry for you: I tried to satisfy and fulfill your desire, I gave my blood and my entire self.

Do you not remember; do you not remember? My faith and immense wishes, My dream of love no longer involves you: I don't seek your kisses. I do not think of you; I dream of another ideal; I don't love you.

I would like for a spell of love To plainly come at your call, And by you, like a flower. With a sweet voice, to whisper: I love you!

Translation by: Maureen Seymour

Joaquin Turina first became well known in Seville as a pianist. He composed a few short operas, as well as piano music and songs. The first song, Dedicatoria, is a piano solo. Turina used it to set the mood for the cycle, contrasting lyricism and intensity, with a guitar-like figure which reappears throughout the cycle. Cantares is the most popular of these songs, and is often excerpted for performances. In Las locas por amor, Turina combines a delightful dance tune with a wildly intense vocal line, which pauses only near the end to allow the Goddess to confide her secret preferences, and before reiterating the initial vocal lines in a forceful, exciting finish.

I. Dedicatoria

Piano Solo.

II. Nunca olvide...

Ya que este mundo abandono antes de darme cuenta a Dios, a qui para entre los dos mi confesion te die.

Con toda el alma perdono hasta a los que siempre he odiado.

¿A ti que tanto te amado nunca te perdonare?

Translation by: Maureen Seymour

I would like for a spell of love

To plainly come at your call, And by you, like a flower. With a sweet voice, to whisper: I love you!

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III. Cantares

¡Ay!

Más cerca de mi te siento cuando más huyo de ti pues tu imagen es en mi sombra de mi pensamiento.

Translation by: Maureen Seymour

III. Songs

Oh!

I feel you closer to me when I try to run from you the shadow of your image is in my thoughts.

Oh!

Tell me again for I was embellished with you yesterday I listened to you without hearing, I looked at you without seeing you.

Translation by: Maureen Seymour

Translation by: Maureen Seymour
IV. Las dos miédos

Al comenzar la noche de aquel día ella lejos de mí, ¿Porqué te acercas tanto? me decía. Tengo miedo de ti.

Y después que la noche hubo pasado dijo, cerca de mi: ¿Porqué te alejas tanto de mi lado? ¡Tengo miedo sin ti!

Text by: R. de Camposanor

IV. The two fears

At the start of the night that day she was distant from me, Why do you get so close? I would tell myself, I am afraid of you.

After the night has passed she asked, close to me: "Why do you distance yourself from my side? I have fear without you!"

Translation by: Maureen Seymour

V. Las locas por amor

Te amaré diosa Venus si prefieres que tea mucho tiempo y con cordura.

Y respondió la diosa Citeres Prefiero como todas las mujeres que me amen poca tiempo y con locura.

Te amaré diosa Venus ¡Te amaré!

Text by: R. de Camposanor

I will love you, goddess Venus If you prefer that I love you for a long time and with prudence.

And the goddess Citeres responds, I prefer, like all women, to be loved for a short time, yet with madness.

I will love you, goddess Venus I will love you!

Translation by: Maureen Seymour

Menotti's delightful comic opera The Old Maid and the Thief is the story of two lonely women's desperate infatuation with a handsome stranger. It was commissioned as a radio opera by Samuel Chotzinoff of NBC and was one of the first operas composed especially for radio. It premiered on April 22, 1939 on the radio, and then on stage February 11, 1941. It was the first Menotti opera to be on television in 1943.10 In the opera, Miss Todd welcomes a young beggar man, Bob, into her home. Her servant, Laetitia, becomes infatuated with him. She shows her frustration with him in this aria.

Steal me, sweet thief

What a curse for a woman is a timid man! A week has gone by: he had plenty of chances.

But he made no advances, Miss Todd schemes and labors to get him some money, She robs friends and neighbors, the club and the church. He takes all the money with a smile that entrances, But still makes no advances.

The old woman sighs and makes languid eyes
All the drawers are wide open, all the doors are unlocked.

He neither seems pleased nor shocked.
He eats and drinks and sleeps,
He talks of baseball and boxing, but that is all
What a curse for a woman is a timid man.
Steal me, oh steal me sweet thief, for time's flight is stealing my youth, And the cares of life steal fleeting time.
Steal me, thief, for life is brief and full of theft and strife,
And then with furtive step death comes and steals time and life,
Oh sweet thief, I pray, make me die before dark death steals her prey.
Steal my lips before they crumble to dust.
Steal my heart before death must.
Steal my cheeks before they've sunk and decayed.
Steal my breath before it will fade.
Steal my lip, steal my heart, steal my cheek,
Steal, oh steal my breath and make me die before death will steal her prey;
Oh steal me, for time's flight is stealing my youth.

Translation by: Gian Carlo Menotti

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7 Capell, Richard. 201.
9 Kimball, Carol Song A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature, 211. Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2005
10 Kimball, Carol. 43-4.
12 Kimball, Carol. 509-510.