

A Junior Recital

Liebeszauber

2 May 2025 3.40pm | YST Concert Hall

Beatrice Lin

Piano

Val Chong

Soprano

Works by

Schumman, Menotti
& Boulanger



Programme

from *Sechs Lieder Op.13*

Clara Schumann

- I. Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen
- II. Sie liebten sich beide
- III. Liebeszauber
- IV. Der Mond kommt still gegangen

from *Clairières dans le ciel*

Lili Boulanger

- III. Parfois, je suis triste
- VIII. Vous m'avez regardé avec toute votre âme
- IX. Les lilas qui avaient fleuri

from *The Medium*

Gian Carlo Menotti

O Black Swan
Monica's Waltz



Message

Liebeszauber is a German word which translates to love magic. It encapsulates the themes of romance, longing, and devotion that will weave through my recital. I will be showcasing a wide range of repertoire, including the introspective heartfelt Clara Schumann's *Sechs Lieder Op.13*, the evocative and impressionistic Lili Boulanger's *Clairières dans le ciel* and the soaring and haunting melodies of Menotti's *The Medium* arias.

Through my recital, I would like to honour the remarkable contributions of two female composers, Lili Boulanger and Clara Schumann. Throughout history, women were discouraged from composing or had their works overshadowed by their male counterparts. They defied societal expectations and inspired a new generation of female composers.

We will embark on a transformative emotional journey of love. First, the **purity of love** in romantic relationships - *Sechs Lieder Op.13* was written during the early weeks of Clara and Robert Schumann's marriage. Next, **unrequited and reminiscent love**. *Clairières dans le ciel* reflect distance and longing through evershifting tonalities. Last, our **maternal roots**. *O Black Swan (The Medium)* is a haunting and soothing lullaby Monica sings to her mother after encountering a manic episode.

Thank you and I hope you enjoy this romantic voyage today.

Clara Schumann

Clara Josephine Schumann (1819–1896) was a German composer and pianist, and wife of Robert Schumann. A piano prodigy, she gained widespread acclaim across Europe from a young age. Clara also shared a long and close friendship with Johannes Brahms, who credited her as the muse behind many of his finest melodies. Though her talents as a composer were never fully recognized, she managed to create many notable works while juggling the demands of a solo career, her husband's mental illness, and raising eight children.

Sechs Lieder

Clara Schumann's *Sechs Lieder*, Op. 13, is a captivating song cycle set to deeply romantic poems by Heine, Geibel, and Rückert. Composed in the early weeks of her marriage, the songs reflect the tender intimacy and joy of that initial, blissful period.

Ich stand in dunkeln Träumen

Ich stand in dunklen Träumen
und starrte ihr Bildnis an,
und das geliebte Antlitz
heimlich zu leben begann.

Um ihre Lippen zog sich
ein Lächeln wunderbar,
und wie von Wehmutstränen
Erglänzte ihr Augenpaar.

Auch meine Tränen flossen
mir von den Wangen herab –
und ach, ich kann's nicht glauben,
dass ich dich verloren hab!

Sie liebten sich beide

Sie liebten sich beide, doch keiner
Wollt' es dem andern gestehn;
Sie sahen sich an so feindlich,
und wollten vor Liebe vergehn.

Sie trennten sich endlich und sah'n sich
nur noch zuweilen im Traum;
Sie waren längst gestorben
und wussten es selber kaum.

Liebeszauber

Die Liebe saß als Nachtigall
im Rosenbusch und sang;
es flog der wunderschöne Schall
den grünen Wald entlang.

Und wie er klang, - da stieg im
Kreis
aus tausend Kelchen Duft,
und alle Wipfel rauschten leis',
und leiser ging die Luft;

Die Bäche schwiegen, die noch
kaum
Geplätschert von den Höh'n,
die Rehlein standen wie im Traum
und lauschten dem Getön.

Und hell und immer heller floß
über Sonne Glanz herein,
Um Blumen, Wald und Schlucht
ergoß
sich goldig roter Schein.

Ich aber zog den Wald entlang
und hörte auch den Schall.
Ach! was seit jener Stund' ich sang,
war nur sein Widerhall.

Der Mond kommt still gegangen

Der Mond kommt still gegangen
mit seinem gold'nen Schein.
da schläft in holdem Prangen
die müde Erde ein.

Und auf den Lüften schwanken
aus manchem treuen Sinn
viel tausend Liebesgedanken
über die Schläfer hin.

Und drunten im Tale, da funkeln
die Fenster von Liebchens Haus;
ich aber blicke im Dunklen
still in die Welt hinaus.

Lili Boulanger

Lili Boulanger (1893–1918) was a remarkably gifted 20th-century composer whose life was tragically short. Born into a musical family with her sister Nadia, she showed early promise. Despite chronic illness, she became the first woman to win the Prix de Rome at 19. Her time in Rome was cut short by World War I, and she spent her final years composing as much as possible before dying at 24. Of her 64 known works, only 24 were published; many remain incomplete or lost. Religious themes were central to her music.

Clairières dans le ciel

Clairières dans le ciel is a song cycle of 13 set to poems by Francis Jammes. Rich in nostalgia and longing, the texts are filled with vivid natural imagery—flowers, birds, and other symbols of memory. Boulanger's luminous, avant-garde musical style stands apart from the preferences of many of her contemporaries. She was also precise in her musical instructions, noting that the melodies should be sung “with the feeling of evoking a past that has remained fresh.”

Parfois, je suis triste

Parfois, je suis triste. Et, soudain, je pense à elle.

Alors, je suis joyeux. Mais je redeviens triste
de ce que je ne sais pas combien elle m'aime.

Elle est la jeune fille à l'âme toute claire,
et qui, de dans son cœur, garde avec jalousie
l'unique passion que l'on donne à un seul.

Elle est partie avant que s'ouvrent les tilleuls,
et, comme ils ont fleuri depuis qu'elle est partie,
je me suis étonné de voir, ô mes amis,
des branches de tilleuls qui n'avaient pas de fleurs.

Vous m'avez regardé avec toute votre âme

Vous m'avez regardé avec toute votre âme.
Vous m'avez regardé longtemps comme un ciel bleu.
J'ai mis votre regard à l'ombre de mes yeux ...
Que ce regard était passionné et calme ...

Les lilas qui avaient fleuri

Les lilas qui avaient fleuri l'année dernière
vont fleurir de nouveau dans les tristes parterres.

Déjà le pêcher grêle a jonché le ciel bleu
de ses roses, comme un enfant la Fête-Dieu.

Mon cœur devrait mourir au milieu de ces choses
car c'était au milieu des vergers blancs et roses
que j'avais espéré je ne sais quoi de vous.
Mon âme rêve sourdement sur vos genoux.

Ne la repoussez point.

Ne la relevez pas

de peur qu'en s'éloignant de vous elle ne voie
combien vous êtes faible et troublée dans ses bras

Gian Carlo Menotti

Gian Carlo Menotti (1911–2007) was an American composer of Italian origin, best known for his operas. Writing his own librettos, he blended 20th-century themes with the traditional Italian opera conventions. Born into a well-off family, Menotti received his first music lessons from his mother and began composing at the age of six, completing his first opera by eleven. He studied at the Milan Conservatory before moving to the United States in 1928 to further his musical education at the Curtis Institute of Music. His first major opera, *Amelia Goes to the Ball*, premiered in 1937.

The Medium

The Medium is a two-act dramatic opera with both music and libretto written by Menotti. Madame Flora, her daughter, Monica, and a mute servant named Toby, deceive clients through staged séances.

The aria *O Black Swan* appears in Act I, during a moment when Madame Flora believed she has experienced a real paranormal event. Monica soothes her mother's distressed, manic state with this haunting lullaby.

The aria *Monica's Waltz* opens Act 2 and serves as a one-sided dialogue between Monica and Toby, conveyed entirely through Monica's voice. As the song ends, Toby collapses in tears, overwhelmed and ashamed. Monica, surprised by his reaction, responds with tender compassion.

O Black Swan

The sun has fallen and it lies in blood.
The moon is weaving bandages of gold.
O black swan, where, oh, where is my lover gone?
Torn and tattered is my bridal gown,
And my lamp is lost, and my lamp is lost
With silver needles and with silver thread,
The stars stitch a shroud for the dying sun.
O black swan, where, oh, where has my lover gone?
I had given him a kiss of fire
And a golden ring, and a golden ring.
Don't you hear your lover moan?
Eyes of glass and feet of stone,
Shells for teeth and weeds for tongue,
Deep, deep, down in the river's bed
He's looking for the ring
Eyes wide open, never asleep,
he's looking for the ring, looking for the ring.
The spools unravel and the needles break.
The sun is buried and the stars weep.
O black wave, o black wave, take me away with you.
I will share with you my golden hair,
and my bridal crown, and my bridal crown.
Oh, take me down with you.
Take me down to my wand'ring lover
With my child unborn,
With my child unborn.

Monica's Waltz

Bravo! And after the theatre, supper and dance

Music! Um pa pa, um pa pa,

Up in the sky someone is playing a trombone and a guitar

Red is your tie, and in your velvetine coat you hide a star

Monica, Monica, dance the waltz

Monica, Monica, dance the waltz

Follow me, moon and sun,

keep time with me, one two three one

If you're not shy, pin up my hair with your star and buckle my shoe

And when you fly, please hold on tight to my waist,

I'm flying with you. O,

Monica, Monica, dance the waltz

Monica, Monica, dance the waltz

Follow me, moon and sun,

Follow me, follow follow me

Follow me, follow follow me

What is the matter, Toby?

What is it you want to tell me?

Kneel down before me,

And now, tell me...

Monica, Monica, can't you see,
that my heart is bleeding, bleeding for you?
I loved you, Monica all my life,
with all my breath, with all my blood
You haunt the mirror of my sleep, you are my night
You are my light and the jailer of my day

How dare you, scoundrel, talk to me like that!
Don't you know who I am?
I'm the queen of Aroundel!
I shall have you put in chains!

You are my princess, you are my queen
and I'm only Toby, one of your slaves,
and still I love you and always loved you
with all my breath, with all my blood!
I love your laughter, I love your hair,
I love your deep and nocturnal eyes,
I love your soft hands, so white and winged
I love the slender branch of your throat

Toby, Don't speak to me like that!
You make my head swim

Monica, Monica, fold me in your satin gown
Monica, Monica, give me your mouth
Monica, Monica, fall in my arms!

Why, Toby! You're not crying, are you?
Toby, I want you to know
that you have the most beautiful voice in the world!

Biography



Val Chong is a coloratura soprano from Singapore. In 2025, she won first prize at the Voice Concerto Competition at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. She was previously a Concerto Prizewinner at the School of the Arts in 2021, performing with the Orchestra of the Music Makers.

Her earlier accolades include first prize at the North International Music Competition (2019, Stockholm), a Gold Award at Singapore's 7th Performer's Festival (2018), and a semi-finalist spot at the 92.4 Young Talent Project (2018). At 13, she placed third in the Junior Category of the Singapore Lyric Opera ASEAN Vocal Competition, which led to a solo performance at the Esplanade Concert Hall—a dream come true.

Val's notable performances include the soprano solo in Bach's Easter Oratorio with Red Dot Baroque and Mozart's Coronation Mass with the NUS Symphony Orchestra. Her operatic roles span Monica in *The Medium* (Chicago Summer Opera), Serpina in *La Serva Padrona* (Conservatory Opera Scenes), Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* (Vienna Opera Academy), and Despina in *Così fan tutte* (Classic Lyric Arts Opera Scenes). She has also sung in the choruses of fully staged opera productions including *Médée* (The Opera People), *La Sonnambula* (The Opera People), *La Cenerentola* (The Opera Lab), and *The Three Feathers* (L'arietta Productions).

Before pursuing classical voice, Val performed actively in choral and contemporary music. She was part of the pioneer batch of the Voices of Singapore Choral Scholars in 2018 and joined the Voices of Singapore professional choir at 18, becoming its youngest member. Val is passionate about using music to uplift and connect with underprivileged communities. Her charity events include ChildAid (2018) and Sunburst Concert for the MDAS (2018, 2019).

She is currently a third-year Vocal Performance major at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, studying under Alan Bennett. In the fall of 2024, she received a scholarship for an exchange at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, where she was mentored by Julian Tovey. An alumna of the School of the Arts, Singapore, she pursued the IB Career-related Programme under the mentorship of Leslie Tay.

Biography



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. Her 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 freelances with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra as well as the Singapore Chinese Orchestra.

Acknowledgements

To my collaborative pianist, Beatrice Lin, thank you for performing and rehearsing with me throughout this semester and it has been a joy and privilege to make music with you.

To my mother, thank you your unwavering support and encouragement. You never fail to attend all my performances and I am endlessly grateful for your love and compassion.

To my wonderful teachers, thank you for your kindness and patience all these years. You are the reason why I am on this stage today.

To my dear friends, thank you for showing up today and constantly cheering me on. You've given me the strength to walk down this path and have shaped into the person I am.

And to the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, thank you for nurturing me with endless opportunities and a space to dream, learn, and create.

With love and gratitude,
Val