

a voice recital by

mezzo-soprano

Stephanie Josselin

with Kira Lim and Beatrice Lin

works by Poulenc, Händel, Strauss and Korngold

26 November 2024 | 8:20pm SGT
YST Concert Hall, 3 Conservatory Drive



program

Francis Poulenc

Banalités

- i. Chanson d'Orkenise
- ii. Hôtel
- iii. Fagnes de Wallonie
- iv. Voyage à Paris
- v. Sanglots

George Frideric Handel

Flavio, Re de'Longobardi Ricordati, mio ben

Giulio Cesare Svegliatevi nel core

Richard Strauss

Op. 27

- i. Ruhe, meine Seele
- ii. Cäcilie
- iii. Heimliche Aufforderung
- iv. Morgen!

Erich Korngold

Songs of the Clown

- i. Come Away, Death
- ii. O Mistress Mine
- iii. Adieu, Good Man Devil
- iv. Hey Robin
- v. For the Rain, It Raineth Every Day

[program notes]

Francis Poulenc (1899 - 1963)

Banalités

Born in 1899, Francis Jean Marcel Poulenc was largely self-taught. He was a prominent French composer of the 20th century who used his words well with an eccentric way of doing so. *Banalités* sets five poems by Guillaume Apollinaire, offering a fascinating journey through contrasting moods and colors. Composed in 1940, the cycle is a testament to Poulenc's witty sense of humor and ability to capture the spirit of poetry with music that feels effortless, perfectly matching the text.

Chanson d'Orkenise opens full of mischief, telling a lively narrative about a town guard who gossips and a lover leaving town. It is brought to life with bouncy rhythms and playful turns in the piano. The accompaniment adds a sense of movement, echoing a bustling village scene. In the next song *Hôtel*, the mood shifts entirely. The poem is an ode to laziness, with the singer longing only to rest and smoke. Its slow, almost hypnotic melody, supported by softly meandering harmonies, mirrors the poem's languid, indulgent tone. The music feels like a deep sigh of contentment.

Fagnes de Wallonie takes on a more rugged, desolate feel. The imagery of barren landscapes is mirrored in the stark, almost sparse writing. There's a sense of wandering in both the text and music, picturing the raw beauty of nature. The brightness of *Voyage à Paris* provides a joyful contrast, celebrating the enchantment of Paris. The text's simplicity and enthusiasm—"Ah! Paris! What a delight!"—are matched by sparkling, buoyant music that feels like a love letter to the city.

The final song, *Sanglots* is the emotional heart of the cycle. It reflects on love, pain, and the passage of time, with Apollinaire's imagery of weeping and eternity matched by Poulenc's deep, arching vocal lines. The flowing accompaniment and the harmony between the voice and the piano adds to the song's sense of inevitability and introspection, leaving the listener with a poignant sense of longing.

Chanson d'Orkenise

Song of Orkenise

Par les portes d'Orkenise
Veut entrer un charretier.
Par les portes d'Orkenise
Veut sortir un va-nu-pieds.

Et les gardes de la ville
Courant sus au va-nu-pieds:
'Qu' emportes-tu de la ville?'
'J'y laisse mon coeur entier.'

Et les gardes de la ville
Courant sus au charretier:
'Qu'apportes-tu dans la ville?'
'Mon coeur pour me marier!'

Que de coeurs, dans Orkenise!
Les gardes riaient, riaient.
Va-nu-pieds la route est grise,
L'amour grise, ô charretier.

Les beaux gardes de la ville
Tricotaien superbement;
Puis les portes de la ville
Se fermèrent lentement.

Through the gates of Orkenise
A waggoner wants to enter.
Through the gates of Orkenise
A vagabond wants to leave.

And the sentries guarding the town
Rush up to the vagabond:
'What are you taking from the town?'
'I'm leaving my whole heart behind.'

And the sentries guarding the town
Rush up to the waggoner:
'What are you carrying into the town?'
'My heart in order to marry.'

So many hearts in Orkenise!
The sentries laughed and laughed:
Vagabond, the road's not merry,
Love makes you merry, O waggoner!

The handsome sentries guarding the town
Knitted vaingloriously;
The gates of the town then
Slowly closed.

Hôtel

Ma chambre a la forme d'une cage
Le soleil passe son bras par la fenêtre
Mais moi qui veux fumer pour faire des mirages
J'allume au feu du jour ma cigarette
Je ne veux pas travailler je veux fumer

My room is shaped like a cage
The sun slips its arm through the window
But I who want to smoke to make mirages
I light my cigarette on daylight's fire
I do not want to work I want to smoke

Fagnes de Wallonie

Walloon moss-hags

Je n'ai confié aucun secret
sinon une chanson énigmatique
Aux tourbières humides

Les bruyères fleurant le miel
Attiraient les abeilles
Et mes pieds endoloris
Foulaient les myrtilles et les airelles
Tendrement mariée
Nord, Nord
La vie s'y tord
En arbres forts et tors
La vie y mord
La mort
À belles dents
Quand bruit le vent

So much utter sadness
Seized my heart in the desolate upland moss-hags
When weary I set down in the fir plantation
The weight of kilometres to the roar
Of the west wind
I had left the pretty wood
The squirrels stayed there
My pipe tried to make clouds
In the sky
Which stubbornly stayed clear

I confided no secret
but an enigmatic song
To the dank peat-bogs

The honey-fragrant heather
Attracted the bees
And my sore feet
Crushed bilberries and whortleberries
Tenderly united
North, North
Life is gnarled there
In trees that are strong and twisted
Life there bites
Death
Voraciously
When the wind howls

Voyage à Paris

Ah! la charmante chose
Quitter un pays morose
Pour Paris
Paris joli
Qu'un jour dut créer l'Amour

Oh! how delightful
To leave a dismal place
For Paris
Charming Paris
That one day love must have made

Sanglots

Sobs

Notre amour est réglé par les calmes étoiles
Or nous savons qu'en nous beaucoup d'hommes respirent
Qui vinrent de très loin et sont un sous nos fronts
C'est la chanson des rêveurs
Qui s'étaient arraché le coeur
Et le portaient dans la main droite
Souviens-t'en cher orgueil de tous ces souvenirs

Des marins qui chantaient comme des conquérants
Des gouffres de Thulé des tendres cieux d'Ophir
Des malades maudits de ceux qui fuient leur ombre
Et du retour joyeux des heureux émigrants
De ce coeur il coulait du sang
Et le rêveur allait pensant
A sa blessure délicate
Tu ne briseras pas la chaîne de ces causes
Et douloureuse et nous disait
Qui sont les effets d'autres causes
Mon pauvre coeur mon coeur brisé
Pareil au coeur de tous les hommes
Voici voici nos mains que la vie fit esclaves
Est mort d'amour ou c'est tout comme
Est mort d'amour et le voici
Ainsi vont toutes choses,
Arrachez donc le vôtre aussi
Et rien ne sera libre jusqu'à la fin des temps
Laissons tout aux morts
Et cachons nos sanglots

*Our love is governed by the calm stars
Now we know that in us many men have their being
Who came from afar and are one beneath our brows
It is the song of the dreamers
Who tore out their hearts
And carried them in their right hands
Remember dear pride all these memories*

*The sailors who sang like conquerors
The chasms of Thule the gentle Ophir skies
The accursed sick those who flee their shadows
And the joyous return of happy emigrants
This heart ran with blood
And the dreamer kept thinking
Of his delicate wound*

*You shall not break the chain of these causes
Of his painful wound and said to us
Which are the effects of other causes
My poor heart my broken heart
Like the hearts of all men*

*Here here are our hands that life enslaved
Has died of love or so it seems
Has died of love and here it is
Such is the fate of all things
So tear out yours too*

*And nothing will be free till the end of time
Let us leave all to the dead
And conceal our sobs*

[program notes]

G.F. Handel (1685 - 1759)

Ricordati, mio ben
Svegliatevi nel core

George Frideric Handel was a German-born composer who spent most of his life in England, becoming one of the greatest figures of Baroque music. Known for his dramatic flair and melodic genius, he wrote music that captivated audiences across Europe. Handel was celebrated for his charm and wit, and famously recovered from a stroke to continue composing until his final years.

Ricordati, mio ben is an aria from one of Handel's lesser performed operas "Flavio, Re de'Longbardi". The opera blends drama and comedy, centering on political intrigue and romantic entanglements. The aria is sung by Vitige, a nobleman secretly in love with Teodata, the daughter of his rival. Their forbidden relationship unfolds amidst a broader conflict involving the titular King Flavio, who manipulates the lives of his courtiers for his own amusement. In this piece, Vitige implores Teodata to remember him, expressing his deep devotion despite the obstacles they face. The music captures Vitige's sincerity and vulnerability, with its lyrical melody and delicate accompaniment. Handel's ability to reflect the emotional struggles of his characters is evident here, making this aria a poignant moment within the opera's complex interplay of love, duty, and power.

Svegliatevi nel core is an aria taken from Handel's "Giulio Cesare". Sung by Sesto, the son of Pompey, it occurs after the death of his father, and expresses his vow to seek revenge. The recitative and aria captures Sesto's transition from mourning to resolve, as he prepares to take action against those responsible for Pompey's death. Reflecting on Sesto's growing determination, the music along with the vocal line emphasize strength and urgency. The repetitive phrasing and bold orchestral accompaniment convey his resolve and inner conflict.

Recitativo

VITIGE:

Fra i ciechi orror notturni

Veiled by the shades of the night,

Partirò innoservato.

I'll leave without being seen.

TEODATA:

Vitige!

VITIGE:

Amata sposa!

Beloved bride!

TEODATA:

O Dio! Tu parti?

Oh God, you're leaving?

VITIGE:

Parto, ma l'alma mia tutta dal piè diversa ella farà la via

I leave, but my soul will take a different way from that of my foot

TEODATA:

Pur di Lottario ai tetti, in questa notte,

But tonight at Lotario's house,

Per le nozze di Guido a me germano,

At the wedding of Guido, my brother,

Caro, ti rivedrò?

Dear, I'll see you again?

VITIGE:

No, Teodata.

TEODATA:

Ahi misera! Perché?

Oh, I'm miserable! Why not?

VITIGE:

Quel grado ch'io sostento m'obliga nella reggia.

The office I hold obliges me to stay at the Court.

Ricordati, mio ben

Remember, my love

Duetto

TEODATA & VITIGE:

Ricordati, mio ben

Remember, my love

Che se da me tu parti,

That if you leave me

Io vivo sol conte,

I live alone.

Già teco resta il cor

My heart remains with you

In pegno del mio amor,

As a pledge of my love,

Di mia costante fè.

Of my constant faith.

Svegliatevi nel core

Awake, my soul

Recitativo

Vani sono i lamenti;

Laments are vain:

È tempo, o Sesto, omai

Now is the time, Sesto,

Di vendicare il padre;

To avenge your father;

Si svegli alla vendetta

Wake up to revenge

L'anima neghittosa

The lazy soul

Che offesa da un tiranno invan riposa.

Who, offended by a tyrant, rests in vain.

Aria

Svegliatevi nel core,

Awake, my soul

Furie d'un'alma offesa,

Furies of a wounded soul,

A far d'un traditor aspra vendetta!

And spur me to wreak bitter vengeance upon a traitor!

L'ombra del genitore

My father's shade

Accorre a mia difesa,

Hastens to my defence,

E dice: «a te il rigor figlio, si aspetta»

Saying, "My son, from you severity is awaited."

[program notes]

Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949)

Vier Lieder, op. 27

A German composer and conductor, Richard Strauss is celebrated for his lush, expressive music and masterful orchestration. A key figure of late Romanticism, he is best known for his operas and lieder, which showcase his gift for capturing deep emotion and vivid imagery.

Vier Lieder (Four Songs), Op. 27 explores themes of love, longing, and tranquility in a deeply personal way. Composed in 1894 as a wedding gift to his wife, Pauline de Ahna, the songs are united by their emotional intensity and rich interplay between voice and piano. Each piece contributes to a larger arc, moving from inner turmoil to a profound sense of peace.

The set begins with *Ruhe, meine Seele!* (Rest, My Soul!), a quiet meditation on finding calm amidst inner unrest. The restrained dynamics and unresolved harmonies create a tension that sets the tone for the journey ahead. This introspection gives way to the unrestrained passion of *Cäcilie* (Cecily), where the lover's declaration is full of urgency and joy. The music surges with energy, its sweeping lines capturing the transformative power of love.

From this high intensity, the mood becomes more intimate in *Heimliche Aufforderung* (Secret Invitation). The poem's invitation to a secret meeting is conveyed with a gentle, flowing rhythm in the piano and a vocal line that feels both personal and heartfelt. The excitement and tenderness of this moment transition seamlessly into the serene conclusion of *Morgen!* (Tomorrow!). With its sparse, tranquil opening, the final song offers a vision of hope and peace. The simple melody, supported by the piano's steady accompaniment, reflects the quiet fulfillment promised in the text, closing the set with a sense of resolution and contentment.

Ruhe, meine Seele!

Rest, my soul!

Nicht ein Lüftchen,
Regt sich leise,
Sanft entschlummert
Ruht der Hain;
Durch der Blätter
Dunkle Hülle
Stiehlt sich lichter
Sonnenschein.
Ruhe, ruhe,
Meine Seele,
Deine Stürme
Gingen wild,
Hast getobt und
Hast gezittert,
Wie die Brandung,
Wenn sie schwillt!
Diese Zeiten
Sind gewaltig,
Bringen Herz und Hirn
in Not—
Ruhe, ruhe,
Meine Seele,
Und vergiß,
Was dich bedroht!

Not even
A soft breeze stirs,
In gentle sleep
The wood rests;
Through the leaves'
Dark veil
Bright sunshine
Steals.
Rest, rest,
My soul,
Your storms
Were wild,
You raged and
You quivered,
Like the breakers,
When they surge!
These times
Are violent,
Cause heart and mind
Distress—
Rest, rest,
My soul,
And forget
What threatens you!

Cäcilie

Cecily

Wenn Du es wüßtest,
Was träumen heißt
Von brennenden Küssem,
Vom Wandern und Ruhen
Mit der Geliebten,
Aug' in Auge,
Und kosend und plaudernd –
Wenn Du es wüßtest,
Du neigtest Dein Herz!

Wenn Du es wüßtest,
Was bangen heißt
In einsamen Nächten,
Umschauert vom Sturm,
Da Niemand tröstet
Milden Mundes
Die kampfmüde Seele –
Wenn Du es wüßtest,
Du kämest zu mir.

Wenn Du es wüßtest,
Was leben heißt
Umhaucht von der Gottheit
Weltschaffendem Atem,
Zu schweben empor,
Lichtgetragen,
Zu seligen Höh'en,
Wenn Du es wüßtest,
Du lebstest mit mir.

If you knew
What it is to dream
Of burning kisses,
Of walking and resting
With one's love,
Gazing at each other
And caressing and talking –
If you knew,
Your heart would turn to me!

If you knew
What it is to worry
On lonely nights
In the frightening storm,
With no soft voice
To comfort
The struggle-weary soul –
If you knew,
You would come to me.

If you knew
What it is to live
Enveloped in God's
World-creating breath,
To soar upwards,
Borne on light
To blessed heights –
If you knew,
You would live with me.

Heimliche Aufforderung

Secret Invitation

Auf, hebe die funkelnde Schale empor zum Mund,
und trinke beim Freudenmahle
dein Herz gesund.

Und wenn du sie hast,
so winke mir heimlich zu,
Dann lächle ich,
und dann trinke ich still wie du ...

Und still gleich mir betrachte um uns
Das Heer der trunknen Schwätzer
—verachte sie nicht zu sehr.

Nein, hebe die blinkende Schale,
gefüllt mit Wein,
Und laß beim lärmenden Mahle
sie glücklich sein.

Doch hast du das Mahl genossen,
den Durst gestillt,
Dann verlasse der lauten Genossen
festfreudiges Bild,

Und wandle hinaus in den Garten
zum Rosenstrauch —
Dort will ich dich dann erwarten
nach altem Brauch,

Und will an die Brust dir sinken
eh' du's gehofft,
Und deine Küsse trinken,
wie ehmals oft,

Und flechten in deine Haare
der Rose Pracht—
O komm, du wunderbare,
ersehnte Nacht!

Come, raise to your lips the sparkling goblet,
And drink at this joyous feast
to your heart's content.

And when you raise it,
give me a secret sign,
Then I shall smile,
and drink as quietly as you ...

And quietly like me, look around at
the hordes of drunken gossips
—do not despise them too much.

No, raise the sparkling goblet,
filled with wine,
And let them be happy
at the noisy feast.

But once you have savoured the meal,
quenched your thirst,
Leave the loud company
of riotous merrymakers,

And come out into the garden
to the rosebush —
There I shall wait for you
as I've always done.

And I shall sink on your breast,
before you could hope,
And drink your kisses,
as often before,

And entwine in your hair
the glorious rose—
Ah! come, O wondrous,
longed-for night!

Morgen!

Tomorrow!

Und morgen wird die Sonne wieder scheinen

And tomorrow the sun will shine again

Und auf dem Wege, den ich gehen werde,

And on the path that I shall take,

Wird uns, die Glücklichen, sie wieder einen

It will unite us, happy ones, again,

Inmitten dieser sonnenatmenden Erde ...

Amid this same sun-breathing earth ...

Und zu dem Strand, dem weiten, wogenblauen,

And to the shore, broad, blue-waved,

Werden wir still und langsam niedersteigen,

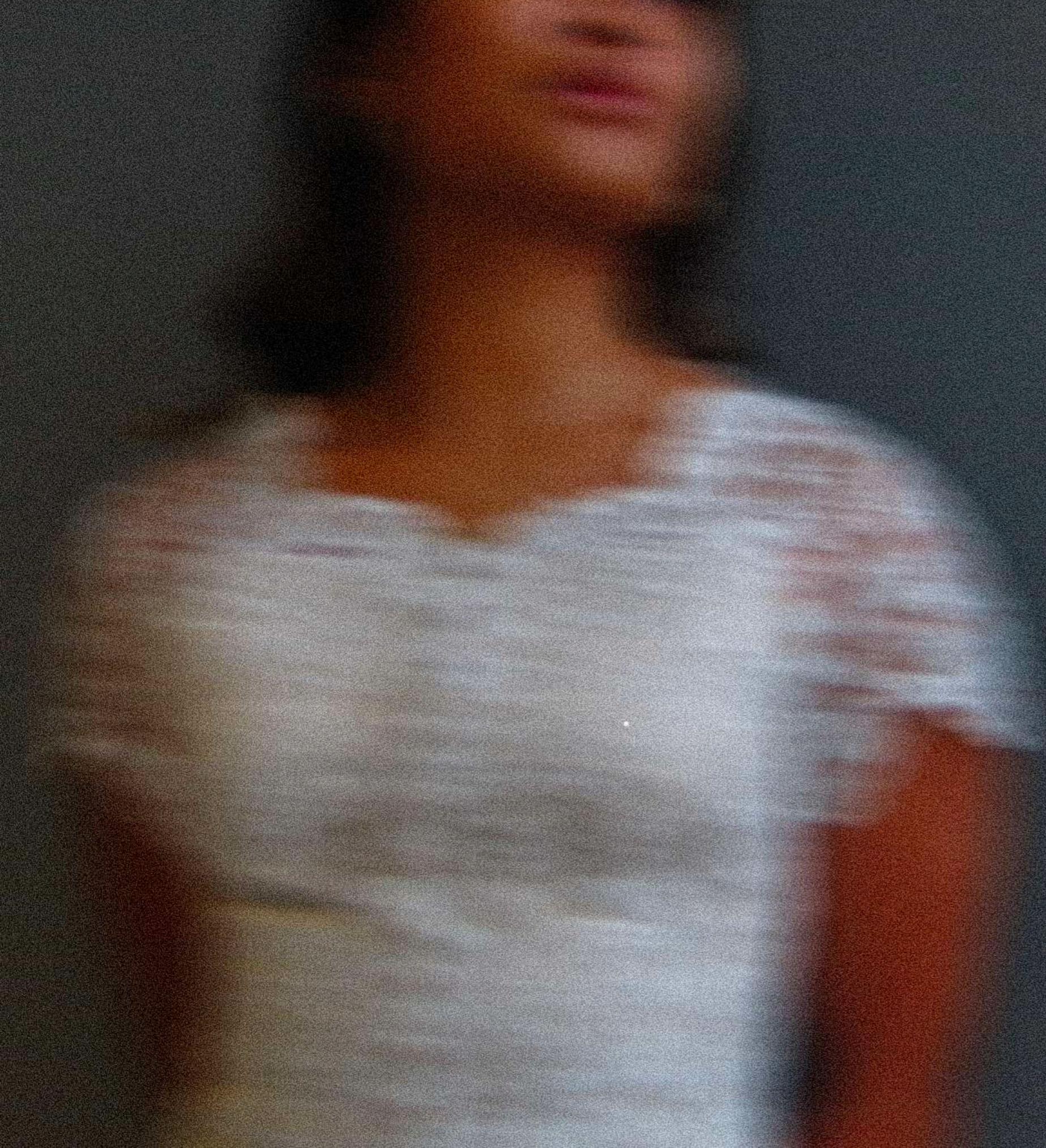
We shall quietly and slowly descend,

Stumm werden wir uns in die Augen schauen,

Speechless we shall gaze into each other's eyes,

Und auf uns sinkt des Glückes stummes Schweigen ...

And the speechless silence of bliss shall fall on us ...



[program notes]

Erich Wolfgang Korngold (1897 - 1957)

Songs of the Clown

Erich Wolfgang Korngold was an Austrian-American composer and a child prodigy, composing his first opera at age 11. He gained early fame in Vienna before moving to Hollywood in the 1930s, where he revolutionized film music. Written in 1939, *Songs of the Clown* is a cycle of five songs based on texts from William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night". This cycle captures the wit, humor, and occasional melancholy of Feste, the play's clown, blending humor, irony, and poignant introspection into a unified narrative. Korngold's music and dramatic sensitivity bring these texts to life, balancing playfulness with subtle depth.

The cycle begins with *Come Away, Death*, a mournful song about unrequited love and longing for peace, set to a haunting melody. The mood lightens with *O Mistress Mine*, an invitation to seize the moment, its flowing lines and gentle rhythm reflecting the text's playful tone.

Adieu, Good Man Devil is full of sharp humor, with lively rhythms and witty wordplay, while *Hey, Robin* slows down for a quiet and reflective dialogue on loyalty and sadness. The final song, *For the Rain, It Raineth Every Day*, brings the cycle full circle, combining humor and melancholy as Feste reflects on life's ups and downs. Korngold's music underscores the text's acceptance of life's challenges, ending the set on a bittersweet yet satisfying note.

Come Away, Death

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand, thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O where
True lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

O Mistress Mine

O mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O, stay and hear; your true love is coming,
That can sing both high and low.

O trip no further, pretty sweeting;
For journeys end in lovers meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.

What is this love? 'tis not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter,
What's to come is still unsure.

And in delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.
Ah!

Adieu, Good Man Devil

I am gone, sir,
And anon, sir,
I'll be with you again,
In a trice,
Like to the old Vice,
Your need to sustain;
Who, with dagger of lath,
In his rage and his wrath,
Cries, ah, ha! to the devil:
Like a mad lad,
Pare thy nails, dad;
Adieu, good man devil.
Ah, ha ha ha!

For the Rain, It Raineth Every Day

Hey Robin

Hey, Robin, jolly Robin,
Tell me how thy lady does.
My lady is unkind, perdy.
Hey, Robin, jolly Robin,
Tell me why is she so?
She loves another, another.

When that I was a little boy, a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain, it raineth every day.

But when I came to man's estate,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
'Gainst knaves and thieves men shut their gate,
For the rain, it raineth every day.

But when I came, alas, to wive,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
By swagg'ring could I never thrive,
For the rain, it raineth every day.

A great while ago the world begun,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
But that's all one, our play is done,
And the rain, it raineth every day.
Every day!

musician biographies

Stephanie Joshvin

A mezzo-soprano from Jakarta, Stephanie first started singing in 2017 with her tutor Rico Sijaila, with whom she performed in various concerts in and outside of school and won national singing competitions. Stephanie is now a final year undergraduate in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music , studying under the tutelage of Professor Alan Bennett. She has participated in some notable masterclasses under Sumi Hwang and Richard Stokes. Stephanie performed the alto part for *Mein Gott, hier wird mein Herze sein – Du wollest deinen Geist und Kraft* in the Bach Cantata Series: Come, Ye Sons of Art, Away! along with the Red Dot Baroque. She recently played the role of Donna Ribalda in the conservatory's semi-staged opera rendition of P.D.Q Bach's *The Stoned Guest*.

musician biographies



Kira Lim

Kira Lim is a final year undergraduate in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, majoring in Voice Performance studying with Professor Alan Bennett. In 2019, Kira graduated from Lasalle College of The Arts with a Diploma in Performance (Theatre).

Kira has participated in some notable singing performances including: Hansel and Gretel (2016) as 'Gretel', Mass of The Children and New York Sounds of Summer, Carnegie Hall (Soloist, 2016), Los Angeles International Music Festival (2018), Carmina Burana (Soloist, 2019), Der Zwerg with The Opera People (2019) as 'First Maiden', Baby Shark Live! The Hidden Treasure musical (2021-2022) as 'Shimmer', In Our Manner of Speaking performing new locally-commissioned pieces with The Opera People (2022), Come, Ye Sons of Art, Away! with the Red Dot Baroque and YST Conservatory (Soloist, 2022), CabaRED with New Opera Singapore (2023), 'Zerlina' in Mozart's Don Giovanni with Vienna Opera Academy at the Musikverein (2023). The Opera People La Sonnambula (Ensemble, 2023). In 2024, as part of a performance workshop, she debuted the main role of 'Klara' in The Opera People's commissioned opera 'Beacon' composed by Dr Jonathan Shin.

Kira wishes for the arts to be accessible and inclusive to all communities.

musician biographies



Beatrice Lin

A graduate of the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, Singapore, the Royal Academy of Music, and the Haute école de Musique de Genève, her studies were generously supported by the National Arts Council and the Lee Foundation. She was also awarded the Adolphe Neuman Prize from the canton of Geneva upon graduation. Performances include live radio broadcasts on the Radio Suisse Romande Espace 2, keyboardist with L'Orchestre de Chambre de Genève and Ensemble Contrechamps, as well as répétiteur for the Concours de Genève. On home ground, she is collaborative pianist at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory and freelancer with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra as well as the Singapore Chinese Orchestra. Her love for opera has led to numerous projects with the Singapore Lyric Opera and The Opera People.