

Program Notes

Porgi amor- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

“Porgi amor” is the opening aria for the second act of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. The aria is sung by the Countess, who is alone in her bedroom begging Cupid to either give her back her lover or to simply die. Throughout the opera prior to this aria, her husband, the Count, has been making advances towards their servant Susanna who is in the process of marrying her own fiancé, Figaro. Feeling unwanted by her own husband and alone, the Countess is begging Cupid to give some level of peace, whether it be with her husband or in death.

Porgi amor

Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro,

Oh Love, give me some remedy,

Al mio duolo, a miei sospir!

For my sorrow, for my sighs!

O mi rendi il mio tesoro,

Either give me back my darling

O mi lascia almen morir.

Or at least let me die.

Translation by Jane Bishop

S’altro che lacrime- Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

This aria comes from Mozart’s *La clemenza di Tito*, which tells the story of a young woman named Vitellia attempting to assassinate the emperor after he did not reciprocate her feelings for him. For this particular scene, the maid Servilia, has walked in on her crying and she assumes that she’s crying because Sextus, Servilia’s brother who is in love with Vitellia, is about to be executed. Thinking that this is the reason she’s crying, Servilia horribly attempts to comfort her by saying that crying won’t fix anything and his death is going to happen regardless of what

she does. What she doesn't understand, however, is that the reason she is crying is because Servilia is the reason that he's about to die.

S'altro che lacrime

S'altro che lacrime	If you cannot bestow
Per lui non tenti,	Upon him anything but your tears,
Tutto il tuo piangere	All of your weeping
Non giovera	Will be for naught
A questa inutile	To this useless
Pieta che senti	Pity you feel
Oh, quanto e simile	Oh, how similar
La crudelta	Is outright cruelty!

Translation by Andrew Schneider

Der Tod und das Mädchen

"Der Tod und das Mädchen" is a lied composed by Franz Schubert in 1817 and published a little over four years later. The poem was written by Matthias Claudius. The name of the piece translates to "Death and the Maiden," which tells its story of a young maiden being fear stricken seeing the ghostly figure of Death and begging for them to spare her life. Death, instead of having the more frightening and commonly used perception, is actually calming and welcoming to the maiden. They tell her that they are her friend and that with them, she will sleep softly in their arms.

Der Tod und das Mädchen

DAS MÄDCHEN

Vorüber, ach, vorüber!

Geh, wilder Knochenmann!

Ich bin noch jung, geh, Lieber!

Und rühre mich nicht an.

DER TOD

Gib deine Hand,

Du schön und zart Gebilde!

Bin Freund

Und komme nicht zu strafen.

Sei gutes Muts!

Ich bin nicht wild,

Sollst sanft in meinen Armen schlafen!

THE MAIDEN

Pass by, Ah, pass by!

Away, cruel Death!

I am still young, leave me, dear one

And do not touch me.

DEATH

Give me your hand

You lovely, tender creature

I am your friend

And come not to chastise

Be of good courage!

I am not cruel,

You shall sleep softly in my arms!

Translation by Richard Wigmore

Mein schöner Stern- Robert Schumann

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was a German composer and pianist of the Romantic Era. He and his wife Clara Schumann traveled all around Europe playing their compositions and also formed a close friendship with another prominent German composer Johannes Brahms. Robert wrote this lied in honor of his wife, who he loved dearly and who also loved him just as much. After he died of pneumonia in 1856, Clara dropped everything that she was working on for herself and dedicated her life to playing only his compositions. Arguably, had it not been for her

love and use of her platform to champion his works, his music wouldn't be as prominent in the canon as it is now.

Mein schöner Stern

Mein schöner Stern!	My lovely star!
Ich bitte dich,	I beg of you
O lasse du	Oh, do not let
Dein heitres Licht	Your serene radiance
Nicht trüben durch	Be dimmed by
Den Dampf in mir,	Dark clouds in me
Vielmehr den Dampf	Rather help
In mir zu Licht,	My lovely star
Mein schöner Stern,	To transfigure the dark
Verklären hilf!	Into light

Mein schöner Stern!	My lovely star!
Ich bitte dich,	I beg of you
Nicht senk' herab	Not to descend
Zur Erde dich,	To earth,
Weil du mich noch	Because you still
Hier unten siehst,	See me down here,
Heb' auf vielmehr	Rather lift me
Zum Himmel mich,	Up to heaven,
Mein schöner Stern,	My lovely star,

Wo du schon bist!

Where you already are!

Translation by Richard Stokes

Liebst du um Schönheit- Clara Schumann

Clara Schumann (1819-1896) was not only the beloved wife of prominent composer Robert Schumann, but was also a very talented pianist and composer. She was actually considered one of the greatest pianists of her time alongside the likes of Brahms and Franz Liszt. In her lied, she begs the man she loves to love her not for beauty, or money, or youth, but for love. Similarly to Robert, Clara loved her husband deeply and composed many pieces dedicated to him and their love.

Liebst du um Schönheit

Liebst du um Schönheit,

If you love for beauty,

O nicht mich liebe!

Oh love me not!

Liebe die Sonne,

Love the sun,

Sie trägt ein gold'nes Haar!

She has golden hair!

Liebst du um Jugend,

If you love for youth,

O nicht mich liebe!

Oh love me not!

Liebe den Frühling,

Love the spring,

Der jung ist jedes Jahr!

Who is young each year!

Liebst du um Schätze,

If you love for riches,

O nicht mich liebe!

Oh love me not!

Liebe die Meerfrau,

Love the mermaid,

Sie hat viel Perlen klar!

Who has many shining pearls!

Liebst du um Liebe,

If you love for love

O ja, mich liebe!

Oh yes, love me!

Liebe mich immer,

love me always,

Dich lieb' ich immerdar!

I shall love you forever!

Translation by Richard Stokes

As imperceptibly as grief- Cary John Franklin

This song is based on poetry by the 19th century American poet Emily Dickinson. Her poem dives head first into how life, no matter how beautiful, will always end in death. It acts as a beautiful representation as to how precious life is for us as humans to experience and how we must appreciate it while we are still able to do so. The song is featured in the AIDS Quilt Songbook project, a series of songs dedicated to bringing light to the tragedy that is the AIDS Epidemic.

As imperceptibly as grief- Emily Dickinson

As imperceptibly as grief

The summer lapsed away, —

Too imperceptible, at last,

To seem like perfidy.

A quietness distilled,

As twilight long begun,

Or Nature, spending with herself

Sequestered afternoon.

The dusk drew earlier in,
The morning foreign shone, —
A courteous, yet harrowing grace,
As guest who would be gone.

And thus, without a wing,
Or service of a keel,
Our summer made her light escape
Into the beautiful.

I Deserve Better- Ricky Dubuisson II

My best friend composed this song. While he was composing this piece, he specifically designed it for me, our memories, and our friendship. This song is the only piece that I will be performing that will not be accompanied by piano, but rather with an electronic sound file. The piece takes inspiration from the chords and a motif from a TV show both of us love called “Steven Universe.” Dubuisson stated that if he was going to compose a song for me, it should accurately speak from the heart. It should encompass our friendship as well as the growth that I have made from 2019, to now. He hopes that this song can help me realize that despite everything that has happened to me, I do deserve better.

Clear Water- Nadine Shanti

Nadine Shanti (b. 1953) is a black female composer who was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. She has spent much of her career traveling the world performing various genres of music in addition to her own two albums that she wrote and performed. Her song “Clear Water” is considered a vocalise, due to the song not having any words at all. As the audience is listening

to the piece, one can hear the almost hypnotic effect that both the singer and the collaborative pianist create and the visualization of the peaceful yet slightly rippling water.

The Pledge- Betty Jackson King

Betty Jackson King (1928-1994) was a prominent black female composer who was born in Chicago. While she is mostly known for her vocal compositions, she was both a university and high school music teacher and received the Teaching Recognition Award from Thomas Kean, the former governor of New Jersey. Her song “The Pledge,” composed in 1991, is the last vocal piece that she composed before her death in 1994.

I’ll Know- Frank Loesser

This duet comes from the Broadway musical *Guys and Dolls* and was composed by Frank Loesser. This is a duet between Sarah, the good Christian missionary, trying to find more people to attend her church meetings, and Sky, a chronic gambler. In the duet, both Sky and Sarah are describing how they will know when they have found the love of their life, with neither one of them realizing it’s actually each other.

Changing My Major- Jeanine Tesori

The song “Changing My Major” comes from the Broadway musical *Fun Home*, which is based on the memoir graphic novel of the same title by Alison Bechdel. The music was composed by Jeanine Tesori with the lyrics adapted and written by Lisa Kron. The song occurs right after Medium Alison, who previously identified as asexual, sleeps with a young woman named Joan and quickly realizes that she might actually be a lesbian. In this song, she comes to terms with her sexuality as well as her love and sexual passion for Joan.

She Used to be Mine- Sara Bareilles

“She Used to be Mine” comes from the Broadway musical *Waitress* and was originally composed by Sara Bareilles. The song occurs towards the end of the story, right after Jenna, the main protagonist of the story, has been found by her abusive husband to be saving money to escape his control. In order to protect herself and her future child, she lies saying that she was saving the money for her future daughter Lulu and Earl the husband proceeds to take the money for himself and leaves her in a distraught state. The song acts as a lament for the life that Jenna has lost while being in this abusive relationship and how pieces of herself have slowly died off in the process.

Good Morning Baltimore- Marc Shaiman

Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman are an American duo of composers that are responsible for a few other fairly popular projects. Some of their works include the music and lyrics for *Smash*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, *Catch Me if You Can* (the 2011 Broadway musical), and *Hairspray*, which is not only where “Good Morning Baltimore” comes from, but is also the opening act for the show. “Good Morning Baltimore” introduces the audience to Tracy Turnblad, an upbeat plus size teen from 1960s Baltimore that loves to dance. This song acts as a love letter for not only her love for dance, but also for her hometown and its unique characteristics that makes it so special to her. Through this piece, we as the audience come to understand not only the setting of the show due to its 60’s Motown sound and constant city name drops, but also the personality of the main protagonist herself and what her ambitions are for herself throughout the show.