

Olga Melendez Valdes
soprano

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Master of Music degree, 2024
Student of Jane Eaglen

with
JJ Penna, piano

Grief through the Looking-Glass

Sunday, March 10, 2024
12:00 noon
Burnes Hall

PROGRAM

Giuseppe Verdi
(1813–1901)

from *Sei Romanze*
No. 3, In solitaria stanza
No. 1, Non t'accostar all'urna

Hector Berlioz
(1803–1869)

from *Les nuits d'été, op. 7*
No. 2, Le spectre de la rose
No. 3, Sur les lagunes

Intermission

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

Meine liebe ist grün wie der Fliederbusch
from *Neun Lieder und Gesänge*, op. 63 no. 5

O kühler Wald
from *Fünf Gesänge*, op. 72 no. 3

Ach, wende diesen Blick
from *Acht Lieder und Gesänge*, op. 57 no. 4

An eine Äolsharfe
from *Fünf Gedichte*, op. 19 no. 5

Henry Purcell
(1658–1695)

Dido's Lament from *Dido and Aeneas*

Benjamin Britten
(1913–1976)

Funeral Blues from *Cabaret Songs*

*First and foremost, I would like to thank God
for blessing me with the strength, knowledge and sufficient love
to complete this wonderful milestone.*

*To my treasured parents, Manuel and Zaribe,
who have been the biggest supporters and motivators in my life;
thank you for always being by my side and holding my dreams up in the light.*

*To my beloved team of teachers and mentors: Jane Eaglen, Jacqueline Dickey, Richard Bower,
Monica Soto-Gil, Dr. Hsin-Yi Lin, and so many others –
for all your encouragement, infinite wisdom and unwavering support.
I thank you all for changing my life and being part of my village.*

*To the insanely talented JJ Penna,
who embarked on this recital journey with me and whose support
has been invaluable to this process,
thank you for sharing your artistry and wisdom with me.*

*To my friends,
thank you for inspiring me, giving me cherished experiences,
and for being peers in this journey of self-actualization.
Our love and shared humanity make this life worth living.*

*Lastly, I would like to thank my siblings, Abby and Junior.
Thank you both for being my first audience members, co-creators, and dream enablers.
You both are God's greatest gift to me as an artist and a person.*

Verdi's *Sei Romanze* (Six Songs) of 1838 was his first published work, composed in 1836. This set of songs touch on the themes of death and loss that foreshadow the tragedy found in his later operatic works.

In solitaria stanza

*In solitaria stanza
Langue per doglia atroce;
Il labbro è senza voce,
Senza respiro il sen,*

*Come in deserta aiuola,
Che di rugiade è priva,,
Sotto alla vampa estiva
Molle narcisso svien.*

*Io, dall'affanno oppresso,
Corro per vie remote,
E grido in suon che potete
Le rupi intenerir:*

*Salvate, o Dei pietosi,
Quella beltà celeste;
Voi forse non sapreste
Un'altra Irene ordir.*

Non t'accostar all'urna

*Non t'accostar all'urna,
Che il cener mio rinserra,
Questa pietosa terra
È sacra al mio dolor.*

*Odio gli affanni tuoi
Ricuso i tuoi giacinti,
Che giovano agli estinti
Due lagrime, [o due] fior?*

*Empia! Dovevi allora
Porgermi un fil d'aita,
Quando traeva la vita
Nell'ansia e nei sospir.*

In a solitary room

*In a solitary room
He languishes in horrible pain;
His lips are without voice,
His breast without breath.*

*As in a deserted flower bed
That is deprived of dew,
Beneath the blaze of summer
The weak narcissus wilts.*

*I, oppressed from desire,
Run through remote paths
And cry out a sound that could
Crumble the cliffs.*

*Save, oh piteous God,
This heavenly beauty;
Perhaps, you may not know of
Another Irene to conspire against.*

Do not approach the urn

*Do not approach the urn,
That encloses my ashes,
This holy ground
Is sacred to my sorrow.*

*I hate your anguish
I refuse your hyacinths,
What use are to the dead
Two tears or two flowers?*

*Wicked one! You should then
Have offered me a thread of help
When my life was pulled
Into anxiety and sighing.*

*A che d'inutil pianto
Assordi la foresta?
Rispetta un'Ombra mesta,
E lasciala dormir.*

Jacopo Vittorelli

Why with useless crying
Do you deafen the forest?
Respect a sad soul
And let it sleep.

Translations © 2003-2024, IPA Source

In *Les nuits d'été*, **Berlioz** sets six poems written by his close friend Théophile Gautier (1811-72) from the volume *La comédie de la mort* (The comedy of death). The poems consider love from different perspectives, but loss of love permeates them all. When performed as a cycle, the songs convey this loss all the more strongly, not just as individual compositions touched by melancholy, but as a coherent conception of the relationship between that which is longed for and is yet unattainable.

Le spectre de la rose

*Soulève ta paupière close
Qu'effleure un songe virginal;
Je suis le spectre d'une rose
Que tu portais hier au bal.
Tu me pris encore emperlée
Des pleurs d'argent de l'arrosoir,
Et parmi le fête étoilée
Tu me promenas tout le soir.*

*Ô toi, qui de ma mort fus cause,
Sans que tu puisses le chasser,
Toutes les nuits mon spectre rose
À ton chevet viendra danser.
Mais ne crains rien, je ne réclame
Ni messe ni De profundis;
Ce léger parfum est mon âme,
Et j'arrive du paradis.*

*Mon destin fut digne d'envie:
Et pour avoir un sort si beau,
Plus d'un aurait donné sa vie
Car sur ton sein j'ai mon tombeau,
Et sur l'albâtre où je repos
Un poète avec un baiser
Écrivit: Ci-gît une rose
Que tous les rois vont jalouser.*

The spectre of the rose

Open your eyelids,
Brushed by a virginal dream;
I am the spectre of a rose
That yesterday you wore at the dance.
You plucked me still sprinkled
With silver tears of dew,
And amid the glittering feast
You wore me all evening long.

O you who brought about my death,
You shall be powerless to banish me:
The rosy spectre which every night
Will come to dance at your bedside.
But be not afraid – I demand
Neither Mass nor De Profundis;
This faint perfume is my soul,
And I come from Paradise.

My destiny was worthy of envy;
And for such a beautiful fate,
Many would have given their lives –
For my tomb is on your breast,
And on the alabaster where I lie,
A poet with a kiss
Has written: Here lies a rose
Which every king will envy.

Sur les lagunes

Ma belle amie est morte,
Je pleurerai toujours;
Sous la tombe elle emporte
Mon âme et mes amours.
Dans le ciel, sans m'attendre,
Elle s'en retourna:
L'ange qui l'emmena
Ne voulut pas me prendre.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! Sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!
La blanche créature
Est couchée au cercueil;
Comme dans la nature
Tout me paraît en deuil!
La colombe oubliée
Pleure et songe à l'absent;
Mon âme pleure et sent
Qu'elle est dépareillée.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! Sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

Sur moi la nuit immense
S'étend comme un linceul,
Je chante ma romance
Que le ciel entend seul.
Ah! Comme elle était belle,
Et comme je l'aimais!
Je n'aimerai jamais
Une femme autant qu'elle.
Que mon sort est amer!
Ah! Sans amour, s'en aller sur la mer!

Théophile Gautier

On the lagoons

My dearest love is dead,
I shall weep for evermore;
To the tomb she takes with her
My soul and all my love.
To heaven, without waiting for me,
She has returned:
The angel who took her away
Did not wish to take me.
How bitter is my fate!
Ah! Loveless, I am sent out to sea!
The pure white creature
Lies in her coffin:
How everything in nature
Seems to mourn!
The forgotten dove
Weeps and dreams of its absent mate;
My soul weeps and feels
That she is disappearing.
How bitter is my fate!
Ah! Loveless, I am sent out to sea!

The immense night above me
Extends like a shroud,
I sing my romances
Which only heaven can hear.
Ah! How beautiful she was,
And how I loved her!
I shall never love
A woman as I loved her.
How bitter is my fate!
Ah! Loveless, I am sent out to sea!

Translation © Richard Stokes, author of *A French Song Companion* (Oxford University Press),
provided via Oxford International Song Festival
(www.oxfordsong.org)

Meine Liebe ist grün wie der Fliederbusch

*Meine Liebe ist grün wie der Fliederbusch,
Und mein lieb ist schön wie die Sonne;
Die glänzt wohl herab auf dem Fliederbusch
Und füllt ihn mit Duft und mit Wonne.*

*Meine Seele hat schwingen der Nachtigall
Und wiegt sich in blühendem Flieder,
Und jauchzet und singet vom Duft berauscht
Viel liebestrunkene Lieder.*

Felix Schumann

O kühler Wald

*O kühler Wald, wo rauschest du,
In dem mein Liebchen geht?
O Widerhall, wo lauschest du,
Der gern mein Lied versteht?*

*Im Herzen tief, da rauscht der Wald,
In dem mein Liebchen geht,
In Schmerzen schlief der Widerhall,
Die Lieder sind verweht.*

Clemens Brentano

Ach, wende diesen Blick

*Ach, wende diesen blick,
Wende dies Angesicht!
Das Inn're mir mit ewig neuer Glut,
Mit ewig neuem Harm erfülle nicht!*

*Wenn einmal die gequälte Seele ruht,
Und mit so fieberischer Wilde nicht
In meinen Adern rollt das heiße Blut-*

*Ein Strahl, ein flüchtiger, von deinem Licht,
Er wecker auf des Wehs gesamte Wut,
Das schlangengleich mich in das Herze sticht.*

Georg Friedrich Daumer

My Love is Green Like the Lilac Bush

*My love is green like the lilac bush,
And my beloved is beautiful like the sun;
It shines right down onto the lilac bush
And fills it with fragrance and with bliss.*

*My soul has the wings of a nightingale
And rocks itself in blossoming lilac,
And exults and sings, drunk with fragrance,
Many love-drunk songs.*

Oh Cool Forest

*Oh cool forest, where are you rustling,
In which my darling walks?
Oh echo, where are you listening
Gladly, understanding my songs?*

*Deep in my heart, there rustles the forest,
In which my darling walks,
In sorrows slept the echo,
The songs have blown away.*

Ah, Turn Away That Gaze

*Ah, turn away that gaze,
Turn away that face!
Do not fill my inner being with ever new fire,
With ever new sorrow!*

*If for once my tormented soul is at rest,
And without such feverish wildness
Within my veins surges hot blood-*

*One ray, one fleeting ray of your light,
Awakens the full fury of my pain,
Which like a snake bites into my heart.*

In 1838, Eduard Mörike wrote his poem *An eine Äolsharfe*, where he remembers his dead brother. He asks the wind to travel from the boy's grave to his garden to play the aeolian harp. The wind brings memories and the harp vibrates in unison with the lament of his soul.

Dedicated in loving memory of my brother, Junior Manuel Melendez Valdes (2002–2022).

An eine Äolsharfe

Angelehnt an die Epheuwand
Dieser alten Terrasse,
Du, einer luftgebor'nen Muse
Geheimnisvolles Saitenspiel,
Fang an,
Fange wieder an
Deine melodische Klage!
Ihr kommet, Winde, fern herüber,
Ach, von des Knaben,
Der mir so lieb war,
Frisch grünendem Hügel.
Und Frühlingsblüten unterwegs streifend,
Übersättigt mit Wohlgerüchen,
Wie süß bedrängt ihr dies Herz!
Und säuselt her in die Saiten,
Angezogen von wohl lautender Wehmut,
Wachsend im Zug meiner Sehnsucht,
Und hinsterbend wieder.
Aber, auf einmal,
Wie der Wind heftiger herstösst,
Ein holder Schrei der Harfe
Wiederholt zu süßem Erschrecken
Meiner Seele plötzliche Regung,
Und hier, die volle Rose streut geschüttelt

All' ihre Blätter vor meine Füße!

Eduard Mörike

To an Aeolian Harp

Leaning against the ivy-covered wall
Of this old terrace,
You, mysterious lyre
Of an air-born muse,
Begin,
Begin again
Your melodious lament!
You, winds, come here from afar,
Ah, from the boy's,
Who was so dear to me,
Freshly greening grave.
And, having lightly brushed spring blossoms
On the way, saturated with fragrances,
How sweetly you oppress my heart!
And murmur hither into the strings,
Attracted by euphonious melancholy,
Growing along with my yearning,
And dying away again.
But all of a sudden,
With a more vehement gust of wind,
A lovely cry of the harp
Repeats, to my sweet alarm,
My soul's sudden stirring,
And here, the full blown rose shaken by the
wind,
Scatters all its petals at my feet!

*Translations adapted from those copyrighted © by
Emily Ezust, from the LiederNet Archive –
<https://www.lieder.net/>*

After Dido orders Aeneas to leave due to his betrayal, she states that “Death must come when he is gone.” The opera and Dido's life both slowly come to a conclusion, as the Queen of Carthage sings her last aria in the arms of her confidant; Belinda.

Dido's Lament

Thy hand, Belinda, darkness shades me;
On thy bosom let me rest.

More I would, but death invades me:
Death is now a welcome guest.

When I am laid in earth,
May my wrongs create,
No trouble in the breast.
Remember me, but ah! Forget my fate.

Nahum Tate

The tension between private, *public* and personal expressions of grief is what energizes *Funeral Blues*. There's an honesty in the poem depicting bereavement as impossible to cope with, and Auden reveals how easy it is to feel frustrated when, as one person's world completely falls apart, the rest of us carry on our daily business as if nothing has happened.

Funeral Blues

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message 'He is Dead',
Tie crêpe bands 'round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love could last forever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one,
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun,
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W.H. Auden

Upcoming Student Recitals at NEC

all programs subject to change

Visit necmusic.edu for complete and updated concert information

Zack Bacak, *jazz saxophone* (MM)

Student of Frank Carlberg and Jerry Bergonzi

Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Donovan Bown, *oboe* (MM)

Student of John Ferrillo

Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Roger Dahlin, *trombone* (MM)

Student of James Markey

Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., Keller Room

Xianyi Ji, *clarinet* (BM)

Student of Richard Stoltzman and Andrew Sandwick

Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Adam Chen, *bassoon* (BM)

Student of Marc Goldberg

Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Brown Hall

Willow Otten, *French horn* (MM)

Student of Rachel Childers

Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Nicholas Tsang Man To, *cello* (MM)

Student of Laurence Lesser

Sunday, March 10, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Yimin Ji, *jazz trombone* (MM)

Student of Marshall Gilkes, Bob Nieske, and Donny McCaslin

Monday, March 11, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Bowen Chen, *violin* (DMA '26)

Student of Paul Biss

Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room

Upcoming Student Recitals at NEC

—continued

Jeong Won Choe, *flute* (MM)

Student of Paula Robison

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Burnes Hall

Thompson Wang, *violin* (MM)

Student of Donald Weilerstein and Ayano Ninomiya

Wednesday, March 13, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room

Logan From, *jazz saxophone* (MM)

Student of Ken Schaphorst, Jerry Bergonzi, Melissa Aldana, and Donny McCaslin

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Alyssa Peterson, *double bass* (BM '25)

Student of Donald Palma

Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Williams Hall

Yoonsu Cha, *harp* (MM)

Student of Jessica Zhou

Friday, March 15, 2024 at 8:30 p.m., Brown Hall

Lihyeon Kim, *piano* (MM)

Student of Alessio Bax and Pavel Nersessian

Friday, March 15, 2024 at 8:30 p.m., Williams Hall

Felix Ko, *percussion* (MM)

Student of Will Hudgins, Daniel Bauch, and Tim Genis

Friday, March 15, 2024 at 8:30 p.m., Burnes Hall

Hang Zhong, *piano* (MM)

Student of Bruce Brubaker

Sunday, March 24, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room

Zoe Beck, *bassoon* (BM)

Student of Suzanne Nelsen

Monday, March 25, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Pierce Hall

Man To Kwong, *viola* (GD)

Student of Nicholas Cords

Monday, March 25, 2024 at 8:00 p.m., Keller Room

Food and drink are not allowed in the concert hall,
and photography and audio or video recording are prohibited.
Assistive listening devices are available for all Jordan Hall concerts;
contact the head usher or house manager on duty or inquire at the Coat Room.
Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of management.

Stay connected



necmusic.edu/tonight