



**University
of Victoria**

School of
Music

DEGREE RECITAL

Cassidy Stahr, mezzo-soprano

2 March 2020, 20:00

Phillip T. Young Recital Hall, MacLaurin Building

Free admission

Program

Sonetto proemio dell'opera: Mercé di voi

Barbara Strozzi
(1619 – 1677)

Olivia Duffin, *soprano I*
Chris Bork, *guitar*

Fünf Lieder, IAM 2

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*

Sandra Fletcher, *piano*

Tres poemas de Ítaca

Trey Daugherty
(b. 1988)

- I. *El orden*
- II. *Fiesta*
- III. *La espera*

Lea Fetterman, *violin*
Amanda Steinemann, *viola*
Aline Gilbert-Thévard, *cello*

~ INTERMISSION ~

Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson

Aaron Copland
(1900 – 1990)

- I. *Nature, the gentlest mother*
- II. *There came a wind like a bugle*
- III. *Why do they shut me out of Heaven?*
- IV. *The world feels dusty*
- V. *Heart, we will forget him*
- VI. *Dear March, come in!*
- VII. *Sleep is supposed to be*
- VIII. *When they come back*
- IX. *I felt a funeral in my brain*
- X. *I've heard an organ talk sometimes*
- XI. *Going to Heaven!*
- XII. *The Chariot*

Jorge Carrizales, *piano*

Translations

Sonetto proemio dell'opera – Strozzi

“Introduction sonnet”

I give thanks to you, my star of good fortune,
With Pindar's* flight among blessed choirs
And crowned with immortal laurels
Perhaps I will be called the new Sappho. **

And so, it is a difficult and beautiful task
To be happy in song and in love;
When our voices unite, our hearts
Can never be separated by a rebellious desire.

Oh! Such a pleasant and soft harmony
To create two loving and faithful souls,
So that one wishes for the desires of the other.

To rejoice in happiness, laughter upon laughter,
Never sighing, unless the sigh comes
From a death that heals and does not kill.

Italian text: Giulio Strozzi

Translation: C. Stahr

* Pindar (d. 438 BCE) was a Greek poet who is considered one of the greatest poets of his time. He wrote about classic Greek folklore in the form of odes, most commonly referred to as “victory odes.” These poems would begin with an invocation to a Greek deity.

** Sappho (d. 550 BCE) was also a Greek poet. She wrote erotic lyric poetry intended to be sung and accompanied by a lyre.

Fünf Lieder, IAM 2 – Mahler

Five Songs

I. Die stille Stadt

“The silent 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 of praise began,
Sung by children.

German text: Richard Dehmel

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II. In meines Vaters Garten

“In my father’s garden”

In my father's garden --
Bloom, my heart, bloom forth! --
In my father's garden
Stands a leafy apple tree --
Sweet dream --
Stands a leafy apple tree.

Three blonde King's daughter's --
Bloom, my heart, bloom forth --
Three wondrous maidens
Slept under the apple tree --
Sweet dream --
Slept under the apple tree.

The youngest of the fine ladies --
Bloom, my heart, bloom forth! --
The youngest of the fine ladies
Blinked but did not awake --
Sweet dream --
Blinked but did not awake.

The second moved a hand over her hair --
Bloom, my heart, bloom forth! --
Saw the red morning's dream--
Sweet dream --

She spoke: Did you not hear the drum?
Bloom, my heart, bloom forth! --
Sweet dream --
Clearly through the twilight space.

My beloved joins me on the battlefield --
Bloom, my heart, bloom forth --
My beloved joins me on the battlefield,
Kisses me as the victor on the hem of my uniform --
Sweet dream --
Kisses me on the hem of my uniform.

The third spoke -- and spoke so softly --
Bloom, my heart, bloom forth! --
The third spoke -- and spoke so softly --
I kiss the hem of my beloved's uniform.
Sweet dream --
I kiss the hem of my beloved's uniform.

In my father's garden --
Bloom, my heart, bloom forth! --
In my father's garden
Stands a sunny apple tree --
Sweet dream --
Stands a sunny apple tree.

German text: Otto Hartleben

Translation: Emily Ezust, from the LiederNet Archive, <https://www.lieder.net/>, ed. Stahr

III. *Laue Sommernacht*

“Mild summer night”

Mild summer night, in the sky
There are no stars; in the wide woods
We searched deep in the darkness
And we found ourselves.

We found ourselves in the wide woods,
In the night, the starless night;
We held ourselves in wonder in each other's arms
In the dark night.

Was not our entire life
Simply groping, simply searching?
There, into its darkness
Tumbled your light, Love.

German text: Otto Bierbaum

Translation: Emily Ezust

IV. *Bei dir ist es traut*

“I am at ease with you”

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!

German text: Rainer Maria Rilke
Translation: Knut W. Barde

V. *Ich wandle unter Blumen*

“I wander among the 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!

German text: Heinrich Heine
Translation: Emily Ezust

Tres Poemas de Ítaca – Daugherty
Three Poems of Ithaca

Spanish text: Francisca Aguirre
Translations: Ana Valverde Osan

I. *El orden*
“Orderliness”

We should do something other than dying,
but often death happens upon us so quietly
that only after a certain time do we know
we are inhabiting our own corpse.

Had we been warned,
if only a gesture had indicated
the decay that inhabited us,
perhaps we might have fought
against the slow enemy.

But there was a silence like orderliness,
retreating only to return later,
like the flow of a moderate tide.

No one wished to give us the bad news,
no one wished to warn us about the disaster.

Perhaps because death started turning me strange,
and the old words did not suffice,
and it was only possible to look,
to look at how death moves forward.

And now, from the other side of silence,
I also examine that look,
that gaze that does not ask but gives,
that future without a future
and I start crying about life
telling myself: Penelope,
we should do something other than dying.

II. Fiesta "The Party"

Sunday falls over me,

it falls
with the slow pace of things final,
always with the disintegration
of things without cause,
of what lives without a reason,
of what begins on something that closes;

it falls
like a soft rain
from a cloudless sky:
it rains on Sunday for no one,
like a refuted event,
like a corpse that might have a fever;

it falls
and I fall, too,
and perhaps the world also falls,
and everything falls I know not where,
and, like a river, it keeps on falling,
or it falls simply like a Sunday,
like an abandoned number
that lost its meaning
when we opened our hand
so that the white page
could fall from the palm of our hand to the ground.

III. La espera "The Wait"

The best thing we can do is not get scared.
I know it is very difficult to grip fear.
But fear also binds. It is a matter of knowing it
and not underestimating that wisdom.

Patience, a lot of patience,

in the midst of terror one can also have patience;
I would almost say it is essential.
One must move carefully,
figure out movements well:
a step in the wrong direction can mean destruction.

Fear, of course. A lot of fear:
no one wants to disintegrate.
But fear also integrates. One must not forget it.
Take it for granted: this task is no fun,
but in instances such as the present one
the best thing to do is look at things with realism.
Nothing helps as much as reality.

The best we can do
is look affectionately at consolation;
when one is afraid,
words of comfort should not be turned down.
Anyone may die,
but to die alone takes longer.

And if fear keeps growing,
one must lean one's back against another's.
It is soothing.
It inspires a certain sense of security
while the wait lasts, Telemachus, my son.

Poetry in the **12 Poems of Emily Dickinson** – Copland

I. Nature, the gentlest mother

Nature, the gentlest mother
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest,
Her admonition mild.

In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon,
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep

She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky,

With infinite affection
And infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

II. There came a wind like a bugle

There came a wind like a bugle;
It quivered through the grass,
And a green chill upon the heat
So ominous did pass.

We barred the windows and the doors
As from an emerald ghost;
The doom's electric moccasin
That very instant passed.

On a strange mob of panting trees,
And fences fled away,
And rivers where the houses ran
The living looked—that Day—

The bell within the steeple wild
The flying tidings whirled.
How much can come
And much can go,
And yet abide the world!

III. Why do they shut me out of Heaven?

Why do they shut me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?
But I can sing a little minor, timid as a bird.
Wouldn't the angels try me just once more,
Just see if I troubled them? But don't shut the door.

Oh, if I were the gentlemen in the white robes
And they were the little hand that knocked...
Could I forbid?

Why do they shut me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?

IV. The world feels dusty

The world feels dusty when we stop to die.
We want the dew then; honors taste dry.
Flags vex a dying face, but the least fan
Stirred by a friend's hand cools like the rain.

Mine be the ministry when thy thirst comes.
Dews of thyself to fetch, and holy balms.

V. Heart, we will forget him

Heart, we will forget him.
You and I, tonight.
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray, tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste, lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him.

VI. Dear March, come in!

Dear March, come in!
How glad I am, I looked for you before!
Put down your hat; you must have walked.
How out of breath you are!

Dear March, how are you... and the rest?
Did you leave Nature well?
Oh, March, come right upstairs with me,
I have so much to tell!

I got your letter, and the bird's.
The maples never knew that you were coming.
I declare, how red their faces grew!

But March, forgive me,
And all those hills you left for me to hue.
There was no purple suitable;
You took it all with you.

Who knocks? That April?
Lock the door!

I will not be pursued.
He stayed away a year
To call when I am occupied.

But trifles look so trivial
As soon as you have come.
And blame is just as dear as praise,
And praise as mere as blame.

VII. Sleep is supposed to be

Sleep is supposed to be –
By souls of sanity –
The shutting of the eye.

Sleep is the station grand.
By which on either hand
The hosts of witness stand.

Morn is supposed to be –
By people of degree –
The breaking of the day.

Morning has not occurred!
That shall aurora be
East of Eternity;

One with the banner gay,
One in the red array,
That is the break of day.

VIII. When they come back

When they come back, if blossoms do,
I always feel a doubt
If blossoms can be born again
When once the art is out.

When they begin, if robins do,
I always had a fear
I did not tell, it was their last experiment
Last year.

When it is May, if May return,
Has nobody a pang
That on a face so beautiful
We might not look again?

If I am there,
One does not know
What party one may be
Tomorrow, but if I am there
I take back all I say.

IX. I felt a funeral in my brain

I felt a funeral in my brain,
And mourners to and fro,
Kept treading, treading, till it seemed
That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated
A service like a drum
Kept beating, beating, till I thought
My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,
And creak across my soul
With those same boots of lead, again.
Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,
And being but an ear,
And I and silence, some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here.

X. I've heard an organ talk sometimes

I've heard an organ talk, sometimes
In a cathedral aisle,

And understood no word it said,
Yet held my breath, the while.

And risen up and gone away,
A more Bernardine girl
And know not what was done to me
In that old hallowed aisle.

XI. Going to Heaven!

Going to Heaven!
I don't know when,
Pray do not ask me how, –
Indeed I'm too astonished
To think of answering you!

Going to Heaven! –
How dim it sounds!
And yet it will be done
As sure as flocks go home at night
Unto the shepherd's arm!

Perhaps you're going too!
Who knows?
If you should get there first
Save just a little place for me
Close to the two I lost!

The smallest "robe" will fit me,
And just a bit of "crown";
For you know we do not mind our dress
When we are going home.

Going to Heaven!
I'm glad I don't believe it
For it would stop my breath,
And I'd like to look a little more
At such a curious earth!

I am glad they did believe it
Whom I have never found
Since the mighty autumn afternoon
I left them in the ground.

XII. The Chariot

Because I would not stop for Death —
He kindly stopped for me —
The carriage held but just ourselves —
and Immortality.
We slowly drove — he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labour, and my leisure too
For His Civility —

We passed the school, where children played,
Their lessons scarcely done.

We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.
We paused before a house that seemed
a swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Bios

Trey Daugherty (b. 1988) is an American composer living in Tennessee where he is active as an organist and voice instructor. His works include the ballet "Appalachian Winter", "Overture for St. Cecilia Day" for Organ and Orchestra, the cantatas "For He Was King" and "Requiem from the Highlands", and several works for chamber groups. Most recently he attended the Composing for Choirs summer course at Oxford University, England.

Francisca Aguirre (1930 – 2019), poet of the *Tres Poemas* song set, was born in Alicante, Spain. When she was fifteen, she joined the workforce as a secretary, and later became an editor of literary texts, a translator, and a writer of encyclopedias. Like many other contemporary poets, she started to publish late in life. *Ithaca*, which is a collection of poems reimagining Homer's *Odyssey* from the perspective of Odysseus' wife, Penelope, was Aguirre's first published book, and it earned her the Leopoldo Panero award in 1971.

Program Notes

This program encapsulates fragments of life; it is a collection which begins with joyful and bittersweet memories and, as the evening progresses, time becomes fleeting, and the concept of a finite end – of joy and of existence – permeates in the speaker's mind. An exploration begins: how does one prepare to leave the Earth? What are the emotional journeys one takes to come to accept that life is a cycle that must end with death?

I selected the works for this evening on the basis of these themes, but I was also programming on a principle of gender equality, an issue in which, as a woman, I strongly believe. I accounted for composers as well as writers and poets. Notably, *Twelve Poems* composer Aaron Copland wondered aloud if "there [was] a mysterious element in the nature of musical creativity that runs counter to the nature of the feminine mind," and I assure you that the compositions I have chosen tonight prove him wrong.

I have been fascinated by Greek mythology since I was little, and my program happens to reflect my fascination, incorporating a handful of references to Ancient Greece. Following the reference to famed poets Pindar and Sappho in the text of Strozzi's *Mercé di voi*, the most poignant

example is in Trey Daugherty's *Tres Poemas de Ítaca*, which uses text from Francisca Aguirre's epic poem; it tells the story of Homer's *Odyssey* from the perspective of Penelope. She stays, alone, on the island of Ithaca with her son, Telemachus, desperate for a sign that Odysseus will return to keep her suitors at bay. Her sanity is unraveling, yet she is contemplative in her confinement, and her realizations are universally relatable.

Trey and I were introduced to one another in Oxford last year at the summer program he mentioned in his bio. He and I were fast friends, and I became interested in his style of composition after having studied some of his choral works while we were both attending the college.

He composed *Tres Poemas* for this occasion, and I chose the text. Although I don't speak Spanish fluently, I enjoy the beauty of the language, and I have hardly given myself much opportunity to sing it. I spent hours sitting in the McPherson Library reading (translated) works of female Spanish poets before deciding to select excerpts from Aguirre's *Odyssey*-themed collection.

Her entire poem is available in paperback format with intermixed English translations by Dr. Ana Osan, and I have brought my own copy of it to the Music Lounge. It will be available to browse during intermission and after the show.

Whereas Mahler's *Fünf Lieder* is comprised of tableaux in five different literary voices, Copland's *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson* is more streamlined, in my interpretation, because every poem is central to the character of its author. Dickinson lived a private, secluded life throughout adulthood, and at 14 years old she had her first close encounter with Death: she was profoundly affected by the loss of her second cousin, so much so that she had to take time away from her educational institute and move back in with her family. None of the Twelve Poems performed tonight were intended for the public; Dickinson's younger sister found her collection and published it after her death. She wrote for an audience of only herself, and that is why these poems tend to portray such intense emotions.

"I had no intention of composing a song cycle," wrote Copland. His interest in the Dickinson poems began with *The Chariot* and he gradually added others. The cycle is Copland's longest work for solo voice. He explained, "Each song is meant to be complete in itself, but I prefer them to be sung as a cycle. They seem to have a cumulative effect." *The Chariot* is the only song that does not derive from the first line of the poem. It was this Dickinson poem that sparked Copland's interest in her writings. He wrote, "The first lines absolutely threw me: Because I could not stop for Death, he kindly stopped for me; the carriage held but just ourselves and immortality."

- Vivian Perlis

Cassidy is from the class of Prof. Susan Young

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Music
(Performance) program.*