CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

An Abstract in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Music,

in Performance

by

Suzanne Lewinson

December 2012
The abstract of Suzanne Lewinson is approved:

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ABSTRACT

GRADUATE RECITAL IN VOICE

by

Suzanne Lewinson

Master of Music, Performance

The songs in my recital are songs throughout several time periods focused on many aspects on love. There are many themes in these pieces which reflect any woman's life. Looking for love, finding love, losing love, and just being mad about love. These songs span many time periods throughout music from the classical period to songs written as recently as 1997. The songs in this recital feature: a concert aria, French mélodie, German lied, and Russian and English art songs.

Austrian composer, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) is known for the multitude of works written in his brief lifetime. Mozart is best known for his symphonies, extensive list of concertos for instruments, and 22 operas. Throughout his life, he wrote 60 concert arias, with the majority – 35 – for the soprano voice.

The concert aria “Vado, ma dove?” was one of two insertion arias written for Martin y Soler's 1789 opera, Il Bubero di buon core, “The Goodhearted Churl”. The other aria was, “Chi sa, chi sa, qual sia.” The text was written by Lorenzo da Ponte who wrote Mozart's famous operas, Don Giovanni, Le Nozze di Figaro, and Cosi fan Tutte. The aria, “Vado, ma dove?” is written in a two-part form. The aria begins with a fast allegro section to convey confusion. The second section has a slower andante sostenuto section, demonstrates loving and tenderness. In the andante sostenuto section, the piano accompaniment, has a constant triplet rhythm, while the voice is in a duple meter.
Claude Debussy (1862-1918) is a highly prolific French composer. Debussy's works are most associated with the French Impressionist movement. Debussy was able to create sounds and colors that were unheard of musically before his time. During Debussy's lifetime, he composed a multitude of mélodie. He often collaborated with his poetic contemporaries, Paul Verlaine and Stéphane Mallarmé.

Debussy's song cycle, *Ariettes oubliées (Forgotten Airs)*, are a group of six songs based on various texts by Paul Verlaine. These songs were composed between 1885-1887. The six pieces in the cycle are: “C'est L'extase,” “Il pleure dans mon coeur,” “L'ombre des arbes,” “Chevaux des bois,” “Green,” and “Spleen.”

“C'est l'extase,” is a through composed piece. In this piece, Debussy was able to illustrate two lovers, post ecstasy, and then re-enacts the encounter. The text, “Cela ressemble au cri doux / Que l’herbe agitée expire, is represented musically by vocal ascending and descending patterns.

“Green,” comes from the “English section” of Verlaine's *Romances san paroles*, his six *Aquarelles*. The piece is written in a modified ABA form. The overall mode in this piece is joyous and happy. A young lover is bringing his beloved fruits, flowers, leaves, and branches. Debussy's triplet meter in the piano, while the voice has a predominantly duple meter, allows this watercolor-like feeling to take hold of the piece. The middle section of the piece, the accompaniment goes across the registers, implying, this lover will do anything for his beloved. In the final section, it is a return to the opening theme, but in a slower tempo. “Et que je dorme un peu puisque vous reposez,” the young lover finally gets to sleep in his beloved's arms.

“Spleen,” the second of Verlaine's *Aquarelles*. The title “Spleen,” has a multitude of interpretations. It has been interpreted as hostility, anger, or spite. “Spleen,” is written in an AB form. The piece starts with a four measure piano accompaniment followed by the voice with an unaccompanied monotone couplet. The remainder of the piece transcends into this dramatic voyage. Debussy then uses the opening piano melody but transplants it in different ways throughout the piece.
The piece intensifies dramatically as the vocal lines rises. The piece eventually ends on a somber note, both musically and textually.

Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873-1943) was last of the foremost Russian romantic era composers. He was also known as a piano virtuoso. Rachmaninoff came from an old aristocratic family. He studied at the Moscow Conservatory. Rachmaninoff was mentored by fellow Russian Peter Illyich Tchaikovsky. Rachmaninoff wrote a multitude of piano works including four piano concertos and the *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*. Rachmaninoff also wrote three operas, three symphonies, and a number of orchestral works as well. The piano is featured greatly throughout Rachmaninoff's compositions, especially in his vocal music.

Rachmaninoff's song “*V*molchani nochi,” (In the silence of the mysterious night) was the of his earliest songs composed written in 1890. The third song of Rachmaninoff's Op. 4, it was actually composed before the first two. The song is set to a romantic text by Afanasy Fet. Rachmaninoff creates this passionate and emotional world that is not even reflected in Fet's text. The piece escalates to a climactic ***fff*** when the text says, with your cherished name awaken the darkness of the night.

Rachmaninoff's song “*Siren,*” (Lilacs) with original text by Ekaterina Beketova is from his Op. 21 No 5, written in 1902. The song begins with a very simplistic folk melody. The opening sections are very characteristic of Russian folk music. The piece elaborates into a dramatic melody both vocally and pianistically. Rachmaninoff later transcribed this piece into a solo piano piece.

Rachmaninoff's “*Son,*” (A Dream) Op. 38 No. 5, was written in 1916, with text by Feodor Sologub. The piece is written in an AB form. The two measure piano introduction has only sets up this dream-like piece. The delicate piano texture is woven in with a captivating vocal melody. The song begins with a somewhat simplistic and legato vocal melody in the first section of the song. In the second section of the piece, the piano line changes its texture and then the vocal line changes into the
changes into this passionate melody. The piece finishes with a dream-like piano refrain bringing back all the themes from earlier in the piece.

Richard Strauss (1864-1949) was one of the most highly regarded German composers of the late Romantic era. He is well known for his tone poems, such as Don Juan and Also Sprach Zarathustra, his operas, such as Der Rosenkavalier, Salome, and Arabella, and his lieder, especially his Vier letze Lieder (Four Last Songs).

“Begegnung” (Meeting), is musical flirting. The text was written by Otto Gruppe, and the title was later added by Strauss. The buoyant piano accompaniment along with the giddy nature of the vocal texture make this an overall happy piece. The ABA form in F-major adds to the continuous nature of happiness in this piece of two loves sneaking kisses behind their parent's backs.

“Seitdem dein Aug’” (Since your eyes) Op.17 No.1, was composed in 1887, with the text by Adolph von Schack. This is one of the greatest love songs Strauss wrote. Through composed and set in D-flat major, the piano always contains steady chords while the vocal line has ascending and descending lines to indicate immense happiness. The vocal line later has soaring legato lines, and then the piano takes over the lines previously sung by the vocal line.

“Cäcilie” (Cecilia) Op.27, No.2, was composed in 1894 with a text by Heinrich Hart. Strauss presented Opus 27 to his wife Pauline de Ahna on their wedding day. In 1897, Strauss later orchestrated Opus 27. “Cäcilie” has an almost orchestral arrangement in the piano accompaniment. This piece, written in E-major, has a recurring triplet theme in the vocal line on the text asking the lover's beloved, “Wenn du es wüstest” (If you only knew).

“Zueignung” (Dedication) Op. 10, No.1 was composed in 1885 in a set of eight songs with text by Hermann von Gilm. “Zueignung,” was later orchestrated by Robert Heger in 1932 and the composer in 1940, but Heger's is the orchestration in current use. The piano accompaniment has a continuous
triplet figure throughout the piece. And in each of the three verses, the piece ends with the same phrase “Habe dank” (Have thanks). The first two verses are identical with the exception of the text and in the final verse on the word “Helig” (Holy), the vocal line has a climactic high-A and ends in a very declamatory phrase.

American born composer Jake Heggie (1961) is best known for his 2000 opera, Dead Man Walking. His works have been championed extensively by mezzo-soprano Frederica von Stade. Heggie was influenced by different genres of music, such as pop, jazz, rock, and opera, which have all had an impact on his compositions. The song cycle Natural Selection, was written by San Francisco based poet, Gini Savage in 1997. Heggie and Savage specifically wrote this song cycle for soprano Nicole Folland, who later recorded these songs.

“Animal Passion,” is set in a tango rhythm. The singer is the huntress and the listener is her prey. The singer has very specific demands about what she wants at one moment (I mean business/I want whiskey/I want to be swallowed whole). And then in the next moment she is back to her cat-like tendencies (no discreet eavesdroppers coughs can stop us in our frenzies/let the voyeurs voient/and let the great cats come.) Heggie imitates the animalistic traits, whether it be in the notes to the piano (purr) and (very dry).

In “Alas! Alack!” the singer takes on the narrative role and goes through a laundry list of what she is looking for in a mate, using comparisons from various operas. In the piano accompaniment, he has a constant triplet figure in the right hand and a steady quarter note pattern to maintain the common time. The only time this goes astray is when the accompaniment plays a familiar theme from Giacomo Puccini's opera, Tosca. The narrator complains about opera heroes Cavaradossi, from Puccini's Tosca and Don Ottavio from Mozart's Don Giovanni, as being too boring and wanting the bad guy like Scarpia from Tosca. (As Tosca I lost it over Scarpia/not such a bad fella/he had the power and steady job/the
“Joy Alone (Connection)” is the most somber of the song cycle. It focuses on finding inner joy and happiness. This piece evokes themes of nature (A fox streaks across the sand and scented sage brush). This through composed piece has fluid lines throughout. A dance-like waltz in the center section and in the end a reflective ending of finding inner peace.
Suzanne Lewinson
Soprano

In her Master of Music Recital

Carol Roberts
Piano

Saturday, November 17, 2012
2:30 PM

Music Recital Hall

In partial fulfillment of the
Master of Music in Vocal Performance
Suzanne Lewinson
Soprano

Carol Roberts
Piano

PROGRAM

I. Vado, ma dove? Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

II. Ariettes oubliées Claude Debussy (1862 – 1918)
   1. C'est l'extase
   2. Green
   3. Spleen

III. V'molchani nochi Sergei Rachmaninoff (1873 – 1943)
     Siren
     Son

INTERMISSION

IV. Begegnung Richard Strauss (1864 – 1949)
    Seitdem dein Aug'
    Cäcilie
    Zueignung

V. Natural Selection Jack Heggie (1961)
   1. Animal Passion
   2. Alas! Alack!
   3. Joy, Alone (Connection)
I. Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, is known for the abundance of music he wrote during his brief life. The concert aria, *Vado, ma dove?*, was written as an insertion aria for Martin y Soler's opera Il Bubero di buon core. The text is written by the famous librettist, Lorenzo da Ponte, who wrote libretti for Mozart's Don Giovanni, Le Nozze di Figaro, and Così fan Tutte. This concert aria is a two part aria which an allegro to convey frustration and a slower andante sostenuto to express loving and tenderness.

II. Claude Debussy is a highly prolific impressionist French composer. The Ariettes Oubliées (Forgotten Songs), are all written from various texts of poet Paul Verlaine. In “C'est l'extase”, Debussy mimics the text, in the music, the languorous ecstasy. In Green, the piece is exuberant and always content. Spleen, begins and ends very sparsely. The intensity of the piece begins as quickly as it ends.

III. Russian composer Sergei Rachmaninoff, is best known for his piano concertos and for his tone poem, Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini. V'molchani nachi (In the silence of the mysterious night), is exceedingly passionate musically, while its text would suggest otherwise. Siren (Lilacs), is a very simplistic melody, that unfolds into an elaborate melody. Son (Dreams), is very languorous melodically.

IV. German composer Richard Strauss, wrote for many genres of music. His music is a prime example of the late German Romantic era. Strauss wrote his vocal music for his wife, Pauline de Ahna. Begegnung is musical flirting. The piece builds in quiet intensity through the verses. Seitdem dein Aug' has long soaring melodic lines in this poignant love song. Cäcilie is part of four songs that Strauss wrote to his wife the night before their wedding. Zueignung is one of Strauss' best known lied. This three stanza song is the ultimate form of dedication.

V. American contemporary composer Jake Heggie, is well known for his operas, Moby Dick, The End of the Affair, and Dead Man Walking. In the song cycle, Natural Selection, Heggie wrote these pieces, along with poet Gini Savage, for soprano Nicole Folland.
I. **Vado, ma Dove?**

I go, but where Ye gods,
if for his torments, for my sighs,
Heaven feels no pity?

You who speak to my heart
guide my steps, love;
remove that hesitation that makes me doubt.

II. **Ariettes oubliées**

1. **C'est l'extase**

It is the languorous ecstasy,
It is the amorous fatigue,
It is all the tremors of the woods
As the breezes embrace them,
It is in the gray branches
The choir of tiny voices.

O the frail and fresh murmur,
How it twitters and whispers!
It resembles the soft cry
Breathed out by the ruffled grass...
You would say it is, under swirling waters,
The muffled rumbling of the pebbles.

This soul that mourns
With such subdued lament
Is ours, is it not?
It is my soul, say, and your,
Exhaling the humble anthem
Very softly, on this warm evening?
2. **Green**

Here are some fruit, some flowers, some leaves and some branches,
And then here is my heart, which beats only for you.
Do not rip it up with your two white hands,
And may the humble present be sweet in your beautiful eyes!

I arrive all covered in dew,
Which the wind of morning comes to freeze on my forehead.
Suffer my weariness, rested at your feet,
To dream of the dear moments that will solace it.

On your young breast allow my head to rest,
Still ringing with your last kisses;
Let it calm itself after the pleasant tempest,
And let me sleep a little, since you are resting.

3. **Spleen**

Around were all the roses red
The ivy all around was black.

Dear, at your slightest move
My despair comes back.

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

I fear always-ah, to wait and wonder!
Some atrocious flight of yours.

I am so tired of holly-sprays
And weary of the bright bos-tree,

And of the immense country side,
And of everything, save you, alas!
III. **V'molchani Nochi**

In the silence of the mysterious night,
your alluring babble, smiles and glances,
your fleeting glances, the locks of your rich hair, locks pliant under your fingertips -
I will long be trying to get rid of the images only to call them back again;

I will be repeating and correcting in a whisper
the words I've told you, the words full of awkwardness,
and drunk with love, contrary to reason.
I will be awakening the night's darkness with a cherished name.

**Siren**

In the morning, at daybreak,
over the dewy grass,
I will go to breathe the crisp dawn;
and in the fragrant shade,
where the lilac crowds,
I will go to seek my happiness...

In life, only one happiness
it was fated for me to discover,
and the happiness lives in the lilacs;
in the green boughs,
in the fragrant bunches,
my poor happiness blossoms...

**Son**

There is nothing more desirable
In the world than the dream.
It has magic stillness.
It has on its lips
No sadness, no laughter
And bottomless eyes, and many hidden pleasures.

It has two immense wings,
as light as the shadow of midnight.
It's unfathomable how it carries them,
and where and on what;
It will not beat its wings,
And it will not move its shoulder.

IV. Begegnung

A down the stairway bounding, came I with laughter gay,
and springing up to meet me, came he the other way.
And in the shadow so dark and grim,
he held me close, so close to him
and kiss'd me once and kiss'd me twice
and kiss'd me thrice!
I hope that no one saw!

My guilty cheeks were burning as I in the parlor came,
to smiling guests a turning, my heart all filled with shame.
I thought "Ah, me, they have seen it all!
Their scorn on me this moment should fall!
Ah, me, ah marry! what shall I do?
His folly he will shall rue!"
I'm sure that no one saw!

I in the Garden hid me where bright the flowers shone,
for laughing glances chide me and I must be alone.
The roses a blushing, hid their face.
The sweet birds were twittering of my disgrace,
I care not if the saw!

Seitdem dein Aug'

Since your eyes looked into mine,
and love, as if falling from Heaven,
fell from them onto me like dew,
what more could the earth offer me?

It has given me its best,
and from the heart's quiet happiness
My whole life was overflowing
only through one happy moment.

Cäcilie
If you only knew
what it's like to dream of burning kisses,
of wandering and resting with one's beloved,
eye turned to eye,
and cuddling and chatting -
if you only knew,
you would incline your heart to me!

If you only knew
what it's like to feel dread on lonely nights,
surrounded by a raging storm, while no one comforts
with a mild voice your struggle-weary soul -
if you only knew,
you would come to me.

If you only knew
what it's like to live, surrounded by God's
world-creating breath,
to float up, carried by the light,
to blessed heights -
if you only knew,
then you would live with me!

Zueignung
Yes, you know it, dearest soul,
How I suffer far from you,
Love makes the heart sick,
Have thanks.

Once I, drinker of freedom,
Held high the amethyst beaker,
And you blessed the drink,
Have thanks.

And you exorcised the evils in it,
Until I, as I had never been before,
Blessed, blessed sank upon your hear,
Have thanks.

V. Natural Selection

1. Animal Passion
Fierce as a bobcat’s spring
With start-up speeds of sixty miles per hour
I want a lover to sweep me off my feet
And slide me into the gutter
Without the niceties of small-talk roses or champagne.

I mean business, I want whiskey
I want to be swallowed whole,
I want tiles to spring off of walls
When we enter hotel rooms or afternoon apartments
I won’t pussyfoot around responsibility
“Shoulds” and “oughts” are out for good.

And I don’t want to be a fat domestic cat
I want to be frantic,
Yowls and growls to sound like the lion house at feeding time
I don’t give a damn who hears,
I don’t give a damn!

No discreet eavesdroppers coughs can stop us in our frenzy.

Let the voyeurs voyent
And let the great cats come.

2. Alas! Alack!
Alas! Alack!
I have a knack for falling for the wrong man
Cavaradossi or Don Ottavio were just too tame
I never seem to want to stick to my own script
It’s the chain-smoking bad guy in leather
The one who’ll ruffle my feathers the most who gets me
I fear it’s a lack—Alas!

As Tosca I lost it over Scarpia
Not such a bad fella
He had the power and the steady job
The better tune
So when they asked me to pick up the knife and dispatch demurred
Perhaps it was his theme song I preferred
I know there's a lack—Alas!

If I were Oberon,
I'd choose Puck,
For Pamina, it's Papagena
If I'm Brünnhilde, it’s bound to be Wotan on whom I’m stuck
If Isolde were smitten by King Marke or Melot
Would it make her a zealot?
Damn!
I know there’s a lack—Alas!

3. Joy Alone (Connection)
The stunning silence of myself
From the hearts of forests
Middle of mountains
A late low sun rests her friendly hand
On the crowns of uncompromised trees
A fox streaks across the sand and scented sagebrush
A chatter of chipmunks scatters
Squirrels who stuff their briefcases for the winter
Blue-collar workers
Long term plans
The resiny crunch of orange pine needles warm under foot
A windfall of sweet cones
Joy alone
A startle of saplings
The power of trees
Unrav’ling of rivers
Joy alone
Joy
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Carol Roberts.... Thank you for getting me up on this stage today. I could not have gotten here without you.

Dr. David Sannerud.... Thank you for making me the singer I am today. Thank you for always encouraging me and for always having chocolate!

Mom and Dad.... Thank you, thank you, THANK YOU!!! You two are the best parents in the world. Thank you for always believing in me and never giving up on me.

Ed and Sam.... Thank you for your patience and always coming to your favorite little sister's shows. You two are the best and I thank you for never complaining about it!

Buddy.... Thank you from the bottom of my heart for.... just being you.

Carol DeLeon.... Thank you for being the best travel, yoga, and singing buddy ever. I would never have survived graduate school without your friendship and encouragement.

Leah Adams.... Thank you for being such an amazing listener... and thank you for always bringing me flowers.

Grandma Barbara, Uncle Richard and Noелиe.... Thank you for traveling to see me today. I am SOOO happy you are here with me on my special day. I love you all so much!!!

And You, my beautiful audience.... Thank you so much for sharing this afternoon with me. It means so much to me.