

UNTIL OUR LAST BREATH

A JUNIOR RECITAL BY BENJAMIN HARRIS

WITH

LEE YUN YEE AMANDA (PIANO & HARPSICHORD)

NGOO TIEN HONG TED (TENOR)



**FEATURING WORKS BY
SCHUBERT,
D'INDIA,
COLE PORTER &
LUCY SIMON**

FOREWORD

Until our Last Breath is a Junior Recital comprising of works for the voice. The recital presents styles as diverse as the Early Baroque of the Seconda Prattica, the lieder of Schubert and songs popularized by the Broadway hits of the 20th Century.

During the conceptualisation of the recital, I was extremely keen on the idea of storytelling through song. This enthusiasm is reflected in the storytelling inherent in the poetry of Goethe, the dramatism of D'India's compositional style, and the musical theatre songs.

Recurring themes that then emerged from the Junior Recital programme were notions of death, heartbreak, and lost love. I thought that it would have been extremely apt to title my recital loosely around these notions. As luck would have it, I was focusing on taking deeper breaths in my Major class with Prof. I saw a chance and I took it. Thus, the titular expression "Until our Last Breath" was conceived.

Until our Last Breath also serves as a reconciliation between my former practice in musical theatre and Western classical voice. Having made the transition from being a theatre student to a voice student many 5 years ago, I found that I have had to radically approach the way I convey meaning in song. What was once seen as an acceptable expression of emotion in theatre, is now a stumbling block in vocal production. I am still finding that balance in my artistry. Nonetheless, I had so much fun preparing this recital for you and I hope you will enjoy the music presented tonight as much as I have enjoy making it.

ARTISTS

BENJAMIN HARRIS, TENOR AND RESEARCHER



Benjamin (he/him) is a Voice, and Music and Society major at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. What began as a ploy to impress girls as a 12-year old has led to Benjamin begging his mum to sign him up for formal singing classes. 12 years on and many voice classes later, Benjamin presents his Junior Recital, *Until Our Last Breath*. As a singer, he has performed for the Singapore Repertory Theatre, Singapore Lyric Opera Chorus, and as a chorister in the Voce Men's Choir. At the YST Conservatory, he is under the tutelage of tenor, Professor Alan Bennett.

Benjamin is also a music researcher, having been bitten by the academic bug off the back of being enrolled in a freshman class, taught by Singaporean pianist Dr. Abigail Sin. This led to him taking on a second major in Music and Society, where he is under the supervision of Singaporean composer, A/P Ho Chee Kong. His current research involves the musical and sonic realities of transnational transient workers in Singapore. Other research interests include critical theory, race, postcolonialism, and the ways in which they intersect with music. He hopes to further pursue these interests in a Postgraduate capacity upon graduation from YST.

LEE YUN YEE AMANDA, PIANIST



Lee Yun Yee Amanda was born in Singapore in 2001 and started learning the piano at the age of 4. She is currently doing her Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of renowned American pianist and pedagogue, Dr. Thomas Hecht, with a full scholarship. She actively performs locally and internationally. Prior to that, Amanda has won numerous competitions such as the 2014 International Competition of Young Musicians "Ohrid Pearls" Macedonia, the Thailand 5th Mozart International Piano Competition and the 'Liszt Memorial Prizes' Hong Kong International Piano Open Competition. Moreover, she has attained the Fellowship of Trinity College of London FTCL Piano Recital in 2019. During her free time, Amanda enjoys playing the violin and searching for hidden food gems.

NGOO TIEN HONG TED , TENOR



Ngoo Tien Hong Ted is an aspiring singer currently studying his Bachelor's Degree in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music at NUS (YSTCM), specialising under Voice and Performance. Before this, Ted graduated from the School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) in 2017, and was also part of YSTCM's Young Artist Programme between 2016 and 2017.

Ted has had a wealth of performance experience as a soloist, having performed as a soloist in events such as the ASEAN Paragames Opening Ceremony (2015), as well as alongside the Orchestra of Music Makers in the Concerto Il Solisti Series (2017), as part of the SOTA-OMM Concerto Competition. Ted has also performed as an ensemble member on many occasions, being part of the chorus for YSTCM's semi staging of Handel's "Acis and Galatea" (2017).

Apart from his passion for singing, Ted loves eating good food, trying out different drinks (and sometimes mixing them too!), travelling, kendo, and meeting new people.



PROGRAM

FRANZ SCHUBERT

Der König In Thule, Op 5 No.5

Der Fischer, Op 5 No. 3

Ester Verlust, Op 5 No. 4

SIGISMONDO D'INDIA

Lamento D'Orfeo

COLE PORTER

Easy to Love from Anything Goes

LUCY SIMON

Lily's Eyes from The Secret Garden

SCHUBERT-GOETHE LIEDER

Franz Schubert (1797-1828) was an Austrian composer whose music is more commonly associated with the late Classical and early Romantic periods. With a compositional output of over 600 secular songs, 50 choral works, and instrumental works, Schubert's imprint on the Western Classical musical world is nothing short of colossal. Schubert is particularly known for the German lieder genre and his settings of text to music remain staples in the vocal repertoire of many a Western classical vocalist.

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749-1832) was a German thinker of the Romantic period. As an intellectual, he wore many hats, including literature, science, politics, and aesthetic criticism. Having been dubbed the "German Shakespeare" in some circles, it is clear that his influence on literature is gargantuan.

The songs that you are about to hear are just 3 of the many pieces Schubert's songs that contain text by Goethe. In fact, it is noted that 1 in 10 of Schubert's lieder contain text by Goethe. The recital begins with *Der Fischer*, Op 5 No. 3. *Der Fischer* is a piece composed in strophic form. It tells the tale of a fisherman lured to his death by a water-nymph. The text is juxtaposed against the melody and accompaniment which incessantly drives the piece forward.

After that, we will be presenting *Ester Verlust*, Op 5 No. 4. The piece sings about the pining that comes with losing a first love. The chromaticism in the melodic line accentuates *Affektenlehre* of a heartbreak. Keeping to the theme of heartbreak and death, we finish the lieder segment with *Der König in Thule*, Op 5 No. 5. The song tells a story of the King of Thule. A widower, he spends his last days drinking from a golden goblet gifted to him by his late wife. Before his last breath, he tosses the goblet into the sea.

TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

Der König in Thule

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Es war ein König in Thule
Gar treu bis an das Grab,
Dem sterbend seine Buhle
Einen goldnen Becher gab.
Es ging ihm nichts darüber,
Er leert ihn jeden Schmaus;
Die Augen gingen ihm über,
So oft er trank daraus.

Und als er kam zu sterben,
Zählt' er seine Städt' im Reich,
Gönnt alles seinen Erben,
Den Becher nicht zugleich.
Er sass beim Königsmahle,
Die Ritter um ihn her,
Auf hohem Vätersaale,
Dort auf dem Schloss am Meer.

Dort stand der alte Zecher,
Trank letzte Lebensglut,
Und warf den heiligen Becher
Hinunter in die Flut.
Er sah ihn stürzen, trinken
Und sinken tief ins Meer.
Die Augen täten ihm sinken;
Trank nie einen Tropfen mehr.

The King of Thule

English Translation by Richard Wigmore

There was a king in Thule
faithful unto the grave,
whose dying mistress
gave him a golden goblet.
Nothing was more precious to him;
he drained it at every feast.
His eyes filled with tears
whenever he drank from it.

And when he came to die
he counted the towns in his realm,
bequeathed all to his heirs,
except for that goblet.
He sat at the royal banquet,
his knights around him
in the lofty ancestral hall
in his castle by the sea.

The old toper stood there,
drank life's last glowing draught,
and hurled the sacred goblet
into the waves below.
He watched it fall and drink
and sink deep into the sea.
His eyes, too, sank;
he drank not one drop more.

Der Fischer

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Das Wasser rauscht', das Wasser schwoll,
Ein Fischer sass daran,
Sah nach dem Angel ruhevoll,
Kühl bis ans Herz hinan.
Und wie er sitzt und wie er lauscht,
Teilt sich die Flut empor;
Aus dem bewegten Wasser rauscht
Ein feuchtes Weib hervor.

Sie sang zu ihm, sie sprach zu ihm:
„Was lockst du meine Brut
Mit Menschenwitz und Menschenlist
Hinauf in Todesglut?
Ach wüsstest du, wie's Fischlein ist
So wohlig auf dem Grund,
Du stiegst herunter, wie du bist,
Und würdest erst gesund.

Labt sich die liebe Sonne nicht,
Der Mond sich nicht im Meer?
Kehrt wellenatmend ihr Gesicht
Nicht doppelt schöner her?
Lockt dich der tiefe Himmel nicht,
Das feuchtverklärte Blau?
Lockt dich dein eigen Angesicht
Nicht her in ewgen Tau?

Das Wasser rauscht, das Wasser schwoll,
Netz' ihm den nackten Fuss;
Sein Herz wuchs ihm so sehnsuchtsvoll,
Wie bei der Liebsten Gruss.
Sie sprach zu ihm, sie sang zu ihm;
Da war's um ihn geschehn:
Halb zog sie ihn, halb sank er hin,
Und ward nicht mehr gesehn.

The Fisherman

English Translation by Richard Wigmore

The waters murmured, the waters swelled,
a fisherman sat on the bank;
calmly he gazed at his rod,
his heart was cold.
And as he sat and listened
the waters surged up and divided;
from the turbulent flood
a water nymph arose.

She sang to him, she spoke to him:
'Why do you lure my brood
with human wit and guile
up into the fatal heat?
Ah, if you only knew how contented
the fish are in the depths,
you would descend, just as you are,
and at last be made whole.

'Do not the dear sun and moon
refresh themselves in the ocean?
Do not their countenances emerge doubly beautiful
from breathing the waters?
Are you not enticed by the heavenly deep,
the transfigured, watery blue?
Are you not lured by your own face
into this eternal dew?'

The waters murmured, the waters swelled,
moistening his bare foot;
his heart surged with such yearning,
as if his sweetheart had called him.
She spoke to him, she sang to him,
then it was all over;
she half dragged him, he half sank down
and was never seen again.

Erster Verlust

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ach, wer bringt die schönen Tage,
Jene Tage der ersten Liebe,
Ach, wer bringt nur eine Stunde
Jener holden Zeit zurück!
Einsam nähr' ich meine Wunde,
Und mit stets erneuter Klage
Traur' ich ums verlorne Glück,
Ach, wer bringt die schönen Tage,
Jene holde Zeit zurück!

First Loss

English Translation by Richard Wigmore

Ah, who will bring back those fair days,
those days of first love?
Ah, who will bring back but one hour
of that sweet time?
Alone I nurture my wound
and, forever renewing my lament,
mourn my lost happiness.
Ah, who will bring back those fair days,
that sweet time?



SIGISMONDO D'INDIA

Sigismondo D'India (1582-1629) is an Italian composer, court musician, and vocalist of the early Baroque era. Born in Sicily in 1582, D'India was an avid traveller. In performing for various courts during his travels, his compositional output would also be heavily influenced by the composers that he met.

As a member of the Florentine Camerata and a strong proponent of the Seconda Pratica movement, he was widely considered second only to Monteverdi in terms of compositional output. The Florentine Camerata and the Seconda Prattica comprised a group of intellectuals and artists who valued the expression of human emotion in art. This is in contrast to the Prima Pratica movement that championed polyphony. A feature of music composed by D'India includes irregular meter and an irregular melodic line.

These compositional styles recur constantly in the monody, Lamento D'Orfeo. Lamento D'Orfeo tells the story of the lovers Orfeo and Euridice. In the piece, Orfeo mourns the death of Euridice. He plans to travel to the Underworld to appeal to the emotions of Hades to win back Euridice's soul. In true operatic fashion, the monody covers themes of loss, heartbreak, anger, and resignation all in a span of a single piece.

Lamento D'Orfeo

Che vegg'io, ohime, che miro?
Chi lasso, mi ti toglie, Euridice, mio bene?
Chi mi t'invola, ohime,
Cara de gl'occhi miei luce e pupilla?
Chi dunque del mio core,
Chi dell'anima mia, lassa mi priva?
Ah, che qui non vegg'io
Ch'alcun porga soccorso al dolor mio?

Ohime, come su l'alba delle delizie mie,
delle mie gioie,
cadde repente l'espero de' mali!
Misero! E pur degg'io,
Io pur deggio morir senza godere la celeste
belta del volto amato?
Sole delle mie luci almo e beato,
dove, ahi, dove rimani e dove sei,
Specchio de gl'occhi miei?
Dove, dove sei gita,
Unico del mio cor spirito e vita?

A voi del tenebroso e basso Regno
Prencipi eterni,
a voi Tartarei Numi,
a voi chiedo mercede:
A me l'anima mia tosto rendete,
O me fra le vostre ombre anco accogliete.
Rendete il cor al core,
che per grave martir languisce e more.
La viddi e non la viddi,
e qual baleno Fuggita disparve.
Ella velocemente corse a morte,

Et io rimango esangue e semivivo,
della mia vita privo.
Ah, troppo dura legge,
Eccelso Re della Tartarea Dite.
Legge fatal e ria
A torto mi ritien la vita mia.
Lasso, lasso ch'io moro
e pur convienmi
da te, mio sol, partire
Senza mirarti e senza te, morire.

Orfeo's Lament

What do I see, alas, what do I see?
Who takes from me my beloved Euridice?
Who steals you from me, alas,
Dearest one to my eyes, light of my eyes?
Who, therefore, from my heart
Who, from my soul, alas deprives me?
Ah! Is there no one who can give
Me aid in my grief?

Alas, It is as if the dawn of my delight,
Of all my joy,
Were eclipsed by an evil star!
I am miserable! I must then,
I then die without seeing the celestial
Beauty of my beloved's face?
Sun of my eyes divine and blessed,
Where, oh where are you resting and where
Mirror of my eyes?
Where, where have you gone?
Unique to my heart, spirit and life?

Of you, Eternal princes
of the dark and deep realms
Of you, gods of Tartarus
Of you I beg a merciful favour:
Return my soul (Euridice) to me immediately,
Or welcome me also among your shades.
Restore my heart to my heart,
Which through grave sadness languishes and dies.
I saw her and then did not,
And like a lightning flash, she had vanished.
She ran swiftly to her death.

And I remain here, exhausted and half alive,
Deprived of my life.
Oh, too hard a law,
Mighty King of Tartarus, which you proclaim.
Law, fatal and unjust
Wrongly you hold my life from me.
Alas, alas that I should die
And that I must,
From you my sun, depart,
Without sight of you and without you, must die.

Morirò di dolor, anzi ch'io mora;
E dopo morte ancora
nella selva de' mirti,
Ti seguirò tra gl'amorosi spirti.
Io parlo e non rispondi,
O dell' anima mia vano desio,
Euridice, cor mio.
Ah, che dall' ire ultrici
Agitato n'andrò fra l'ombre spente,
Precipitando il volo a l'onde nere
Del fiammeggiante et atro Flegetonte.

Ma che, vaneggi, Orfeo,
Così dunque disperì,
Così dunque ne perì?
O disperato Orfeo,
dalla tua vita non più sperar aita.
Ahi, che ti lascio,
ahi lasso,
Già di te privo e casso,
Morro pur di dolore,
Vedovo, pria che sposo,
Del mio bramato e sospirato Amore.

A così grave duol già cede l'alma,
Perde la lena il cor
e'n guisa d'angue,
Che giace a terra, moribondo langue.
Tremando agghiaccio,
freddo il viso e smorto:
Privo di moto, tramortito io resto.
Già cede al duolo il cor
già stanco e lasso,
Io vengo meno
e resto immobil sasso.

I shall die of grief, rather I do die;
And after death again
Through myrtle groves
I shall follow you amidst the amorous souls
I speak and you do not respond,
O vain desire of my soul
Euridice, my heart.
Ah, stung by veengeful fury
I shall go among dead shades
Speeding on my way to dark waves
Of flaming and terrifying Phlegethon.

But wait, this is fantasy, Orfeo,
Are you so desperate
Thus to perish?
O desperate Orfeo,
Expect nothing more from your life.
Ah, that I must leave you,
Ah, alas,
Already deprived of you and without strength
I shall die of sorrow,
A widower, before being a bridegroom,
Of my longed and sighed for beloved.

My soul already succumbs from such deep grief,
The strength of my heart is lost
And, as a serpent,
Stretches itself on the ground, languishing.
I tremble and shiver,
My face is cold and pale:
Deprived of motion, traumatized I remain.
My heart already succumbs to grief
Already it is exhausted
I faint
And remain immobile as a stone.





COLE PORTER

Cole Porter (1891-1964) was a composer and a songwriter, most noted for his success in Musical Theatre and the canonization of many of his works as jazz standards. Born in Indiana, Porter grew up learning the violin and the piano. However he was bitten by the theatre bug as a student at Yale. He would frequently travel to New York to soak up the theatre scene and the nightlife. After Yale, Porter would enrol himself at Harvard Law School. At Harvard, he would grow disillusioned with law, Thus, Porter transferred to the Music Department, where he was under the tutelage of Pietro Yon.

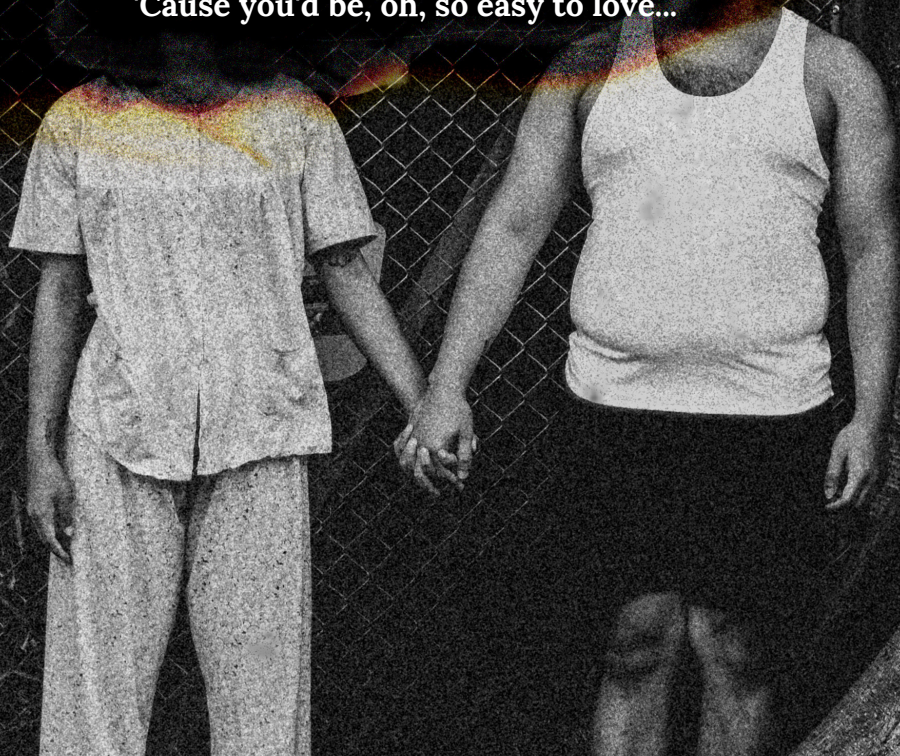
Anything Goes is a musical with music and text by Cole Porter. It made its Broadway debut in 1934, at the Neil Simon theatre. Since its debut, there have been numerous revivals of the musical. Each of these productions have had sold-out runs and have been nominated for various awards. These include but are not limited to, the Drama Desk Awards, The Tony Awards, and the Laurence Olivier Awards. Additionally, the titular song has established itself as a standard in both Musical and Jazz worlds.

The song that we will be presenting tonight is Easy to Love. In the piece, Billy, a Wall Street Broker is courting Hope Harcourt, a debutante. He describes and dreams of a life together with Hope. While Hope reciprocates his affections, she is engaged to Lord Evelyn and is unable to outwardly display her affections. Hope's feelings for Billy are eventually revealed in Easy to Love (reprise).



Easy to Love from Anything Goes

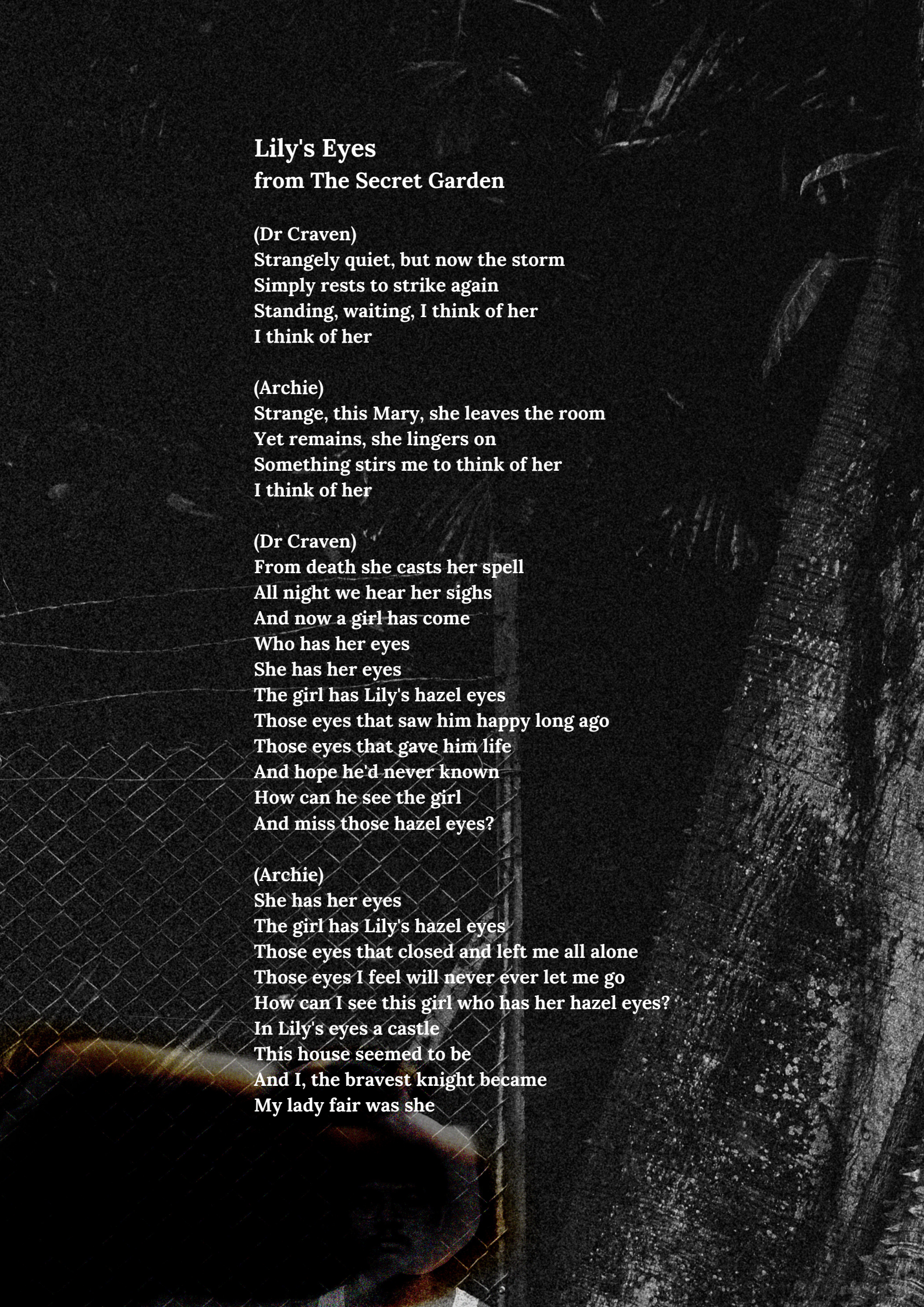
I know too well that I'm
Just wasting precious time
In thinking such a thing could be
That you could ever care for me.
I'm sure you hate to hear
That I adore you, dear,
But grant me, just the same,
I'm not entirely to blame, for...
You'd be so easy to love,
So easy to idolize, all others above,
So sweet to waken with,
So nice to sit down to the eggs and bacon with.
We'd be so grand at the game,
So carefree together that it does seem a shame
That you can't see
Your future with me
'Cause you'd be, oh, so easy to love...
You'd be so easy to love,
So easy to idolize, all others above,
So worth the yearning for,
So swell to keep ev'ry home fire burning for.
Oh, how we'd bloom, how we'd thrive
In a cottage for two, or even three, four or five,
So try to see
Your future with me
'Cause you'd be, oh, so easy to love...



LUCY SIMON

Lucy Simon is an American Musical Theatre composer and songwriter. Born to Richard L. Simon and Andrea Simon, she had her first foray into music as part of a folk song duo with her sister, Carly Simon. Together, they were known as The Simon Sisters. Together, the Simon Sisters released three albums in the 1960s. Lucy released a further two albums as part of a solo project in the 1970s. However, she would go on to receive worldwide acclaim for her compositional work on the Broadway musical, *The Secret Garden*. The musical would go on to be nominated for six Tony Awards, including "Best Original Score".

The piece that we will be presenting today is *Lily's Eyes* from *The Secret Garden*. Ted sings the role of Dr Craven and I will be singing the role of Archibald Craven. The characters are two brothers who were in love with Archibald's late wife, Lily. When Lily's niece, Mary, comes over to the Craven residence for a visit, the brothers notice that Mary's eyes bears an uncanny resemblance to Lily's. The pair then reminisce and lament over missed opportunities, death, and memories of a love lost. The piece reaches a dramatic and musical climax towards the end of the piece when the two finally sing together for the first time. Here Dr Craven's feelings of resentment towards his brother is set against the despair that Archie feels for his late wife. Additionally, the sustained notes that bring the piece to a close are typical of many Broadway numbers. This compositional element makes for a very dramatic and rousing end to the piece, and to the recital.



Lily's Eyes

from The Secret Garden

(Dr Craven)

Strangely quiet, but now the storm
Simply rests to strike again
Standing, waiting, I think of her
I think of her

(Archie)

Strange, this Mary, she leaves the room
Yet remains, she lingers on
Something stirs me to think of her
I think of her

(Dr Craven)

From death she casts her spell
All night we hear her sighs
And now a girl has come
Who has her eyes
She has her eyes
The girl has Lily's hazel eyes
Those eyes that saw him happy long ago
Those eyes that gave him life
And hope he'd never known
How can he see the girl
And miss those hazel eyes?

(Archie)

She has her eyes
The girl has Lily's hazel eyes
Those eyes that closed and left me all alone
Those eyes I feel will never ever let me go
How can I see this girl who has her hazel eyes?
In Lily's eyes a castle
This house seemed to be
And I, the bravest knight became
My lady fair was she

(Dr Craven)

She has her eyes

She has my Lily's hazel eyes

Those eyes that loved my brother never me

Those eyes that never saw me

Never knew I longed to hold her close

To live at last in Lily's eyes

(Archie)

Imagine me, a lover

(Dr Craven)

I longed for the day

She'd turn and see me standing there

(Both)

Would God have let her stay

She has her eyes

She has my Lily's hazel eyes

Those eyes that saw me happy long ago

(Those eyes that first I loved so)

How can I now forget

That once I dared to be in love

Be alive and whole

In Lily's eyes, in Lily's eyes



SPECIAL THANKS

Three years have passed since I've matriculated and there are many people that I would love to thank. First of all, I would like to thank Professor Alan Bennett for hearing something in my singing during my audition. I cannot begin to imagine where life would have taken me if not for YST and I am very grateful for the guidance that I have received since.

I would also like to thank YST, for providing students with a platform that is the Junior and Senior recitals. The effect of COVID-19 on the arts has been devastating. As such, the privilege that I have to be able to share my singing with you is not lost on me. Below are a list of colleagues and mentors in and outside of YST who have provided me with valuable guidance and opportunities for collaboration. These experiences and the lessons that I have learnt have all gone towards preparing me for this Junior recital and I am extremely thankful.

I would like to thank:

Ellis for constantly encouraging, loving me and celebrating every one of my victories, big or small.

Mr (soon to be Dr) Darius Lim and Wailun, for making my first forays into the world of choral singing a welcoming one, and for providing me with a safe space for learning.

Leslie Tay, for getting me vocally ready for my YST audition and the constant pep talks.

Dr Choi, for her repeated and literal lectures on phrasing in Year 1 and 2.

Edmund Loh for the kickass photography in the Program booklet.

and

Ted and Amanda, for so willingly jumping on board this wild ride with me.

Lastly, shout out to Mr HJ. You told me that I'd never get into YST. Well, I am about to present my Junior Recital.