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Program Notes and Translations

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presents

Kelly Frailly, soprano
Sunday, April 10, 2016, 4:00 PM

Program Notes & Translations

“Un moto di gioia” from *Le nozze di Figaro*

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) premiered his opera buffa *Le nozze di Figaro* in 1786. This opera is known as one of Mozart’s three “da Ponte” operas based on librettos by Lorenzo da Ponte (1749-1838.) *Le nozze di Figaro* tells the story of the wedding day of Figaro and Susanna. While preparing for their special day, the couple finds out that the Count has plans on sabotaging their wedding. With the help of the Countess and the Count’s page, Cherubino, the two devise a plan to thwart the Count’s plot. At this point in the story, Susanna and the Countess are dressing up Cherubino as a girl in order to send him to the Count to create confusion. The aria “Un moto di gioia” was not originally intended to be included in *Le nozze di Figaro*. When Mozart first composed the opera, he wrote it specifically for the voice of Nancy Storace, the singer playing the original Susanna. In a 1789 revival, Adriana Ferrarese del Bene was slated to play Susanna and demanded that Mozart write a new aria for her vocal talents. The result was “Un moto di gioia.” Susanna sings this aria to Cherubino as she fits him in a dress. The text is filled with generalities about the difficulty of the task at hand, and the hope that everything will go well. She is excited to beat the Count at his own game but also shows nerves, knowing it could potentially end in disaster.

“Un moto di gioia”

Un moto di gioia
Mi sento nel petto,
Che annunzia diletto
In mezzo il timor!
Speriam che in content
Finisca l’affanno
Non sempre é tiranno
Il fato ed amor.

“A feeling of joy”

A feeling of joy
Stirs in my breast,
It proclaims delight
Amid my fears!
Let us hope that in contentment
Our distress will end
For fate and love
Are not always a tyrant.

Translation by Bard Suverkrop

“Il barcaiolo”

Gaetano Donizetti was born in Bergamo, Italy in 1797 and died in the same city in 1848. He was a dominant figure in nineteenth-century Italian opera. In addition to being a prolific opera composer, Donizetti was also a prominent composer of sacred cantatas and art songs. “Il barcaiolo” is an art song from his 1836 song cycle *Nuits d’été à Pausilippe*, a set of twelve art songs based on various poets. “Il barcaiolo” is a poem written by Leopoldo Tarantini (1811-

1882). It tells the story of a woman in love with a sailor. Throughout the piece she envisions their relationship, including the potential storms they may face along the way. This song has been performed by many famous singers, including Cecilia Bartoli in 1997 and Luciano Pavarotti in 2001.

“Il barcaiolo”

Voga, voga, il vento tace,
Pura é l’onda, il ciel sereno,
Solo un alito di pace
Par che allegri e cielo e mar.
Voga, voga, o marinar.
Or che tutto a noi sorride,
In si tenero momento,
All’ebbrezza del contento
Voglio l’alme abbandonar.
Voga, voga, o marinar.
Voga, voga, il vento tace,
Pura é l’onda, il ciel sereno,
Solo un alito di pace
Par che allegri e cielo e mar.
Ché se infiera la tempesta,
Ambidue ne tragge a morte,
Sarà lieta la mia sorte
Al tuo fianco vuó spirar, si
Al tuo fianco vuó spirar.

“The boatman”

Row, row, the wind is silent,
The wave is pure, the sky is clear,
The breath of peace alone
Seems to gladden both heaven and earth.
Row, row, oh sailor.
Now that everything smiles upon us,
At this tender moment,
The intoxication of happiness
I want us to abandon our souls.
Row, row, oh sailor.
Row, row, the wind is silent,
The wave is pure, the sky is clear,
The breath of peace alone
Seems to gladden both heaven and earth.
Although the storm of life rages,
And ferries us both to death,
My fate will be happy
For I want to die at your side, yes,
For I want to die at your side.

Translation by Bard Suverkrop

“Và godendo” from *Serse*

“Và godendo” is an aria from George Frideric Handel’s opera seria *Serse*. Written between December 1737 and February 1738, *Serse* follows the story of Persian king Xerxes I and his expedition against Greece in 470 B.C.E. The heart of this opera is the rivalry between Xerxes and his brother Artabanus over the love of Romilda. Romilda sings “Và godendo” in the beginning of Act I while perusing the garden. This aria is a celebration of freedom, containing the imagery of a free-flowing brook running gaily through the grass as a symbol. Romilda is not singing about any particular freedom, but rather out of the joy in her heart. It is through-composed, unlike the customary da capo arias expected of this repertory. *Serse* premiered in London at the King’s Theater on April 15, 1738. It is one of dozens of *opere serie* Handel composed for the English stage.

“Và godendo”

Và godendo vezzoso e bello,
Quel ruscello la libertà.

“The brook goes lightly”

The brook goes lightly and beautifully,
Enjoying its freedom.

E tra l'erbe con onde chiare
Lieto al mare correndo v`a.

Through the brightly waving grass
Gaily it flows towards the sea.

Translation by Bard Suverkrop

“Al amor”

“Al amor” was written by Fernando J. Obradors (1897-1945). It is part of his famous song set *Canciones cl`asicas espa`nolas*, which was published in four volumes in 1941. These song sets are primarily responsible for the fame of Obradors as a song composer, and are now considered to be staples of Spanish repertory for voice recitals. Obradors grew up in Barcelona and studied piano at the Municipal Music School. He was self-taught in composition, harmony, and counterpoint. He later became the principal conductor of the Liceu and Radio Barcelona Orchestras, as well as the Philharmonic Orchestra of Gran Canaria. Melodically, this piece is an arrangement of a common *tonadilla*, a Spanish musical song form of theatrical origin. The text is derived from a poem set by Crist`obal de Castillejo (1491-1556). Castillejo penned the poem based on writings by first-century B.C.E. Roman poet Catullus.

“Al amor”

Dame, amor, besos sin cuento
Asido de mis cabellos,
Y mil y ciento tras ellos
Y tras ellos mil y ciento.
Y despu`s... de muchos millares, tres!
Y porque nadie lo sienta,
Desbaratemos la cuenta
Y... contemos al rev`s.

“To love”

Give me, love, kisses without count
Grasped by my hair,
And eleven hundred after that
And after that, eleven hundred more.
And then... three thousand more!
And so that no one may regret it,
Let us spoil the count
And... let us count backwards.

Translation by Suzanne Rhodes Draayer

“El mirar de la maja”

Enrique Granados (1897-1916) was a remarkable Spanish composer and pianist. He is noted as being the first Spanish composer to establish the piano rather than the guitar as an accompanying instrument. This *tonadilla*, a Spanish musical song form of theatrical origin, is from the *Colecci`on de tonadillas*, a set of six pieces debuted by Conchita Bad`ia in Barcelona in 1913. “El mirar de la maja” is the sixth and final tonadilla in the set, based on a poem by Fernando Periquet (1873-1940). This tonadilla tells the story of an eighteenth-century love encounter in Madrid. It is narrated by the *maja*, a working-class woman from Madrid. She sings about how the intensity in her eyes seems to reflect a fire within them. The *maja* looks at a *chispero*, a lower-class Spanish male, and causes him to fall in love with her. In the end he tosses his hat to her and begs that she decline looking at him, for she is killing him with passion.

“El mirar de la maja”

¿Por qué ese n mis ojos
Tan hondo el mirar
Que a fin de cortar desdenes
Y enojos,
Los suelo entornar?
¿Qué fuego dentro llevaràn
Que si, acaso, con calor
Los clavo en mi amor
Sonrojo me dan?
Por eso el chispero
A quien mi alma di,
Al verse ante mi
Me tira el sombrero
Y diceme asi:
“Mi Maja, no me mires más
Que tus ojos rayos son
Y ardiendo en passion
La muerte me dan.”

“The glance of the maja”

Why is the look in my eyes
So intense
That in order to halt disdains
And angers,
I am in the habit of half-closing my eyes?
Why do my eyes carry such a fire
That if, perhaps, with ardor
I fix them on my love
They make me blush?
For that, the chispero
To whom I gave my soul,
Seeing himself before me
He tosses his hat to me
And he says to me like this:
“My Maja, look at me no more
Because your eyes are rays
And burning in passion
They give me death.”

Translation by Suzanne Rhodes Draayer

“Cantares”

“Cantares” is a setting by Joaquín Turina (1882-1949) on a poem by Ramón de Campoamor (1817-1901). Although of Spanish origin, Turina spent part of his life in Paris, France, where he studied piano performance and composition. After hearing one of his piano quintets, Isaac Albéniz urged Turina to study Spanish folk music. He returned home and began composing vocal works. His first musical output was in the form of a song cycle titled *Poema en forma de canciones*. “Cantares” is the second of four songs in this set. First premiered in 1918, this song tells the story of a person who is deeply in love. The entire set is based on Campoamor’s four-strophe poem, split into four separate songs to bring life to the various verses of his poetry.

“Cantares”

¡Ay! Más cerce de mi te siento
Cuando más huyo de ti.
Pues tu imagen es en mi
Sombra de mi pensamiento.
Pues embelesado ayer
Te escuchaba sin oír
Y te miraba sin ver.

“Songs”

Ah! I feel you closest to me
When I flee from you.
Then your image is in me
A shadow of my thought.
Since delighted yesterday
I listened to you without hearing
And I looked at you without seeing.

Translation by Suzanne Rhodes Draayer

“Charmant papillon”

“Charmant papillon” is an aria from *Les fêtes vénitiennes* (*The Venetian Festival*) by leading French theatrical music composer André Campra (1660-1744). This opera-ballet, with libretto by Antoine Danchet, premiered in Paris on June 17, 1710. It consists of a prologue and five *entrées*, or short acts. Each act has its own plot and characters, but they are linked together by the central location—Venice. *Les fêtes vénitiennes* is a comic composition and features a carnival with gypsies, gamblers, jilted lovers and, at one point, even dancing sheep. This aria was originally titled “La farfalla intorno ai fiori” and it was performed in Italian, although the rest of the work was sung in French. It was later translated into French, and this is the version you will be hearing today.

“Charmant papillon”

Charmant papillon dont l’aile
D’or passe dans l’espace
Comme une fleur!
Que ne puis-je sur ta trace
M’envoler avec toi comme une soeur!
Je voudrais voler avec toi
Comme une soeur!
C’est à peine sit u te poses
Sur la feuille tendre des roses,
Dans l’espace que tu parcours.
Ah! Que tes bons jours sont courts!

“Charming butterfly”

Charming butterfly whose wing
Of gold passes through the air
Like a flower!
Could I not follow your example
And fly away with you like a sister!
I would like to fly with you
Like a sister!
You have hardly landed
Upon the tender petal of a rose,
And you dart off into the air.
Ah! How short are your beautiful days!

Translation by Bard Suverkrop

“Mandoline”

Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924) was a prominent composer of late nineteenth-century French vocal music. “Mandoline” is the first song in his song cycle *Cinq mélodies de Venise* (*Five Venetian Melodies*, Op. 58). The cycle originated in Venice, Italy, and Fauré finished the last few songs later after moving back to Paris. The *Cinq mélodies* was published in 1891 and features five poems by Paul Verlaine (1844-1896). “Mandoline” comes from Verlaine’s *Fêtes galantes* (1869), a collection of poems that alludes to scenes and characters from *commedia dell’arte*. “Mandoline” is a charming piece with a lovely melody and a quick tempo. The piano accompaniment is reminiscent of a mandolin, the guitar-like instrument associated with a lover’s serenade. The text, inspired by “The Mandolin Player,” the famous painting by Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684-1721), depicts nineteenth-century nobility and their whimsical gaiety and wealth.

“Mandoline”

Les donneurs de sérénades
Et les belles écouteuses
Echangent des propos fades
Sous les ramures chanteuses.
C’est Tircis et c’est Aminte,
Et c’est l’éternel Clitandre,
Et c’est Damis qui pour mainte
Cruelle fait maint vers tendre.
Leurs courtes vestes de soie,
Leurs longues robes à queues,
Leur élégance, leur joie,
Et leurs molles ombres bleus
Tourbillonnent dans l’extase
D’une lune rose et grise
Et la mandoline jase
Parmi les frissons de brise.

“Mandolin”

The serenaders
And the lovely listeners
Exchange sweet nothings
Beneath the singing branches.
It is Thyrsis and it is Amyntas,
And it is the eternal Clytander,
And there is Damis who for many
Cruel women writers many tender verses.
Their short jackets of silk,
Their long gowns with trains,
Their elegance, their joy,
And their soft blue shadows
Whirl in ecstasy
Of a moon pink and grey
And the mandolin chatters
Amid the shivers of the breeze.

Translation by Bard Suverkrop

“Romance”

“Romance” is the first piece in the 1891 song set *Deux Romances* by Claude Debussy (1862-1918). Due to the similar names of the single song and the cycle from which it originated, “Romance” is often referred to by its secondary title, “L’âme évaporée” (“The vanishing soul”). It is based on a poem written by French poet Paul Bourget (1852-1935) titled *Les aveux* (*Confessions*). Like many other of Debussy’s well-known works, “Romance” features a lilting melody with an elegant accompaniment, typical of his musical aesthetic. This piece follows a heartbroken woman as she questions why her lover left. The harmonic style of this song produces a sound much like that of a conversation – the phrases rise and fall alongside the text. This style, combined with poetic lines such as “Does no more perfume remain?” creates a somber disposition. This mood allows the performer to open up and be vulnerable with the audience.

“Romance”

L’âme évaporée et souffrante
L’âme douce, l’âme odorante
Des lis divins que j’ai cueillis
Dans le jardin de ta pensée,
Où donc les vents l’ont-ils chassée,
Cette âme adorable des lis?
N’est-il plus un parfum qui reste
De la suavité celeste,
Des jours ou tu m’enveloppais

“Romance”

The vanishing and suffering soul
The gentle soul, the fragrant soul
Of divine lilies that I have gathered
In the garden of your thought,
Where then have the winds driven them,
This adorable soul of the lilies?
Does no more perfume remain
of the celestial sweetness,
Of the days when you enveloped me

D'une vapeur surnaturelle,
Faites d'espoir, d'amour fidèle,
De beatitude, et de paix?

With a magical vapor,
Made of hope, of faithful love,
Of heavenly happiness, and of peace?

Translation by Bard Suverkrop

“Why do they shut me out of Heaven?”

Famous American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) wrote “Why do they shut me out of Heaven?” in 1861. It was later set to music by Aaron Copland (1900-1990) and included in his 1950 work *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Copland wrote the song cycle after completing work on the film score for *The Heiress*, a film which promoted sympathy for women and led Copland to Dickinson's works. This song is the third in the cycle and explores Dickinson's doubtful feelings that she will be accepted into Heaven in the afterlife. It was likely that Dickinson felt this way due to her unwillingness to concede to one religion, combined with her general sorrowful mood and introverted personality that are often reflected in her poetry. Copland's music is suggestive of a prayerful plea to God.

“Down in the Forest”

“Down in the Forest” was written by Sir Landon Ronald (1873-1938) in 1906 as part of his five-poem song cycle titled *Cycle of Life*. This cycle uses poetry by Harold Simpson (d. 1955). The cycle is meant to paint the image of nature's cycle of seasons. “Down in the Forest” is the second song in the work, representing spring. While the poem tells the story of a young lady with love in her heart, the music is bright and uplifting, bringing new life to the words—much like spring brings about renewal to nature. Ronald was also a conductor, pianist, teacher, and administrator in England. He was knighted in 1922. Although Ronald was an active composer, his fame resides mainly in this composition.

“Someone to Watch Over me” from *Oh, Kay!*

George Gershwin (1898-1937) was an American composer who also wrote hundreds of songs for Hollywood films, the Broadway stage, and Tin Pan Alley. His older brother, Ira Gershwin (1896-1983), often acted as the lyricist for his songs. George began taking piano lessons at the age of nine and quickly started writing his own compositions. He dropped out of school after the ninth grade to work for a publishing company on Tin Pan Alley. Together, the brothers wrote “*Oh, Kay!*” a comedic musical that starred Gertrude Lawrence and premiered at the Imperial Theater on November 8, 1926. The musical centers around Kay, the sister of a British man who is caught up in a liquor-running operation during the age of Prohibition. In order to maintain a good image, Kay must pretend that she is married. In reality, she is not, but she longs to be. “Someone to watch over me” is her cry for affection. With an emotionally

affective tune, lyrics that amplify the music, and a moving story, this song has become a Golden Age standard.

“Like Breathing” from *Edges*

Edges is a musical theater work about growth, coming of age, and self-discovery. Written by Benj Pasek (b. 1985) and Justin Paul (b. 1985) when they were just nineteen years old, this contemporary song cycle follows the lives of four twenty-somethings as they explore love, identity, commitment, and meaning. This work is unique in its conception, because it flows together as a musical theater work but, like a song cycle, each song can be taken and performed separately. *Edges* premiered in 2005 at the Kerrytown Concert House in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and was later revised and reopened in Albany, New York in 2007. In “Like Breathing” the characters confront their own self-doubts and issues of self-worth and identity. At the song’s climax, they come together to lift one another up and encourage each other that, in the end, they should not be afraid to be who they are. The characters let their lives take their course and ultimately, as they say in the piece, “let it be like breathing.”

“Before it’s Over” from *Dogfight*

Benj Pasek (b. 1985) and Justin Paul (b. 1985) are a show-writing duo who began their rise to fame as freshmen at the University of Michigan, where they both earned their B.F.A. in musical theater in 2006. The two have written Tony-Award-nominated works, including *A Christmas Story the Musical*, *Edges*, *James and the Giant Peach*, and *Dogfight*. *Dogfight* is a musical adaptation of the 1991 movie of the same name. It premiered on July 16, 2012 off-Broadway at the Second Stage Theater. *Dogfight* follows the story of Eddie Birdlace on his last night home before heading off as a Marine to the Vietnam War. He and his two friends decide to partake in a dogfight, an event where the men bet on who can bring the ugliest date to a party. Birdlace meets innocent, shy Rose Fenny and decides to take her as his date. Before arriving at the party, Birdlace realizes he has feelings for Rose and wants to take her home, but it is too late. Rose later finds out about the dogfight and is deeply hurt. “Before it’s Over” is her response to Birdlace, telling him that, although she is hurt, she is thankful for their encounter because it allowed her to come out of her shell and see that there is a life out there waiting for her and it is time she began to live it.

“On My Way” from *Violet*

Violet is a musical adaptation of the short-story *The Ugliest Pilgrim* by Doris Betts. It premiered off-Broadway in 1997 and later made its Broadway debut in 2014. Written by Jeanine Tesori (b. 1961) with lyrics by Brian Crawley, this musical tells the story of Violet, a young disfigured woman who embarks on a cross-country bus trip in hopes of being healed by a televangelist. In the end, she is not physically healed but through her journey she meets friends

and discovers the true meaning of beauty. “On My Way” is sung by Violet as she first steps on the bus to begin her trip. She sings about where her journey might take her, what she might learn, and her excitement about the expedition at hand.

“When Will My Life Begin (Reprise 2)” from *Tangled*

The Disney film *Tangled* was released on November 24, 2010. With a screenplay by Dan Fogelman, music by Alan Menken (b. 1949), and lyrics by Glenn Slater (b. 1968), this movie follows the old Brothers Grimm fairytale *Rapunzel*. *Tangled* is about a young girl with long, magical hair with healing powers who has spent her entire life in a tower, excluded from society. One day, a handsome runaway thief stumbles upon her tower and agrees to show her the world. The two embark on an adventure that ends with them falling in love and realizing Rapunzel’s true identity as a long lost princess. Rapunzel sings the second reprise of “When Will My Life Begin” immediately after leaving her tower for the first time. She embraces the new world before her, discovering all that she has missed while living in her tower. Menken was nominated for an Academy Award for his musical contributions to *Tangled*. He is also known for writing the soundtracks to many popular Disney films, including *Pocahontas*, *Hercules*, and *Aladdin*.

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