UNLV
Department of Music
College of Fine Arts
presents a
Doctoral Recital
Wen Zhang, mezzo-soprano
Karen McCann, piano

PROGRAM

Ennanno Wolf-Ferrari
(1876–1948)

Quattro Rispetti, Op. 12
Quando ti vidi
O guarda quel nobile augello
Angiolo delicato fresco e bello
Sia benedetto chi fece la mondo!

Alma Mahler
(1879–1964)

Fünf Lieder
Die stille Stadt
In meines Vaters Garten
Laue Sommernacht
Bei dir ist es traut
Ich wandle unter Blumen

INTERMISSION

Claude Debussy
(1862–1918)

Chansons de Bilitis
La flûte de Pan
La chevelure
Le tombeau des Naiades

Benjamin Britten
(1913–1976)

A Charm of Lullabies
A Cradle Song
The Highland Balou
Sephestia’s Lullaby
A Charm
The Nurse’s Song

Francisco Asenjo Barbieri
(1823–1893)

Lo que está de Dios

Sebastián de Iradier
(1809–1865)

El Arreglito

Rafael Taboada Mantilla
(1837–1914)

La Manola de Madrid

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Music Arts in Performance.

Wen Zhang is a student of Linda Lister.

Sunday, December 4, 2011 3:30 p.m.
Dr. Arturo Rando-Grillot Recital Hall
Lee and Thomas Beam Music Center
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Program notes

Quattro Rispetti, Op. 12

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari was born of German with Italian heritage; he divided his musical endeavors and his residency between the two cultures. This perspective allowed his music to unite the serious contrapuntal Germanic idea with the more graceful Italian Bel Canto style. 

Quattro Rispetti, Op. 12 was first published in 1904 as part of a “group-song.” The poet entreats his lover to give him her heart, now that her beauty has won him over.

Fünf Lieder

Alma Mahler, the wife of Gustav Mahler was one of the most wooed women of her time in Viennese artist salons. After marrying to Mahler in 1901, she gave up her compositional ambition “completely for him so that he will be happy” (her letter, 1901). She described her Five songs as “half song, half speech, half choral—a very peculiar art genre that I have put together here” (her letter, 1900). The choice of text, the melodic line and the piano writing are evidence that her mentality and her musical background led her in an unmaurerian direction, rather than the influence of Wagner (harmonically) and Brahms (formally). In meines Vaters Garten is her longest and most ambitious song-- 134-bar long and full of descriptive effects and chromatic modulations. In this song, she demonstrated that she could create an effective mood piece, but she failed to prove that she could unify her music as the song sprawls over nine rambling pages of imitations and incidents.

Chansons de Bilitis

Debussy set three poems from The Songs of Bilitis by his friend Pierre Louÿs. The songs are emblematic of Debussy’s art -- imagination, suggestion and dream-like, giving a fleeting existence to immaterial, abstract ideas. In La flûte de Pan, where simpering sexuality is defused by total innocence; La chevelure is expansive; and Le tombeau des Naïades, a barren landscape suggests an equal bleakness of spirit.

A Charm of Lullabies

Benjamin Britten wrote this song cycle for Nancy Evans in 1948; its content is far from conventional cradlesongs. In the opening song-- A Cradle Song, the mother sees all the lament sorrows, desires and wiles in her sleeping child’s face. The Highland Balou is about a child born to Highland chief; the jagged melodic line, dotted rhythms and loud outburst underline the point that there is no innocence to be nurtured in this cradle. Sephestia’s Lullaby is also a negation of innocence; the child, at first loved by the father becomes the cause of the parent’s separation. A Charm is an angry mother terrifying her baby into sleep-- who knows what would be the nightmare. The Nurse’s Song is the only one having the conventional lullaby features.

Spanish Songs

Spanish vocal music in the 19th century features lovely dance rhythms, beautiful poetry, and singable melodies that are equivalent to the lieder, mélodie and art songs produced in other countries. Lo que está de Dios (Barbieri) and La Manola de Madrid (Manilla) explore the breadth of the fiery Spanish temperament and the intensity of love and despair. El Arreglito (Iradier) has the Habanera melody from a folk song, which was also adopted by Bizet for his opera Carmen.