



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

Doctoral Recital | Friday, April 4, 2025 | 5:00 p.m. | Recital Hall

Shuyi Li, soprano

Zihao Zhou, piano

Cinco canciones negras (1945) Xavier Montsalvatge

1. Cuba dentro de un piano (1912–2002)

(Poetry by Rafael Alberti Merello)

2. Punto de Habañera (Poetry by Néstor Luján y Fernández)

3. Chévere (Poetry by Nicolas Guillén)

4. Canción de cuna para dormir un negrito

(Poetry by Ildefonso Pereda Valdés)

5. Canto negro (Poetry by Nicolas Guillén)

Preach Sister, Preach (2018) Evan Mack

1. Simone de Beauvoir (b. 1981)

2. Mae West

3. Gilda Radner

Movement texts by
their respective namesakes

4. George Eliot

5. Lucille Ball

6. Daphne du Maurier

7. Lizz Winstead

8. Leslie Jones

9. Ann Landers

10. Gloria Steinem

11. Natasha Scripture

12. Lucille Ball (2)

13. Tina Fey

14. Ellen DeGeneres

-INTERMISSION-

Program four hundred eighty-three of the 2024–2025 season

Photography and videography are prohibited

Viens, mon bien-aimé! (1892) Cécile Chaminade
(1857–1944)
Text by Armand Lafrique

L'été (1894) Cécile Chaminade
Text by Édouard Guinand

Emily! (from New England) (2014) Gwyneth Walker
(b. 1947)

1. My Letter to the World
 2. The Moon and the Sea
 3. The Frog in the Bog
 4. Hope (with Feathers)
 5. Passion
 6. Joy
 7. All I Have to Bring
- Text by Emily Dickinson

Program Notes, Texts, and Translations

When I first discovered the concept of “Gesamtkunstwerk”, or “total work of art,” during my exploration of composer Richard Wagner’s creations, it was like a light bulb turning on in my soul. This idea truly resonates with me because I have always felt that art is one cohesive, beautiful whole. People often call themselves artists, and then they get asked, “What kind?” Are they dancers, painters, musicians? While I deeply admire those who’ve excelled in specific fields, to me, real art blends all forms together—just like Wagner’s ideal stage productions.

Art is a glorious mix of music, dance, painting, architecture, literature, and even things like philosophy, history, and psychology. Each art form shines brighter because of its interactions with others, all woven together by the times they come from with its historical context. I’m endlessly passionate about art, life, nature, universe, spirituality, and every creative expression. That’s why I find myself singing, painting, dancing, snapping photos, and even trying to become a makeup artist!

While indulging in the beauty art brings to my life, I’ve realized how much these different forms influence each other. This epiphany sparked a dream in me three years ago—to create this recital that fuses my paintings with music. My goal is to enhance the music’s story with the vivid lines and colors of visual art. Each painting you’ll see tonight is my creation, inspired by the music and poetry in the program, and infused with my personal touch. I’ve used acrylics, oil pastels, and digital painting, and even learned by mirroring the work of famous artists—all part of my journey, despite having no formal visual art training.

I hope this recital marks the beginning of my journey into truly understanding “Gesamtkunstwerk”. I can’t wait to keep exploring and mixing even more art forms, revealing new layers of meaning and imagination in the music I cherish.

– Shuyi Li
March 14, 2025

Cinco canciones negras (1945) by Xavier Montsalvatge (1912–2002)

Xavier Montsalvatge’s *Cinco Canciones Negras* (*Five Black Songs*) stands as one of the most celebrated works of his career, composed during what is known as his Antillan or Caribbean Period (1939–1953). This phase marked the most widely recognized era of his compositional output, characterized by a deep engagement with the musical traditions of the Spanish Antilles.

During this time, Spain was still reeling from the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War and the lingering effects of the Spanish-American War. In the latter conflict, Catalan immigrants who had settled in Cuba were forced to return to Spain, bringing back with them a rich fusion of musical traditions from the Caribbean—blending Spanish, African, and American influences. Having just emerged from his own period of wartime exile, Montsalvatge found inspiration in these sounds and in the folk musicians he encountered, leading him to incorporate Cuban habaneras, Bahamian rhythms, and Havana street music into his compositions. At the same time, he was influenced by French Neoclassicism and the rising prominence of American jazz, which added a distinct harmonic and rhythmic flavor to his work.

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Cinco Canciones Negras is a striking example of this synthesis, weaving together folk idioms with classical structures and rich harmonic textures. The opening song, "*Cuba dentro de un piano*," reflects on the nostalgia of Cuban immigrants in Spain, using evocative melodies to capture their longing for a lost homeland. "*Punto de Habañera*" pays tribute to the habanera rhythm, a dance form that originated in Cuba but became deeply ingrained in Spanish music. "*Chévere*" draws from the poetry of Nicolás Guillén, a major figure in Afro-Cuban literature. The song highlights the stark racial and social inequalities faced by Black laborers in colonial society. The fourth song, "*Canción de cuna para dormir a un negrito*," is a poignant lullaby tinged with melancholy, offering both tenderness and an underlying sense of sorrow. The cycle culminates in "*Canto negro*," an electrifying piece filled with percussive vocal lines and syncopated rhythms, embodying the vibrant spirit of Afro-Caribbean music.

Translation © 1992 by Jacqueline Cockburn and Richard Stokes published in *The Spanish Song Companion*, accessed from oxfordsong.org

Cuba dentro de un piano

Cuando mi madre llevaba un
sorbete de fresa por sombrero
y el humo de los barcos aún era
humo de habanero.
Mulata vueltabajera.
Cádiz se adormecía entre
fandangos y habaneras
y un lorito al piano quería
hacer de tenor.
Dime dónde está la flor que
el hombre tanto venera.
Mi tío Antonio volvía con su aire
de insurrecto.
La Cabaña y el Príncipe sonaban
por los patios del Puerto.
Ya no brilla la Perla azul del mar de
las Antillas.
Ya se apagó, se nos ha muerto.
Me encontré con la bella Trinidad.
Cuba se había perdido y ahora
era verdad.
Era verdad,
no era mentira.
Un cañonero huido llegó
cantándolo en guajira.
La Habana ya se perdió.
Tuvo la culpa el dinero...
Calló, cayó el cañonero.
Pero después, pero ¡ah! Después...
fue cuando al Sí lo hicieron YES.

Cuba in a piano

When my mother wore a
strawberry ice for a hat
and the smoke from the boats was still
Havana smoke.
Mulata from Vuelta Abajo.
Cadiz was falling asleep to
fandango and habanera
and a little parrot at the piano tried
to sing tenor.
Tell me, where is the flower that
a man can really respect.
My uncle Anthony would come home in
his rebellious way.
The Cabaña and El Príncipe resounded
in the patios of the port.
But the blue pearl of the Caribbean shines
no more.
Extinguished. For us no more.
I met beautiful Trinidad.
Cuba was lost, this time
it was true.
True,
and not a lie.
A gunner on the run arrived, sang
Cuban songs about it all.
Havana was lost and
money was to blame...
The gunner went silent, and fell.
But later, ah, later
they changed Sí to YES.

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Punto de Habañera

La niña criolla pasa con su
miriñaque blanco.
¡Qué blanco!
¡Hola! Crespón de tu espuma;
¡Marineros, contempladla!
Va mojadita de lunas
que le hacen su piel mulata;
Niña no te quejes,
tan solo por esta tarde.
Quisiera mandar al agua que no se
escape de pronto
de la cárcel de tu falda.
Tu cuerpo encierra esta tarde
rumor de abrirse de dalia.
Niña no te quejes,
tu cuerpo de fruta está
dormido en fresco brocado.
Tu cintura vibra fina
con la nobleza de un látigo,
toda tu piel huele alegre
a limonal y naranjo.
Los marineros te miran
y se te quedan mirando.
La niña criolla pasa con su
miriñaque blanco.
¡Qué blanco!

Chévere

Chévere del navajazo,
se vuelve él mismo navaja:
pica tajadas de luna,
mas la luna se le acaba;
pica tajadas de sombra,
mas la sombra se le acaba;
pica tajadas de canto,
mas el canto se le acaba;
y entonces pica que pica
carne de su negra mala.

Canción de cuna para dormir un negrito

Ninghe, ninghe, ninghe,
tan chiquitito,
el negrito
que no quiere dormir.

Cabeza de coco,
grano de café,
con lindas motitas,
con ojos grandotes
como dos ventanas
que miran al mar.

Habanera Rhythm

The Creole girl goes by in her
white crinoline.
How white!
The billowing spray of your crepe skirt!
Sailors, look at her!
She passes gleaming in the moonlight
which darkens her skin.
Young girl, do not complain,
only for tonight
do I wish the water not
to suddenly escape
the prison of your skirt.
In your body this evening
dwells the sound of opening dahlias.
Young girl, do not complain,
your ripe body
sleeps in fresh brocade,
your waist quivers
as proud as a whip,
every inch of your skin is gloriously fragrant
with orange and lemon trees.
The sailors look at you
and feast their eyes on you.
The Creole girl goes by in her
white crinoline.
How white!

The Dandy

The dandy of the knife thrust
himself becomes a knife:
he cuts slices of the moon,
but the moon is fading on him;
he cuts slices of shadow,
but the shadow is fading on him,
he cuts slices of song,
but the song is fading on him;
and then he cuts up, cuts up
the flesh of his evil black woman.

Lullaby for a little black boy

Lullay, lullay, lullay,
finy little child,
little black boy,
who won't go to sleep.

Head like a coconut,
head like a coffee bean,
with pretty freckles
and wide eyes
like two windows
looking out to sea.

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Cierra los ojitos,
negrito asustado;
el mandinga blanco
te puede comer.
¡Ya no eres esclavo!

Y si duermes mucho,
el señor de casa
promete comprar
traje con botones
para ser un 'groom'.

Ninghe, ninghe, ninghe,
duérmete, negrito,
cabeza de coco,
grano de café.

Canto negro

¡Yambambó, yambambé!
Repica el congo solongo,
repica el negro bien negro.
congo solongo del Songo
baila yambó sobre un pie.

Mamatomba,
serembé cuserembá,

El negro canta y se ajuma.
el negro se ajuma y canta.
el negro canta y se va.

Acuemem e serembó
aé,
yambó
aé.

Tamba, tamba, tamba, tamba,
tamba del negro que tumba,
tamba del negro, caramba,
caramba, que el negro tumba,
¡Yambá, yambó, yambambé!

Close your tiny eyes,
frightened little boy,
or the white devil
will eat you up.
You're no longer a slave!

And if you sleep soundly,
the master of the house
promises to buy
a suit with buttons
to make you a 'groom'.

Lullay, lullay, lullay,
sleep, little black boy,
head like a coconut,
head like a coffee bean.

Negro Song

Yambambó, yambambé!
The congo solongo is ringing,
the black man, the real black man is ringing;
congo solongo from the Songo
is dancing the yambó on one foot.

Mamatomba,
Serembe cuserembá.

The black man sings and gets drunk,
the black man gets drunk and sings,
the black man sings and goes away.

Acuemem e serembó
aé,
yambó
aé.

Bam, bam, bam, bam,
bam of the black man who tumbles;
drum of the black man, wow,
wow, how the black man's tumbling!
¡Yambá, yambó, yambambé!

Preach Sister, Preach (2018) by Evan Mack (b. 1981)

Evan Mack's *Preach Sister, Preach* is a vibrant and witty song cycle that celebrates the voices of 14 influential women through their own words. Inspired by the energy surrounding the first Women's March, Mack was struck by Simone de Beauvoir's famous quote: "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman." This led him to explore a wealth of quotations from history's most iconic women—writers, comedians, activists, and thinkers—who shaped conversations on gender, society, and identity. The result is a dynamic musical homage to their wisdom, humor, and strength.

Each movement is named after the woman whose words form its text, creating a series of brief yet powerful musical portraits. Figures such as Mae West, George Eliot, Daphne du Maurier, and Ellen DeGeneres are brought to life, alongside two appearances by Lucille Ball, whose comedic brilliance finds a natural home in Mack's playful musical style. With each quote, the composer crafts a distinct sonic world, reflecting either the personality of the speaker, the historical context of their words, or an extramusical reference embedded in the text itself.

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Despite its brevity, Preach Sister, Preach delivers a powerful message, celebrating the strength and wit of women's voices while maintaining an engaging and often humorous tone. Mack employs a diverse range of musical styles—including Blues, Funk, R&B Ballad, and Modern Rock Beat—crafting each movement to reflect the unique character and energy of its speaker. This stylistic variety, combined with Mack's keen sense of lyricism and rhythmic playfulness, creates a cycle that is both expressive and accessible, seamlessly blending contemporary idioms with classical sensibilities. The result is a vibrant and dynamic work that transforms iconic words into a compelling musical tapestry.

Simone de Beauvoir

This has always been a man's world, and none of the reasons that have been offered in explanation have seemed adequate. One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.

Mae West

There are no good girls gone wrong—just bad girls found out.
When I'm good, I'm very good, but when I'm bad, I'm better.
There are no good girls gone wrong—just bad girls found out.
Good girls go to heaven, bad girls go everywhere.

Gilda Radner

I'd much rather be a woman than a man.
Women can cry, they can wear cute clothes, and they're the first to be rescued off sinking ships.

George Eliot

I'm not denyin' the women are foolish. God Almighty made 'em to match the men.

Lucille Ball

A man who correctly guesses a woman's age may be smart, but he's not very bright.

Daphne du Maurier

Women want love to be a novel, men a short story.

Lizz Winstead

I think, therefore I'm single.

Leslie Jones

It's hard to date now. Remember back in the day all you had to ask a man was: Are you single?...Now? It's a whole interview. Are you single? Are you on drugs? Are you gay? Are you sure?

Ann Landers

Women complain about sex more often than men. Their gripes fall into two major categories:

1. Not enough.
2. Too much.

Gloria Steinem

A liberated woman is one who has sex before marriage and a job after.

Natasha Scripture

The notion that wearing makeup is antifeminist is silly. Cleopatra pretty much invented the eyeliner, and she ruled a kingdom.

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Lucille Ball (2)

The secret to staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and lie about your age.

Tina Fey

If you retain nothing else, always remember the most important role of beauty, which is: who cares?

Ellen DeGeneres

Follow your passion. Stay true to yourself. Never follow someone else's path...unless you're in the woods and you're lost, and you see a path. By all means, you should follow that.

Viens, mon bien-aimé! (1892) by Cécile Chaminade (1857–1944)

Set to a poem by Armand Lafrique, *Viens, mon bien-aimé!* reflects the romantic yearning of a woman awaiting her lover's return as spring blossoms. The text, consisting of four stanzas, repeats the phrase "Viens, mon bien-aimé" as a refrain, emphasizing the protagonist's longing. Chaminade's setting captures the poem's emotional depth through a lyrical, sweeping vocal line, evokes a sense of anticipation. The song's gentle shifts in harmony and the interplay between voice and piano create a delicate yet expressive portrayal of love and longing.

Translation © 2012 by Ann Marie Wilcox-Daehn, accessed from www.lieder.net

Viens! mon bien-aimé

Les b'eaux jours vont enfin renaître,
Le voici, l'avril embaumé!
Un frisson d'amour me pénètre,
Viens! mon bien-aimé!

Ils ont fui, les longs soirs moroses,
Déjà le jardin parfumé
Se remplit d'oiseaux et de roses:
Viens! mon bien-aimé!

Soleil, de ta brûlante ivresse,
J'ai senti mon coeur enflammé,
Plus enivrante est ta caresse,
Viens! mon bien-aimé!

Tout se tait, de millions d'étoiles
Le ciel profond est parsemé,
Quand sur nous la nuit met ses voiles:
Viens! mon bien-aimé!

Come my sweet love!

The beautiful days will finally return
And finally April is with us!
A frisson of love passes through me,
Come my sweet love!

Gone are the long, sad evenings,
The garden is perfumed
It is filling up with birds and roses.
Come my sweet love!

The sun flames intensely.
It burns in my heart,
Your caress is passionate
Come my sweet love

All is silent, the millions of stars,
Are scattered in the distant sky
When the night casts her veil:
Come, my sweet love!

L'été (1894) by Cécile Chaminade (1857–1944)

Composed in 1894, *L'été* by Cécile Chaminade is set to a poem by Édouard Guinand. The song captures the vibrancy of summer, with its lively depiction of nature in full bloom—roses, birdsong, the soft rustle of the breeze, and the fragrant of the summer wood. Chaminade's music mirrors this imagery through a spirited, flowing melody, brimming with joy and warmth. The piano accompaniment is full of passion, enhancing the lyrical vocal line with vivid harmonic colors. Together, the voice and piano evoke the beauty of love and the peaceful, yet exuberant, atmosphere of a perfect summer day.

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L'été

Ah! chantez, chantez,
Folle fauvette,
Gaie alouette,
Joyeux pinson, chantez, aimez!
Parfum des roses,
Fraîches écloses,
Rendez nos bois, nos bois plus embaumés!
Ah! chantez, aimez!

Soleil qui dore
Les sycomores
Remplis d'essains tout bruisants,
Verse la joie,
Que tout se noie
Dans tes rayons resplendissants.
Ah! chantez, aimez ...

Souffle, qui passes
Dans les espaces
Semant l'espoir d'un jour d'été.
Que ton haleine
Donne à la plaine!
Plus d'éclat et plus de beauté.
Ah! chantez, chantez!

Dans la prairie
Calme et fleurie,
Entendez-vous ces mots si doux.
L'âme charmée,
L'épouse aimée
Bénit le ciel près de l'époux!
Ah! chantez, aimez, ...

Summer

Ah, sing, sing,
foolhardy warbler,
happy lark,
joyous chaffinch, sing and love!
Scent of roses,
Freshly released,
Make our woods more fragrant!
Ah! sing and love!

Sun that gilds
the sycamores
Filled with noisy swarms,
Pour forth joy,
Let all drown
in your resplendent rays.
Ah! sing and love...

Breeze that passes
in the spaces
Sowing the hope of a summer day:
Let your breath
Give to the meadow
More brightness and more beauty.
Ah! sing, sing!

In the prairie
Calm and flourishing,
Do you hear such sweet words?
The charmed soul,
The beloved wife
the heavens bless next to her husband!
Ah, sing and love!

Emily! (from New England) (2014) by Gwyneth Walker (b. 1947)

This song cycle showcases the poet Emily Dickinson's unique blend of wit, introspection, and emotional depth, all of which are captured in Walker's musical settings. Each song explores different aspects of Dickinson's poetic voice, from her vivid depictions of nature to her contemplations on life, love, and the human experience.

The poetry of Emily Dickinson is known for its simplicity, often focused on small, everyday elements of the natural world—birds, bees, meadows, and ponds—along with deeper, more introspective musings on death, love, and immortality. Walker, a fellow New Englander, masterfully translates Dickinson's words into music, blending lyrical beauty with rhythmic vitality. Her settings reflect Dickinson's compact yet profound verse, employing a variety of musical styles and idioms to match the wide-ranging emotional landscape of the poems.

Great care is taken to musically capture the vivid imagery in Dickinson's poems: letters drifting on the breeze ("My Letter to the World"); moonlight shimmering ("The Moon and the Sea"); a croaking frog in a bog ("The Frog in the Bog"); birds hopping with hope ("Hope with Feathers"); a passionate boat riding the waves before settling ("Passion"); cannons firing in celebration ("Joy"); and the delicate gifts of nature ("All I Have to Bring"). These are Dickinson's "Letters to the World," written in isolation, yet her words soar, spreading like messengers of the soul.

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1. My Letter to the World

This is my letter to the World That never wrote to Me -
The simple News that Nature told - With tender Majesty
Her Message is committed To Hands I cannot see -
For love of Her - Sweet - countrymen -
Judge tenderly - of Me

2. The Moon and the Sea

The Moon is distant from the Sea - And yet, with Amber Hands -
She leads Him - docile as a Boy - Along appointed Sands -
He never misses a Degree - Obedient to Her eye -
He comes just so far - toward the Town - Just so far - goes away-
Oh, Signor, Thine, the Amber Hand - And mine - the distant Sea -
Obedient to the least command
Thine eye impose on me -

3. The Frog in the Bog

I'm Nobody! Who are you?
Are you - Nobody - Too?
Then there's a pair of us!
Don't tell! they'd advertise - you know!
How dreary - to be - Somebody!
How public - like a Frog -
To tell one's name - the livelong June -
To an admiring Bog!

4. Hope (with Feathers)

"Hope" is the thing with feathers - That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words - And never stops - at all -
And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird that kept so many warm -
I've heard it in the chillest land -
And on the strangest Sea - Yet - never - in Extremity, It asked a crumb - of me.

5. Passion

Wild Nights - Wild Nights!
Were I with thee
Wild Nights should be
Our luxury!
Futile - the Winds - To a Heart in port -
Done with the Compass -
Done with the Chart!
Rowing in Eden - Ah, but the Sea!
Might I but moor -Tonight -
In Thee!

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6. Joy

'Tis so much joy!' 'Tis so much joy!
If I should fail, what poverty!
And yet, as poor as I,
Have ventured all upon a throw!
Have gained! Yes! Hesitated so -
This side the Victory!
Life is but Life! And Death, but Death!
Bliss is, but Bliss, and Breath but Breath!
And if indeed I fail,
At least, to know the worst, is sweet!
Defeat means nothing but Defeat, No drearier, can befall!
And if I gain! Oh Gun at Sea!
Oh Bells, that in the Steeples be!
At first, repeat it slow!
For Heaven is a different thing,
Conjectured, and waked sudden in - And might extinguish me!

7. All I Have to Bring

It's all I have to bring today -
This, and my heart beside -
This, and my heart, and all the fields -
And all the meadows wide -
Be sure you count - should I forget
Someone the sun could tell -
This, and my heart, and all the Bees
Which in the Clover dwell.
It's all I have to bring -
It's all I have to bring -
It's all I have to bring today.

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