**Artistic Performance: Songs about Ageing**

**Presented by Lynn Eustis, soprano, and Kevin Jones, piano**

57th NATS National Conference, Chicago

Saturday, July 2, 2022

**Introduction:**

Voice teachers of a certain age know that the older one gets, the more difficult it is to find appropriate repertoire, particularly with regard to text. A soprano in her 50s no longer wants to sing about birds and flowers, and “if I could only meet a boy!” And yet we may not feel comfortable moving into lower repertoire simply because the operatic world sees older women as low-voiced mothers. In musical theater, singers are expected to pursue different repertoire as they age, and there are far more options from which to choose.

This presentation includes music from two classical art song cycles whose settings of poetry deal with more mature themes while maintaining a higher tessitura.

Franz Schubert Selections from the *Abendröte Cycle of Friedrich von Schlegel*

(1797-1828) Abendröte, D. 690

Die Vögel, D. 691

Die Rose, D. 745

Der Schmetterling, D. 633

Das Mädchen, D. 652

Die Sterne, D. 684

Die Gebüsche, D. 646

Tom Cipullo *Of a certain age* (2007)

(b. 1956) I. Magnolia

II. There are Mornings

III. Fugitive

IV. Two Men Loved Me Once

V. Mary

VI. The Garden

**TRANSLATIONS and TEXTS**

**Schubert: all texts by Friedrich von Schlegel (1772-1829)**

**Abendröte [Sunset]**

The sun sinks deeper already, and it breathes peace to all,

The day’s work is finished, and children play merrily.

The green earth shines greener, before the sun has sunk entirely.

Mild scents waft gently in the air and the flowers

They tenderly soothe the soul when the senses blissfully drink them in.

Little birds, far-away people, mountains lining the sky,

And the great silver river that narrowly winds in the valley.

Everything seems to speak to the poet, for he has discovered their meaning;

Everything forms a single choir, many songs out of one mouth.

**Die Vögel [Birds]**

How delightful and joyful, to soar, to sing,

To look down on the earth from the shining heights!

Men are foolish: they cannot fly.

They lament in their troubles; we fly up to the heavens.

The huntsman wants to kill us, whose fruit we picked,

But we should mock him, and snatch our spoils.

**Die Rose [The Rose]**

Lovely warmth lured me toward the light,

There burned wild heat’s fire; this I must forever grieve.

I could have bloomed for a long time in mild, higher days;

Now I must wither early, my life already gone.

The morning’s red rays came, there I left all shyness,

And I opened my buds wherein all of my charms lay.

I could generously scent the air and lift my crown,

But the sun became too hot, and for that I must indict it.

What good is the mild evening? I must sadly ask now.

It can no longer save me, nor chase away my sorrows.

The red rays have vanished, soon the cold will nip at me.

While dying I still wanted to speak of my short young life..

**Der Schmetterling [The Butterfly]**

Why shouldn’t I dance? It makes no trouble,

And delightful colors shimmer here in the forest.

Ever fairer gleam my colorful wings,

Ever sweeter breathe all of the little blossoms.

I taste the blossoms, you cannot protect them!

How great is my joy, be it late or early,

To lightly float over valley and hill!

When the evening rustles, you see clouds glowing.

When the air turns golden, the meadows seem greener.

I taste the blossoms, you cannot protect them!

**Das Mädchen [The Maiden]**

How ardently, I would like to say, he yields to my wishes,

Only to soothe my fears that he does not love me so passionately.

But if I say it, the feeling disappears.

If I had been granted the gift of music, it would flow from me in harmony, then it lives in every note.

Only the nightingale can say how ardent he is,

To soothe my fears that he does not love me so passionately.

**Die Sterne [The Stars]**

Are you amazed, O human, by how holy we beam? If only you followed the heavenly signs,

You would understand better how benignly we twinkle, how earthly suffering would vanish!

Then love would flow from eternal vessels, all would breathe the pure azure,

the light-blue sea would encircle the meadows, and stars would sparkle in our native valleys.

All spring from a divine source; is each being not one of the choir?

Now the heavenly gates are open, what good is fearful despair?

If you had already climbed to the depths, you would see the stars circling around your head,

and the childlike waves playing about your heart, untouched by life’s storms.

**Die Gebüsche [The Bushes]**

The breeze blows cool and soft through dark meadows,

And only the heavens smile from a thousand bright eyes.

Only one soul stirs amid the roaring ocean,

And in the soft words that whisper through the leaves.

Thus wave echoes wave, where spirits secretly mourn;

Thus words follow words, where spirits breathe life.

Through all the sounds in the earth’s many-coloured dream,

One faint sound echoes for him who secretly listens.

**Magnolia** [Lisel Mueller (1924-2020] **Two men loved me once** [Judith Baumel] (b. 1956)]

This year spring and summer decided Two men loved me once

to make it quick, roll themselves into one for my long, long, knee-long hair.

season of three days One would sing and tell me

and steam right out of winter. of an old religious man

In the front yard the reluctant who had declared

magnolia buds lost control that only God my dear

and suddenly stood wide open. could love Anne Gregory

Two days later their pale pink silks for herself alone

heaped around the trunk and not her yellow hair.

like cast-off petticoats. The other knew a life so hard

Remember how long spring used to take? he never shed a prayer

And how long from the first locking of fingers nor murmured out his tears

to the first real kiss? And after that but wept, or said he wept,

the other eternity, endless motion to see me shorn beyond repair.

toward the undoing of a button? And like the foolish Anne

In despair I believed nothing simple or sincere.

Now and then I move my small bare head

**There are mornings** [Lisel Mueller] and feel the heft of what’s not there.

Even now, when the plot

calls for me to turn to stone,

the sun intervenes. Some mornings **Mary** [Lisel Musller]

in summer I step outside Mary points to a fellow patient

and the sky opens I n the nursing home and says,

and pours itself into me “She’s always crying,” The woman

as if I were a saint is weeping bitterly.

about to die. But the plot I’m shocked because there’s no hint

calls for me to live, of compassion in Mary’s face.

be ordinary, say nothing The callousness of the old, I think.

to anyone. Inside the house But then I realize that’s not it.

the mirrors burn when I pass. The callousness of the old, I think.

But then I realize that’s not it.

Mary, deaf and in a wheelchair,

**Fugitive** [Lisel Mueller] claims no more sympathy for herself,

My life is running away with me; accepts the world’s indifference

the two of us are in cahoots. as the natural order of things,

i hold still while it paints though her eyes still recognize kindness.

dark circles under my eyes, Death won’t let anyone off the hook,

streaks my hair gray, stuffs pillows whether we rage or go gentle.

under my dress. In each new room Mary’s way is to let go,

the mirror reassures me little by little, of anger and love,

I’ll not be recognized. the self’s constituents. She moves

I’m learning to travel light toward death the way a swimmer

like the juice in the power line. eases into freezing water:

My baggage, swallowed by memory, ankles, knees, hips,

weighs almost nothing. No one suspects shivering rib-cage, collarbone.

its value. When they knock on my door, .

badges flashing, I open up:

I don’t match their description. **The Garden** [Lisel Mueller]

“Wrong room,” they say, and apologize. I bring my mother back to life,

My life in the corner winks Her eyes still green, still laughing.

and wipes off my fingerprints. She is still not fashionably thin.

She looks past me

for the girl she left her old age to.

She does not recognize her

in me, a graying woman

older than she will ever be.

How strange that in the garden

of memory where she lives

nothing ever changes;

the heavy fruit cannot pull the branches

any closer to the ground.

**PRESENTERS**

**Lynn Eustis, soprano**, is currently Director of Graduate Studies in Music and Associate Professor of Voice at Boston University, where she joined the faculty in 2012. From 1999-2012 she held the same positions at the University of North Texas. She holds the Doctor of Music degree in opera (Florida State University), the Master of Music degree in opera (The Curtis Institute of Music) and the Bachelor of Music degree in vocal performance (Bucknell University, Phi Beta Kappa).

She appears frequently as a soloist with professional organizations in works such as Mozart’s Mass in C-minor, *Gloria* (Poulenc), *Carmina burana,* and *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. Dr. Eustis has sung over thirty operatic roles, most notably the title roles in *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *The Daughter of the Regiment*, Zerbinetta,Olympia*,* Pamina, Susanna, Rosina,and Gilda. In 2007 she appeared as the title soloist in the U.S. premiere of James Whitbourn’s *Annelies: The Anne Frank Oratorio*, a work for which she continues to be in demand*.* She has been heard with the Americke Jaro Festival (Czech Republic, eleven seasons) and taught at the Up North Vocal Institute in Michigan (seven seasons).

Dr. Eustis is the author of *The Singer’s Ego: Finding Balance Between Music and Life,* the *Finding Middle Ground* series, and *The Teacher’s Ego: When Singers Become Voice Teachers* (Chicago: GIA). Her most recent book, *A Singer’s Epiphany: Faith, Music, and Mortality,* was released by GIA in October 2020. For *Liturgical Singer,* she writes a regular column, “Ask a Voice Teacher.” Her students have been heard with Santa Fe Opera, San Francisco Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Boston Symphony Orchestra, the Salzburg Music Festival, Ravinia’s Steans Institute, Opera Theater of St. Louis, and others. A regular guest clinician at the Royal College of Music in London, Dr. Eustis is a native of Long Island, New York.

**Kevin Jones** began formal musical training at the age of four. After preparatory and high school musical training with Judith Thomas and John Gilbert, he attended Southern Methodist University, studying organ with Robert T. Anderson and harpsichord with Larry Palmer. He completed his undergraduate degree at Ashland College, studying organ with Karel Paukert and piano with Elizabeth Pastor. Mr. Jones went on to earn graduate degrees in Collaborative Piano and in Organ Performance at the Cleveland Institute of Music, studying organ with Karel Paukert, and piano and chamber music with Anne Epperson, Thomas Muraco, Elizabeth Pastor, and Vivian Hornik Weilerstein. He also holds the Master of Science in Education degree in Human Services from the University of Dayton.

From 1996 to 2004, Jones held the post of Musical Director/Conductor of the New York City based Gilbert & Sullivan ensemble, the Blue Hill Troupe, Ltd. With that ensemble he made his Carnegie Hall conducting debut as guest with Skitch Henderson’s New York Pops Symphony Orchestra. While on the East Coast, he was in demand as a conductor and collaborative artist, appearing frequently with soloists and ensembles throughout the region. He has worked as assistant to conductor Anton Coppola in productions of Aïda, Gianni Schicchi, La Bohème, Lucia, Le Nozze di Figaro, and Rigoletto. He appeared with regularity at New York City’s famed Carnegie Hall with Mid-America Productions, and made his Weill Recital Hall début with flutist Koaki Fujimoto. He has performed at Ashland University, Cleveland Museum of Art, Oberlin College, Merkin Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, SUNY Stony Brook, SUNY Purchase, and Weill Hall. Internationally, he has performed throughout Europe and the Far East, most recently playing a solo recital in the 11th-century St. Mary’s Church in Helsingborg, Sweden. Jones also recently performed on the Pipes at One series at St. Paul’s Chapel, NYC.

From 2007 to 2012, he was Canon Precentor and Director of Music at Christ Church Cathedral, Hartford, Connecticut, as well as being a member of the vocal division faculty at the Hartt School where he was vocal coach and vocal instructor, and taught courses in English, French and German diction. Since 2013, Mr. Jones is Minister of Music at First Congregational Church, Columbus, Ohio, where he oversees a large music program of four choirs