

A SENIOR RECITAL

# PRIMAVERA Y PASIÓN

28 APRIL 2026 7PM | YST CONCERT HALL

Beatrice Lin  
Fong Jean Ying

Piano

Val Chong

Soprano

Works by

Falla, Wolf,  
Argento & Satie



# PROGRAMME

## *Siete canciones populares españolas*

Manuel de Falla

1. El paño moruno
2. Seguidilla murciana
3. Asturiana
4. Jota
5. Nana
6. Canción
7. Polo

## *from Mörike-Lieder*

Hugo Wolf

5. Er ist's
9. Nimmersatte liebe
16. Elfenlied
11. An eine Äolsharfe
45. Nixe Binsefuß

## *Trois Mélodies*

Erik Satie

1. Les Anges
2. Élégie
3. Sylvie

## *Songs About Spring*

Dominick Argento

1. who knows if the moon's a balloon
2. Spring is like a perhaps hand
3. in Just-spring
4. in Spring comes
5. when faces called flowers float out  
of the ground

# MESSAGE

'Primavera y Pasión' is Spanish for 'spring and passion'. Similar to spring, youth is fleeting yet deeply formative. It is a period marked by curiosity, vulnerability, and passion. We encounter love, longing, joy, and uncertainty in their purest forms. Tonight, I invite you to explore the vivid emotional landscapes of my program that mirrors my journey from youth into this next chapter of life.

In Manuel De Falla's *Siete canciones populares españolas*, love emerges as fiery and raw. It unfolds through the distinct regions of Spain and their dance traditions. Each piece offers a unique lens on passion, at once playful, tender, and intense.

Rather than depicting love as fiery or dramatic, Erik Satie's *Trois mélodies* presents it as restrained, and introspective. If spring is often associated with blossoming and outward vitality, Satie's music captures the stillness and tenderness between emotions.

Hailed as the Wagner of Lied, Hugo Wolf's *Mörike-Lieder* is infused with profound emotional surge and operatic depth. In this collection, spring emerges not only as a season of renewal, but as a powerful force of emotional transformation.

In Dominick Argento's *Songs about Spring*, spring is a motif symbolising hope and youth. He captures spring as an inner awakening through Cummings' unconventional poetic writing and imagery.

Thank you, and I hope that today, in some small way, feels like the gentle arrival of spring.

## Manuel de Falla

Manuel de Falla (1876–1946) was the most prominent Spanish composer of the early 20th century, renowned for fusing Spanish music traditions with modern orchestral techniques. Falla integrated folk music, native opera (zarzuela), and church music into his works. During his stay in Paris (1907–1914), he connected with impressionists like Debussy and Ravel, whose orchestration styles deeply influenced him. Returning to Spain, he produced his most famous masterpieces, including the *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*, and *The Three-Cornered Hat*.

### ***Siete canciones populares españolas***

Dedicated to his close friend, Ida Godebski, this song cycle features seven folk songs from various Spanish regions. *El paño moruno* and *Seguidilla murciana* draw from Murcia, while *Asturiana* provides a northern lament. *Jota* represents Aragon through rhythmic 3/8 meter shifts. From Andalusia, Falla included *Nana*, a lullaby learned from his mother. Finally, *Polo* evokes flamenco dance through guitar-like punteado (dotted) effects and rhythmic palmadas (claps).

This collection remains a definitive example of Falla's ability to elevate authentic folk themes into sophisticated art music while preserving their regional soul.

## Hugo Wolf

Hugo Wolf (1860–1903) was an Austrian composer widely considered the master of late Romantic German Lieder who incorporated psychological depth and Wagnerian harmonic language. He wrote approximately 300 songs before succumbing to syphilitic insanity at age 42.

Wolf's compositional style is uniquely marked by the way he shifts dramatic weight from voice to piano. His pieces often include bold and intricate keyboard writing, with extended postludes that deepen the emotional meaning of the melody. This reflects his belief in *Gesamtkunstwerk*, where voice, piano, and text work together to create a fully expressive experience.

### ***Mörike-Lieder***

In 1888, Wolf attained compositional maturity when he turned 28 years old. In the same year, he set 43 of Eduard Mörike's poems to music in a short span of 4 months. Subsequently, he completed 10 more in October 1888.

*Er ist's*: a jubilant hymn to Spring. *Nimmersatte Liebe*: an erotic and humorous poem with shifting complex harmonies. *Elfenlied*: a witty, miniature drama that uses skittering piano textures to depict a confused elf's nocturnal mishap. *An eine Äolsharfe*: Mörike's lament for his younger brother, a suicide at 19. It depicts an Aeolian harp played by the winds and connotes Möriker's complex relationship with his first profession as a Lutheran pastor. *Nixe Binsefuß*: a romantic folklore-inspired song about a water spirit protecting her river realm.

## Erik Satie

Erik Satie (1866–1925) was a French composer and avant-garde provocateur who challenged musical traditions. Initially a cabaret pianist in Montmartre, he gained fame for his *Gymnopédies*. His rejection of Wagnerian grandiosity deeply influenced the next generation of French composers, including "Les Six" and Claude Debussy. Satie remains a landmark figure of bridging the gap between late-Romanticism and 20th-century minimalism.

### ***Trois Mélodies***

This cycle was set to the poetry of his close friend Contamine de Latour and was among his earliest published works. It marked a departure from the lush, sentimental romances of the 19th century, instead favoring a sparse, atmospheric style that hints at his future *Gymnopédies*. This cycle is characterized by modal harmonies and textural simplicity.

*Les Anges*: a serene, celestial setting using repetitive, oscillating chords and a chant-like melody to create stillness. *Élégie*: a restrained, somber meditation about loss. *Sylvie*: a gentle, pastoral song that blends traditional melodic grace with Satie's signature unexpected harmonic shifts.

## Dominick Argento

Dominick Argento (1927–2016) was a leading American composer of lyric opera and choral music. He is regarded as a true American Romantic. His music is crafted with wit, passion and dramaticism. His most famous works include *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf*, which won the 1975 Pulitzer Prize, and the opera *The Aspern Papers*.

### **Songs About Spring**

Argento composed this song cycle from 1950–1955 while studying at the Eastman School of Music. Dedicated to his wife, soprano Carolyn Bailey, he sets five texts by E.E. Cummings. Argento states, “the music is essentially a reflection of the emotional response evoked in me by the text—its meaning, its beauty, its insights, its ironies, its timidity, its vulgarity. The music attempts to force the listener (and performer) to share my point of view about the text.”

*who knows if the moon's a balloon*: a whimsical, lighthearted piece that uses wide vocal leaps to evoke a sense of childlike wonder. *Spring is like a perhaps hand*: an atmospheric space featuring shifting harmonies and rubato that mimic the tentative unfolding of the new season. *in Just-spring*: a vibrant scherzo that captures the child's perspective of a balloonman. *in Spring comes*: a more introspective, lyrical movement reflecting the profound emotional awakening brought by the season. *when faces called flowers float out of the ground*: a celebratory, virtuosic finale that surges with driving rhythms and ecstatic vocal lines to celebrate the joy and arrival of Spring

# BIOGRAPHY



Val Chong is a 23-year old soprano from Singapore. In 2025, she was awarded first prize at the Voice Concerto Competition at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music where she performed *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*.

Val's performances include the soprano solo in Bach's *Easter Oratorio* and Mozart's *Coronation Mass*.

Her operatic roles include Lucy in *The Telephone*, Monica in *The Medium*, Serpina in *La Serva Padrona* and Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. She has also sung in the choruses of *Médée*, *La Sonnambula*, *La Cenerentola* and *The Three Feathers*. She has performed internationally and was a participant of Chicago Summer Opera, Classic Lyric Arts (Italy) and Vienna Opera Academy. In 2024 fall, she attended an NUS Exchange Programme where she studied at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland with Julian Tovey.

She has previously been coached by esteemed teachers including Stephen Robertson, Glenn Morton, Roger Vignoles, Deborah York and Janet Williams. She is currently in her final year at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Professor Alan Bennett.

Aside from vocal pursuits, Val has also attained her Grade 8 certification in piano, violin and cello. She is an active member of Dance Synergy, a contemporary dance group in National University of Singapore.

# 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

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To my mother, thank you your unwavering support and encouragement. I owe everything I've achieved to you. You are the most supportive mother I could ever imagine, and I'm so grateful to have you.

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To Prof Bennett, thank you for shaping me into the performer I am today. I am extremely thankful to the 4 years of study I had with you.

To my dear friends and family, thank you for showing up today and constantly cheering me on. Thank you for believing in me in everything I do.

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