Erin Ehlis, Soprano

Senior Vocal Recital

December 12th, 2020

**Sweeter than Roses**

*Henry Purcell*

“Sweeter than Roses” may be one of the most well known Baroque vocal pieces. Written for Richard Norton’s tragic play, “Pausanius”, the piece was composed as a song of seduction, and if often confused for a sweet, pleasant piece.

**The Babe**

*John Duke*

The English poet, Kathleen E. Carpenter wrote the poem “The Babe”, describing that among the frenzy and chaos of mankind, greedy and prideful, is the Babe, tiny and perfect. One may take this as the interpretation of the innocence of children, or maybe little Baby Jesus underneath the loving shadow of his parents.

**Hello! Oh Margaret, it’s you**

*Gian Carlo Menotti*

Also known as “Lucy’s Aria”, “Hello! Oh Margaret, it’s you” from the opera *The Telephone* (1947) is sung by Lucy while she is talking to her friend Margaret on her brand new phone that she received from her boyfriend Ben, who is trying to propose. Over the opera, Lucy becomes obsessed with the phone, turning Ben to try to even cut the cord. His question goes unsaid until the very end of the opera, when he phones Lucy and asks for her hand, as he can get to her no other way.

**Mélodies Passagères**

*Samuel Barber*

Barber put Rainer Maria Rilke’s “Poèmes franҫais” to music starting in 1950. He originally took the first (“Puisque tout passe”), fourth (“Le clocher chante”), and fifth (Départ) poems and arranged them for the American soprano Eileen Farrell to sing in Washington D.C., with Barber at the piano. Barber then arranged the second (Un cygne) and third (Tombeau dans un parc) for the French baritone Pierre Bernac, this time with Francis Poulenc at the piano. The two Frenchmen premiered the full cycle in Paris in February of 1952.

Knowing that this cycle was written for two drastically different voices and performers is important when listening to (and learning) this cycle. Being written for a soprano with a massive and extremely capable voice, the first, fourth, and fifth pieces are much more lively and upbeat with a flowing, somewhat repeating piano part. These pieces are vocalist-focused, with the piano acting only as accompaniment. The second and third pieces, however, were written for a master of French art song and strong baritone. These pieces sigh and are weighed down with emotion, which Bernac would have portrayed flawlessly.

I. Puisque tout passe

*(Since All Things Pass)*

Puisque tout passe, faisons

la mélodie passagère ;

celle qui nous désaltère,

aura de nous raison.

Chantons ce qui nous quitte

avec amour et art;

soyons plus vite

que le rapide Depart.

Since all things pass,

Let us make a passing melody;

The one that quenches our thirst

Shall be the right one for us.

That which leaves us, let us sing

With love and art

Let us be swifter

Than the swift departure.

II. Un cygne

*(A Swan)*

Un cygne avance sur l’eau

tout entouré de lui-même,

comme un glissant tableau;

ainsi à certains instants

un être que l’on aime

est tout un espace mouvant.

Il se rapproche, doublé,

comme ce cygne qui nage,

sur notre âme troublée…

qui à cet être ajoute

la tremblante image

de bonheur et de doute.

A swan moves across the water,

Completely surrounded by itself,

Like a gliding painting;

Thus, at certain moment

A being that one loves

Is a whole moving space.

It draws near, duplicated,

Like the swimming swan,

On our troubled soul…

Which to that being adds

To the trembling image

Of happiness and of doubt.

III. Tombeau dans un parc

*(Tomb in a Park)*

Dors au fond de l’allée,

tendre enfant, sous la dalle,

on fera le chant de l’été

autour de ton intervalle.

Si une blanche colombe

passait au vol là-haut,

je n’offrirais à ton tombeau

que son ombre qui tombe

At the end of the avenue, sleep,

Tender child, beneath the stone,

We shall sing the song of Summer

About your grave.

If a white dove

Passes in flight over head,

I would offer to your tomb

Only its falling shadow.

IV. Le clocher chante

*(The Belltower Sings)*

Mieux qu’une tour profane,

je me chauffe pour mûrir mon carillon.

Qu’il soit doux, qu’il soit bon

aux Valaisannes.

Chaque dimanche, ton par ton,

je leur jette ma manne;

qu’il soit bon, mon carillon,

aux Valaisannes.

Qu’il soit doux, qu’il soit bon;

samedi soir dans les channes

tombe en gouttes mon carillon

aux Valaisans des Valaisannes.

Better than a secular tower,

I am to ripen my carillon.

May it be sweet, may it be good

For the girls of Valais.

Every Sunday, tone by tone,

I cast them my manna;

May it be good, my carillon,

For the Valais girls.

May it be sweet, may it be good;

Into their beers on Saturday nights

Drop by drop, my carillon falls

For the boys and girls of the Valais.

V. Départ

*(Departure)*

Mon amie, il faut que je parte.

Voulez-vous voir

l'endroit sur la carte?

C'est un point noir.

En moi, si la chose

bien me réussit, ce sera

un point rose

dans un vert pays.

My love, I must leave.

Would you like to see

The place on the map?

It is a black point.

In me, if things

Go well for me,

It will be a red point

In a green land.

**Der Hirt auf dem Felsen**

*Franz Schubert*

More commonly known in the US as its English translation, “The Shepherd on the Rock”, this piece was composed by Schubert in 1828, just days before his death at the age of 31. He used German poet Wilhelm Müller’s and the German playwright Helmina von Chézy’s combined text and created a piece specifically for soprano Anna Milder-Hauptmann. Apart from voice and piano, this piece was atypically joined by a solo clarinet.

Wenn auf dem höchsten Fels ich steh',

In's tiefe Tal hernieder seh',

Und singe,

Fern aus dem tiefen dunkeln Tal

Schwingt sich empor der Widerhall

Der Klüfte.

Je weiter meine Stimme dringt,

Je heller sie mir wieder klingt

Von unten.

Mein Liebchen wohnt so weit von mir,

Drum sehn' ich mich so heiß nach ihr

Hinüber.

In tiefem Gram verzehr ich mich,

Mir ist die Freude hin,

Auf Erden mir die Hoffnung wich,

Ich hier so einsam bin.

So sehnend klang im Wald das Lied,

So sehnend klang es durch die Nacht,

Die Herzen es zum Himmel zieht

Mit wunderbarer Macht.

Der Frühling will kommen,

Der Frühling, meine Freud',

Nun mach' ich mich fertig

Zum Wandern bereit.

When I stand on the highest rock,

Look down into the deep valley

And sing,

From far away in the deep dark valley

The echo from the ravines

Rises up.

The further my voice carries,

The clearer it echoes back to me

From below.

My sweetheart lives so far from me,

Therefore, I long so to be with her

Over there.

Deep grief consumes me,

My joy has fled,

All earthly hope has vanished,

I am so lonely here.

The song rang out so longingly through the wood,

Rang out so longingly through the night,

That is draws hearts to heaven

With wondrous power.

Spring is coming,

Spring, my joy,

I shall now make ready to journey

**Musique Anodine, No. III**

*Gioachino Rossini*

The text of “Mi langerò tacendo” has been set to music numerous times by different composers. In Rossini’s musical translation, he pokes and prods fun at the ever-famous extravagant aria, creating bold and beautiful lines.





\*All translations were taken from ipasource.com