

Sydney Pexton

soprano

Recital in partial fulfillment of the
Master of Music degree, 2025
Student of Carole Haber

with
J.J. Penna, piano
Céline Bethoux, violin

Friday, May 2, 2025
8:30 p.m.
Williams Hall

PROGRAM

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

“L’amerò, sarò costante” from *Il re pastore*, K. 208

Célina Bethoux, violin

Claude Debussy
(1862–1918)

Ariettes oubliées, L. 60

C’est l’extase langoureuse

Il pleure dans mon cœur

L’ombre des arbres

Chevaux de bois

Green (Aquarelle)

Spleen (Aquarelle)

Joseph Marx
(1882–1964)

Selige Nacht

Und gestern hat er mir Rosen gebracht

Nocturne

Intermission

Aaron Jay Kernis
(b. 1960)

Simple Songs

Hildegard of Bingen

Psalm I

Ryokan

Rumi

Psalm 131

Kevin Puts
(b. 1972)

Evening

I'd like to thank...

*My teacher, Ms. Haber,
for her incredible guidance, her honesty and her caring heart;*

*My coach and collaborator, JJ Penna,
For his invaluable insight, his artistry, and his endless patience;*

*My family,
for their unwavering support, unconditional love and encouragement;*

*My friends,
for the laughter, the boba and making NEC feel like home.*

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

*Sydney Pexton is the recipient of a scholarship made possible by
the Lincoln and Therese Filene Voice Scholarship Fund.*

L'amerò, sarò costante

*L'amerò, sarò costante;
Fido sposo e fido amante
Sol per lei sospirerò.*

*In sì caro e dolce oggetto
La mia gioia, il mio diletto,
La mia pace io troverò.*

Pietro Antonio Domenico Bonaventura
Trapassi

C'est l'extase langoureuse

*C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
Le chœur des petites voix.*

*Ô le frêle et frais murmure!
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire ...
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.*

*Cette âme qui se lamente
En cette plainte dormante
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas?
La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas?*

Il pleure dans mon cœur

*Il pleure dans mon cœur
Comme il pleut sur la ville;
Quelle est cette langueur
Qui pénètre mon cœur?*

I shall love her, I shall be faithful

I shall love her, I shall be faithful,
A loyal husband and constant lover.
I shall only sigh for her.

In such a dear and sweet object,
I shall find my joy,
my delight, and my peace

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<https://www.lieder.net/>*

It is languorous rapture

It is languorous rapture,
It is amorous fatigue,
It is all the tremors of the forest
In the breezes' embrace,
It is, around the grey branches,
The choir of tiny voices.

O the delicate, fresh murmuring!
The warbling and whispering,
It is like the soft cry
The ruffled grass gives out ...
You might take it for the muffled sound
Of pebbles in the swirling stream.

This soul which grieves
In this subdued lament,
It is ours, is it not?
Mine, and yours too,
Breathing out our humble hymn
On this warm evening, soft and low?

Tears fall in my heart

Tears fall in my heart
As rain falls on the town;
What is this torpor
Pervading my heart?

Ô bruit doux de la pluie
Par terre et sur les toits!
Pour un cœur qui s'ennuie
Ô le bruit de la pluie!

Il pleure sans raison
Dans ce cœur qui s'écœure.
Quoi! nulle trahison? ...
Ce deuil est sans raison.

C'est bien la pire peine
De ne savoir pourquoi
Sans amour et sans haine,
Mon cœur a tant de peine.

L'ombre des arbres

L'ombre des arbres dans la rivière embrumée
Meurt comme de la fumée
Tandis qu'en l'air, parmi les ramures réelles,
Se plaignent les tourterelles.

Combien, ô voyageur, ce paysage blême
Te mira blême toi-même,
Et que tristes pleuraient dans les hautes feuillées
Tes espérances noyées!

Chevaux de bois

Tournez, tournez, bons chevaux de bois,
Tournez cent tours, tournez mille tours,
Tournez souvent et tournez toujours,
Tournez, tournez au son des hautbois.

L'enfant tout rouge et la mère blanche,
Le gars en noir et la fille en rose,
L'une à la chose et l'autre à la pose,
Chacun se paie un sou de dimanche.

Tournez, tournez, chevaux de leur cœur,
Tandis qu'autour de tous vos tournois
Clignote l'œil du filou sournois,
Tournez au son du piston vainqueur!

Ah, the soft sound of rain
On the ground and roofs!
For a listless heart,
Ah, the sound of the rain!

Tears fall without reason
In this disheartened heart.
What! Was there no treason? ...
This grief's without reason.

And the worst pain of all
Must be not to know why
Without love and without hate
My heart feels such pain.

The shadow of trees

The shadow of trees in the misty stream
Dies like smoke,
While up above, in the real branches,
The turtle-doves lament.

How this faded landscape, O traveller,
Watched you yourself fade,
And how sadly in the lofty leaves
Your drowned hopes were weeping!

Merry-go-round

Turn, turn, you fine wooden horses,
Turn a hundred, turn a thousand times,
Turn often and turn for evermore
Turn and turn to the oboe's sound.

The red-faced child and the pale mother,
The lad in black and the girl in pink,
One down-to-earth, the other showing off,
Each buying a treat with his Sunday sou.

Turn, turn, horses of their hearts,
While the furtive pickpocket's eye is flashing
As you whirl about and whirl around,
Turn to the sound of the conquering cornet!

*C'est étonnant comme ça vous soûle
D'aller ainsi dans ce cirque bête:
Rien dans le ventre et mal dans la tête,
Du mal en masse et du bien en foule.*

*Tournez, dadas, sans qu'il soit besoin
D'user jamais de nuls éperons
Pour commander à vos galops ronds:
Tournez, tournez, sans espoir de foin.*

*Et dépêchez, chevaux de leur âme,
Déjà voici que sonne à la soupe
La nuit qui tombe et chasse la troupe
De gais buveurs que leur soif affame.*

*Tournez, tournez! Le ciel en velours
D'astres en or se vêt lentement.
L'église tinte un glas tristement.
Tournez au son joyeux des tambours!*

Green

*Voici des fruits, des fleurs, des feuilles et des
branches
Et puis voici mon cœur qui ne bat que pour vous.*

*Ne le déchirez pas avec vos deux mains blanches
Et qu'à vos yeux si beaux l'humble présent soit
doux.*

*J'arrive tout couvert encore de rosée
Que le vent du matin vient glacer à mon front.
Souffrez que ma fatigue à vos pieds reposée
Rêve des chers instants qui la délasseront.*

*Sur votre jeune sein laissez rouler ma tête
Toute sonore encore de vos derniers baisers;
Laissez-la s'apaiser de la bonne tempête,
Et que je dorme un peu puisque vous reposez.*

Spleen

*Les roses étaient toutes rouges
Et les lierres étaient tout noirs.*

Astonishing how drunk it makes you,
Riding like this in this foolish fair:
With an empty stomach and an aching head,
Discomfort in plenty and masses of fun!

Gee-gees, turn, you'll never need
The help of any spur
To make your horses gallop round:
Turn, turn, without hope of hay.

And hurry on, horses of their souls:
Nightfall already calls them to supper
And disperses the crowd of happy revellers,
Ravenous with thirst.

Turn, turn! The velvet sky
Is slowly decked with golden stars.
The church bell tolls a mournful knell—
Turn to the joyful sound of drums!

Green

Here are flowers, branches, fruit, and fronds,

And here too is my heart that beats just for
you.

Do not tear it with your two white hands
And may the humble gift please your lovely
eyes.

I come all covered still with the dew
Frozen to my brow by the morning breeze.
Let my fatigue, finding rest at your feet,
Dream of dear moments that will soothe it.

On your young breast let me cradle my head
Still ringing with your recent kisses;
After love's sweet tumult grant it peace,
And let me sleep a while, since you rest.

Spleen

All the roses were red
And the ivy was all black.

*Chère, pour peu que tu te bouges,
Renaissent tous mes désespoirs.*

*Le ciel était trop bleu, trop tendre,
La mer trop verte et l'air trop doux.*

*Je crains toujours, — ce qu'est d'attendre! —
Quelque fuite atroce de vous.*

*Du houx à la feuille vernie
Et du luisant buis je suis las,*

*Et de la campagne infinie
Et de tout, fors de vous, hélas!*

Paul Verlaine

Selige Nacht

*Im Arm der Liebe schliefen wir selig ein.
Am offenen Fenster lauschte der Sommerwind,*

*und unsrer Atemzüge Frieden
trug er hinaus in die helle Mondnacht.*

*Und aus dem Garten tastete zagend sich
Ein Rosenduft an unserer Liebe Bett
Und gab uns wundervolle Träume,
Träume des Rausches — so reich an Sehnsucht!*

Otto Erich Hartleben

Dear, at your slightest move,
All my despair revives

The sky was too blue, too tender,
The sea too green, the air too mild.

I always fear — oh to wait and wonder! —
One of your agonizing departures.

I am weary of the glossy holly,
Of the gleaming box-tree too,

And the boundless countryside
And everything, alas, but you!

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

Blissful Night

In love's arms we fell blissfully asleep.
The summer wind listened at the open
window,
and carried the peace of our breathing
out into the moon-bright night. —

And from the garden a scent of roses
came timidly to our bed of love
and gave us wonderful dreams,
ecstatic dreams — so rich in longing!

*Translation © by Richard Stokes, author of The
Book of Lieder (Faber, 2005) provided courtesy
of Oxford International Song Festival
(www.oxfordsong.org)*

Ach gestern hat er mir Rosen gebracht

*Ach gestern hat er mir Rosen gebracht,
Sie haben geduftet die ganze Nacht,*

Für ihn geworben, der meiner denkt –

Da hab' ich den Traum einer Nacht ihm geschenkt.

*Und heute geh' ich und lächle stumm,
Trag seine Rosen mit mir herum
Und warte und lausche, und geht die Thür,
So zittert mein Herz: ach, käm' er zu mir!*

*Und küsse die Rosen, die er mir gebracht,
Und gehe und suche den Traum der Nacht.*

Thekla Lingen

Nocturne

*Süß duftende Lindenblüthe
in quellender Juninacht.
Eine Wonne aus meinem Gemüthe
ist mir in Sinnen erwacht.*

*Als klänge vor meinen Ohren
leise das Lied vom Glück,
als töne, die lange verloren,
die Jugend leise zurück.*

*Süß duftende Lindenblüthe
in quellender Juninacht.
Eine Wonne aus meinem Gemüthe
ist mir zu Schmerzen erwacht.*

Otto Erich Hartleben

Ah! Yesterday he brought me roses

Ah yesterday he brought me roses,
They diffused their scent the whole night
long,

They wooed me on his behalf, he who thinks
of me --

So I bestowed the dream of one night upon
him.

And today I wander about and smile mutely,
Carry his roses around with me
And wait and hearken, and if I hear the door,
My heart quivers: ah, if he would only come
to me!

And I kiss the roses that he brought me,
And I go and seek the dream of the night.

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Nocturne

Sweet fragrance of linden blossoms
In the flowing summer night,
A feeling of delight from my soul
Has awakened in my senses

As if there rang in my ears
Softly the song of joy,
As if echoes of my long lost youth
Were quietly returning

Sweet fragrance of linden blossoms
In the flowing summer night,
A feeling of delight from my soul
Turns to pain within me

Translation by Sydney Pexton

Hildegard of Bingen

Holy Spirit,
giving life to all life,
moving all creatures,
root of all things,
washing them clean,
wiping out their mistakes,
healing their wounds,
you are our true life,
luminous, wonderful,
awakening the heart
from its ancient sleep.

Hildegard of Bingen

Psalm I

Blessed are the man and the woman
 who have grown beyond their greed
 and have put an end to their hatred
 and no longer nourish illusions.
But they delight in the way things are
 and keep their hearts open, day and night.
They are like trees planted near flowing rivers,
 which bear fruit when they are ready.
Their leaves will not fall or wither.
 Everything they do will succeed.

Psalm I

Ryokan

First days of spring--the sky
is bright blue, the sun huge and warm.
Everything's turning green.
Carrying my monk's bowl, I walk to the village
to beg for my daily meal.
The children spot me at the temple gate
and happily crowd around,
dragging at my arms till I stop.
I put my bowl on a white rock,
hang my bag on a branch.

(The text continues on the following page. Please turn the page quietly.)

First we braid grasses and play tug-of-war,
then we take turns singing and keeping a kick-ball in the air:
I kick the ball and they sing, they kick and I sing.
Time is forgotten, the hours fly.
People passing by point at me and laugh:
"Why are you acting like such a fool?"
I nod my head and don't answer.
I could say something, but why?
Do you want to know what is in my heart?
From the beginning of time: just this! just this!

Ryokan

Rumi

You are the notes, and we are the flute.
We are the mountain, you are the sounds coming down.
We are the pawns and kings and rooks
you set out on a board: we win or we lose.
We are the lions rolling and unrolling on flags.
Your invisible wind carries us through the world.

Rumi

Psalm 131

Lord, my mind is not noisy with desires,
and my heart has satisfied its longing.
I do not care about religion
or anything that is not you.
I have soothed and quieted my soul,
like a child at its mother's breast.
My soul is as peaceful as a child
sleeping in its mother's arms.

Psalm 131

Evening

Moonlight pours down
without mercy, no matter
how many have perished
beneath the trees.

The river rolls on.

There will always be
silence, no matter
how long someone
has wept against
the side of a house,
bare forearms pressed
to the shingles.

Everything ends.
Even pain, even sorrow.

The swans drift on.

Reeds bear the weight
of their feathery heads.
Pebbles grow smaller,
smoother beneath night's
rough currents. We walk

long distances, carting
our bags, our packages.
Burdens or gifts.

We know the land
is disappearing beneath
the sea, islands swallowed
like prehistoric fish.

We know we are doomed,
done for, damned, and still
the light reaches us, falls
on our shoulders even now,

even here where the moon is
hidden from us, even though
the stars are so far away.

Dorianne Laux

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