



Faculty Recital Series

2022-2023 Season

Sara M. Snell Music Theater

Monday, April 10, 7:30 PM

Steven Groth, baritone
Brock Tjosvold, piano

Une soirée française

Cinq Poèmes de Baudelaire

Le Balcon
Harmonie du Soir
Le jet d'eau
Recueillement
La mort des amants

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

Chansons de Don Quichotte

Chanson du départ de Don Quichotte
Chanson à Dulcinée
Chanson du Duc
Chanson de la mort de Don Quichotte

Jacques Ibert
(1890-1962)

Chansons Gaillardes

La Maîtresse volage
Chanson à boire
Madrigal
Invocation aux Parques
Couplets bachiques
L'Offrande
Sérénade
La Belle Jeunesse

Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)

C'est Moi
Camelot

Frederick Loewe
(1901-1988)

Program Notes:

Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire (1890) by Claude Debussy

Claude Debussy, born in 1862 in St. Germain-en-Lay, was one of the most influential musicians of his time, fundamentally changing how the aesthetic of French composition. Entering the Conservatoire in 1872, Claude was rapidly trained in piano, solfège, accompanying, and composition. By 1883 he placed second in the *Prix de Rome* before winning the major prize in the following year with his cantata *L'enfant prodigue*. As he began exploring symbolist poetry and Javanese gamelan music, these outside influences to the French idiom would shape his later musical aesthetic beginning at the Universal Exposition of 1889. Debussy would become a compositional icon, an influential critique, and a member of the advisory board of the Conservatoire at the behest of Gabriel Fauré.

Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) was one of the fathers of symbolist poetry. His writing is richly dense with constantly shifting imagery. His most influential work is *Les Fleurs du mal*, which consists of 126 poems. Much of Baudelaire's work was considered obscene, as it often addresses issues of death, mental illness, poverty, and sex. In fact, Baudelaire was charged for offenses to religion and public morality. Structurally, Baudelaire would recycle entire lines of text several times throughout a poem. The repeated text would always have a new meaning to it due to the constantly shifting contexts of the other lines before and after it. Debussy, who traveled to Bayreuth twice in 1888 and 1889, masterfully highlights these moments of repetition by assigning them with the same motivic material, but with varying subtext of harmony and voicing, much like Wagner would do with his use of *leitmotif*. Debussy's style became leaner and more abstract as he eventually came to swear off Wagner's compositional style. The *Cinq poèmes* offer a unique snapshot into Debussy's developing style at the time.

Translations of Cinq poèmes de Baudelaire by Claude Debussy

Le balcon – The balcony

Mother of memories, mistress of mistresses,
Oh you, who are all my pleasures, and you who are all my duties
You will remember the beauty of our caresses
The sweetness of the hearth and the charm of evenings,
Mother of memories, mistress of mistresses!

The evenings lit by the glowing coal-fire,
and the evenings on the balcony, veiled with pink mist;
How soft your breast was, how your heart was so good to me!
Often we said imperishable things
On evenings lit by the glowing coal-fire.

How the suns are beautiful on the warm evenings!
How deep is space? How powerful is the human heart!
As I leaned towards you, queen of all adored ones,
I thought I was breathing the perfume of your blood.
How beautiful the suns are on warm evenings!

The night thickened like a wall of a cloister,
And my eyes, in the dark, was sensing yours
And I was drinking in your breath, oh sweetness, oh poison!
And your feet were falling asleep in my brotherly hands
The night thickened like a wall of a cloister.

I know the art of evoking happy minutes
And reliving my past while nestled in your lap.

Because why would I seek your languid beauties
Except in your dear body and your heart, so gentle?
I know the art of evoking happy minutes.

Will those words, those perfumes, those infinite kisses,
will they be reborn from a chasm deeper than we can sense,
Like the rejuvenated suns rise into the sky
After cleansing themselves in the depths of the profound seas?
Oh sweet words! Oh perfumes! Oh, infinite kisses!

Harmonie du soir

Now comes the time when, quivering on its stem,
Each flower sheds perfume like a censer;
Sounds and scents turn in the evening air;
Melancholy waltz and reeling languor!

Each flower sheds perfume like a censer;
The violin throbs like a wounded heart,
Melancholy waltz and reeling languor!
The sky is sad and beautiful like a great altar.

The violin throbs like a wounded heart,
A fond heart that loathes the vast black void!
The sky is sad and beautiful like a great altar.
The sun has drowned in its congealing blood.

A fond heart that loathes the vast black void
And garners in all the luminous past!

The sun has drowned in its congealing blood...
Your memory within me shines like a monst'rance!

Le jet d'eau – The fountain

Your lovely eyes are tired, poor beloved!
Stay long without opening them,
In this languid pose
Where pleasure has taken you by surprise.

In the courtyard the fountain that babbles
And is never silent night or day,
Sweetly prolongs the ecstasy
Into which this evening love has plunged me.

The sheaf of water lulling its myriad flowers,
Through which the moon shines with its pallid light,
Falls like a shower of big tears.
Thus your soul set ablaze
By the burning flash of sensuous delight
Darts with speed and fearlessness
Towards the vast enchanted heavens.
Then, it overflows, dying,
In a wave of sorrowful languor,
Which by an invisible sloping path
Descends to the depths of my heart.

The sheaf of water lulling its myriad flowers,
Through which the moon shines with its pallid light,
Falls like a shower of big tears.

O you, whom night so beautifies,
How sweet it is for me, leaning on your breast,
To listen to the eternal moan
Which sobs in the marble basins!
Moon, plashing water, blessed night,
Trees that quiver around us,
Your pure melancholy
Is the mirror of my love

The sheaf of water lulling its myriad flowers,
Through which the moon shines with its pallid light,
Falls like a shower of big tears.

Recueillement - Contemplation

Be still, O my sorrow, and remain more calm.
You called for the evening; it descends; it is here:
A somber atmosphere envelops the town,
Bringing peace to some, to others worry.
While the base multitude of mortals
Under the whip of pleasure, this merciless tormentor,
Goes to gather remorse in the menial party
My Sorrow, give me your hand; come here.

Far away from them. See the dead years leaning
Over the balconies of the sky, in outdated garments;
Smiling Regret rising up from the depths of the waters.

The dying sun goes to sleep beneath an arc,
And, like a long shroud trailing towards the east,
Hear, my dear, hear the steps of the gentle night.

La mort des amants – The Death of the Lovers

We shall have beds drenched in light scents,
Divans as deep as tombs,
And displays of exotic flowers
That bloomed for us beneath fairer skies.

Outdoing even their most recent passions
Our two hearts will be two mighty torches,
Reflecting their twin lights
In our two twin-mirrored souls.

On an evening of pink and mystic blue,
We shall exchange a single radiant glance,
Like a long sob laden with farewells;

And later an Angel, pushing the portals ajar,
Will come, faithful and joyous, to revive
The tarnished mirrors and lifeless flames.

Chansons de Don Quichotte (1933) by Jacques Ibert

Jacques Ibert, born in 1890 in Paris, France, was the son of a father in the export trade and a mother who was a gifted pianist who studied with teachers at the French Conservatoire. Into this musical lifestyle Jacques began his musical training both

in violin and piano during his formative years. At the end of his primary education, Ibert dedicated his life to composition. He also gave lessons, accompanied singers, wrote program notes, and played piano for silent movies at the cinema to make his living. Ibert studied harmony and counterpoint at the Paris Conservatoire where he met members of *Les Six*, Milhaud and Honegger. During World War I, Ibert served as a stretcher-bearer at the front before becoming a naval officer at Dunkirk. Soon after the war ended, he won *Le Prix de Rome* in 1919 on his first attempt. This achievement, incredible considering the enforced four-year break in his musical activities during World War I, launched Ibert's compositional career. Ibert's music embraces a variety of genres and spans the emotional spectrum from festive and joyous, to lyrical, pensive, and evocative – most often with a sense of tongue-in-cheek humor.

Ibert's *Chansons de Don Quichotte* were written for the film director Georg Wilhelm Pabst was filming; three separate versions of *Don Quichotte* in English, French, and German. The Russian bass, Feodor Chaliapin, was to sing the title role in each language. Ibert contributed the four songs of tonight's set while Ravel's three *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* were received too late for consideration. Chaliapin sang Ibert's compositions in the film with Ibert himself conducting.

The texts for these pieces are originally French, not written by Cervantes. The poem for the first selection is by Pierre de Ronsard, while the last three are written by Alexandre Arnoux. The first song references knightly virtues as symbolized by a castle. The second song serenades Don Quichotte's love, Dulcinea, while the third represents a troubadour's tribute to the lady of his dreams. The final song sets Quixote's final farewell to Sancho Panza, noble and profound both in his message and his sound.

Translations of *Chansons de Don Quichotte* by Jacques Ibert:

Chanson du départ de Don Quichotte:

This new castle, this new building,
All enriched with marble and porphyry,
That love built a castle for his empire
Where all of heaven added their skill,
It is a rampart, a fortress against vice,
Is whose virtuous mistress hides herself,
That the eye sees and the spirit admires,
Forcing hearts to render her their service.

It is a castle, made in such a way,
That no one can approach the door
If he has not saved his race from Great Kings,

Victorious, valiant, and loving.
No knight, unless he be adventurous,
Can earn his place without being such a person.

Chanson à Dulcinée

A day seems to pass like a year to me
If I do not see my Dulcinea.

But, love painted her face,
To sweeten my languishing,
In the fountains and the clouds,
In every dawn and every flower.

A day seems to pass like a year to me
If I do not see my Dulcinea.

Always near and always far,
The star of my long travels,
The wind brings to me her breath
When it passes over the jasmine flowers.

A day seems to pass like a year to me
If I do not see my Dulcinea.

Chanson du Duc

I want to sing right here, lady of my dreams,
That exalts me above this century of mud
Her heart of diamond is a virgin to lies
The rose darkens before the glance of her cheek

For her I have tried the highest of adventures
My arm has delivered the Princess from servitude
I have conquered the Enchanter, and confused the perjurers
And I have bent the universe to give to her a tribute

Lady, for whom I go alone above this earth
Who would not be a prisoner of false appearances
I support you against any reckless Knight,
Your unequaled radiance, and your preeminence.

Chanson de la mort de Don Quichotte

Do not weep, my good Sancho, do not weep,
Your master is not dead, he is not far from you,
He lives on a happy island where all is pure and without lies
On this island he has at least found where you will come one day
On this desired island, O my friend Sancho

The books have been burned, and have made so many cinders,
If all the books have killed me, it only takes one that I should live,
To be a phantom in life and to be real in death,
Thus is the strange fate of the poor Don Quichote.

Chansons Gaillardes (1925-1926) by Francis Poulenc

Francis Poulenc was born in 1899 in Paris, France. He began his musical studies by 1915. By the time he was mobilized by the French Army in 1917 Poulenc had achieved his first compositional success with his *Rhapsodie nègre*. Soon after the war ended in 1918, he became a member of *Les Six*. This group of French composers (Auric, Honegger, Milhaud, Poulenc, Tailleferre, and Durey) were tied more by friendship and appreciation of musical taste than a shared aesthetic. Poulenc had a deep appreciation for and drew inspiration from a wide variety of composers and styles from Mozart and Chopin to Debussy and Stravinsky. His vocal works set texts by many of the impactful, twentieth-century, French poets including Apollinaire, Eluard, Cocteau, and Max Jacob. Poulenc tackled nearly every musical genre, creating an *oeuvre* that has been described by many as typically French: juxtaposing happiness, cheekiness, and spontaneity with melancholy, tenderness, and seriousness.

Chansons Gaillardes was premiered on 2 May 1926 by baritone Pierre Bernac and Poulenc himself at the piano. Poulenc composed this song cycle of eight texts in the euphoric post-war period following the First World War. Comprised of a set of bawdy anonymous texts from the 17th Century, Poulenc alternates between fast and slow tempi throughout the set. These texts include a certain code, mostly based on the principle of double-entendre. For example, in “Chanson à boire” the words celebrate the “Kings of Egypt and Syria” because they wanted to embalm their bodies so they would last longer, dead.” The text concludes “Let us therefore drink, according to our desire, to embalm our bodies before we die.” Loosely related by the themes of celebration, promiscuity, and alcohol; the set was quite daring for the concert hall in its era. When compared alongside activities and artistic liberties frequently on display in the Vaudeville tradition, however, these pieces can easily be viewed within the framework of the European inter-war period.

Chansons Gaillardes initiated the partnership between baritone Pierre Bernac and Francis Poulenc, which was rekindled in 1935 after an eight-year hiatus following this work's premier. Poulenc would write nearly 90 songs for Bernac over a 25-year performing period until Bernac retired from the stage. Bernac would later write *The Interpretation of French Song* in 1970, one of the foremost guides to French song and text interpretation for the English-speaking singers.

Chansons Gaillardes Song Translations:

I. Ma maîtresse volage – The Unfaithful Mistress

My mistress is unfaithful,
My rival is happy:
If he took her virginity,
It's because she had two.
And so sails the ship
As long as it can sail.

II. Chanson à boire – Drinking Song

The kings of Egypt and Syria
Wanted their bodies to be embalmed
So that they would last a longer time, dead.
What folly!

Let us drink, then according to our desire,
We must drink and drink again.
Let us drink, then all of our life,
Let us embalm ourselves before our deaths

Let us embalm ourselves,
For this balm is sweet!

III. Madrigal – Madrigal

You are beautiful like an angel
Sweet like a little lamb:
There is no heart, Jeanette,
Who does not stand beneath your law.
But a girl without breasts
Is a partridge without an orange.

IV. Invocation aux parques – Invocation of the fates

I swear that for as long as I shall live,
to love you, O Sylvie;
Fates, who in your hands hold
The thread of our Life,
Elongate, as long as you can,
Mine, I beg of you.

V. Couplets Bachiques – Bacchanalian Verses

I am, throughout the day
Both serious and playful.
When I see an empty bottle,
I am serious, I am serious;
Is it all full, then I am playful.

I am, throughout the day
Both serious and playful.
When my wife takes me to bed,
I behave all night long
If a harlot holds me in bed
Then I am playful.

Ah! Beautiful hostess, pour me some wine,
I am so playful, playful, playful.

VI. L'Offrande - The Offering

To the god of Love, a virgin
one day offered a candle
so that she could obtain a lover.
The god smiled at her question,
and replied to her, "Beauty, while you are waiting,"
Always make good use of this offering.

VIII. Sérénade - Serenade

With such a beautiful hand,
That serves so many charms,
That you hold from the malicious god,
You handle weapons well.
And when this child is upset
Wipe away all of his tears.

VII. La belle jeunesse – The beautiful youth

We must always love each other
And never ever get married.
We must make love
Without priest or notary.

Stop, gentlemen, being people who marry!
Aim only for money;
Aim only for pleasures.
Stop, gentlemen, do not marry,
Aim only for the hearts.

Why should we marry?
When the wives, when the wives
The wives of other men
hardly need to be asked to become ours.

When their passions,
When their favors,
Are searching for our money,
Are searching for our pleasures,
Are searching for our hearts.