



DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

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Tuesday, May 22, 2018 • 8:00 p.m

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**Abagael V. Martin**

*Graduate Recital*

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DePaul Concert Hall  
800 West Belden Avenue • Chicago

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DePaul Concert Hall

**Abagael V. Martin, mezzo-soprano**

*Graduate Recital*

Luciano Laurentiu, piano

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**PROGRAM**

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Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

**Les nuits d'été (1841)**

Villanelle

Le spectre de la rose

Sur les lagunes

Absence

Au cimetière: clair de lune

L'île inconnue

Luciano Laurentiu, piano

**Intermission**

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

**The Crucifixion (1953)**

**Bessie Bobtail (1934)**

**Sure on this Shining Night (1940)**

Luciano Laurentiu, piano

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

**An die nachtigall (1868)**  
**Meine liebe ist grün (1874)**  
**Dein blaues auge (1873)**

Luciano Laurentiu, piano

Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916)

**Ideale (1882)**  
**Non t'amo piu (1885)**

Luciano Laurentiu, piano

Alessandro Parisotti (1853-1913)

**Se tu m'ami (1885)**

Luciano Laurentiu, piano

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*Abagael V. Martin is from the studio of Nicole Cabell. This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the degree Master of Music.*

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*As a courtesy to those around you, please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Flash photography is not permitted. Thank you.*

## PROGRAM NOTES

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Hector Berlioz (1803-1869)

### **Les Nuits d'été (1841)**

*Duration: 32 minutes*

Originally published in 1841 and later orchestrated in 1856, little is known of the origin of this beautiful song cycle, as Berlioz surprisingly didn't mention it in any of his correspondence or his "Memoires"--quite odd for a typically outspoken and blunt music critic. One can infer, however, that perhaps the subject matter was just too personal for him to want to discuss. Berlioz was good friends with Gautier and thus chose some of his poems to arrange for voice and piano. At the time, Berlioz and soon-to-be ex-wife Harriet Smithson were long separated, and he was just about to go away on a European tour with his mistress and future wife Marie Recio, a singer for whom the fourth movement, "Absence," was orchestrated...the only movement orchestrated in Berlioz's lifetime. Overall, the "cycle" has a common theme--the progression of love, from infatuation to tragic loss to a new beginning, and this is why it is usually performed as a cycle together despite what Berlioz may or may not have intended. The first movement, "Villanelle" is evocative of an ode to a lover, asking them to enjoy the spring together, the joy of picking strawberries and running about through the woods, and is very much about young new love. The second movement "Le spectre de la rose" is where we begin to feel some kind of impending tragedy--the speaker tells us she is the ghost of a rose that you wore on your gown at the ball, and because you picked her she died prematurely. This is symbolic of the loss of innocence and the act of giving your life to someone who doesn't realize or appreciate the significance. It is the reason for the upcoming tragedy. The third movement, "Sur les lagunes" is the only song in a minor key, and this is significant because it is the ultimate realization that the love is dead--at least symbolically, the opening line being "My beautiful love is dead" and the text going on to reiterate, "I shall weep forever...Ah, without love to go on the sea!" The piece is the sad but necessary "going on with life" when we lose a person or a love, how painful it is to have to go on somehow, knowing no one will be waiting for your return. "Absence" is the fourth movement --a desperate cry for the "absent one" to return, and is another, later stage of mourning simply wishing for

things to be as they were when the "flower of my life" was present. The fifth movement "au cemetery" speaks of a symbolic "cemetery" where the love lives now in a "tomb," and has meaning in that fond memories still exist but painful ones do as well, and the speaker says she will never go into the tomb again, will never return. So, it is the resignation that one cannot and won't go back to a dead love. It is the healing of the tragedy. The final movement "Lile inconnue" has quite a different tone from the past four movements, one of happiness and full of new hope and possibility of going forward, wherever this may be with new love and life--"Say, my young beauty, where would you like to go?" and clearly symbolizes new beginnings.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

**The Crucifixion (1953)**

*Duration: 2 minutes*

Samuel Barber is one of the best known American composers of the 20th century, for both his gift of writing for the voice and skill in orchestration, bringing us incredible color and emotion unique to only himself.

"The Crucifixion" is from the cycle "Hermit Songs" wherein the text was translated from anonymous monks of the 11th century. It is a short narrative of the day of the Crucifixion and the suffering that Christ endured, yet is unique because it humanizes his suffering--"But sorer still to Him was the grief which for His sake came upon His Mother" telling us that he was hurt more by knowing his mother was in pain watching him be crucified than he was in the actual physical abuse. The opening piano lines seem to put you in the time and place evocative of a memory, and serve as emotional "thunderstorm" building up to the moment of crying out, "Ah, sore was the suffering bourne by the body of Mary's Son."

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

**Bessie Bobtail (1934)**

*Duration: 3 minutes*

"Bessie Bobtail" was originally a poem of 1912 and sets a whole new scene of its own, the opening piano lines being like the limp and "wambling

down the road" of this poor old homeless woman. In the middle of the song there is a character change between "Speaker/Observer/Narrator" and "Bessie" herself, crying "O God, He knows!" which is quite poignant in that we are all the same in the human experience of the world. The poem tells us her story and leaves some mystery in it as well--why is she so distraught? Who is she talking to? The piece brings a darkness to the concept of everyday life and the struggles we all go through, bringing to light that we never know what a person is suffering or how.

Samuel Barber (1910-1981)

**Sure on this shining night (1940)**

*Duration: 3 minutes*

"Sure on this shining night" hardly needs an introduction, as one of the best loved American pieces today. It is said that once when Samuel Barber had to use a pay phone to call his own house and didn't know his new telephone number, the operator wouldn't connect him until he sang this to her to prove his identity. The piece is truly a conversation between voice and piano, each answering the other much as we ask the stars for answers. Ultimately, the theme here is the passing of the seasons similar to the passing of life.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

**An die nachtigall (1868)**

*Duration: 3 minutes*

Johannes Brahms is quite well known in general and for his gift of lieder composition, having written over 200 lieder in his lifetime in addition to contributing to many other genres. Something unique about Brahms is his ability to find additional depth in poetry through his musical contributions and reliability of emotional subject matter, especially that of pain in love. Thus, "An die Nachtigall" is the classic "tortured by my love for you" story, the speaker not wanting to be reminded of the lover they lost--hearing her in the nightingale's song and even being jealous that the bird has a mate to go home to. The piano line imitates both the calling of the nightingale and the pang of emotion the speaker feels as a result. Perhaps this is yet another ode to Clara.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

**Meine liebe ist grün (1874)**

*Duration: 2 minutes*

Brahms is said to have only set poetry to his music that could be improved greatly by music, but this was a personal piece to him. The poem "Meine liebe ist grün" was written by Felix Schumann--Brahms' godson and son of Robert and Clara Schumann--when he was only 19. Brahms set his poem to music as a Christmas gift to both Felix and Clara. The song is the first in Brahms' Opus 63 "Junge Lieder" or "Boy Lieder"--the other song in the set being set to a poem by Felix as well. Felix had wished to become a musician, but he wasn't in good health and died at the age of 25 of tuberculosis. This makes the lieder all the more poignant and interesting as the emotion of the piece is forever frozen in this youthful perspective of infatuation and love.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

**Dein blaues auge (1873)**

*Duration: 2 minutes*

The original poem "Dein blaues auge" was written by a friend of Brahms, Klaus Groth. It speaks ultimately of the relief of finding someone you can trust, finding relief and even a healthier life because of them, in the cool depths of their blue eyes "like a lake" and not being "burned" as before by another. Again, this is an ode to Clara Schumann, whose eyes were said to be beautiful, and the "Clara" theme of the combination of notes "C-B-A-G#-A" is present here under the text "you ask me what I seek" which can be interpreted to mean that he actually seeks Clara specifically.

Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916)

**Ideale (1882)**

*Duration: 3 minutes*

Often referred to as "Master of the ballad," Tosti has earned his place among the greats in art song. His gift for setting the Italian language and writing with ease of the voice in mind, combined with especially beautiful and nostalgic melodies is perhaps the reason for this. This can all be heard especially in "Ideale." The opening of the piece is very much like the memory of a dance, and despite the seemingly pleasant introduction the



song is sad because it is a memory of what used to be. The speaker calls out, "Torna"--"Return" as a last attempt to preserve this feeling that cannot be returned, just as the ideal one will not return.

Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916)

**Non t'amo piu (1885)**

*Duration: 4 minutes*

"Non t'amo più" is the continuation of the progression of the love for the "ideal one," except at this point the speaker has been separated somehow from the love and feels the need to repeat "I don't love you anymore" perhaps in an effort to convince him/herself of this very thing. It brings up the question, "If I don't in fact love you anymore, why do I feel the need to say this and keep having to repeat it?" The answer is simple--the love for the ideal still exists, no matter how much the speaker doesn't want it to be true. I believe these belong together in a set because they too tell of the progression of love--from the memory of worshipful infatuation and wishing for the love to return in "Ideale"--the loss of the "ideal one"--to the unconvincing, repetitive "Non t'amo piu"--I don't love you anymore, I don't dream or think of you anymore. These are, despite the titles and despite the text, songs of loss and the inability to cope or forget this love. They are songs of dwelling in memories, as the opening of "Ideale" is much like the memory of a happy dance, the opening of "Non t'amo piu" is a simple chordal lament in minor. One has only to listen to the music itself to know that indeed, and despite his or herself, the speaker still loves the ideal.

Alessandro Parisotti (1853-1913)

**Se tu m'ami (1885)**

*Duration: 3 minutes*

Originally attributed to Giovanni Battista Pergolesi, this piece is now believed to actually have been composed by Alessandro Parisotti, editor and creator of the *24 Italian Songs and Arias*. Scholars suspect that he slipped this original piece into the new collection/edition of antiquities he was creating to get one of his own pieces published--as there are no original manuscripts to be found which link this piece with Pergolesi. The

publication of the collection is the first time we see "Se tu m'ami." However dishonestly this piece earned its place in the canon, it is part of the canon nonetheless and gives a more modern twist and insight into the practices of composition used the century before. The piece is quite charming as the speaker plays hard to get, telling her shepherd over and over again that she can't be tied down to him alone, she loves him "the lily" but also loves the other "flowers" just as well. Although more commonly given to young singers as a good "beginning challenge" and a good introduction to the Italian language in particular, Cecilia Bartoli, Joyce DiDonato, and many others have given the world recordings and it continues to be a fun favorite among many today.

*Notes by Abagael V. Martin.*



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