

SONOKLECT '00-'01

A Concert Series of Modern Music

TERRY VOSBEIN, DIRECTOR

Kristen Matson, soprano

&

Brad Blackham, piano

Washington and Lee University
Keller Theatre • 8:00 p.m. • 28 October 2000

PROGRAM

Cuatro Madrigales Amatorios

¿Con qué lavaré
Vos me matásteis
¿De dónde venís, amore
De los Alamos vengo, madre

Joaquin Rodrigo

(1901-1999)

Three Songs, Opus 45

Now Have I Fed and Eaten Up the Rose
A Green Lowland of Pianos
O Boundless, Boundless Evening

Samuel Barber

(1910-1981)

Six Emily Dickinson Poems

Perhaps you'd like to buy a flower
I died for beauty
How lonesome the wind must feel nights
The saddest noise, the sweetest noise
Hope is the thing with feathers
Make me a picture of the sun

Terry Vosbein

(b. 1957)

INTERMISSION

Proses Lyriques

De Rêve
De Grève
De Fleurs
De Soir

Claude Debussy

(1862-1918)

Laurie's Song

from THE TENDER LAND

Aaron Copland

(1900-1990)

Memories

A — Very Pleasant
B — Rather Sad

Charles Ives

(1874-1954)

The World's Highway

The Housatonic at Stockbridge

Berceuse

PROGRAM NOTES

First and foremost, we would like to express our warmest gratitude to Terry Vosbein for not only composing songs especially for us, but also giving us a wonderful opportunity to present them in a recital program. We have thoroughly enjoyed interpreting these songs and the opportunity to put the first marks on new music. Terry's wide range of musical tastes can be heard in these songs, from the orchestral sounds to the more intimate jazz combo.

Music cannot come alive without both the performers and the listeners taking a journey during the performance. The journey might consist of a simple reminiscence or exciting new discoveries at each turn. Our "journey" starts with Joaquin Rodrigo, a Spanish composer blind since the age of three, who attributed his career in music to his blindness. We move on to Samuel Barber, winner of two Pulitzer Prizes in music, who possessed a fine baritone voice. It is interesting to note that Barber chose to set the works of three different poets, translated from the original German and Polish. We end the first half with *Six Emily Dickinson Songs*. Terry Vosbein is establishing himself as one of the great American composers and his settings of the poetry of Emily Dickinson are masterful.

Earlier this year we were fortunate to have the opportunity to travel to Europe, and Paris was among our travels. We were able to experience firsthand the bustle in a Parisian train station on a summer weekend, which Debussy recounts in *De Soir*, the last piece in his *Proses Lyriques*. In this set, the only work that Debussy supplied the poetry for himself, we also encounter other favorite subjects of his, including the moon and the sea. Debussy paints a musical watercolor of an ocean tempest (*De Grève*) and a bitter, dark side of flowers (*De Fleurs*). Following the French set, we pay homage to the 100th anniversary of Aaron Copland's birth with the poignant *Laurie's Song* from his opera *The Tender Land*. To close the program, we have selected four diverse songs by Charles Ives. These songs come from a collection of 114 songs, many of them written with the intention of *not* being performed. Ives was asked on many occasions why he wrote music that was incapable of being performed. His idea was that it did not matter that it could not be performed; the fact that it existed was enough.

— Brad Blackham & Kristen Matson

TEXTS

Cuatro Madrigales Amatorios

Joaquin Rodrigo

¿Con qué la lavaré

With what shall I wash the flesh of my face that I live shamefully?
All married women wash with lime water.
I wash myself carefully with shame and pain.

Vos me matásteis

You have killed me, girl with hair.
You have killed me.
On the banks of a river, we saw the Virgin.

¿De dónde venís, amore

From where are you coming, my love?
I know well from where.
From where are you coming, friend?
I have been a witness.

De los alamos vengo, madre

I come from the groves of Seville, mother.
I come from watching the wind rustle them.
I come from seeing my beautiful friend.

Now Have I Fed and Eaten Up the Rose

Now have I fed and eaten up the rose
Which then she laid within my stiffcold hand.
That I should ever feed upon a rose
I never had believed in liveman's land.
Only I wonder was it white or red
The flower that in the darkness my food has been.
Give us, and if Thou give, thy daily bread,
Deliver us from evil, Lord, Amen.

A Green Lowland of Pianos

In the evening as far as the eye can see, herds of black pianos
Up to their knees in the mire they listen to the frogs.
They gurgle in water with chords of rapture.
They are entranced by froggish, moonish spontaneity.
After the vacation, they cause scandals in a concert hall
During the artistic milking.
Suddenly, they lie down like cows
Looking with indifference at the white flowers of the audience
At the gesticulating of the ushers.

O Boundless, Boundless Evening

O boundless, boundless evening.
Soon the glow of long hills on the skyline will be gone,
Like clear dream country now, rich-hued by sun.
O boundless evening where the cornfields throw
The scattered daylight back in an aureole.
Swallows high up are singing, very small.
On every meadow glitters their swift flight,
In woods of rushes and where tall masts stand in brilliant bays.
Yet in ravines beyond between the hills already nests the night.

Perhaps you'd like to buy a flower

Perhaps you'd like to buy a flower,
But I could never sell—
If you would like to *borrow*,
Until the Daffodil
Unties her yellow Bonnet
Beneath the village door,
Until the Bees, from Clover rows
Their Hock, and Sherry, draw,
Why, I will lend until just then,
But not an hour more!

I died for Beauty

I died for Beauty—but was scarce
Adjusted in the Tomb
When One who died for Truth, was lain
In an adjoining Room—
He questioned softly “Why I failed”?
“For Beauty,” I replied—
“And I—for Truth—Themselves are one—
We Brethren, are,” He said—
And so, as Kinsmen, met at Night—
We talked between the Rooms—
Until the Moss had reached our lips—
And covered up—our names—

How lonesome the Wind must feel Nights

How lonesome the Wind must feel Nights—
When people have put out the Lights
And everything that has an Inn
Closes the shutter and goes in—
How pompous the Wind must feel Noons
Stepping into incorporeal Tunes
Correcting errors of the sky
And clarifying scenery
How mighty the Wind must feel Morns
Encamping on a thousand dawns
Espousing each and spurning all
Then soaring to his Temple Tall—

The saddest noise, the sweetest noise

The saddest noise, the sweetest noise,
The maddest noise that grows,—
The birds, they make it in the spring,
At night's delicious close.
Between the March and April line—
That magical frontier
Beyond which summer hesitates,
Almost too heavenly near.
It makes us think of all the dead
That sauntered with us here,
By separation's sorcery
Made cruelly more dear.
It makes us think of what we had,
And what we now deplore.
We almost wish those siren throats
Would go and sing no more.
An ear can break a human heart
As quickly as a spear,
We wish the ear had not a heart
So dangerously near.

Hope is the thing with feathers

"Hope" is the thing with feathers—
That perches in the soul—
And sings the tunes without the words—
And never stops—at all—
And sweetest—in the Gale—is heard—
And sore must be the storm—
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm—
I've heard it in the chilliest land—
And on the strangest Sea—
Yet, never, in Extremity,
It asked a crumb—of Me.

Make me a picture of the sun

Make me a picture of the sun—
So I can hang it in my room—
And make believe I'm getting warm
When others call it "Day"!
Draw me a Robin—on a stem—
So I am hearing him, I'll dream,
And when the Orchards stop their tune—
Put me pretense—away—
Say if it's really—warm at noon—
Whether it's Buttercups that "skim"—
Or Butterflies—that "bloom"?
Then—skip—the frost—upon the lea—
And skip the Russet—on the tree—
Let's pray those—never come!

De Rêve

(Of Dreaming)

The night has a woman's sweetness!
And the old trees beneath the golden moon, dream
Of her who has just passed, her head adorned with pearls,
Heartbroken now!
Forever heartbroken!
They knew not how to signal her . . .

All of them! All have passed
The frail women,
The foolish,
Sowing their laughter on the sparse grass,
In the soft breezes the charming allure
Of their florid hips!
Of all this, nothing remains save a pale shudder.

The old trees beneath the golden moon, weep for
Their beautiful golden leaves
No one will grant them the pride of golden helmets
Tarnished now!
Forever tarnished! The knights have died in search of the Grail!

The night has the sweetness of women!
Certain hands seem to caress souls
Hands so foolish, so frail,
In the time when swords sang their valiant song for Them! . . .
Strange sighs rise up from under the trees.
My soul! It is some ancient dream that grips you!

De Grève

(Of Shores)

On the sea the twilights fall,
White, frayed silk!
Waves like giddy girls,
They chatter, young girls leaving school,
Among the swishing of their dress,
Green iridescent silk!

Clouds, serious voyagers,
Plot out the coming storm,
And, it is a background truly too dark
For this English watercolor.
The waves, the little waves,
No longer know where to turn,
For here comes a nasty shower,
Swishing of skirts in the air,
Bewildered green silk.

But the moon, sympathetic to all!
Comes out to calm this gray conflict,
And slowly soothes his little friends,
Who offer themselves, like loving lips
To this warm and white kiss.
Nothing, nothing more!
Nothing save the belated bells
Of floating churches
Angelus of the waves,
Becalmed white silk!

De Fleurs

(Of Flowers)

In the boredom so desolately green
Of the hothouse of sorrow,
Flowers entwine my heart
In their cruel tendrils.
Ah! when will they come and surround my head again
Those dear hands so tenderly soothing?

The great violet irises
Ravage your eyes violently,
While pretending to reflect them,
They who were the water of the dream
Into which my dreams plunged so gently
Dreams enclosed by their color;
And the lilies, white fountains smelling of pistils,
Have lost their pale grace
And are now only poor invalids without the sun!

Sun! friend of evil flowers,
Killer of dreams! Killer of illusions
The blessed bread of miserable souls!
Come! Come! Hands of salvation!
Shatter the panes of delusion,
Shatter the panes of evil,
My soul dies from too much sun!

Mirages! No more will joy in my eyes be reflected,
And my hands are weary from praying,
My eyes are weary from weeping!
Eternally this mad sound
Of petals that are black with boredom,
Falling drop by drop on my head
In the greenness of the hothouse of sorrow!

De Soir

(Of Evening)

Sunday over cities,
Sunday in hearts!
Sunday for little girls
Who sing in a knowing voice
Persistent rounds
About how fine Towers
Have only a few days remaining to them!

Sunday, the train stations are wild!
Everyone prepares
For the suburbs of adventure
Bidding farewell to each other
With bewildered gestures!

Sunday the trains go quickly,
Devoured by insatiable tunnels;
And the kindly railroad signals
Share with their single eye
Mechanical observations.

Sunday, in the blue of my dreams
Where my sad thoughts
Of failed fireworks
No longer wish to abandon
The grief of old Sundays dead and gone.

And the night on velvet footsteps
Comes to send off to sleep the lovely tired sky,
And it is Sunday on the avenues of the stars;
The Virgin of gold on silver
Lets fall the flowers of sleep!

Quickly, little angels
Fly past the swallows
So that you may sleep
Strong in absolution!
Take pity on the cities,
Take pity on the hears,
You, Virgin of gold on silver!