

EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

**AN EVENING OF
SONGS BY BEN
MOORE**

Wednesday, March 17, 2021
Kilbourn Hall (livestream)
7:30 PM



EASTMAN
SCHOOL OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY *of* ROCHESTER

PROGRAM

FROM *CABARET AND THEATER SONGS*

See How a Flower Blossoms

Ben Moore
(b. 1960)

Chloe Lee, soprano
Jonathan Mamora, piano

I believe

Lauren Case, soprano
Russell Miller, piano

Let the walls fall down

David Wolfe, baritone
Russell Miller, piano

FROM *FOURTEEN SONGS*

In the Dark Pinewood

Cailin Jordan, soprano
Rachel Sohn, piano

I travel as a phantom now (not from *Fourteen Songs*)

Murphy Meyn, baritone
Andrew Chen, piano

I am in need of Music

Sofia Scattarreggia, soprano
Russell Miller, piano

PROGRAM

I would in that sweet bosom be

Nathan Savant, baritone
Michele Wong, piano

This Heart that Flutters

Dannielle Wolf, soprano
Ava Linvog, piano

The Cloak, the Boat, and the Shoes

Nathan Savant, baritone
Michele Wong, piano

Bright Cap and Streamers

Chloe Lee, soprano
Jonathan Mamora, piano

Judith River

Joshua Carlisle, tenor
Nathan Cheung, piano

INTERMISSION (30 mins.)

SPECIAL FEATURE: INTERVIEW WITH BEN MOORE (VIA ZOOM)

FROM *SO FREE AM I*

1. Mutta

Alexandra Rose Hotz, soprano
Brock Tjosvold, piano

PROGRAM

2. Interlude

Sarah Luebke, soprano
Hannah Bossner, piano

3. Orinda upon Little Hector Philips

Deepti Kumar, soprano
Russell Miller, piano

4. Nervous Prostration

Alexandria McNeely, soprano
Cynthia Liu, piano

7. Mettika

Alexandra Rose Hotz, soprano
Brock Tjosvold, piano

FROM *DEAR THEO*

2. I Found a Woman

4. The Man I Have to Paint

7. Souvenir

Bergsvein Toverud, tenor
Maeve Berry, piano

COMIC SONGS

Content to Be Behind Me

Kira Kaplan, soprano
Jenny Kirby, piano

PROGRAM

I'm Glad I'm Not a Tenor

Michael Aiello, baritone
Maeve Berry, piano

TEXTS

Reprinted with the permission of the composer.

See How a Flower Blossoms

Ben Moore

See how a flower blossoms
See how a flower proudly blossoms
It's not afraid to open
It's not afraid to shine
It simply fulfills its own design
And see how a flower brightens
Even the hour when the night encircles our lives
with darkness, it survives
to learn that sunlight and moonlight fade and then return.

Knowing its time is fleeting
Knowing it soon will die
Still it beams and smiles at the world
So see how a flower blossoms
See how a flower breaks free and blossoms
Why are scared to follow even as years depart
For hasn't a simple flower a lesson for the heart?

I Believe

Ben Moore

I believe the barren hills will bloom again
Sending sweet aroma through the air
I believe the fledgling dove will fly without a care
High up in the blue
I believe it's true.

And I believe that in the end the world is kind
Though we see despair at ev'ry turn
I believe these frightful days could be our chance to learn
How to know what's real

TEXTS

How to truly feel
How to see the world anew.

I can guess what you're thinking
I'm hopelessly naïve
But it was you my dear who taught me to believe
So why the big surprise?
It's right here in my eyes.
It's time to look at me and realize
That I believe that we will find our way at last
Even as we stumble all around
I believe that what we've lost will one day soon be found.
Tell me I'm a fool,
Tell me it's not true
But I can say as plain as day
That I'm this way
Because of you.

Let the Walls Fall Down

Ben Moore

Let the walls fall down, let the goldfish drown,
Let the daily chores be forgotten
Let the debts pile high and the children cry,
Let the nosey pry as they may

For the time must come when you bang your drum
And you live your life in your own way
No more fools to bear, no more suits to wear,
No more time spent lost in disguises.

Now we're who we are and we're fine so far,
In this crazy town with its wide renown,
Let its stifling walls fall down!

Are you afraid of being daring?
Sword in your hand afraid to lunge?
Wait just a moment and then take the plunge!

For we soon will be where the best is free
And where love is all we'll ever need forever,
We will never doubt it ever, never ever ever
Let the walls fall down, let the buildings crumble into pieces

TEXTS

We'll be on our way while the prudish frown and the jesters clown,
Let these frightful walls fall down!

Soon we will be together there in the sunny weather,
There where with the grace of God we'll live with no sickness or pain

Let the walls fall down that enclose our hearts,
Let us not be guarded or frightened,
Let the hope we share keep away despair
And let laughter crown all the love we've found,
Let the walls of fear fall down!

In the dark pine-wood

James Joyce

In the dark pine-wood
I would we lay
In deep cool shadow
At noon of day.

How sweet to lie there,
Sweet to kiss,
Where the great pine-forest
Enaisled is!

Thy kiss descending
Sweeter were
With a soft tumult
Of thy hair.

O unto the pine-wood
At noon of day
Come with me now,
Sweet love, away.

I Travel as a Phantom Now

Thomas Hardy

I travel as a phantom now for people who do not wish to see
In flesh and blood so bare a bough as Nature makes of me
And thus I visit bodiless strange gloomy households often at odds
And wonder if man's consciousness was a mistake of God's
And next I meet you and I pause and think that if mistake it were
As some have said, O then it was one that I well can bear.

TEXTS

I am in need of Music

Elizabeth Bishop

I am in need of music that would flow
Over my fretful, feeling fingertips,
Over my bitter-tainted, trembling lips,
With melody, deep, clear, and liquid-slow.
Oh, for the healing swaying, old and low,
Of some song sung to rest the tired dead,
A song to fall like water on my head,
And over quivering limbs, dream flushed to glow!

There is a magic made by melody:
A spell of rest, and quiet breath, and cool
Heart, that sinks through the fading colors deep
To the subaqueous stillness of the sea,
And floats forever in a moon-green pool,
Held in the arms of rhythm and of sleep.

I would in that sweet bosom be

James Joyce

I would in that sweet bosom be
(O sweet it is and fair it is!)
Where no rude wind might visit me.
Because of sad austerities
I would in that sweet bosom be

I would be ever in that heart
(O soft I knock and soft entreat her!)
Where only peace might be my part.
Austerities were all the sweeter.
So I were ever in that heart.

This heart that flutters

James Joyce

This heart that flutters near my heart
My hope and all my riches is
Unhappy when we draw apart
And happy between kiss and kiss,
My hope and all my riches, yes!
And all my happiness...

TEXTS

For there as in some mossy nest
The wrens will divers treasures keep
I laid those treasures I possessed
Ere that mine eyes had learned to weep.
Shall we not be as wise as they
Though love live but a day.

The Cloak, the Boat, and the Shoes

William Butler Yeats

‘What do you make so fair and bright?’
‘I make a cloak of Sorrow:
O lovely to see in all men’s sight
Shall be the cloak of sorrow,
In all men’s sight.’

‘What do you build with sails for flight?’
‘I build a boat for Sorrow:
O swift on the seas all day and night
Saileth the rover Sorrow,
All day and night.’

‘What do you weave with wool so white?’
‘I weave the shoes of Sorrow:
Soundless shall be the footfall light
In all men’s ears of Sorrow,
Sudden and light.’

Bright cap and streamers

James Joyce

Bright cap and streamers,
He sings in the hollow:
Come follow, come follow
All you that love.

Leave dreams to the dreamers
That will not after,
That song and laughter
Do nothing move.

With ribbons streaming
He sings the bolder;

TEXTS

In troop at his shoulder
The wild bees hum.

And the time of dreaming
Dreams is over.
As lover to lover,
Sweetheart, I come.

Judith River

Nabma Sandron, based on the journals of Lewis and Clark

Name this river Bighorn? No! look how bright and quick
How it winds and turns and flirts away again behind the hills
With a flash and a glance hide and seek and hide again
Hidden but now you have found her
But where does she flow beyond these green hills?
No, I think it proper, gentlemen, to name this Judith River!

Back in Virginia, gentlemen, in a ballroom far away,
Miss Judith Hancock of Virginia tilted her fan
Virginia gallants all around her...or should I say ga-LAHNTS?
With their bows and their shiny boots
But Miss Judith Hancock tilted her fan and then over her fan
She looked at me and then she danced away.

And oh Miss Judith, Miss Hancock, I'm a plain man
I waltz like a bear. But if you were here in my ballroom
With sunshine for candles, with willow rose and honeysuckle
Perfuming the warm air and mountains perfect chaperones
Oh, my bright-eyed merry mischief, My light-footed darling my love
take my hand and we'll dance down the valley and see where your river
may go.

FROM SO FREE AM I:

I. Mutta

Indian Buddhist nuns, 6th c. B.C.

trans. Uma Chakravarti and Kumkum Roy

So free am I
So gloriously free!
Free from three petty things:
Free from mortar and from pestle and from my twisted lord
Freed from rebirth and death I am

TEXTS

And all that has held me down is hurled away.

II. Interlude

Amy Lowell

When I have baked white cakes and grated green almonds to spread upon them,
When I have picked the green crowns from the strawberries
And piled them cone-pointed in a blue and yellow platter,
When I have smoothed the seam of the linen I've been working
What then? Tomorrow will be the same.

Cakes and strawberries and needles
In and out of cloth
If the sun is beautiful on bricks and pewter
How much more beautiful is the moon
Slanting down the gauffered branches of a plum tree
The moon wavering across a bed of tulips
The moon still upon your face,
You shine beloved you and the moon
But which is the reflection?
The clock is striking eleven
I think when we have shut and barred the door
The night will be dark outside.

III. Orinda Upon Little Hector Philips

Katherine Philips

Twice forty months of wedlock did I stay
Then had my vows crowned by a lovely boy
And yet in forty days he dropped away
Oh swift vicissitude of human joy.

I did but see him and he disappeared
I did but pluck the rosebud and it fell
A sorrow unforeseen and scarcely feared
For ill can mortals their affections spell

And now, sweet babe, what can my trembling heart
Suggest to right my doleful fate or thee,
Tears are my muse and sorrow all my art,
So piercing groans must be thy elegy.

TEXTS

Ah! Thus whilst no eye is witness of my moan
I grieve the loss, Ah boy too dear to live
And let the unconcerned world alone
Who neither will nor can refreshment give.

IV. Nervous Prostration

Anna Wickham

Note from the composer:

“In this song you’ll hear the words ‘the Croydon class.’ This refers to people who live in the London suburbs which were considered conventional and boring!”

I married a man of the Croydon class when I was twenty-two
And I vex him and he bores me till we don’t know what to do!

It isn’t good form in the Croydon class to say you love your wife,
So I’ll spend my days with the tradesmen’s books and pray for the end of
life!

In green fields there are blossoming trees and a golden wealth of gorse
And young birds sing for joy of worms and it’s perfectly clear of course

That it wouldn’t be taste in the Croydon class to sing over dinner or tea
But I sometimes wish the gentleman would turn and talk to me!

But ev’ry man of the Croydon class lives in terror of joy and speech.
“Words are betrayers,” “joys are brief,” The maxims their wise ones teach

And for all my labor of love and life I shall be clothed and fed
And they’ll give me an orderly funeral when I’m still enough to be dead!

VII. Mettika

Indian Buddhist nuns, 6th c. B.C.

trans. Uma Chakravarti and Kumkum Roy

Though I am weak and tired now and my youthful step long gone
Leaning on this staff I climb the mountain peak, my cloak cast off,
My bowl overturned, I sit here on this rock and over my spirit
Blows the breath of liberty.

TEXTS

FROM *DEAR THEO*:

based on letters of Vincent Van Gogh to his brother Theo

II. I Found a Woman

I found a woman, not young, not beautiful, But oh this woman had a charm for me
It's not the first time I was unable to resist that feeling of affection, yes, affection and love
for these women who are so damned and condemned
I do not condemn them, would you think that I have never felt the need for love?
We talked about her life, about her cares, about her misery,
We talked about everything, brother, everything.

IV. The Man I Have to Paint

I think of the man I have to paint, terrible in the furnace of the full ardors of the harvest
At the heart of the south, of the old gold in the shadows
Oh my dear boy and the nice people will only see the exaggeration as caricature
The only choice I have is between being a good painter and a bad one—I choose the first
But the needs of painting are like those of a ruinous mistress:
You can do nothing without money and you never have enough of it.
If you should happen to send a little extra this month, I would be most grateful.

VII. Souvenir

I must leave a souvenir, a souvenir that I might offer in the shape of something true
The shape of drawing and of pictures
I must leave a souvenir, a souvenir that might remain to say to those who care to see,
To those with eyes who care to see, that this man felt deeply.
I know I'll never do what I intended
Success requires a nature unlike mine
My strength has been depleted far too quickly
But for others Theo, yes for others there is a chance for something more.
If only you had been there when I saw the red vineyard, all red like red wine,
There is a chance for something more, a souvenir that might remain
To say to those who care to see that here was someone who felt deeply,
Brother, Dear brother, Dear Theo.

TEXTS

COMIC SONGS:

Content to Be Behind Me

Ben Moore, alt.

People often remind me to mention the one who is slaving away at the keys.

But such decorous gestures are quite overdone,
Share the glory? Oh please! I assure you that she's
Content to be behind me, content there in the rear,
Content to feed my ev'ry need and never ever interfere.
For she has no ambition, She shed those long ago,
She'll never claim applause or fame and that is why I love her so.

Does she bang? God forbid. I would kill her if she did.
Is she rigid like a grid?
No, She yields to my voice with its ev'ry inflection,
obeying my whims and my ev'ry predilection!

Content to be behind me and follow my commands.
Content to play whatever I say like a chestnut now and then,
I know, let's do the trout again!

In einem Bächlein helle, you see how quickly she complies,
Die launische Forelle, believe me, she's very wise.

She goes from Napoli to Fargo and knows it's all because of me,
She carries all the cargo, content as she can be.
Just happy to travel with a star going round the world for free.

And this I tell you gladly: the press will never make her gray.
She may play well or badly, they don't mention her either way.
Of course, if editors compel it, some rag might register her name.
They usually misspell it, she's happy all the same.
Just look at her, anyone can tell it's for love and not for fame.

So now you know the reason, she needs no nod from me.
She needs no praise or thanks, no, no, not she, not she!

In einem Bächlein helle, perhaps it's something that I said?
Die launische Forelle, but you shouldn't be misled.

Her love for me is ever-burning, for I'm the one who set her free,
Concerti she's not learning, no need to, thanks to me!

TEXTS

In einem Bächlein helle...
Da schuss in froher Eil...
Die launische...

Content to be behind me,
I thought she felt that way
Oh well, too bad,
There's nothing to add
Except...
Boy, oh boy, can that girl play!

I'm Glad I'm Not a Tenor

Ben Moore

All the good tunes go to tenors in the opera world, it would appear.
That tessitura can alone insure a gorgeous melody that people come to hear.

Well, I'm not hooked on "Nessun dorma" and to prove my case
I'll now perform a little song to make it absolutely clear...

I'm glad I'm not a tenor, for anyone can see
They're philistines and drama queens
And rarely over five-foot-three.

Yes, I'm glad I'm not a tenor. Why would I want it so?
To have to try to sing so high when it's so nice and comfy way down low.
Yet since my first voice lesson I've heard: "You've got the stuff!"
But higher scales each session were never high enough!

So I'm glad I'm not a tenor, but people aren't convinced.
They say the things I've said to you, and nothing new
Like "Tenors get the good tunes!" Well, I am here to say that's just not true!
Take this tune which you'll agree has an awesome melody.
Tenors can argue, rant and hiss. No tune of theirs comes even close to this.
Hear how it modulates, what joy this noble tune creates,
And it's only one of so many greats all for the baritone.

Why would I care to sing a tenor part at all
With so much music at my beck and call,
When you've got tunes for baritones this strong,
You just can't go wrong...Let's move along!

TEXTS

To those wondrous Verdi anthems, beautiful as any tenor tune you can name,
And the thrill as the rhythm changes makes you think of how truly strange it is
That some baritones wish they had led tenor lives instead, Let's skip ahead!

To Wagner the man who'll save the day. His tunes could never go astray.
For they have simply no relation to that Italian cheap sensation.
But there it is again! No, no, this is not what this should be about
And just so there's no doubt, I'll drown it out!

Ah, bravo Figaro, bravo bravissimo, a te fortuna non manche...
Toreador en gar...No!!!...

I'm glad I'm not a tenor, I'd never sink that low.
But one admits some tenor hits are sort of, well...agreeable, and so
The only thing to say is "Vincerò"!

ABOUT THE COMPOSER

The music of American composer **Ben Moore** includes art song, opera, musical theatre, cabaret, chamber music, choral music and comedy material. His work has been called “brilliant” and “gorgeously lyrical” by the New York Times while Opera News has praised the “easy tunefulness” and “romantic sweep” of his songs. Singers who have performed his work include Deborah Voigt, Susan Graham, Frederica von Stade, Isabel Leonard, Lawrence Brownlee, Robert White, Nathan Gunn and Audra McDonald.

Moore composed the scores for three operas including *Enemies*, a Love Story which premiered at Palm Beach Opera in 2015 and was seen at Kentucky Opera in November 2018. Based on the novel by Isaac Bashevis Singer, with a libretto by Nahma Sandrow, the opera has been called “an important new work that will find its place among those works that audiences will be moved by...” (Fred Plotkin/WQXR). *Odyssey* and *Robin Hood* are youth operas commissioned by the Glimmerglass Festival with librettos by Kelley Rourke. *Odyssey* premiered at Glimmerglass in 2015 and has since been seen at venues across the country including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Minnesota Opera. Opera News called it “an opera for all ages” with an “ebullient and lyrical” score (See complete review [here](#)). *Robin Hood* premiered at Glimmerglass in August 2017 and was seen at Seattle Opera in February 2018, and Houston Grand Opera in June 2018. For information on both works please visit youthopera.org.


Ben's songs can be heard on Deborah Voigt's *All My Heart* (EMI) with eight Moore works, Nathan Gunn's *Just Before Sunrise* (SonyBMG), Lawrence Brownlee's *This Heart that Flutters* (Opus Arte) and Susan Graham at Carnegie Hall (Warner Classics). *Dear Theo* (Delos records) features three of Ben's song cycles. These include *Dear Theo*, based on the letters of Vincent van Gogh; *So Free Am I*, on poems by women; and *Ode to a Nightingale*, a setting of John Keats' great poem. Read the Opera News review [here](#).

In 2006 the Metropolitan Opera featured two of his comedy songs in a gala broadcast nationally. 2006 also saw the release of the volume “Ben Moore: 14 Songs” published by G. Schirmer. Reviewing the album, *Classical Singer Magazine* wrote: “...you can find a breath of fresh air in the settings included in this volume... This composer is not afraid of the past, but rather embraces many of the most beautiful aspects of his artistic heritage while imbuing his work with its own personal colors and tones.” Born on January 2, 1960, in Syracuse, New York, Moore grew up in Clinton, New York and graduated from Hamilton College. With an MFA from The Parsons School of Design, Ben is also a painter and teaches at New York's Guggenheim Museum and Morgan Library.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT EASTMAN

Information about upcoming Eastman concerts and events can be found at:

www.rochester.edu/Eastman/calendar

 www.facebook.com/ConcertsAtEastman

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Please note: The use of unauthorized photographic and recording equipment is not allowed in this building. We reserve the right to ask anyone disrupting a performance to leave the hall.

Restrooms are located on the main floor of Kilbourn Hall. Fully-accessible restrooms are available on the first floor of the Eastman School. Our ushers will be happy to direct you to them.

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