Andrea Zesati, Mezzo-soprano

Dr. Song Hwa Chae, piano

December 4, 2025
5:00pm
All Faiths Chapel, Kansas State University

PROGRAM

Cara Sposa.....George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man.....Jerome Kern
(1885-1945)

Send In The Clowns .....Stephen Sondheim
(1930-2021)

Lullaby of Birdland.....George Shearing
(1919-2011)

But Not For Me.....George Gershwin & Ira Gershwin
(1898-1937) (1896-1983)

Y Andale.....Minerva Elizondo
Cheryl Savage, *soprano*
Toni Hudulla, *mezzo-soprano*
Tatenda Sekabanja, *mezzo-soprano*

Por Un Amor.....Gilberto Parra
(1913-2000)
Katelyn Valdez, *violin*

Los Laureles .....José Lopez
Katelyn Valdez, *violin*

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | School of Music, Theatre, and Dance

Program Notes

Cara Sposa from *Rinaldo*, HWV 7 by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)
This aria is from Handel's first Italian opera written for the London stage, *Rinaldo.* This baroque opera, premiered in 1711, and became a huge success for its dramatic intensity and virtuosic music.

The story has a mix of heroism and fantasy. It is centered around a knight, Rinaldo, who struggles to defeat sorceress Armida, who is trying to keep him from rescuing his lover, Almirena. Armida is working with Argante who is the enemy commander who is fighting against Rinaldo. Armida plans to take Almerina as a tactic of war to hurt Rinaldo emotionally and weaken him in battle. At this moment in the opera, Rianldo is experiencing terrible shock and heartbreak after Almirena is captured. "Cara Sposa" also known as "Beloved Spouse" is Rinaldo's emotional response to the loss he just experienced.

Translation

Cara sposa, amante cara,	Dearest bride, dearest beloved,
Dove sei?	Where are you?
Deh, ritorna a pianti miei!	Come back, hear my entreaties!
Del vostro Erebo sull'ara	I challenge you evil spirits,
Colla face del mio sdegno	With the intensity of my scorn,
Io vi sfido, o spiriti rei!	To appear on that altar out of your darkness!

Program Notes

Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man from *Show Boat*, by Jerome Kern (1885-1945)
This bluesy swing jazz arrangement by Roger Holmes is from the musical, *Show Boat,* that was written by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II in 1927. The gentle swing of the melody and the heartfelt lyrics create a warm, soulful atmosphere that has made the song a beloved standard. Roger Holmes' arrangement brings a fresh, expressive color to this classic tune while keeping its original charm and emotional sincerity.

In the musical, this song is sung by Julie LaVerne, who expresses a deep and unwavering love that she cannot deny, no matter the flaws or challenges her relationship faces. Julie works as a leading lady on the Cotton Blossom, the riverboat where this musical takes place. In this particular scene, she is with Magnolia, the daughter of owners of the Cotton Blossom, and Queenie, one of the Black cooks. Magnolia asks Julie about a man she loves and Julie begins singing this song casually. However, this song is known on the riverboat as a tune that is traditionally sung within the Black community, and Julie's familiarity with it quietly hints at the deeper secret she carries.

Send In the Clowns from *A Little Night Music*, by Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021)
This well known song is from Stephen Sondheim's 1973 musical *A Little Night Music.* Sondheim, one of the most influential composers and lyricists in American musical theater, wrote popular works such as *Sweeney Todd, Into the Woods,* and, *Company.* This musical was inspired by Ingmar Bergman's 1955 film *Smiles of a Summer Night.* Sondheim and book writer Hugh Wheeler helped bring the storyline of humor, elegance, and bittersweet romance.

This particular piece is sung by the character, Desirée Armfeldt, a popular actress who longs for a stable, lasting love. When she finally confesses her feelings to a man she once loved, Fredrik Egerman, she discovers the timing is painfully wrong. This song is her quiet response to the disappointment. This title comes from the theatrical expression when things go wrong onstage, but in this piece it is a gentle metaphor for the irony and heartbreak in Desirée's life.

Program Notes

Lullaby of Birdland by George Shearing (1911-2011)

Talented jazz pianist, George Shearing, was born blind from birth in London in 1911. He was known for playing in pubs before joining a group by the National Institute of the Blind. Around the 1940s he was becoming England's popular jazz musicians and he later moved to New York to focus more on modern jazz. In the 1950s , there was a club named "The Birdland" that needed a tune for a six hour show that could be played constantly. Shearing had an idea in his head and wrote this famous piece in about 10 minutes. Later on George David Weiss added lyrics to this jazz standard where famous jazz musicians, Sarah Vaughan and Clifford Brown made the tune become a hit in 1954.

This interpretation of Lullaby of Birdland is from Ella Fitzgerald's 1955 studio album. Ella Fitzegerald (1917-1996) also known as "First Lady of Song" was one of the greatest jazz singers of all time. She is known for her beautiful warm tone, amazing scatting/improvisation skills, and seamless pitch. She has interpreted many major composers like George Gershwin, Cole Porter, and Duke Ellington. Ella remains a huge influential vocalist in music history to me and so many people.

But Not For Me from *Girl Crazy* by George Gershwin (1898-1937) & Ira Gershwin (1896-1983)

This classic ballad is by the legendary Gershwin brothers. George wrote the music and Ira wrote the lovely lyrics. It was originally written for their 1930 musical *Girl Crazy*, a show that also introduced other well-known standards such as "Embraceable You". This musical is about Danny Churchwill, a wealthy young man who is sent out West to a dusty Arizona town in hopes that he'll stay out of trouble. Instead, he turns the town into a lively hotspot by bringing in a swing band, falling in love with the local postmistress Molly Gray, and creating chaos that leads to music, romance, and plenty of humor."But Not for Me" is sung by Molly Gray who feels discouraged about love at this point of the story.

Ella Fitzgerald recorded her version of this piece in 1959 for her *Gershwin Songbook* album. This project showed just how naturally she could bring warmth, clarity, and an easy swing feel to the music of America's great composers. In Ella's interpretation, she shapes each phrase with her smooth tone and natural timing, letting the sadness come through without making it heavy.

Program Notes

Y Andale by Minverva Valdés Elizondo

This light-hearted drinking song is a classic traditional mariachi piece. Mariachi music is a beloved musical tradition from Mexico. It began in Jalisco during the 18th-19th centuries, and over time grew into a national symbol of Mexican culture. Mariachi songs cover a wide emotional range of joy, romance, humor, patriotism, and are deeply emotional. They can be lively and rhythmic, or tender and expressive. Many of the most famous mariachi songs come from the ranchera tradition, which tells stories of love, loss, celebration, and everyday life.

This interpretation of this song is performed by Linda Ronstadt from her album, *Canciones de Mi Padre (*1987). Ronstadt helped introduce mariachi music to new audiences through her albums. By recording with top mariachi ensembles and honoring the traditions of the style, she showcased its richness, energy, and cultural pride. According to Ronstadt, this tune was written by Minverva Valdés Elizondo. This song follows a narrator who knows they are being judged for their drinking and care-free habits but goes right on enjoying life anyway. I chose this song from her album to honor both my Mexican roots and my late tia, Alejandra–the most influential woman in my life. This song celebrates the joyful, messy, and wonderfully human spirit that reminds us to embrace life while we can. #yolo

Family and friends, please join me in singing the last verse.

Translation

¿Qué dirán los de tu casa	What will they say those at your house
Cuando me miren tomando?	When they see me drinking?
Pensarán que por tu causa	They'll think that it's because of you
Yo me vivo emborrachando	That I live to get drunk
¡Y ándale!	And get on with it!
Pero si vieras	But if you saw
Cómo son lindas	How nice they are
Estas borracheras	These drinking binges
¡Y ándale!	And get on with it!
(Coro)	
¿Pero hasta cuándo	But how long until your parents
Dejan tus padres de andarte cuidando?	Quit taking care of you?
Y ándale	And get on with it!

Cada vez que vengo a verte Siempre me voy resbalando; ¿O es que tengo mala suerte O es que me está lloviznando? ¡Y ándale! Pero si vieras Seco mi chaco en mi higuera floreando ¡Y ándale!	Every time that I come to see you I always go sliding Is it that I have bad luck Or is it that it's raining on me? And get on with it! But you saw My hat drying in my flowering fig tree And get on with it!
(Coro) ¿Pero si cuando Seco mi chaco en mi higuera floreando? ¡Y ándale!	But since when Do I dry my hat on my flowering fig tree? And get on with it!
Me dices que soy un necio Porque me ando emborrachando Y a pesar de tus desprecios Yo quiero seguir tomando ¡Y ándale! But you saw	You tell me that I am a fool Because I'm always getting drunk And in spite of your insults I want to keep on drinking, and get on with it!
(Coro) Pero que bellas paso las horas Vaciando botellas ¡Y ándale!	But how beautifully I pass the time Emptying bottles, and get on with it!
EVERYONE SING:	
Pero si vieras como son lindas Estas borracheras, y ándale!	But if you saw how nice they are These drinking binges, and get on with it!

Program Notes

Por Un Amor by Gilberto Parra (1913-2000)

Although many listeners today associate the song with Linda Ronstadt's *Canciones de Mi Padre*, Linda herself first learned it through the unforgettable voice of Lucha Reyes, "a cornerstone of Mexican female vocal tradition". Reyes' raw, emotional delivery shaped not just the song, but Linda's understanding of what it means to sing ranchera music with honesty and power.

Gilberto Parra, Mexican composer, wrote this piece around 1940 in Jalisco. He studied music in Escuela Libre de Música in Guadalajara and later worked in Mexico City, contributing songs to major performers of the era. He was the founder and director of the Mariachi San Pedro Tlaquepaque.

When I sing Por un Amor, I can't help but think about the women in my own family, the ones who raised me, taught me, and showed me what strength looks like in real time. They're women who held love close even when it was complicated, who kept going, who found a way to laugh and keep music in the house no matter what life brought. In that way, this song doesn't just belong to artists like Lucha Reyes or Linda Ronstadt; it belongs to them, too.

Translation

Por un amor
Me desvelo y vivo apasionada
Tengo un amor
Que en mi vida dejó para siempre amargo dolor

Pobre de mi
Esta vida mejor que se acabe
No es para mi

Pobre de mi (ay coraźon)
Pobre de mi (no sufras más)
Cuanto sufre mi pecho
Que late tan solo por ti

For a love
I stay awake and live passionately
I have a love
That left bitter pitter pain in my life forever

Poor me
This life is better off ending
It's not for me

Poor me (oh heart)
Poor me (don't suffer anymore)
How much my chest suffers
That beats only for you

Por un amor	For a love
He llorado gotitas de sangre	I have cried little drops of blood
del corazón	from the heart
Me has dejado con el alma herida	You have left me with a wounded soul
Sin compasión	Without compassion

Program Notes

Los Laureles by José Lopez

Canciones de Mi Padre began long before Linda Ronstadt ever stepped on a stage. Many of the songs came from *Canciones de mi padre: Spanish Folksongs from Southern Arizona*, a collection gathered and sung by her aunt Luisa Espinel, which Linda learned from her father. When Linda recorded *Canciones de Mi Padre* in 1987, she was honoring not only the Mexican popular songs she grew up with, but also her family's deep musical lineage.

This last ranchera piece is a family favorite and a standard for all mariachis, a song that Ronstadt says dates back to the 1920s and 1930s. It is widely associated with and often credited to José López, yet Ronstadt and other sources also point to Consuelo Velásquez as a possible author. That uncertainty makes sense, considering what Linda notes on the album: during the Mexican Revolution and the years that followed, it was common for women to write songs and to borrow or reshape the couplets men traditionally used. That history helps explain the presence of lines like "la perdición de los hombres son las benditas mujeres" in early versions of Los Laureles. It's a reminder of how women's voices and perspectives shaped the ranchera tradition from the inside.

Translation

Ay, qué laureles tan verdes!	Oh, what green laurel trees!
¡Qué rosas tan encendidas!	What flaming flowers!
Si piensas abandonarme,	If you are thinking of leaving me
Mejor quitame la vida	Better to take away my life
Alza los ojos a verme	Raise your eyes to look at me
Si no estás comprometido	If you're not promised to someone else

Eres mata de algodón
Que vives en el capullo
Ay, qué tristeza me da
Cuando te llenas de orgullo
De ver a mi corazón
Enredado con el tuyo

Eres rosa de Castilla
Que sólo en mayo se ve
Quisiera hacerte un invite
Pero la verdad no sé
Si tienes quien te lo evite
Mejor me separaré

Por ahí va la despedida
Chinito por tus quereres
La perdición de los hombres
Son las benditas mujeres
Y aquí se acaban cantando
Los versos de los laureles

You are a little sprout of cotton
That lives in the bud,
Oh, how sad it makes me
When you get full of pride
To see my heart
Tied up with yours

You are a rose of Castille
That's only seen in May
I'd like to make you an invitation
But, really, I don't know
If you have someone to prevent it
Better that I leave

Here goes the farewell
Chinito of my love
The downfall of men
As the blessed women
Here's where we stop singing
The verses of the laurel trees