Undergraduate Student Recital

Megan Ashley, Soprano
Zhongxi Lin, Piano

May 29, 2021 | 6 pm PDT | Virtual Event

program

La caduta de' decemviri
Spesso vibra per suo gioco
Se tu della mia morte
Gia il sole dal Gange

Alessandro Scarlatti
(1660-1725)

Melodies, Op. 2
Le Charme
La derniere feuille
Serenade italienne
Colibri

Ernest Chausson
(1855-1899)

Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen, Op. 12, No. 1

Clara Schumann
(1819-1896)

Sechs Lieder, Op. 13
Ich stand in dunkeln traumen
Sie Liebten sich beide
Liebeszauber

King Arthur
Fairest Isle
The Fairy Queen
Turn Then Thine Eyes
If music be the food of love (1st version)

Henry Purcell
(1659-1695)
realized by Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

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Megan Ashley is a student of UC Santa Barbara Professor Benjamin Brecher

A senior recital presented by the University of California, Santa Barbara Division of Humanities and Fine Arts in the College of Letters and Science and the UC Santa Barbara Department of Music in partial fulfillment of the Bachelor of Music degree.
**Text and Translations**

**Spesso vibra per suo gioco**
*from La caduta de’ decemviri*
Alessandro Scarlatti (1660-1725)

> Spesso vibra per suo gioco
> Il bendato pargoletto
> Strali d’oro in umil petto,
> Strali di ferro in nobil core.
> Poi languendo in mezzo all’ foco
> Del diverso acceso strale per oggetto
> Non eguale questo manca,
> E quel vien meno.

The blindfolded child
Often lets fly, at his game,
Golden arrows into the humble chest,
Iron arrows into the noble heart.
Then, languishing in the fire,
The diverse flaming arrows
Miss their unequal targets,
Lacking power and falling short.
The blindfolded child
Often lets fly, at his game,
Golden arrows into the humble chest,
Iron arrows into the noble breast.

**Se tu della mia morte**
*from La caduta de’ decemviri*
Alessandro Scarlatti

> Se tu della mia morte
> A questa destra forte
> La gloria non vuoi dar,
> Dalla a’tuoi lumi.
> E il dardo
> Del tuo sguardo
> Sia quello che m’uccida
> E mi consumi.

If you of my death
To this strong right
You don’t want to give glory,
Give it to your lights.
And the dart
Of your look
Be what kills me
And you consume me.

**Gia il sole dal Gange**
*from La caduta de’ decemviri*
Alessandro Scarlatti

> Già il sole dal Gange
> Più chiaro sfavilla,
> E terge ogni stilla
> Dell'alba che piange.

Already, from over the Ganges, the sun
Sparkles more brightly
And dries every drop
of the dawn, which weeps.

> Col raggio dorato
> Ingemma ogni stelo,
> E gli astri del cielo
> Dipinge nel prato.

With the gilded ray
It adorns each blade of grass;
And the stars of the sky
It paints in the field.

**Le Charme**
*from Melodies, Op. 2*
Ernest Chausson (1855-1899)

Text by Armand Silvestre
Translation by Winifred Radford

> Quand ton sourire me surprit,
> Je sentis frémir tout mon être,
> Mais ce qui domptait nous esprit,
> Je ne pus d’abord le connaître.

When your smile surprised me,
I felt a shudder through my entire being,
But what tamed my spirit,
At first I did not recognize.

> Quand ton regard tomba sur moi,
> Je sentis mon âme se fondre,
> Mais ce que serait cet émoi,
> Je ne pus d’abord en répondre.

When your glance fell on me,
I felt my soul melt,
But what that emotion was,
At first I could not answer it.

> Ce qui me vainquit à jamais,
> Ce fut un plus douloureux charme;
> Et je n’ai su que je t’aimais,
> Qu’en voyant ta première larme.

What conquered me forever,
That was a charm more sad,
And I did not know that I loved you,
Until I saw your first tear.
La dernière feuille from *Melodies*, Op. 2
Ernest Chausson
Text by Théophile Gautier
Translation by Richard Stokes

Dans la forêt chauve et rouillée
Il ne reste plus au rameau
Qu’une pauvre feuille oubliée,
Rien qu’une feuille et qu’un oiseau,
Il ne reste plus [dans] mon âme
Qu’un seul amour pour y chanter;
Mais le vent d’automne [qui] brame
Ne permet pas de l’écouter.

L’oiseau s’en va, la feuille tombe,
L’amour s’éteint, car c’est l’hiver.
Petit oiseau, viens sur ma tombe
Chanter, quand l’arbre sera vert.

Serenade italienne from *Melodies*, Op. 2
Ernest Chausson
Text by Paul Bourget
Translation by Winifred Radford

Partons en barque sur la mer
Pour passer la nuit aux étoiles.
Vois, il souffle juste assez d’air
Pour gonfler la toile des voiles.

Le vieux pêcheur italien
Et ses deux fils qui nous conduisent,
Écoutent, mais n’entendent rien
Aux mots que nos bouches se disent.

Sur la mer calme et sombre, vois :
Nous pouvons échanger nos âmes,
Et nul ne comprendra nos voix
Que la nuit, le ciel et les lames.

Colibri from *Melodies*, Op. 2
Ernest Chausson
Text by Leconte de Lisle
Translation by Winifred Radford

Le vert colibri, le roi des collines,
Voyant la rosée et le soleil clair,
Luire dans son nid tissé d’herbes fines,
Comme un frais rayon s’échappe dans l’air.

Il se hâte et vole aux sources voisines,
Où les bambous font le bruit de la mer,
Où l’açoka rouge aux odeurs divines
S’ouvre et porte au coeur un humide éclair.

Vers la fleur dorée, il descend, se pose,
Et boit tant d’amour dans la coupe rose,
Qu’il meurt, ne sachant s’il l’a pu tarir!

Sur ta lèvre pure, ô ma bien-aimée,
Telle aussi mon âme eut voulu mourir,
Du premier baiser qui l’a parfumée.

The Last leaf

In the bare and blighted forest
nothing now remains on the branches
except a poor forgotten leaf,
nothing but a leaf and a bird.

Nothing now remains in my heart
except one love which is there to sing.
But the howling autumn wind
prevents it from being heard.

The bird flies away, the leaf falls,
the love stops burning, for it is winter.
Oh little bird, come to my tomb
to sing when the tree is green again.

Let’s go out in a boat on the sea
to spend the night under the stars.
Look, it’s blowing just enough breeze
to swell the canvas of the sails.

The old Italian fisherman
and his two sons, who sail us out,
hear but understand nothing
of the words we say to each other.

On the calm dark sea, look!
we can exchange our souls,
and our voices will not be understood
except by the night, the sky and the waves.

The hummingbird

The hummingbird, the green prince of the heights,
feeling the dew and seeing the sun’s clear light
shining into his nest of woven grass,
shoots up in the air like a gleaming dart.

Hurriedly he flies to the nearby marsh
where the waves of bamboo rustle and bend,
and the red hibiscus with the heavenly scent
opens to show its moist and glistening heart.

Down to the flower he flies, alights from above,
and from the rosy cup drinks so much love
that he dies, not knowing if he could drink it dry.

Even so, my darling, on your pure lips
my soul and senses would have wished to die
on contact with that first full-fragrant kiss.
Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen, Op. 12, No. 1
Clara Schumann (1819-1896)
Text by Friedrich Ruckert
Translation by Richard Stokes

Er ist gekommen
In Sturm und Regen,
Mein Herz entgegen.
Wie konnt' ich ahnen,
Daß seine Bahnen
Sich einen sollten meinen Wegen?

He came
in storm and rain,
my anxious heart
beat against his.
how could I have known,
that his path
should unite itself with mine?

Er ist gekommen
In Sturm und Regen,
Er hat genommen
Mein Herz verwegen.
Nahm er das meine?
Nahm ich das seine?
Die beiden kamen sich entgegen.

He came
in storm and rain,
he boldly
stole my heart.
Did he steal mine?
Did I steal his?
Both came together.

Er ist gekommen
In Sturm und Regen.
Nun ist [entglommen]
Des Frühlings Segen.
Der Freund zieht weiter,
Ich seh' es heiter,
Denn [er bleibt mein] auf allen Wegen.

He came
in storm and rain,
Now has come
the blessing of spring.
My love travels abroad,
I watch with cheer,
for he remains mine, on any road.

Ich stand in dunkeln träumen
from Sechs Lieder, Op. 13
Clara Schumann
Text by Heinrich Heine
Translation by Richard Stokes

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen
Und starrte ihr Bildniß an,
Und das geliebte Antlitz
Heimlich zu leben begann.

I stood in gloomy daydreams
and gazed at her portrait,
and that well-beloved countenance
began furtively to come to life.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
Ein Lächeln wunderbar,
Und wie von Wehmuthsthränen

About her lips there seemed to glide
a wondrous smile,
and, as if they were about to fill with nostalgic tears,
her eyes glistened.

Auch meine Thränen flossen
Mir von den Wangen herab -
Und ach, ich kann es nicht glauben,
Daß ich Dich verloren hab'!

And my tears flowed
down my cheeks -
and ah, I cannot believe
that I have lost you!
**Sie Liebten sich beide from Sechs Lieder, Op. 13**  
Clara Schumann  
Text by Heinrich Heine  
Translation by Richard Stokes

Sie liebten sich beide, doch keiner  
Wollt' es dem andern gestehn;  
Sie sahen sich an so feindlich,  
Und wollten vor Liebe vergehn.

They once loved each other, but neither  
would to the other confess;  
they saw each other as hostile,  
yet wanted to perish from love.

Sie trennten sich endlich und [sahn] sich  
Nur noch zuweilen im Traum;  
Sie waren [längst] gestorben  
Und wußten es selber kaum.

They finally parted and sometimes sighted  
the other in dreams;  
they had been dead so long now  
and hardly known it themselves.

**Liebeszauber from Sechs Lieder, Op. 13**  
Clara Schumann  
Text by Emmanuel von Geibel  
Translation by Richard Stokes

Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall  
Im Rosenbusch und sang,  
Es flog der wundersüße Schall  
Den grünen Wald entlang.

Now Love once like a nightingale  
in rosebush perched and sang;  
with sweetest wonder flew the sound  
along the woodland green.

Und wie er klang, da stieg im Kreis  
Aus tausend Kelchen Duft,  
Und alle Wipfel rauschten leis',  
Und [leise] ging die Luft;

And as it rang, there rose a scent  
from ring of thousand buds,  
and all the treetops rustled soft,  
and softer blew the air;

Die Bäche schwiegen, die noch kaum  
Geplätzschert von den Höh'n,  
Die Rehlein standen wie im Traum  
Und laschten dem Getön.

The brooklets silenced, scarcely come  
by splashing from the heights,  
the fawns stood still as if in dream  
and listened to the tone.

Und hell und immer heller floß  
Der Sonne Glanz herein,  
Um Blumen, Wald und Schlucht ergoß  

And bright and ever brighter flowed  
the sunbeams down inside,  
‘round blossoms, wood and gorge it gushed  
with golden red sunshine.

Ich aber zog den Weg entlang  
Und hörte auch den Schall --  
Ach, was seit jener Stund' ich sang,  
War nur sein Wiederhall.

I walked along the path that day  
and also heard that sound.  
Alas! what ever since I’ve sung  
was just its echo faint.
**Fairest Isle from King Arthur**  
*Henry Purcell (1659-1695)*  
*Realized by Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)*  
*Text by John Dryden*

Fairest isle, all isles excelling,  
Seat of pleasure and of love  
Venus here will choose her dwelling,  
And forsake her Cyprian grove.  
Cupid from his fav'rite nation  
Care and envy will remove;  
Jealousy, that poisons passion,  
And despair, that dies for love.  

Gentle murmurs, sweet complaining,  
Sighs that blow the fire of love  
Soft repulses, kind disdaining,  
Shall be all the pains you prove.  
Ev’ry swain shall pay his duty,  
Grateful ev’ry nymph shall prove;  
And as these excel in beauty,  
Those shall be renown’d for love.

**Turn Then Thine Eyes from The Fairy Queen**  
*Henry Purcell*  
*Realized by Benjamin Britten*  
*Text by Anonymous*

Turn then thine eyes,  
Upon those glories there,  
And catching flames  
Will on thy cheek appear.

**If music be the food of love (1st version) from The Fairy Queen**  
*Henry Purcell*  
*Realized by Benjamin Britten*  
*Text by Henry Heveningham*

If music be the food of love,  
Sing on till I am fill’d with joy;  
For then my list’ning soul you move  
To pleasures that can never cloy.  
Your eyes, your mien, your tongue declare  
That you are music ev’rywhere.

Pleasures invade both eye and ear,  
So fierce the transports are, they wound,  
And all my senses feasted are,  
Tho’ yet the treat is only sound,  
Sure I must perish by your charms,  

Unless you save me in your arms.
Program Notes

Alessandro Scarlatti

Pietro Alessandro Gaspare Scarlatti was an Italian composer during the Baroque period, known especially for his operas and chamber cantatas. He is considered the most important representative of the Neapolitan school of opera. His music is regarded as the link between the baroque and early classical period, seen in the shift from earlier arias like Gia il sole dal Gange to later works like Spesso vibra per suo gioco.

Beginning with works from La caduta de’ Decemviri, we find Spesso vibra per suo gioco in which the vocal line assumes the role of Cupid, the God of Desire and Attraction, as he lets arrows of gold and iron fly into the hearts of honest men and women on the ground. As anyone can imagine, this causes serious disorder among Earthlings. Se tu della mia morte describes the languishing pain of being hit by Cupid’s arrow and falling for someone who does not feel the same way. To end on a happy note, I chose the triumphant Gia il sole dal Gange. The poetry describes a beautiful field on the end of the Ganges river, bathed in the rays of the sunrise.

Ernest Chausson

Ernest Chausson was a French Romantic composer and literary scholar. His music is very clearly influenced by Jules Massenet, who he studied under at the Paris Conservatory in the late 1870’s. Over the course of his short life, he composed a small number of orchestral and chamber works. Chausson’s lifelong struggle with depression led him to choosing texts laden with undertones of mourning, similar to an elegy. Within this deep sadness, there are moments of happiness and levity. As one of his earliest works, Sept Melodies, Op. 2 demonstrates the existence of several emotions within a singular moment through the contrast of the voice and piano.

La dernière feuille, with text by Theophile Gautier, centers on the imagery of the last leaf to fall in autumn, the forest so lifeless, even birds refuse to sing. The poet requests that the birds come back in spring, once the greenery returns. The emptiness of the piano accompaniment symbolizes the emptiness of the forest. Moving into Sérénade Italienne, the listener is confronted by the stormy waves created by the piano. The text, by Paul Bourget, describes two lovers secretly confirming their commitment to each other before their voices are lost amongst the storm’s wind and waves. Le Charme, in contrast begins suddenly, surprising the listener just as the poet describes being taken aback by the realization that they are in love. Colibri brings us back to a pastoral scene, accompanying the green hummingbird as he observes his kingdom. The final stanza of the poem reveals that the hummingbird is a metaphor for the excitement new love brings.

Clara Wieck-Schumann

Clara Wieck-Schumann established herself as one of the most distinguished pianists of the 19th century, being rivaled only by her own skill in composition. Her contribution to German Lieder resulted in some of these hidden gems that can be found within Opus 12 and Opus 13. Throughout her life, her primary inspiration was her relationship with her husband, Robert Schumann, who contributed to her love of composing as well as her eventual decision to cease the release of music to the public following his death in 1856.

Er ist gekommen in Sturm und Regen, Op.12, No. 1 was written during the first year of her marriage while she was pregnant with her first child. The song explores a popular theme of Romantic era poetry, leidenschaftliche liebe or “passionate love”. The poetry depicts how love can suddenly sweep someone off of their feet.

Sechs Lieder (Six Songs), Op. 13 were written in 1843 as birthday and Christmas gifts to Robert. The texts by Heinrich Heine, Emmanuel Geibel and Friedrich Rückert explore other themes widely used in German Romantic literature: the beauty of nature, the torture of love, inescapable melancholy, detachment, and death.
The opening song of Op.13 Ich stand in dunklen Träumen (text by Heine) depicts the poet’s yearning for his beloved as he gazes upon her portrait. The melancholic and daydreaming quality is reflected in the piano accompaniment. The postlude is reminiscent of missed connections and an improper goodbye. The second poem Sie liebten sich beide tells the story of two lovers who refuse to admit their feelings to each other, even within the privacy of their own dreams. In complete contrast to the prior songs, Liebeszauber (the text by Geibel) fills the room with ecstatic presence, as the repeated piano chords progress in reckless abandon, representing the anxieties of fleeting young love.

**Henry Purcell and Benjamin Britten**

Henry Purcell was an English composer during the early Baroque period. He is regarded for his uniquely English style, in an era dominated by Italian influence on the musical world. During his life, he enjoyed employment at Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal, where he wrote his best known vocal and instrumental works for the theatre and the English royal family.

Benjamin Britten was a leading English composer, conductor and pianist in the mid-20th century. He was best known for his operatic and vocal works. Throughout his life, Britten realized many works by Purcell, meaning he wrote accompaniment where there were previously figured bass markings. He later remarked that this provided him with a stimulating creative challenge which resulted in an oddly personal interpretation. This had a significant influence on Britten’s own vocal style.

From a collection of fifty songs, I selected *Fairest Isle* from *King Arthur*, *Turn Then Thine Eyes* from *The Fairy Queen*, and *If music be the food of love* for their simple themes and challenging vocal writing. They require lightness, agility, and substantial breath control.

**About the Artist**

Megan Ashley is a fourth-year student at UC Santa Barbara and will be graduating in June with a Bachelor of Music with a Voice Emphasis and a minor in Italian Language. She is a student of Professor Benjamin Brecher. She is ecstatic to present her final BM recital to friends and family! She would like to thank the Voice Area and collaborative pianists Christina Chen and Zhongxi Lin for their amazing help over the past four years. Megan doesn’t know what the future holds, but is excited to see.