

Sacred and Profound—Arias and Art Songs
Randy Jones, Soprano
Timothy Newton, Piano and Organ
Emily Ranney, Violin
Daniel Furuta, Violoncello

Saturday, October 29, 2005
4:00 p.m.
Sebring-Lewis Hall
Grinnell College
Grinnell, Iowa

I

Gott will Mensch und sterblich werden (from *Harmonischer Gottesdienst*)
Aria
Recitative
Aria

Georg Philipp Telemann
(1681-1767)

II

Dove sono, i bei momenti (from *Le nozze di Figaro*)

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756-1791)

III

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! (from *The Messiah*)

George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

Vocalise, op. 34, no. 14

Sergei Rachmaninoff
(1873-1943)

Hear ye, Israel! Hear what the Lord speaketh (from *Elijah*)

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

Intermission

IV

Do Not Utter a Word (from *Vanessa*)

Samuel Barber
(1910-1981)

V

Songs of Separation

Idolatry (Arna Bontemps)
Poème (Phillippe Thoby Marcelin)
Parted (Paul Laurence Dunbar)
If You Should Go (Countee Cullen)
A Black Pierrot (Langston Hughes)

William Grant Still
(1895-1978)

VI

Witness

Hall Johnson
(1888-1970)

Deep River

Harry Thacker Burleigh
(1866-1949)

I'm Goin' To Thank God

Robert Nathaniel Dett
(1882-1943)

Din It Rain

Thomas Kerr, Jr.
(1915-1988)

Ride Up in de Chariot

Betty Jackson King
(1928-1994)

Program Notes

Georg Philipp Telemann (b. 14 March 1681, Magdeburg, Germany; d. 25 June 1767, Hamburg, Germany) wrote *Harmonischer Gottesdienst* (The Harmonious Church Service), 72 cantatas for vocalist, melody instrument (flute, oboe or violin), and basso continuo, between 1725-26 during his tenure as Kantor of Hamburg's Johanneum. Composed of two *da capo* arias linked by recitative, *Gott will Mensch und sterblich werden* was written for the Feast of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary.

Text Translation:

*God will man and mortal become,
That mankind in his woe not pass away.
What a sign of highest faith!
Ask if your wit can attain for you a sign,
Here on earth or above in the highest, greater than this.*

*No, when I have taken wings like the dawn
And gone up to the limits of the wild oceans,
Yea, might I toward heaven soar
And again thence rush down into the depths of hell,
Yet I find nothing so wondrous as that of the incarnate God,
Jehovah Sabaoth, who a created man for us became!
Alas, yes, Immanuel walks in the way of mankind
And in Him triumph makes them from their slavery free.
The two savage tyrants, that we in fear brought,
Raging Death and that Prince of Night,
Remove themselves from here, defeated by Him.
Now then, you highly-beloved souls of the Lord,
Forsake the black caves of mourning,
Delight in the radiant, joyous sun;
This great miracle requires great joy!*

*Immanuel is here! Triumph! Hallelujah!
Rejoice, ye heavenly thrones together with all who live on earth;
Through Him we are to Heaven again nigh.
Immanuel is here!
Jesus has lain low in the dust that which aroused anxiety in our souls;
The hope of which, indeed, the Father foresaw.*

(Johann Chrysotom) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (b. 27 January 1756, Salzburg, Austria; d. 5 December 1791, Vienna, Austria) was commissioned by the chief chamberlain of the Viennese court to write an Italian opera. After rejecting numerous librettos, Mozart selected that of Lorenzo da Ponte. *Le nozze di Figaro*, the first of three comic operas on which the pair collaborated, was based upon the politically controversial play by Pierre-Auguste Caron de Beaumarchais. The opera premiered at Vienna's Burgtheater on 1 May 1786.

In Act Three, the Countess Almaviva nervously awaits the arrival of her chambermaid, Susanna, who has drawn the unwanted attention of Count Almaviva. To thwart his advances, the two women have plotted to trick the unfaithful, jealous count by convincing him that he has an

assignation with Susanna in the palace gardens, only to be met by his wife disguised in the maid's clothes.

Text Translation:

And Susanna has not come! I am anxious to know how the Count accepted the proposal. The project is somewhat rash to me, with a husband so spirited and jealous. But what harm is there to us? I change my clothes with those of Susanna and hers with mine by cover of night. Oh, Heaven! To what humiliating, inevitable plight a cruel husband has reduced me! He, who after treating me with an unheard-of mixture of infidelity, of jealousy, of scorn! First beloved, then offended, and finally betrayed, forced me now to seek help from one of my servants.

Where are the lovely moments of sweetness and of pleasure, where have the pledges of those lying lips gone? Why, in weeping and pain, is all unhappiness for me, my memory of that love not passed away? If only my constancy in this languishing love brings me the hope of changing his ungrateful heart.

George Frideric Handel (b. 23 February 1685, Halle, Germany; d. 14 April 1759, London, England) composed the oratorio, *Messiah*, in 24 days during the summer of 1741 in London. He based it on Biblical texts adapted by Charles Jennens. Having previously earned the displeasure of the city's religious leadership when Handel presented the oratorio *Esther* on the London stage, the composer opted to premiere the religious narrative in Dublin, Ireland, the following April. The work underwent numerous revisions as Handel adapted it to suit different soloists and performing forces. Although *Messiah* received a lukewarm reception initially, it became Handel's most admired work. The aria, "Rejoice Greatly," uses text taken from the Old Testament Book of Zachariah 9:9-10, where the coming of the Christ to Jerusalem is prophesied.

Sergei Vasilievich Rachmaninoff (b. 1 April 1873, Novgorod, Russia; d. 28 March, 1943, Beverly Hills, California) completed his *Vocalise*, the last of 14 songs he composed in 1912 during a period of extensive concertizing in Russia. The wordless vocal work was the composer's tribute to renowned Russian opera singer Antonina Nezhdanova. While originally written for soprano and piano, the *Vocalise* has received numerous transcriptions for a variety of instrumentation, including an orchestration written by Rachmaninoff in 1929.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (b. 3 February 1809, Hamburg; d. 4 November 1847, Leipzig, Germany) began work on his oratorio, *Elijah*, while vacationing in Switzerland in 1842. The oratorio remained unfinished, however, until Mendelssohn met famed soprano Jenny Lind two years later. He opened the second part of the oratorio with the aria, "Hear Ye, Israel," written especially with Lind's voice in mind. He premiered the oratorio to great acclaim in August 1846 shortly after accepting a post as director of the Birmingham (England) Festival. The performance drew more than 2,000 listeners, including England's Prince Albert.

Samuel Barber (b. 9 March 1910, West Chester, Pennsylvania; d. 23 January 1981, New York, New York) completed his four-act opera, *Vanessa*, in 1957 with a libretto by Gian Carlo Menotti. *Vanessa* premiered on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera in January 1958 with soprano Eleanor Steber in the title role. Barber's debut opera earned the composer his first Pulitzer Prize for music.

In Act One, Vanessa sits alone in the fire-lit darkness of her drawing room awaiting the long-anticipated arrival of her lover, Anatol. Over the years, she put her life on hold, even to the point

of covering the mirrors and portraits in her country estate. He has come, but before Vanessa faces him, she needs to know if all she has done for him has been worthwhile.

William Grant Still (b. 11 May 1895, Woodville, Mississippi; d. 3 December 1978, Los Angeles, California) wrote *Songs of Separation* in 1949 during a period in which he had established himself as a composer of film scores after many years of writing and performing on Broadway and for the concert stage. This was also the same year his opera, *Troubled Island*, was premiered by the New York City Opera. Still chose five different expressions of love interrupted by death, distance, bitterness, lost desire, and deep despair for his source material. The song cycle, for medium voice and piano, is usually performed by a male singer, but women have often performed and recorded it as well.

Text Translation (Poème):

*It was not dawn, but I arose and rubbed my eyes.
Everything round about slept.
The banana trees under my window shivered in the calm moonlight.
Then, I took my head in my hands,
And I thought of you.*

Francis Hall Johnson (b. 12 March 1888, Athens, Georgia; d. 30 April 1970, New York, New York) composed numerous works for choir as well as spiritual settings for solo voice and piano, including "Witness," which was published in 1940. This occurred during a period when his Hall Johnson Negro Choir was featured in films such as *The Green Pastures*, *Lost Horizon* and *Cabin in the Sky*.

Harry Thacker Burleigh (b. 2 December 1866, Erie, Pennsylvania; d. 12 September 1949, Stamford, Connecticut) wrote this setting of "Deep River" for voice and piano in 1916. By that point in his career, he had written a few vocal and instrumental works based on the plantation melodies he had learned as a child. However, "Deep River" is considered to be the first work of its kind to be written in art song form specifically for performance by a trained singer.

Robert Nathaniel Dett (b. 11 October 1882, Drummondville, Ontario, Canada; d. 2 October 1943, Battle Creek, Michigan) published "I'm Goin' To Thank God" as one of six spiritual settings written especially for soprano Dorothy Maynor in 1940. During that period, Dett was also serving as choral director at Bennett College, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Thomas Kerr, Jr. (b. 3 January 1915, Baltimore, Maryland; d. 26 August 1988, Washington, DC) composed his setting of "Din't It Rain" during his tenure piano and composition instructor and organist at Howard University, Washington, DC.

Betty Lou Jackson King (b. 17 February 1928, Chicago, Illinois; d. 1 June 1994, Wildwood, New Jersey) published her setting of "Ride Up in de Chariot" in 1983 as one of two spirituals she contributed to the song collection, *God Is a God!: Six Negro Spirituals for Voice and Piano*. During this period, Jackson King was the president of the National Association of Negro Musicians.

-- R. L. Jones

The Musicians

Randy Jones is a native of Greensboro, North Carolina. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education from Bennett College, Greensboro. She earned her Master of Music degree in Vocal Performance from Florida State University, Tallahassee, where she studied with Barbara Ford and Enrico Di Giuseppe. Ms. Jones has gained international recognition for her research of African American vocalists and composers through her Web site, Afrocentric Voices in Classical Music. She is also conducting research and regularly presents lectures and recitals on the Negro spiritual. The results of her research project have thus far seen the release of a compact disc recording, *The Art of the Negro Spiritual*, with the anticipated publication of a book on the subject. Ms. Jones currently serves on the library staff at Grinnell College.

Timothy Newton has worked as a pianist and accompanist for Pittsburgh Opera, Ithaca Opera, the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, The King's Brass and most recently at the International Bach Festival at the University of Toronto, where he participated in conducting master classes under Helmuth Rilling. He completed his doctoral work in May 2004 in choral conducting and literature at the University of Illinois, for which his dissertation received the Nicholas Temperley Award for Excellence in Musicology. Dr. Newton earned a Master of Music degree in Conducting (opera and music theater) at Ithaca College in upstate New York, and served as apprentice with Pittsburgh Opera under Theo Alcantara. Dr. Newton has taught on the faculty of several colleges, most recently at Dartmouth College from 1999-2003. He is presently a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Choral Studies at Grinnell College.

Emily Ranney is a second-year English major from Madison, WI. Having studied classical violin for thirteen years, she has taken up Baroque violin, viola da gamba and rebec over the last three semesters, and is a member of Grinnell College's *Collegium Musicum* ensemble.

Daniel Furuta is a second year Grinnell College student considering a math and music double major. He has played cello for nine years, and is currently studying with Julie Sturm. His main interests are modern music and chamber ensembles.