Faculty Recital

Benjamin Butterfield, tenor
Bruce Vogt, piano

Saturday, September 15, 2012 at 8:00 p.m.
Phillip T. Young Recital Hall
MacLaurin Building, University of Victoria
Adults: $17.50 / Students & seniors: $13.50
Program

Beau soir
Mandoline
Green
Lydia
Sylvie
Phidylé

An die ferne Geliebte

Intermission
(Beverages and snacks available at the concession located in the lounge)

Winter Words

Lonely at the top
Simon Smith and the amazing dancing bear
Short people
Marie
Real emotional girl
Texas girl at the funeral of her father

Dayton Ohio, 1903
From Debussy, Fauré and Duparc, the pillars of French melodies, to the founding musical elements of Beethoven, we see in this evening’s program a depiction of the many faces of love. Of course this journey does not come without touching upon despair and desolation - as we see later in Britten’s *Winter Words* – as well as in the irony of Randy Newman!

Debussy’s early *Beau Soir* muses on the vast spectrum of our existence through love and death; *Mandolin* and *Green* chatter and tremble with the intrigues of love offered up by the objects of its desire as found in Fauré’s *Lydia, Sylvie* and the epic *Phidylé* of Duparc.

With *An die ferne Geliebte*, the first true “song cycle”, we are thrust back into the solid foundations of song in Beethoven’s through-composed setting of Jeitteles’ verses. Whereas the song cycle achieved its zenith later with Schubert and Schumann, Beethoven’s raw and exposed declaration of love at a distance maintains its place in the repertoire with its timeless theme of love’s hope springing eternal.

In sharp contrast to this, Britten’s cycle *Winter Words* takes us on an equally personal journey, but this time through the loss of love, paired with the hope (…perhaps) that time will act as a balm to help heal the pain of loss.

In even starker contrast – hardly an uplifting conclusion to this journey and yet perhaps an inevitable one – we enter the ironic world of American songwriter Randy Newman, best known today for his work with Pixar. One of the purest songwriters of our time, Randy Newman exposes the delicacy of the human condition by drawing upon man’s own shortcomings; by delving into parts of the soul where there is no chance for reflection in a romantic manner. Empathetically Newman goes where few people dare to go. Like the impressionists, like Beethoven and Britten before him, Newman suggests foundations for a brave new world of expression through song, where words and melody pierce to the very core of our frailty.

~ Benjamin Butterfield