

Emma Iacovella, Soprano

Dr. Songhwa Chae, Piano

April 23, 2024

7:30pm

All Faiths Chapel, Kansas State University

PROGRAM

O mio babbino caro (Gianni Schicchi) Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)

The Serpent (Songs for Leontyne) Lee Hoiby (1926–2011)

Obéissons quand leur voix appelle- Gavotte (Manon) Jules Massenet (1842–1912)

Zerfliesse, mein herze (St. John Passion) Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750)

Intermission

Try Me, Good King (Last Words of the Wives of Henry VIII) Libby Larson (b. 1950)

Katherine of Aragon

Anne Boleyn

Jane Seymour

Anne of Cleves

Katherine Howard

Klänge der Heimat- Csárdás (Die Fledermaus) Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)

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O mio babbino caro (*Gianni Schicchi*)

O mio babbino caro,
mi piace, è bello, bello;
vo' andare in Porta Rossa
a comperar l'anello!

Sì, sì, ci voglio andare!
E se l'amassi indarno,
andrei sul Ponte Vecchio,
ma per buttarmi in Arno!

Mi struggo e mi tormento!
O Dio, vorrei morir!
Babbo, pietà, pietà!
Babbo, pietà, pietà!

Gianni Schicchi is a comic opera about a family that finds out that a wealthy relative has died. Rinuccio bargains with his aunt Zita to allow him to marry Lauretta, Gianni Schicchi's daughter. She agrees, only if they are left well off. It turns out that the man left all his money to the monks of Santa Reparata. The marriage is called off, but Lauretta pleads with her father by singing *O mio babbino caro*, where she threatens to throw herself into the Arno River. He bends to her will and the marriage is back on.

Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)

Oh, my dear papa,
I love him, he is handsome, handsome,
I want to go to Porta Rossa
to buy the ring!

Yes, yes, I want to go there!
And if I loved him in vain,
I would go to the Ponte Vecchio,
But to throw myself in the Arno!

I am anguished and tormented!
Oh God, I'd want to die!
Papa, have pity, have pity!
Papa, have pity, have pity!

The Serpent (*Songs for Leontyne*)

There was a Serpent who had to sing
There was. There was
He simply gave up Serpentine
Because. Because
He didn't like his kind of life;
He couldn't find a proper wife;
He was a Serpent with a soul;
He got no pleasure down his hole
And so, of course, he had to sing
And sing he did, like anything!
The Birds, they were, they were astounded;
And various measures propounded
To stop the Serpent's awful racket:

Lee Hoiby (1926–2011)

They bought a drum. He wouldn't whack it
They sent, —you always send, —to Cuba
And got a most commodious tuba;
They got a horn, they got a flute
But nothing would suit
He said, "Look, Birds, all this is futile:
I do not like to bang or tootle."
And then he cut loose with a horrible note
That practically split the top of his throat
"You see," he said, with a Serpent's leer
"I'm serious about my singing career!"
and the woods resounded with many a shriek
As the Birds flew off to the end of next week!

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Theodore Roethke's poetry inspired Lee Hoiby to write an energetic and humorous piece about a Serpent who is willing to "give up serpentine" to begin his singing career. Hoiby artfully captures the story with rhythmic coloratura which creates a playful nature throughout the piece. The text-painting used truly showcases Hoiby's innate ability to serve the words within a musical framework.

Obéissons quand leur voix appelle (*Manon*) Jules Massenet (1842–1912)

Obéissons quand leur voix appelle,
aux tendres amours,
toujours, toujours, toujours,
tant que vous êtes belle,
usez sans les compter vos jours, tous vos jours!

Profitons bien de la jeunesse,
des jours qu'amène le printemps;
aimons, rions, chantons sans cesse,
nous n'avons encor que vingt ans!
Profitons bien de la jeunesse,
aimons, rions, chantons sans cesse,
nous n'avons encor que vingt ans! Ah! Ah!

Le cœur, hélas! le plus fidèle,
oublie en un jour l'amour, l'amour,
et la jeunesse ouvrant son aile a disparu
sans retour, sans retour.

Profitons bien de la jeunesse,
bien courte, hélas! est le printemps!
Aimons, chantons, rions sans cesse,
nous n'aurons pas toujours vingt ans!
Profitons bien de la jeunesse!
Aimons, chantons, rions sans cesse,
profitons bien de nos vingt ans! Ah! Ah!

Manon is a young, naive woman at the beginning of the opera but, when she falls in love with a man, her view on life changes, and she becomes more romantic and attracts many lovers. She is lured by a more fashionable lifestyle and decides to break up with her main lover. Now we find Manon in her most seductive era yet. This piece is a simple Gavotte about taking advantage of one's youth and having fun. A Gavotte is a French folk dance that is thought to stem from the region of Dauphiné in the Southeast of France.

Obey when their voices are calling,
beckoning us to tender loves,
always, always, always;
as long as you are beautiful,
use up your days without counting them, all of your days!

Let's take advantage of youth,
days that spring provides;
let's love, laugh, and sing without stopping,
while we're still only twenty!

Let's take full advantage of our youth,
let's love, laugh, and sing without stopping
while we're still only twenty! Ha! Ha!

Even the most faithful heart, alas,
forgets love in a day, love,
and youth, spreading its wings to fly away,
disappears, never to return, never to return.

Let's take full advantage of our youth,
the springtime season, alas, is very short!
Let's love, sing, and laugh without stopping,
we won't be twenty forever!

Let's take full advantage of our youth!
Let's love, sing, and laugh without stopping.
Let's take advantage of being twenty! Ha!
Ha!

Zerfließe, mein herze (*St. John Passion*)

J.S. Bach (1685–1750)

Zerfließe, mein Herze, in Fluten der Zähren
Dem Höchsten zu Ehren!
Erzähle der Welt und dem Himmel die Not:
Dein Jesus ist tot!

Dissolve, my heart, in floods of tears
to honor the Almighty!
Tell the world and heaven your distress:
your Jesus is dead!

Bach's *St. John Passion* is a setting of the Passion story as related to St. John's Gospel. A "Passion" refers specifically to the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, stemming from the Latin word "patior", meaning to suffer, bear, and endure. The narrative in the Gospel of St. John is very different from the other three gospels, this one being heard only on Good Friday rather than Palm Sunday. Bach's *St. John Passion* is an oratorio, or a work consisting of chorales, non-Biblical and devotional texts with gospel passages. Zerfließe, mein herze, in Fluten der Zähren, or "dissolve, my heart, in floods of tears" is in the Burial section of the work. 2024 marks the 300th anniversary of the first performance on Good Friday in 1724.

–please, hold applause until the end of this section–

Try Me, Good King

Libby Larson (1685–1750)

Katherine of Aragon (1485–1536) Queen from June 1509 to January 1533

Katherine of Aragon, formerly Queen of England to Henry VIII, January 7, 1536

My most dear Lord, King, and Husband,
The hour of my death now drawing on, the tender love I owe you forces me...to commend myself unto you and to put you in remembrance of the health and welfare of your soul.... You have cast me into many calamities and yourself into many troubles. For my part, I pardon you everything, and I wish to devoutly pray God that he will pardon you also. For the rest, I commend unto you our daughter Mary, beseeching you to be a good father unto her...Lastly, I make this vow, that my eyes desire you above all things...

Anne Boleyn (1502? –1536) Queen from January 1533 to May 1536

Letter from Anne Boleyn to Henry VIII, May 6, 1536;
Excerpts from two letters from Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn;
Anne Boleyn's speech at her execution, May 19, 1536

Try me, good king, ... and let me have a lawful trial, and let not my ... enemies sit as my accusers and judges. ... Let me receive an open trial for my truth shall fear no open shame.... Never a prince had a wife more loyal in all duty, ... in all true affection, than you have ever found in Anne Bolen.... You have chosen me from low estate to be your wife and companion. ... Do you not remember the words of your own hand? "My own darling... I would you were in my arms... for I think it long since I kissed you. My mistress and friend..." Try me, good king... If ever I have found

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favor in your sight — if ever the name of Anne Bulen has been pleasing to your ears — then let me obtain this request... and my innocence shall be... known and ... cleared.

Good Christian People, I come hither to die... and by the law I am judged to die. ... I pray God save the King. I hear the executioner's good, and my neck is so little....

Jane Seymour (c. 1506–1537) Queen from May 1536 to October 1537

Jane Seymour to the Council, October 12, 1537;

"Tudor rose," Anonymous

Right trusty and Well-Beloved, we greet you well ... for as much as be the inestimable goodness... of Almighty God, we be delivered ... of a prince, ...

I love the rose both red and white.

To hear of them is my delight!

Joyed may we be, Our prince to see, And roses three!

Anne of Cleves (1515–1557) Queen from January 1540 to July 1540

Anne of Cleves, Queen of England, to Henry VIII, July 11, 1540

I have been informed... by certain lords... of the doubts and questions which have been ... found in our marriage... It may please your majesty to know that, though this case... be most hard... and sorrowful... I have and do accept [the clergy] for my judges. So now, ... the clergy hath ... given their sentence, I... approve.... I neither can nor will repute myself for your grace's wife... yet it will please your highness to take me for your sister, for which I most humbly thank you....

Your majesty's most humble sister,
Anne, daughter of Cleves.

Katherine Howard (1521–1542) Queen from July 1540 to February 1541

Recorded at her execution by an unknown Spaniard, February 13, 1542

God have mercy on my soul. Good people, I beg you pray for me. By the journey upon which I am bound, brothers, I have not wronged the King. But it is true that long before the King took me, I loved [Thomas] Culpeper. ... I wish to God I had done as Culpeper wished me, for at the time the King wanted ... me, (Culpeper) urged me to say that I was pledged to him. If I had done as he wished me, I should not die this death, nor would he.... God have mercy on my soul. Good people, I beg you pray for me. ... I die a Queen, but I would rather die the wife of Culpeper.

Program Note from Composer, Libby Larson

Divorce, behead, die, divorce, behead, die. This grade-school memory game is how I first came to know about the six wives of Henry VIII, King of England from 1509–1547. Since then, I've been fascinated with the personal consequences of power that befell the Tudor family and the circle of political intrigue of both church and state, which caused such turmoil in the private lives of Henry and his queens.

Try Me, Good King is a group of five songs drawn from the final letter and gallows speeches of Kathrine Aragon, Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, and Katherine Howard. Henry's sixth wife, Katherine Parr, outlived him and brought some domestic and spiritual peace into Henry's immediate family. Although her written devotions are numerous, her role in the story of the Henry's wives is that of a peaceful catalyst. In these songs I chose to focus on the intimate crises of the heart that affected Henry's first five wives. In a sense, this group of songs is a monodrama of anguish and power.

I've interwoven a lute song into each song, including John Dowland's "In darkness let me dwell" (Katherine of Aragon and Katherine Howard), Dowland's "If my complaints" (Anne Boleyn), Michael Praetorius's "Lo, how a Rose e'er blooming" (Jane Seymour), and Thomas Campion's "I care not for these ladies" (Anne of Cleves). These songs were composed during the reign of Elizabeth I, and while they are cast as some of the finest examples of the golden age, they also create a tapestry of unsung words, which comment on the real situation of each doomed queen.

Two other musical gestures unify the songs: first, the repeated note recalls the lute and creates psychological tension; second, an abstract bell-tolling punctuates each song and releases the spiritual meaning of the words.

Klänge der Heimat (*Die Fledermaus*)

Johann Strauss II (1825–1899)

Klänge der Heimat, ihr weckt mir das Sehnen,
rufet die Tränen ins Auge mir!
Wenn ich euch höre, ihr heimischen Lieder,
zieht mich's wieder, mein Ungarland, zu dir!
O Heimat so wunderbar,
wie strahlt dort die Sonne so klar,
wie grün deine Wälder, wie lachend die Felder,
o Land wo so glücklich ich war!
Ja, dein geliebtes Bild
Meine Seele so ganz erfüllt,
dein geliebtes Bild!
Und bin ich auch von dir weit, ach weit,
ach, dir bleibt in Ewigkeit
doch mein Sinn immerdar ganz allein geweiht!
O Heimat so wunderbar,
wie strahlt dort die Sonne so klar,
wie grün deine Wälder, wie lachend die Felder,
o Land, wo so glücklich ich war!
Feuer, Lebenslust, schwellt echte Ungarbrust,
hei! Zum Tanze schnell! Czárdás tönt so hell!
Braunes Mägdelein, musst meine Tänz'rin sein;
Reich den Arm geschwind, dunkeläugig Kind!
Durst'ge Zecher greift zum Becher,
lasst ihn kreisen, lasst ihn kreisen
schnell von Hand zu Hand!
Schlürft das Feuer im Tokayer!
Bringt ein Hoch aus dem Vaterland! Ha!
Feuer, Lebenslust schwellt echte Ungarbrust,
hei! Zum Tanze schnell! Czárdás tönt so hell!

Sounds of my home country, you revive the yearning,
Let the tears brim in my eyes!
Hearing the old-time songs,
Draws me back, my Hungary, to you!
Oh, homeland so beautiful,
With the sun gleaming so bright,
How green are your forests, how lush your fields,
Oh countryside, where I once was happily at home!
Yes, those cherished memories
Fill my heart to bursting,
Those cherished memories!
But though I am far from you now, so far,
ah, eternally consecrated to you
is the yearning of my heart!
Oh, homeland so beautiful,
With the sun gleaming so bright,
How green are your forests, how lush your fields,
Oh, my country, where once I was happily at home!
Fire, zest for life, fills the real Hungarians chest,
Hay! Hurry to the dancefloor! Czárdás can be heard!
Suntanned maiden, come and dance with me;
Take my arm, you dark eyed child!
Thirsty customers reach for tankards,
Let them go round faster and faster
From hand to hand!
Relish the fire in the Tokay wine!
A toast to our nation! Hay!
Fire, zest for life, fills the real Hungarians chest,
Hay! Hurry to the dancefloor! Czárdás can be heard!

Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* or "The Bat" is a comedic operetta about Gabriel von Eisenstein evading prison for an evening to attend Prince Orlofsky's party. He lies to his wife, Rosalinde, so he can attend the ball without her. However, Rosalinde sees through his lies and attends disguised as a masked Hungarian Countess. She performs a traditional Hungarian dance called a csárdás which often begins with a slow introduction and concludes with a fast, lively section. She attempts to seduce her husband and catch him in his lies.