



SENIOR RECITAL SERIES | SPRING 2025

Sunday, April 6th, 2025, 3 PM

Taplin Auditorium

Lena Molyneux '25

Classical Voice

Featuring:

Marin Neron, piano

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PROGRAM

W.A. MOZART

Una donna a quindici anni from *Così fan tutte*

**AARON
COPELAND**

Pastorale

**CHARLES
GOUNOD**

Sérénade

**RICHARD
STRAUSS**

Brentano Lieder (Sechs Lieder), Opus 68.

No. 1 An die Nacht

No. 2 Ich wollt ein Sträußlein binden

No. 3 Säusle, liebe Myrte!

No. 4 Amor

The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.

PROGRAM

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Quatre Chansons de Jeunesse

No. 1 Pantomime

No. 2 Claire de lune

No. 3 Pierrot

No. 4 Apparition

ROGER QUILTER

Seven Elizabethan Lyrics:

No. 1 Weep You No More Sad Fountains

No. 2 My life's delight

No. 3 Damask roses

No. 4 The faithless shepherdess

No. 5 Brown is my love

No. 6 By a fountainside

No. 7 Fair house of Joy

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PROGRAM NOTES

By Lena Molyneux

Così fan tutte, W.A. Mozart (1756-1791), libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte (1749-1838) “Una donna a quindici anni”

I begin my program with an aria from one of Mozart’s most well known operas. *Così fan tutte*, which translates to “That’s what all women do,” is a comedic drama that unfolds in a whirlwind of relationship drama, wagers, and disguises. Despina is the clever maid who uses her unsuspecting position to manipulate the ladies she serves. This aria, which opens Act II, highlights Despina’s cute duplicity, as she attempts to convince the sisters to flirt with other men while their fiancés are away.

Pastorale, Aaron Copeland (1900-1990), text by E. Powys Mathers (1892-1939)

This beautiful piece for voice and piano was written by Aaron Copeland in 1921. The two-page song is both passionate and melancholy, reflected in its rich harmonic texture. It is a profession of a simple love, where time seems stands still. *Pastorale* is one of Copland's early works, composed shortly after he had returned from his studies in France with renowned teacher Nadia Boulanger. The piece demonstrates his evolving style, blending elements of French impressionism with his growing interest in distinctly American sounds.

Sérénade, Charles Gounod (1818-1893), poem by Victor Hugo (1802-1885)

Written in the style of a traditional serenade, the piece evokes the romantic image of a lover serenading their beloved under the moonlight, with its gentle, flowing melodies and delicate rhythms. Gounod's gentle phrasing adds to the wistful mood of the piece. *Sérénade* demonstrates the composer’s skill in combining French lyricism with an inherent sense of warmth and sophistication, capturing the timeless nature of love and courtship. I paired *Pastorale* and *Sérénade* as a set of two love songs, both simple and sweet.

PROGRAM NOTES

Brentano Lieder (Sechs Lieder) Op. 68, Richard Strauss (1864-1949), lyrics by Clemens Brentano (1778-1842)

- I. *An die Nacht*
- II. *Ich Wollt ein Sträußlein Binden*
- III. *Säusle, liebe Myrthe!*
- IV. *Amor*

Strauss' expansive and expressive vocal lines are on full display in this beloved song cycle for the soprano voice. The first song, "An die Nacht", describes a passionate wedding of two lovers under the moonlight. The music reflects this in the especially poignant third verse, or the second iteration of "Heilige Nacht!" – in which both the vocal line and piano press forward with an incessant crescendo. The second song, "Ich wollt ein Sträusslein binden", is the more heartbreaking tale of a lover who wanted to pick flowers for his beloved, but could not find any. When he finally finds a flower to pick, the flower transforms, and asks him to spare her life – to which he agrees. In the end, he has no flower, and no lover. Strauss' long phrases in this song makes the text bloom and blossom – much like the flower. The third song in the cycle, "Säusle, liebe Myrthe", brims with rich descriptions of nature that are reflected in the melodic line; the crickets chirping, rushing water, a turtledove cooing. The melody of the repeated phrase "schlaf, mein Freund" echoes like a soft lullaby, lulling the vibrant sounds of nature into sleep. The final song I will sing from this cycle is originally the fifth in the set, titled "Amor." The melismatic, coloratura mimics the chaos of a fiesty, flying Cupid.

PROGRAM NOTES

Quatre Chanson de Jeunesse, Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

I. Pantomime, lyrics by Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)

II. Clair de Lune, lyrics by Paul Verlaine

III. Pierrot, lyrics by Theodore de Banville

IV. Apparition, lyrics by Stephane Mallarmé

Claude Debussy (1862–1918), a pivotal figure in the transition from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, is celebrated as one of the most influential composers of his era. “Clair de lune” (Moonlight) is one of Debussy’s most famous piano pieces, composed between 1890 and 1905. He also composed two vocal settings of the piece, the first in 1882 and the second in 1892. All settings are based on a poem by Paul Verlaine (1844–1896), a Symbolist poet known for his atmospheric imagery and subtle emotion, which resonate with Debussy’s compositional style. Between 1882 and 1884, Debussy wrote *Quatre chansons de jeunesse* (Four Songs of Youth). The first setting of “Clair de lune” is the second piece of this song cycle and describes Pierrot singing of love and fortune under the moonlight, which is beautifully conveyed through the dreamy piano accompaniment. The last song in the song cycle, “Apparition” (Apparition) is set to the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898), another Symbolist poet. The text describes a dreamlike memory and the longing for a ghostly apparition of a beloved.

PROGRAM NOTES

Seven Elizabethan Lyrics, Op. 12, Roger Quilter (1877-1953)

- I. Weep you no more.*
- II. My life's delight*
- III. Damask roses*
- IV. The faithless shepherdess*
- V. Brown is my love*
- VI. By a fountainside*
- VII. Fair house of joy*

Thought of as one of Quilter's finest works, the Seven Elizabethan Lyrics are a set that depict the beauty and complexity of love. Most of the poetry used in these songs are from anonymous writers. It is even unclear as to where Roger Quilter found them. The first song of the set, "Weep You No More," is one of Quilter's most popular songs and is often performed by itself, separate from the set. The text comes from John Dowland's Third Book of Aires. It is a hopeful refrain that offers comfort and rest; "melt not in weeping" flows into a welcomed "sleeping."

"My Life's Delight," the second song of the set, is about a young love. The poetry is by Thomas Campion and strikes a balance with the relaxed tempo of the previous song. The voice enters without hesitation and is filled with enthusiasm. The piano accompaniment has consistent motion, pushing the song forward and creating the sense of excitement that young love brings. The following songs explore a range of themes along the spectrum of love; betrayal, heartbreak, endearment, and passion. The final song of my program "Fair house of joy," starts with the cheeky message that singing about love is harmful. By the second verse it moves to the major key to answer to the uplifting quality of love.

Thank you for coming!

ABOUT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Lena Molyneux is a senior in the German Department and completing a minor in Music Performance. She has been involved in many music groups on campus throughout the four years and would like to give special thanks to the Tigressions for being a wonderful musical community and supportive group of friends. Lena studies voice with Kevin Deas (the best!!) who has offered such amazing support both vocally and as a mentor. She'd like to give thanks to her parents for always encouraging a commitment to music and the arts. Also, big thanks to Bella and Henry for creating the poster.

THANK YOU all for coming today! It means so much to me and I hope you enjoyed!
