

Junior Recital

LE CHARME

works by Handel,
Brahms, & Chausson

02 May | 3 pm
YST Concert Hall

Leanne Tavita
soprano

Choi Hye-Seon
piano



PROGRAMME

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Occhi miei, che faceste (HWV 146)

Recitative, occhi miei, che faceste?

Aria, Ve lo dissi, e nol credeste

Recitative, Il misero innocente d'un delitto non suo

Aria, Troppo caro costa al core quel piacere

JOHANNES BRAHMS

From Fünf Lieder (Op. 105)

No. 1 *Wie Melodien zieht es mir*

No. 2 *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer*

No. 4 *Auf dem Kirchhofe*

ERNEST CHAUSSON

From Sept Mélodies (Op. 2)

No. 5 *Sérénade Italienne*

No. 2 *Le Charme*

Chanson perpétuelle, Op. 37



PROGRAM NOTES

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759) *Occhi miei, che faceste?* (HWV 146)

Handel arrived in Italy in 1706 and quickly gained favor among the noble families of Florence and Rome, particularly the Medicis and the cardinals Benedetto Pamphilj and Pietro Ottoboni. During this period, he wrote numerous cantatas. These works often revolved around themes of love, longing, and betrayal, elements that would later define his operatic writing. *Occhi miei, che faceste?* follows the lament of a lover deceived by the captivating gaze of another. Through expressive recitatives and arias, the piece portrays sorrow, realization, and the painful cost of love. The second aria, *Troppo caro costa al core*, reflects on the suffering that love's fleeting pleasures bring.

Recitativo

Occhi miei, che faceste?

My eyes, what have you done?

Nel contemplar curiosi quel vivo fuoco,

In gazing curiously at that living fire,

Che dalle pupille vibra la vaga Fille,

That from the eyes of the lovely Phyllis shines,

Il cuor tradiste, che ogni sua difesa

You betrayed the heart, which had placed all its defenses

Ogni sua speme in voi riposto avea.

And all its hopes in you.

Da quell'ora pungenti e velenosi a ferirlo

From that moment, sharp and poisonous, to wound it,

Per voi passaro i dardi.

Through you passed the darts.

E nel fatale incontro di due sguardi

And in the fateful meeting of two glances,

E libertade e vita al cuor toglieate.

You took both freedom and life from the heart.

Occhi miei, che faceste?

My eyes, what have you done?

Aria Andante

Ve lo dissi, e nol credeste:

I told you so, but you did not believe me:

Chè negli occhi di costei,

That in the eyes of this woman,

Solo inteso a danni miei

There was hidden, meant only for my harm,

S'ascondeva il Dio d'Amor.

The God of Love.

Troppo tardi v'accorgeste

Too late you realized

Cb'il mirar que' Lusinghieri occhi neri,

That gazing into those deceptive black eyes,

Occhi neri gran periglio era del cor.

Those black eyes were a great danger to the heart.

Ve lo dissi, etc.

I told you so, etc.

PROGRAM NOTES

Recitativo

Il misero innocente

The poor innocent one

D'un diletto non suo

For a pleasure not his own

La pena e il danno sente.

Feels both the pain and the harm.

Del suo grave dolor voi siete rei.

You are guilty of his great suffering.

Che faceste, occhi miei?

What have you done, my eyes?

Aria Larghetto

Troppo caro costo al core

Too dearly it costs the heart,

Quel piacere che prendeste

That pleasure you took

Da quegli occhi tutti ardor.

From those eyes full of fire.

E sospira, langue e more,

And now it sighs, languishes, and dies,

Quando soli voi dovrete

When only you should

Sentir tutto il suo dolor.

Feel all its sorrow.

Troppo caro, etc.

Too dearly, etc.



PROGRAM NOTES

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833–1897) From *Fünf Lieder*, Op. 105

Brahms spent the summer of 1886 on holiday in Hofstetten, a picturesque Swiss town on the banks of Lake Thun. During that summer, he was anticipating a visit from Hermine Spies, a renowned alto with whom he had grown fond since the late 1870s. In preparation for her arrival, Brahms sketched several Lieder, which she would later sing with him. These songs, became *Fünf Lieder* Op. 105, were dedicated to her.

Musical ideas from these songs found their way into Brahms's instrumental works. For instance, the second theme of his Violin Sonata, Op. 100, shares its melody with *Wie Melodien zieht es mir* ("Like melodies it moves through me"), a setting of a poem by his close friend Klaus Groth. The text is about the impermanent nature of inspiration, likening it to a melody, a scent, or mist that disappears upon trying to capture it.

Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer ("Ever lighter grows my slumber") and *Auf dem Kirchhofe* ("In the churchyard") also bear connections to Brahms's instrumental music. *Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer* is a melancholic musing on impending death, expressed through a descending melody and tender harmonies. *Auf dem Kirchhofe*, set to a text by Detlev von Liliencron, portrays an overgrown cemetery on a stormy day, going from turbulence to serenity. The hymn-like setting in the final lines conveys a sense of acceptance and peace, capturing the contrast between life's struggles and the stillness of death.

Wie Melodien zieht es mir (By Klaus Groth)

Wie Melodien zieht es
Like melodies, it moves

Mir leise durch den Sinn,
Softly through my mind,

Wie Frühlingsblumen blüht es
Like spring flowers, it blooms

Und schwebt wie Duft dahin.
And drifts away like fragrance.

Doch kommt das Wort und faßt es
But when words come to grasp it

Und führt es vor das Aug',
And bring it before my eyes,

Wie Nebelgrau erblaßt es
Like misty gray, it fades

Und schwindet wie ein Hauch.
And vanishes like a breath.

Und dennoch ruht im Reime
And yet, within the rhyme,

Verborgен wohl ein Duft,
A hidden fragrance lingers,

Den mild aus stillem Keime
That gently from a silent seed,

Ein feuchtes Auge ruft.
A teary eye evokes.

PROGRAM NOTES

Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer

(By Hermann Lingg)

Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer,
Ever lighter grows my slumber,

Nur wie Schleier liegt mein Kummer
Like a veil, my sorrow lies

Zitternd über mir.
Trembling over me.

Oft im Traume hör' ich dich
Often in dreams, I hear you

Rufen drauß vor meiner Tür:
Calling outside my door:

Niemand wacht und öffnet dir,
No one wakes to open for you,

Ich erwach' und weine bitterlich.
I awaken and weep bitterly.

Ja, ich werde sterben müssen,
Yes, I must die,

Eine Andre wirst du küssen,
Another you will kiss,

Wenn ich bleich und kalt.
When I am pale and cold.

Eb' die Maienlüfte wehn,
Before the May breezes blow,

Eb' die Drossel singt im Wald:
Before the thrush sings in the forest:

Willst du mich noch einmal sehn,
If you want to see me once more,

Komm, o komme bald!
Come, oh come soon!

Auf dem Kirchhofe

(By Detlev von Liliencron)

Der Tag ging regenschwer und sturmbewegt,
The day passed, heavy with rain and stirred by storms,

Ich war an manch vergeßnem Grab gewesen.
I had visited many a forgotten grave.

Verwittert Stein und Kreuz, die Kränze alt,
Weathered stone and cross, the wreaths old,

Die Namen überwachsen, kaum zu lesen.
The names overgrown, barely legible.

Der Tag ging sturmbewegt und regenschwer,
The day passed, stirred by storms and heavy with rain,

Auf allen Gräbern fror das Wort: Gewesen.
On all the graves, the word "Once was" lay frozen.

Wie sturmestot die Särge schlummerten—
Like storm-silent, the coffins slumbered—

Auf allen Gräbern taute still: Genesen.
On all the graves, softly thawed the word: "Healed."

PROGRAM NOTES

ERNEST CHAUSSON (1855–1899) From *Sept Mélodies*, Op. 2

Ernest Chausson, initially trained as a lawyer, found his true calling in music after a fateful decision to switch careers in 1877, just as he was sworn in as a barrister. At 24, Chausson entered the Paris Conservatoire to study instrumentation under Jules Massenet, eventually coming under the influence of César Franck. His *Sept Mélodies*, Op. 2 are some of his earliest songs, written while he was still a student. These songs are about love, longing, and loss, often drawing on the natural world as a backdrop for emotional expression.

Sérénade Italienne, with text by Paul Bourget, stands out as one of Chausson's most evocative mélodies. It depicts a Mediterranean atmosphere, with rippling arpeggios and a lively rhythmic drive that suggest the gentle rocking of a boat on the water. The text describes a lover serenading his beloved from a gondola at night, calling for her to join him in a peaceful escape across the water.

Le Charme, set to a poem by Armand Silvestre, is an intimate song that captures the intoxicating nature of love. The song explores the profound impact of love at first sight, as the speaker is overwhelmed by the power of her beloved's smile and gaze. Initially, the speaker struggles to understand these emotions, but the moment of true realization comes with the sight of a single tear—an expression of vulnerability that solidifies their deep affection.

Sérénade Italienne (By Paul Bourget)

Aux mots que nos bouches se disent.
Of the words our lips exchange.

Partons en barque sur la mer
Let us set out in a boat upon the sea

Sur la mer calme et sombre, vois:
Upon the calm and dark sea, see:

Pour passer la nuit aux étoiles;
To spend the night beneath the stars;

Nous pouvons échanger nos âmes,
We can exchange our souls,

Vois, il souffle juste assez d'air
See, there is just enough breeze

Et nul ne comprendra nos voix
And no one will understand our voices

Pour enfler la toile des voiles.
To swell the canvas of the sails.

Que la nuit, le ciel et les lames.
Except the night, the sky, and the waves.

Le vieux pêcheur italien
The old Italian fisherman

Et ses deux fils qui nous conduisent
And his two sons who guide us

Écotent, mais n'entendent rien
Listen, but hear nothing

PROGRAM NOTES

Le Charme

(By Armand Silvestre)

Quand ton sourire me surprit,
When your smile took me by surprise,

Je sentis frémir tout mon être;
I felt my whole being tremble;

Mais ce qui domptait mon esprit,
But what was subduing my spirit,

Je ne pus d'abord le connaître.
At first, I could not understand.

Quand ton regard tomba sur moi,
When your gaze fell upon me,

Je sentis mon âme se fondre;
I felt my soul melt away;

Mais ce que serait cet émoi,
But what this emotion would become,

Je ne pus d'abord en répondre.
At first, I could not say.

Ce qui me vainquit à jamais,
What conquered me forever,

Ce fut un plus douloureux charme,
Was a far more painful charm,

Et je n'ai su que je t'aimais
And I did not know that I loved you

Qu'en voyant ta première larme!
Until I saw your first tear!

PROGRAM NOTES

Chanson perpétuelle, Op. 37

Written in the late 1890s, *Chanson perpétuelle* sets stanzas from Charles Cros' 1873 poem “Nocturne”, from “*Le coffret de santal*”. The poem tells the tragic tale of a woman’s abandonment by her lover and her subsequent contemplation of suicide. In keeping with the dramatic nature of the text, Chausson scored the piece originally for voice, piano, and string quartet, which, together, underscore the emotional weight of the narrative. The work evokes Wagner’s *Liebestod*”, with its association of love and death. The narrator’s yearning for the lost lover leads to a sense of hopelessness, culminating in her decision to drown herself. The music, as written, emphasizes the psychological unraveling of the character, with the melodic lines flowing in response to the changing emotions of despair. The piece concludes with a sense of total emotional collapse.

Chanson perpétuelle (By Charles Cros)

Bois frissonnants, ciel étoilé,
Shivering woods, starry sky,

Mon bien-aimé s'en est allé
My beloved has gone away

Emportant mon cœur désolé.
Taking my sorrowful heart with him.

Vents, que vos plaintives rumeurs,
Winds, let your plaintive murmurs,

Que vos chants, rossignols charmeurs,
Let your songs, enchanting nightingales,

Aillent lui dire que je meurs.
Go tell him that I am dying.

Le premier soir qu'il vint ici
The first evening he came here,

Mon âme fut à sa merci,
My soul was at his mercy,

De fierté je n'eus plus souci.
I cared no more for pride.

PROGRAM NOTES

Mes regards étaient pleins d'aveux,
My gaze was full of confessions,

Il me prit dans ses bras nerveux
He took me in his trembling arms

Et me baisa près des cheveux.
And kissed me near my hair.

J'en eus un grand frémissement.
I trembled violently.

Et puis je ne sais plus comment
And then, I no longer know how,

Il est devenu mon amant.
He became my lover.

Je lui disais: "Tu m'aimeras
I told him: "You will love me

Aussi longtemps que tu pourras!"
As long as you can!"

Je ne dormais bien qu'en ses bras.
I only slept well in his arms.

Mais lui, sentant son cœur éteint,
But he, feeling his heart grow cold,

S'en est allé l'autre matin
Left the other morning

Sans moi dans un pays lointain.
Without me, to a distant land.

Puisque je n'ai plus mon ami,
Since I no longer have my beloved,

Je mourrai dans l'étang parmi
I shall die in the pond among

Les fleurs sous le flot endormi.
The flowers beneath the still water.

Sur le bord arrivée, au vent
Arriving at the shore, to the wind

Je dirai son nom en rêvant
I shall say his name while dreaming

Que là je l'attendis souvent,
That there I often waited for him.

Et comme en un linceul doré,
And like in a golden shroud,

Dans mes cheveux défaits, au gré
With my unbound hair, at the mercy

Du vent je m'abandonnerai.
Of the wind, I shall surrender myself.

Les bonheurs passés verseront
The joys of the past will cast

Leur douce lueur sur mon front
Their gentle glow upon my forehead

Et les joncs verts m'enlanceront.
And the green reeds will embrace me.

Et mon sein croira, frémissant
And my breast will believe, trembling,

Sous l'enlacement caressant,
Under the caressing embrace,

Subir l'étreinte de l'absent.
That it endures the embrace of the absent one.

BIOGRAPHY

Leanne Tavita is a 22-year-old soprano born and raised in the Philippines who is now based in Singapore. She began her classical music journey at the age of 12 at the Philippine High School for the Arts, where she developed her skills as a performer. She is currently in her 3rd year pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Vocal Performance at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music (YST) at the National University of Singapore under the tutelage of Prof. Alan Bennett.

Leanne recently completed an exchange program at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) in Glasgow, where she studied during her first semester under the guidance of mezzo-soprano Kathleen McKellar Ferguson.

She participated in her first opera with the Opera People's 2023 production of Bellini's "*La Sonnambula*" at the Wild Rice Theatre Singapore as part of the ensemble. She has performed in various venues in the Philippines, Singapore, and recently in Europe. She played the role as Nella in Puccini's "*Gianni Schicchi*" at the Scheggino Opera Summer School in Italy last summer, where she worked alongside esteemed musicians and immersed herself in the rich operatic scene of Europe.

Leanne has participated in masterclasses with internationally renowned artists, including tenor Arthur Espiritu, soprano Lynne Dawson, pianist Roger Vignoles, tenor Mark Tucker, and soprano Iulia Maria Dan.

Beyond performance, Leanne is passionate about making classical music more accessible, particularly to underprivileged communities. In 2021, she was awarded the *Mga Bagong Rizal Award* by the Philippine Center for Gifted Education for her pitch proposal on creating an arts program for young underprivileged Filipino artists. In 2023, she organized and performed in *Tiklado*, a benefit concert dedicated to supporting cancer patients, showcasing her belief in music's power to uplift and heal.

Her talent has been recognized in numerous international competitions. She was awarded 1st Place in both the *New York Young Performers Prize (2021)* and the *Sugree Charoensook International Music Competition, Thailand (2021)*. She also won 2nd Place in the *NAMCYA Junior Voice Category (2020)*—where she also received the *Best Interpretation of the Contest Piece Award*. Recently, she placed 3rd in the *2025 YST Voice Concerto Competition* and was a recipient of the *Ani ng Dangal Award (2022)* in the Philippines, which honors outstanding Filipino artists in different art disciplines.

As she continues her musical journey, Leanne remains committed to using her voice to inspire, educate, and bring classical music to a wider audience.

