

Senior Recital

Puno't Dulo

works by Canteloube, Ravel, Paterno,
Abelardo, and de Guzmán

Leanne Reese Tavita

Mezzo-soprano

Dr. Choi Hye-Seon

Piano

28 April | 4:20 pm
YST Concert Hall

Puno't Dulo



Puno't Dulo is a Filipino phrase that literally means “from the source to the end point.” It combines two root words: *puno* which means tree or root, and *dulo* which means the end. It frames my program as a journey of how a voice and a person move through places, stories, and traditions to arrive at a clearer sense of belonging. The first part of the program begins at the *puno*, the roots of melody. Joseph Canteloube’s *Chants d’Auvergne* are based from traditional folk songs of rural central France, sung in the Auvergnat dialect. These songs portray everyday life, showing how identity is carried through language, environment, and communal memory.

The program then turns into outward imagination through Maurice Ravel’s *Shéhérazade*. The voice enters a world of exotic fantasy, secret longing, and fleeting desire. This piece shows how “distant places” can become mirrors for what we yearn for and how we construct identity through what feels unreachable.

The recital reaches its *dulo* or endpoint with Filipino songs, where folk style and nationalism are no longer observed from afar but lived from within. This completes the musical journey of inherited tradition, imagined destinations, and to finally coming home. The voice finally becoming a personal and national statement.

Programme



JOSEPH CANTELOUBE

from *Chants d'Auvergne* (Séries I & III) – selections

Baïlèro (Série I, no. 2)

Lo Fiolairé (Série III, no. 1)

Lou Boussu (Série III, no. 3)

Brezairola (Série III, no. 4)

Malurous qu'ò uno fenno (Série III, no. 5)

MAURICE RAVEL

Shéhérazade, M.41 – for voice and piano

1. Asie

2. La flûte enchantée

3. L'indifférent

FILIPINO SONG SELECTIONS

Dolores Paterno

Sampaguita (La Flor de Manila)

Nicanor Abelardo

Mutya ng Pasig

Constancio de Guzmán

Bayan Ko

Program Notes



Joseph Canteloube (1879–1957) From *Chants d'Auvergne* (Séries I & III)

Joseph Canteloube was a French composer and folklorist who devoted much of his life to collecting and elevating regional song traditions. His *Chants d'Auvergne* are arrangements of folk songs from the Auvergne region of central France, sung in *Auvergnat*, a dialect of *Occitan*. The core of the collection was assembled between 1923 and 1930, and the full set was ultimately published across five series.

In performing these songs, the singer becomes both narrator and character: shepherd, village girl, mother, and outsider. Each song forms an idyllic image of village life and human feeling. “*Baïlèro*” is a long, floating call across a valley that turns distance into longing and makes the whole setting itself feel like part of the phrase. “*Lo Fiolairé*” is a playful and flirty song about young love, while “*Lou Boussu*” introduces the bittersweet figure of the hunchback, mixing humor with tenderness. “*Brezairola*” is a soothing lullaby sung by a mother desperately calling for sleep to come for her child, and “*Malurous qu’o uno fenno*” ends the set with a fast, comedic bite of a dance-song about the miseries of marriage, sung with lightness, rhythm, and irony.



Program Notes

Maurice Ravel (1875–1937) *Shéhérazade*, M.41

Ravel's *Shéhérazade* is a three-song cycle composed in 1903 with text from poems written by Tristan Klingsor, also known as Léon Leclère. The title depicts Scheherazade of *One Thousand and One Nights* not as a literal character, but as a symbol of storytelling, seduction, and the "East" as a realm of imagination. The cycle premiered in Paris on May 17, 1904. As with much French art of the period, the work depicts themes of orientalism with "Asia" constructed through Western fantasy rather than real geography.

Each movement presents a distinct dramatic world. In "Asie," the narrator talks about a feverish fantasy to travel to the East, repeating "Je voudrais..." ("I would like...") while piling up images of cities, fabrics, faces, markets, power, and violence which ends with the dream of returning home to tell the tale like Sinbad, sipping from an Arab cup. The second movement, "La flûte enchantée", describes an intimate scene of a young slave girl who hears her lover's flute outside as her master sleeps. The piece ends with "L'indifférent", in which the narrator invites an androgynous stranger to come in for wine and rest, but the stranger gently declines and walks away. *Shéhérazade* represents the act of mentally leaving home; dreaming and projecting desire onto distant places and strangers.

Program Notes



Dolores Paterno (1854–1881) *Sampaguita*

Dolores Paterno was a Filipina composer from an influential Manila family, best remembered for “*La Flor de Manila*” (also known as “*Sampaguita*”). Written in 1879, this song is often described as a habanera-style piece, reflecting the cosmopolitan musical environment of late-19th-century Manila. The sampaguita, the national flower of the Philippines, becomes a symbol of purity, devotion, and tender admiration.

Nicanor Abelardo (1893–1934) *Mutya ng Pasig*

Nicanor Abelardo is one of the central figures who helped transform the kundiman into an art-song form, balancing Filipino melodic ideas with Western harmonic and formal structure. “*Mutya ng Pasig*” (1926), with text by Deogracias A. Rosario, is a dramatic monologue in which the spirit (*mutya*) of the Pasig River rises to lament a lost kingdom beneath the waters, turning myth into a meditation on loss and national consciousness.

Constancio de Guzmán (1903–1982) *Bayan Ko*

Finally, “*Bayan Ko*” (“My Country”) stands as one of the Philippines’ most recognized patriotic songs. The text is written by José Corazón de Jesús (1929) and the music by Constancio de Guzmán. The song has been used repeatedly as a protest song across Philippine history, including being associated with resistance during the Marcos presidential dictatorship era. The text’s famous metaphor compares the nation to a caged bird longing to fly freely and turns its lyrical melody into moral urgency. As the closing gesture of my recital, this song is a final statement of belonging and identity.

Biography

Leanne Reese Dela Cruz Tavita is a 23-year-old Filipina mezzo-soprano in her final year taking up a Bachelor of Music (Honours) Degree in Vocal Performance at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music (YST), National University of Singapore, where she studies under Professor Alan Bennett. In Term 1 of 2024, Leanne was an exchange student at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS), studying with mezzo-soprano Kathleen McKellar Ferguson, an experience she is grateful to build upon as she continues her musical journey there for her Master's studies.

Leanne has performed in both concert and operatic settings. In 2025, she was awarded 3rd Place in the YST Voice Concerto Competition, and appeared as *The Mother* in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* in YST's Double Bill Production. She also performed in a Ravel Chamber Concert singing *Chansons madécasses* and appeared as a soloist with Red Dot Baroque in *Baroque Music of England & France*. Her operatic training has included staged and scenes work such as *Susanna* in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, being part of the ensemble cast of The Opera People's 2023 production of Bellini's *La Sonnambula*, and *Anne Trulove* in Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (YST Voice Studio Opera Scenes), as well as *Nella* in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* at the Scheggino Opera Summer School in Italy.

Recently, Leanne performed in various concerts in YST, including the Faculty Recital: Traditions and Change. She also was a soprano soloist in Bach Cantata Series #14 *WTF? (What The Fugue?)* with the Red Dot Baroque, and sang the role of *Sesto* in Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* (YST Opera Scenes).

Leanne has been recognized through numerous awards, including the *Ani ng Dangal Award* (2022), conferred through Philippine cultural institutions to honor Filipino artists for outstanding achievements in international competitions. She is also a recipient of the *Mga Bagong Rizal Award* (2021) for a proposal focused on expanding arts opportunities for underprivileged Filipino artists, and has earned prizes at international competitions including 1st Prize (New York Young Performers Prize, 2021) and 1st Prize (Sugree Charoensook International Music Competition, Thailand, 2021), among others.



I want to express my deepest gratitude to the people and places that have made me the artist I am today.

To Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, thank you for being my home, my training ground, and the place where I learned what it means to grow not just as a performing artist, but also as a person. I am incredibly grateful for all the faculty members I have had much the privilege of learning from. Every lesson, rehearsal, and piece of advice has helped form the musician I am becoming.

To Professor Alan Bennett, thank you for your steady guidance and belief in me. Your mentorship has challenged me to dig deeper, to be more honest in my singing, and to keep striving for artistry with intention and meaning. To Dr. Choi Hye-Seon, thank you for being the most wonderful coach and pianist. I am endlessly thankful for your patience and for every coaching session where you helped me find clarity and confidence in the music.

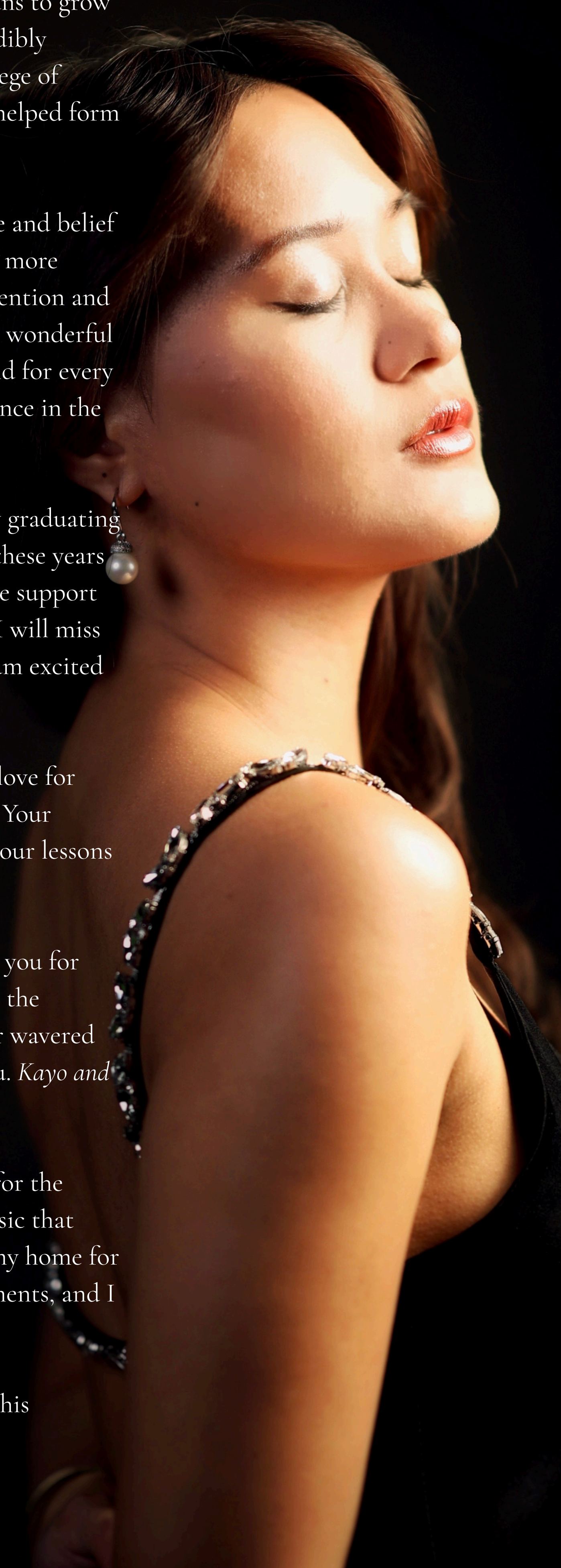
To my friends, especially my Year 4 voice major classmates, my graduating class, and the entire YST Voice Studio, thank you for making these years unforgettable. Thank you for the laughter, the pure joy, and the support we gave each other through every performance and challenge. I will miss you all more than I can say. I am so proud of each of us, and I am excited to see where life takes us next!

To my teachers from high school, thank you for nurturing my love for music and for helping me take my first steps toward this path. Your guidance planted the seeds that brought me here, and I carry your lessons with me.

To my family, my parents, my brothers, and my cousins, thank you for being my strongest support system. Thank you for the prayers, the sacrifices, the constant encouragement, and the love that never wavered even when things felt difficult. Everything I do is rooted in you. *Kayo and puno't dulo.*

Above all, I thank God for carrying me through every season, for the strength, the opportunities, the people I have met, and the music that continues to lead me. And to Singapore, thank you for being my home for the past four years. You have held so many of my growing moments, and I will always be grateful for the life I built here.

This recital is a celebration of everyone who helped me reach this moment. Thank you for being part of my journey!





Hanggang sa muli,

Leanne