University of Nevada Las Vegas
College of Fine Arts
Department of Music

Presents

The UNLV Opera Theatre

Poet's Love

A Staged Song Cycle
&
A program of solos and arias

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Tuesday, December 5, 2006
7:30 p.m.
Doc Rando – Grillot Recital Hall
Beam Music Center
For many, Schumann’s *Dichterliebe* is the quintessential song cycle, an extraordinary synthesis of poetry and music. The poems in *Dichterliebe* sketch a story of unhappy love, the betrayal of the poet by his lover. For his texts, Schumann chose poems from Heine’s *Lyrisches Intermezzo* (1823), a collection of poems written after Heine’s cousin Amalie had reportedly rejected him for another lover, whom she married. The principal theme running through Heine’s work is unrequited love—often nostalgic, often bitter.

Schumann titled his cycle “Poet’s Love.” The original cycle had twenty songs, but four were excised before publication. Within what appears to be a rather simple theme there is a wide variety of moods. The poems run the gamut from infatuation and ecstasy to anger, irony, bitterness, and, finally, forgiveness. It is an intimate poetic journey, psychological as well as emotional. A thread of inner tension runs throughout the poetry: despite the loss of his love and his renunciation of the relationship, the poet is still in love with his beloved. He cannot reject her, and allows his despair to overcome and begin to destroy him until the idea of forgiveness surfaces. Even as the cycle ends, we are not convinced that he has been able to rid himself of her memory, but only has learned to live with his grief.  

**A Brief Synopsis**

On a serene spring day at the park, the poet, inspired by the nature’s beauty, is writing his journal, unaware of the quietly approaching girl. Overcome with the faint scent of the spring blossoms, they simultaneously reach for one. The undeniable attraction captures both of them at once. Their silent encounter is interrupted with the cheerful addition of the friends, who have been intently observing. The two lovers continue with their mutual declaration of love and desire until the girl realizes that the things may be getting closer to a point of no return for her, and withdraws silently. Distraught yet still hopeful, the poet reflects on his deep desire for the girl. Things change quickly once the suitor enters. The girl is swept away with diamonds and the poor poet is left behind, anguished, destroyed and still madly in love.

A wedding celebration takes place with cheerful songs and dances. The poet watches gloomily as the love of his life becomes a bitter memory. The girl is equally distraught with feelings of guilt and desperation as a group of ladies echo the universal tale of ‘boy loves girl,’ in the background.

The Poet visits the park many times only to realize that everything still bitterly reminds him of the girl. He hears the flowers whisper: forgive her! The poet and the girl frequently dream of one another, one driven by unfulfilled desires, the other by agonizing guilt. They dream of a magic land where the past is forgotten and hope offers a new beginning. In order to reach to the magic land, they both have to bury their short-lived love, forgive and forget...

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I.
In the glorious month of May,
when all the buds were bursting,
then in my heart love blossomed
In the glorious month of May,
when all the birds were singing,
then I told you my desires and my longings.

II.
From my tears come many flowers in bloom,
And my sighs turn into a choir of nightingales.
And if you love me child, I shall give you all the flowers,
and outside your window you shall hear the song of the nightingales.

III.
The rose, the lily, the dove, the sun,
I loved them all once blissfully.
I love them no more, I love only the small one, the neat one, the sweet one,
complete one.
She herself, the bliss of love, is my rose, my lily, and dove and sun...

IV.
When I gaze into your eyes
all my sorrow and pain are gone,
then when I kiss your lips
I become completely well.
When I lean on your chest,
joy of heaven comes over me;
yet when you say "I love you,"
I must weep bitterly.

V.
I want to dip my soul in the lily's cup;
the lily would sing in whispers a song from my beloved.
The song will quiver and tremble as the kiss of her lips
that once she gave me in an hour of wonderful sweetness.

VI.
In the Rhine, the holy river,
the waves reflect the great cathedral of great, sacred Cologne.
In the cathedral there hangs a picture painted on golden leather;
illuminating friendly rays into the wilderness of my life.
Flowers and angels hover around Our Lady;
Her eyes, her lips, her cheeks are exactly like my beloved's.

VII.
I do not complain though my heart is breaking,
Love lost forever! I do not complain.
Though you gleam with the glory of diamonds,
no light falls into the night of your heart.
I have known that for long.
I saw in my dreams the darkness and the emptiness of your heart,
and saw the serpent that gnaws at your heart;
and I saw, my love, how wretched you are.

VIII.
And if the little flowers knew how deeply wounded my heart is
they would weep with me to heal my pain.
And if the nightingales knew how sad and sick I am,
they would cheerfully sing to revive me.
And if my grief was known to the little golden stars,
they would come down from the sky and console me.
None of them can know, there is only one who knows my sorrow;
She is the one who broke, broke my heart.

IX.
Flutes and fiddles are playing, trumpets are blaring within.
There in the wedding circle dances the beloved of my heart.
There is a ringing din, drumming and piping,
and in between are the sobbing and wailing of the dear angels.

X.
When I hear the sound of the little song my love once sang,
my heart feels like bursting pressed by the fierce pain.
A dark longing drives me to the wooded heights;
there in tears my overwhelming grief is released.

XI.
A boy loves a girl, she has chosen another;
the other loves another girl and has wed her.
Out of spite the girl takes the next best fellow
who comes her way; the boy is hard hit.
It is an old tale but it remains ever new,
And when it actually happens it breaks the heart in twain.

XII.
On a bright summer morning I go around the garden.
The flowers whisper and speak but I wander quietly.
The flowers whisper and speak, and give me pitying looks:
"Do not be angry with our sister, you sad, pale man!"
XIII.

I wept in my dream; I dreamt you were lying in your grave. I awoke, and the tears still poured down my cheeks. I wept in my dream; I dreamt you were leaving me. I awoke, and kept on weeping long and bitterly. I wept in my dream; I dreamt you still liked me. I awoke, and still tears keep flooding out.

XIV.

All night in dreams I see you, and see you greet me warmly, and crying aloud I throw myself at your sweet feet. You look at me sadly and shake your fair head. From your eyes slip the little pearly teardrops. Secretly you whisper a word to me and give me a cypress wreath. I wake up and the wreath is gone and I have forgotten the word.

XV.

From old tales someone waves out with a white hand. There is singing and sounds of a magical land. Where gay flowers bloom in golden evening light, and, sweetly smelling, glow with faces radiant as brides; and green trees sing the ancient tunes; the breezes murmur softly and birds twitter along; and misty shapes rise up from the earth, and dance airy circles in a strange choir; and, sweetly smelling, glow with faces radiant as brides; and red sparks bum every leaf and twig, and reflections glow strangely in the streams. And be removed from all anguish, be free and happy.

XVI.

The old and evil songs, the dreams so evil and bad, let us bury them now in an enormous coffin. I'll put plenty in, but I won't say what; the coffin must be bigger than the barrel at Heidelberg. And bring a bier, sturdy thick planks; it too must be even longer than the bridge over Mainz. And bring me twelve giants stronger than Saint Christopher in Cologne Cathedral by the Rhine. They are to carry the coffin away and lower it into the ocean for such a large coffin deserves a large grave. Do you know why the coffin is so big and heavy? I also buried my love and my sorrow in it.

Alcina (1735)
Libretto by A. Marchi
Act I, Scene II
Tornami a vagheggiar

Morgana - Barbara Luckett
Ricciardo/Bradamante - Karen To

The story of Alcina involves three pairs of lovers who struggle to find their ideal mate. Morgana, Alcina's sister, has fallen in love with a man she knows as Ricciardo. Ricciardo is actually a woman named Bradamante who has traveled to Alcina's domain in order to find her fiancé, Ruggiero. Ruggiero has been bewitched by Alcina and believes that he is now in love with her. When Bradamante/Ricciardo arrives she is saddened to find that Ruggiero has forgotten her. To make matters worse Morgana, believing her to be the man Ricciardo, has fallen in love with her. Bradamante is forced to make the best of her situation and plays along in order to conceal her true identity. Her male disguise poses a greater problem when jealous Ruggiero assumes that Ricciardo is a rival for Alcina's affections. Ruggiero refuses to believe that Alcina does not have feelings for Ricciardo. In order to prove her steadfastness Alcina offers to turn Ricciardo into an animal using her magic powers. Morgana pleads with her sister to spare his life. When Alcina refuses Morgana runs to warn Ricciardo and begs him to flee to avoid a terrible fate.

Morgana begins her aria by asking Ricciardo to leave but begs him to return to continue loving her. She says that she has already given him her heart, and it would be cruel to leave her in pain. As Morgana pleads with her lover Bradamante comes to terms with having to pose as Ricciardo for a little while longer.

Gianni Schicchi (1918)
Libretto by G. Forzano
O mio babbino caro

Lauretta - Maureen Seymour
Rinuccio - Ivan Hardin
Gianni Schicchi - Grant Davis
Zita - Amanda Mura

The relatives of Buoso Donati are disinherited in favor of a religious order. They turn to Gianni Schicchi, a local tradesman, to help them out of their dilemma. Schicchi's daughter Lauretta and Rinuccio, nephew to Zita, have fallen in love, and only await a change in their fortunes to get a dowry for Lauretta so that they can get married. Lauretta sings her famous aria "O mio babbino caro" to convince her father to overlook his compunction for all the Despatis, and Zita especially.

¡Malditos Quereres!

Ivan Hardin
Rachel Haskett

A young man has lost a love but cannot move on. His passion burns as strong as the first day he laid eyes on his lover. She haunts him day and night and no matter what he tries to do he cannot rid his dreams of her memory. His passion leads him to feelings of resentment and anger towards her as he realizes that she is no longer his. He declares that he loves and hates her at the same time, that he wishes she were dead while at the same time wants her to live, but live only to love him.
Cherubino, Count Almaviva’s young page, has gotten into a bit of trouble around the castle. As a young adolescent boy he is beginning to have feelings for the women in the household, most recently the young maid Barbarina. The Count is losing patience with the young boy. Cherubino is unable to make sense of what is happening to him and confides in his friend Susanna in this aria. Susanna is amused by the young boy’s description of his first experience with love and beyond.

Cherubino continues to get himself into trouble with the Count due to his flirtations with the ladies of the household. As a result the Count sends him off to the military. Devastated, Cherubino comes to say goodbye to his friend Susanna and his beloved Countess. Susanna asks Cherubino to sing the love song he has composed in order to cheer the countess up a little. At first, hesitant and shy, Cherubino doesn’t want to perform in front of the lady of the household. He soon gains confidence as the Countess and Susanna urge him on. Cherubino then willingly laments about the confusing emotions he experiences. He concludes that although love at times is difficult to understand, he gladly takes the good with the bad.

This evening scene sets the stage for the finale of the opera in which Susanna and the Countess play an elaborate trick on the Count. The Count believes he is meeting Susanna in the garden for an evening tryst. The two women have actually switched places so that they can catch the Count in his mischief. Meanwhile Figaro, Susanna’s husband, is spying on the ladies from the bushes. Susanna is aware that her husband is hiding and plays on his jealousy in her recitative. She describes the excitement she feels as she awaits her lover, and how she can finally enjoy being in his arms without fear of discovery. Her aria is filled with images of the magical night and all the pleasures that await those in love.