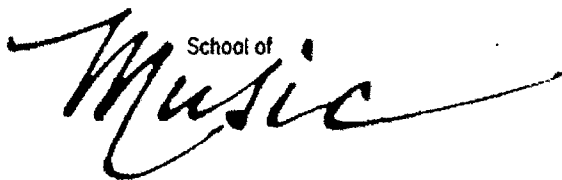


PCD2017/01/27

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY.



presents

Lucy Owen Hoyt, soprano
Gabriel Dobner, piano

assisted by

Wanchi, violin
Diane Phoenix-Neal, viola
Gary Freeburg, Director of the Duke Hall
Gallery

Friday, January 27, 2017
8 pm
Duke Hall Gallery of Fine Art



Program Notes

Even though tonight's recital is billed as "French *mélodie*", several of the songs are by non-native born composers who lived in Paris and "... [adopted] France and French culture as their own."¹ The first group begins and ends with two Verlaine settings of Polish-born composer, Irene Poldowski (1880-1932). *L'heure exquise* is among Poldowski's thirty songs, of which more than half use Verlaine texts. The serene, yet majestic, opening of *L'heure exquise* is a perfect evocation of the text as the music moves effortlessly from an arpeggiated beginning to the full texture of the climax, a clear reference to "l'heure exquise."

Clair de lune is by another Polish composer, Józef Szulc (1875-1956). The song is from his Op. 83, *Dix mélodies sur de poésies de Verlaine*. The undulating piano figure sets the mood for Verlaine's suggestive images – fantastic disguises, dreaming birds, sobbing fountains – all hallmarks of Verlaine's symbolist poetry.

Yet another non-native French composer on the program is Reynaldo Hahn (1875-1947); he was born in Venezuela to a Venezuelan mother and a German father. Hahn, however, moved to France as a child and quickly assimilated into his new French homeland. In *A Chloris*, he weaves together Bach's bass line from *Air on a G String* with a vocal line that shifts from tranquil serenity to an audacious declaration of love. In *Hébé*, Ernest Chausson (1855-1899) also evokes an earlier musical time with a sparse accompaniment and pure, unpretentious melody. The set ends with two upbeat songs, the rarely heard *Chanson d'amour* of Charles Koechlin (1867-1950) and Poldowski's *Mandoline*.

Choosing three songs by Henri Duparc (1848-1933) is a daunting task; there are many masterpieces among his only seventeen songs. The *mélodie* presented tonight are linked by a chronological movement from the looking forward of youth (*L'invitation au voyage*) to the looking back of maturity (*La vie antérieure*). From the first undulating harmonies of *L'invitation au voyage*, Duparc creates a mysterious and somewhat turbulent impression. Like the poetry of Baudelaire itself, this song has a provocative atmosphere that hovers between decadence and purity – "luxe, calme, et volupté." In *Extase*, Duparc channels Wagner's *Liebstd* – the vocal line hovers over a harmony that resists resolution through its chromatic movement. Within the tension, there is a spiritual quality that elevates the song to a sense of deep and abiding love. *La vie antérieure* is a grand, multi-sectional setting of another Baudelaire poem that uses chordal flourishes, tempestuous arpeggios, huge vocal utterances and half-voiced recollections – all to express a life remembered and to ponder its meaning. Without apparent success, the piano postlude continues the search for answers that remain unknowable.

The second half of the recital begins with an unusual grouping of songs by Reynaldo Hahn and Léo Ferré, (1816-1993). While the trajectory of their careers was vastly different, their music shares a penchant for beautiful melody.² Verlaine's poem *Chanson d'automne* played a significant role during World War II. The BBC had indicated to the French Resistance that the first lines of this poem would be broadcast to signal the impending D-Day operations. Thus the French people were alerted to begin their sabotage operations – especially on the railroad system. While singers are familiar with Debussy's setting of *Colloque sentimental*, Léo Ferré's setting is rarely sung; Ferré was a rebel and outside the mainstream of classical *mélodie* composition. The set ends with Ferré's lively *Écoutez la chanson bien douce*, a mature inducement to youth to enjoy the simple pleasures of life!³

In 1956, Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) published a set of seven songs, "Le travail du peintre" all settings of poems by Paul Eluard. The title of each poem is a painter, and both Eluard and Poulenc made vague references to the painters' styles in the poems and songs, respectively. These songs are most often performed by baritone or mezzo-soprano, but who could resist singing them here in the Duke Hall Fine Art Gallery!

Tonight's recital closes with the title song, *Les chemins de l'amour*. Thus, the recital ends with a remembrance of times past:

*Chemins perdus vous n'êtes plus
Et vos échos sont sourds.*

¹ Johnson, Graham and Richard Stokes. *A French Song Companion*. Oxford University Press, Inc. NY, 2000. p. 485.

² Hahn's career was squarely in the midst of *la belle époque* when French *mélodie* was at its pinnacle; Ferré was a post-WWII composer whose songs were fashioned in the chanson style ala Edith Piaf.

³ Many thanks to our JMU student, Elizabeth Weikle for her assistance with the transpositions of the Ferré songs and to Leslie Wickham for his arrangements for violin and viola.

Program

- I. *L'heure exquise* Irene Poldowski
(1879-1932)
Clair de lune Josef Szul
(1875-1956)
A Chloris Reynaldo Hahn
(1874-1947)
Hébé Ernest Chausson
(1855-1899)
Chanson d'amour Charles Koechlin
(1867-1950)
Mandoline Poldowski
- II. *L'invitation au voyage* Henri Duparc
L'extase (1848-1933)
La vie antérieure

10-Minute Intermission

- III. *Le rossignol des lilas* Hahn
Chanson d'automne Hahn
Colloque sentimental Léo Ferré
Écoutez la chanson bien douce (1816-1993)
- IV. *from "Le travail du peintre"* Francis Poulenc
(1899-1963)
i. *Georges Braque*
ii. *Juan Gris*
iii. *Joan Miro*
- V. *Les Chemins de l'amour* Poulenc

Patrons are reminded to turn off all pagers, cell phones,
personal computers, and any other electronic devices.

The unauthorized videotaping or any other recording
of this production is strictly prohibited
in adherence with Federal copyright laws.

School of Music Staff

Dr. Jeffrey Bush.....Director of Music
 Dr. Mary Jean Speare.....Associate Director of Music, Graduate Director
 William Posey.....Director of Concert & Support Services
 Constance Driscoll.....Administrative Assistant, Bands
 Judy Sager.....Administrative Assistant
 Kimberley Velazquez.....Administrative Assistant
 Donna Wampler.....Program Support Specialist

Upcoming Events

January 2017

School of Music Auditions	Sat., Jan. 28 All Day, Forbes Center
JMU Percussion Ensemble	Mon., Jan. 30 @ 8 pm, Concert Hall*
JMU Jazz Combos	Tues., Jan. 31 @ 7 pm, Artful Dodger

February 2017

Guest Artist – James Markey, <i>trombone</i>	Thurs., Feb. 2 @ 8 pm, Recital Hall*
JMU Jazz Ensemble & JMU Jazz Band	Sat., Feb. 4 @ 8 pm, Concert Hall*
JMU Jazz Combos	Tues., Feb. 7 @ 7 pm, Artful Dodger
<i>Opera and the Jazz Age</i> JMU Opera Theater	Fri., Feb. 10 @ 8 pm, Concert Hall*
<i>Opera and the Jazz Age</i> JMU Opera Theater	Sat., Feb. 11 @ 8 pm, Concert Hall*

*These concerts provide student credit for MUS 195.

For tickets and further information, visit www.jmu.edu/forbescenter or call the Forbes Center Box Office at (540) 568-7000. For more on the School of Music, go to www.jmu.edu/music or call (540) 568-3481.