



## SENIOR RECITAL SERIES | SPRING 2025

Saturday, April 5, 2025, 3 P.M.

Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall

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# Claire Dignazio '25 Vocal Performance

## Senior Voice Recital

Featuring works by Handel, Mozart, Schumann, Brahms, and de Falla

Eric Plutz, *pianist*

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## PROGRAM

**George Frideric Handel**  
(1685-1759)

From *Semele*  
“Endless pleasure, endless love”  
“O sleep, why dost thou leave me?”  
From *Joshua*  
“Oh! Had I Jubal’s Lyre”

**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**  
(1756-1791)

”Ch’io mi scordi di te? ... non temer,  
amato bene” K. 505

**Clara Schumann**  
(1819-1896)

From *Sechs Leider*, op. 13  
Ich stand in dunklen Träumen  
Sie liebten sich beide  
Loreley

**Johannes Brahms**  
(1833-1897)

Vergebliches Ständchen  
Von ewiger Liebe

**Manuel de Falla**  
(1876-1946)

From *Siete Canciones populares  
Españolas*  
El paño moruno  
Seguidilla murciana  
Asturiana  
Jota  
Nana  
Canción  
Polo

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

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## PROGRAM NOTES

By Claire Dignazio

### **George Frideric Handel (1685-1759): "Endless pleasure, endless love" and "O sleep, why dost thou leave me?" from *Semele*, "Oh! Had I Jubal's Lyre" from *Joshua***

Handel's *Semele* is a secular English oratorio. Its subject matter focuses on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, detailing the tragic love story between Princess Semele and Jupiter, the king of gods. Jupiter courts Semele, but his jealous wife, Juno, plots revenge. Juno tricks Semele into demanding that Jupiter reveal himself in his divine form. Despite Jupiter's warnings, Semele insists, driven by ambition to become immortal. When Jupiter finally appears to her in his godly form (thunder and lightning), Semele is consumed by his radiance and dies. From her ashes, her unborn child, Bacchus, is saved and becomes the god of wine and ecstasy. Despite being performed in the concert-like "manner of an oratorio," *Semele* (1744) possesses a distinctly operatic spirit. "Endless pleasure, endless love" is sung by Semele at the end of Act I, wherein she vocalizes her happiness being Jupiter's mistress. After waking from a dream about her lover in Act II, Semele sings "O sleep, why dost thou leave me?", revealing her vulnerability and longing when left alone. *Joshua*, written a few years after *Semele*, is a biblical oratorio. "Oh! Had I Jubal's Lyre" is sung by the character Achsah, who expresses joy when given permission to marry Orthniel. The piece demonstrates Handel's brilliant coloratura writing, requiring precise technique and breath control.

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## **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791): "Ch'io mi scordi di te? ... non temer, amato bene"**

This stand-alone concert aria represents one of Mozart's most extraordinary vocal works, and most intimate love confessions. Composed in 1786, "Ch'io mi scordi di te?" was written specifically for the English soprano Nancy Storace as she prepared to leave Vienna. What makes the aria particularly special is its unusual form—a dramatic recitative followed by a rondo for soprano with obbligato piano, which Mozart himself performed at its premiere. The text expresses a lover's anguish at the prospect of separation, mirroring the real-life farewell between Storace and Mozart.

Having created the role of Susanna in *The Marriage of Figaro* for Storace, the soprano had developed a close artistic partnership with Mozart. The aria's questioning title ("You ask that I forget you?") conveys indignation at the very thought of forgetting a beloved, followed by tender reassurances that the heart will remain faithful despite physical separation. Mozart's setting navigates these emotional shifts with remarkable sensitivity, using melodic contours to illuminate the psychological complexity beneath the text's surface.

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**Clara Schumann (1819-1896): Ich stand in dunklen träumen, Sie liebten sich beide, and Loreley**

**Johannes Brahms (1833-1897): Vergebliches Ständchen and Von ewiger Liebe**

I chose to explore German Romantic Lieder through the works of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms, whose close friendship and mutual infatuation deeply influenced both composers. In Schumann's *Ich stand in dunklen Träumen*, a lover gazes at a portrait that mysteriously comes to life, only to confront the pain of loss anew. *Sie liebten sich beide* tells the tragic tale of two people who love each other but never confess their feelings, carrying their unspoken love beyond death. Her dramatic setting of *Loreley* brings to life Heinrich Heine's poetry, detailing the legend of a siren-like woman whose enchanting song lures sailors to their deaths on the Rhine. Brahms's *Vergebliches Ständchen* offers comic relief through a witty dialogue between a hopeful suitor trying to gain entry on a cold night and the sensible young woman who firmly refuses him. By contrast, *Von ewiger Liebe* presents a deeply moving narrative of a young man who offers to end a relationship if it brings his beloved shame, only to hear her powerful declaration that true love, unlike iron and steel, can never be broken—it must endure forever.

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## **Manuel de Falla (1876-1946): *Siete Canciones populares Españolas***

De Falla's song cycle explores the tapestry of Spanish regional folk traditions through seven distinctive songs. "El paño moruno" uses the metaphor of a stained cloth selling for less to suggest lost virtue or reputation. "Seguidilla murciana" warns hypocrites not to throw stones while comparing an unfaithful lover to a worn coin passed from hand to hand until no one will accept it. The melancholic "Asturiana" portrays a heartbroken narrator seeking consolation from a green pine tree, which weeps in sympathy.

The spirited "Jota" celebrates secret love that doesn't need public display, while the tender "Nana" presents a lullaby with a gentle, hypnotic melody. "Canción" shifts between playfulness and bitterness as the singer threatens to bury a lover's treacherous eyes. The cycle concludes with "Polo," a passionate flamenco-inspired outburst cursing love itself, with characteristic cries expressing profound heartache. Composed in Paris in 1914, these arrangements elevate simple folk material through sophisticated harmonies while preserving their authentic regional character and emotional directness.

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## ABOUT

Claire Dignazio '25 is a senior at Princeton University from Wilmington, Delaware, pursuing a concentration in Molecular Biology with a minor in Vocal Performance. Outside of class, Claire is a member of the Princeton Glee Club, Chamber Choir, Opera Scenes, and the Tigerlilies a cappella group. While in college, she has had the opportunity to take part in variety of opera productions, including Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* and Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Claire wishes to express her deepest gratitude to her family and friends, whose steadfast support has been the cornerstone of her artistic journey. Her appreciation extends to her voice teacher, Dr. Martha Elliott, whose guidance has been pivotal in developing her vocal technique with remarkable patience and expertise. Claire is also profoundly grateful to all of her professors, specifically Gabriel Crouch, David Kellett, and Dr. Ruth Ochs, who have cultivated her musical passion and provided invaluable opportunities for growth at Princeton. Lastly, Claire would like to thank Eric Plutz for his exceptional musicianship and collaboration.

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