



University of North Texas
College of Music

Doctoral Recital | Friday, April 18, 2025 | 5:00 p.m. | Paul Voertman Concert Hall

Xiaolinglong Wang, soprano
Yue Yuan, piano

Softly Sweet in Lydian Measures,
from Alexander's Feast, HWV 75 (1736)George Frideric Handel
(1685–1759)
Text by John Dryden

First and Chief on Golden Wing / Sweet Bird,
from l'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato (1710)George Frideric Handel
Text by John Milton
Meige Yang flute

Quel Fior che all'Alba Ride, HWV 192 (1741)George Frideric Handel
Text author anonymous
arr. Johannes Brahms
Tonique Brown, soprano

French Folk Songs (1956) Mátyás Seiber
I. Réveillez vous (1905–1960)
II. J'ai descend Text author anonymous
III. Rossignol
IV. Marguerite, elle est malade
Yihao,Rao guitar

Program six hundred eleven of the 2024–2025 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

La Conocchia (1835) Gaetano Donizetti
(1797–1848)
Text author anonymous

Anzoleta Avanti la Regata (1858) Gioachino Rossini
(1792–1868)
Text by Francesco Maria Piave

La Fioraia Fiorentina (1842) Gioachino Rossini
Text author anonymous

Three Shakespeare Songs, Op. 37 (1905) Amy Beach
(1867–1944)
I. O Mistress Mine
II. Take, O Take Those Lips Away Text by William Shakespeare
III. Fairy Lullaby

The Bird (1939) John Woods Duke
(1899–1984)

QingyuAn Lantern Festival [青玉案元夕] (2010) Changqiong Qun [敖昌群]
(b. 1950)

Program Notes

George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) was a polyphonic musician in the Baroque period, his best-known work is the oratorio "Messiah". He was born in Halle, Germany, and was interested in music since his youth. However, his father hoped that he would become a lawyer in the future. Later, the Duke of Chandos discovered his potential and strongly advocated that Handel's father agreed to let him study music with local organists and composers. Later, he served as the organist of the Domkirche auditorium and began to compose. After his time in Italy, Handel moved to London, England, where he was employed by the court of King George I. He made this transition around the time Italy banned the production of staged operas. Later, when England also restricted staged opera performances, Handel adapted by composing large-scale oratorios. This shift led to the creation of some of his most enduring works, such as Messiah, Samson, and Solomon.

Handel's choral music is known for its grandeur, rich harmonic textures, and expressive depth. His mastery of polyphony played a crucial role in enhancing dramatic expression, and he placed great importance on harmonic relationships, which contributed to the evolution of tonal music. A key figure in the High Baroque style, Handel's music remains celebrated for its powerful emotional impact and structural brilliance.

Softly Sweet in Lydian Measures is an arioso from "Alexander's Feast," HWV75, Handel composed the music in January 17364. This Arioso embodies a moment of calm and sweetness within the dramatic narrative. The piece is a tender and lyrical expression of love and serenity, set in the distinctive Lydian mode, which lends it an ethereal. Handel's use of graceful melodic lines and gentle orchestration allows the vocal line to soar effortlessly, evoking a sense of purity and devotion. The harmonic and melodic writing reflect Handel's mastery in blending expressive depth with elegant simplicity.

Softly sweet in lydian measures,
Soon he sooth'd the soul to pleasures.

First and Chief on Golden Wing... is a recitative from Handel's L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato. The section devoted to introspection and contemplation. The text describes the cherub Contemplation, who arrives on golden wings, bringing silence and reflection. The reference to Philomel (a poetic name for the nightingale) evokes the quiet beauty of nature, as she sings in her "sweetest, saddest plight," smoothing "the rugged brow of night."

Sweet Bird is an aria for soprano, flute, and continuo from Handel's L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato, which is a setting of John Milton, which explores the contrasting moods of cheerfulness (L'Allegro) and melancholy (Il Penseroso), premiered in February 17403. This aria follows a classic ABA da capo form. The text depicts the fabled character L'Allegro inviting the melancholic Il Penseroso to sing a song. The flute plays an essential role, imitating birdsong at the beginning, while the soprano enters in dialogue with the flute, creating an expressive and lyrical interplay.

The B section, set in the parallel minor, reflects Il Penseroso's melancholy and introduces orchestral strings, adding depth and contrast. When the A section returns, performers embellish the melody with ornamental variations, showcasing their technical skill and expressivity. Handel's Sweet Bird is a brilliant example of his ability to blend poetic imagery with vivid musical expression, making it a favorite among sopranos and instrumentalists alike.

First and chief, on golden wing,
The Cherub Contemplation bring,
And the mute Silence hist along,
Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night.

Sweet bird, that shun'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, off the woods among,
I woo to hear thy even-song.
Or, missing thee, I walk unseen,
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wand'ring moon
Riding near her highest noon.
Sweet bird...

Quel Fior che all'Alba Ride HWV192 is a chamber duet for two soprani composed by George Frideric Handel in 1741. The name of the song means "the flower that smiles at dawn". The creation of this song is very interesting because Handel used the technique of self-borrowing, where he adapted material from his earlier works into new compositions. Specifically, Handel reused thematic material from *Quel fior che all'alba ride* in two choral movements of *Messiah*: "His yoke is easy" and "And he shall purify". Both pieces share similar melodic and rhythmic characteristics with the duet, demonstrating Handel's efficient compositional technique and his ability to transform secular Italian duets into sacred oratorio movements. This method was not unusual for Handel, as he frequently repurposed existing compositions to suit new contexts, particularly in his oratorios. The version we will perform tonight from today is an arrangement by Brahms, who had a lifelong fascination with the works of J.S. Bach and Handel.

Quel fior che all'alba ride

Il sole poi l'uccide,
E tomba ha nella sera.
È un fior la vita, la vita ancora.
L'ocasso ha nell'aurora,
E perde in un sol dì la primavera.

That flower that laughs at daybreak

Will be killed by the sun later on,
And has its tomb in the evening.
Life is a flower, life still.
It has its destruction in the dawn
And loses in one single day the springtime.

Mátyás Seiber was a Hungarian-born composer whose music seamlessly blended classical tradition with jazz influences and folk elements. Born in Budapest, he studied cello and composition at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music from 1918 to 1925, studying composition with Zoltán Kodály from 1921 to 1925. Kodály instilled in him a deep appreciation for folk music, which would later influence his compositional style. For his degree, Seiber composed *String Quartet No. 1 in A minor*. During this period, his works, such as the *Serenade for Six Wind Instruments* (1925), reflected his fusion of traditional Hungarian folk music with Western art music structures. He submitted the *Serenade* to a composition contest in Budapest, but when it failed to win—despite Béla Bartók advocating for its superiority—Bartók resigned from the jury in protest. But when it failed to win—despite Béla Bartók advocating for its superiority—Bartók resigned from the jury in protest. Seiber from a secular Jewish family immigrated to London in 1930. Tragically, his life was cut short in a car accident in South Africa in 1960, but his contributions to modern music continue to be recognized and celebrated. His works, such as *Fantasia for String Quartet* (1944) and *Ulysses* (1947), demonstrate his command of structure and lyricism, while *Three Hungarian Folksongs* (1950) reflects his deep connection to Kodály's ethnomusicological approach. Seiber's ability to bridge diverse musical styles made him a unique voice in 20th-century composition.

French Folk Songs. This song cycle for guitar and high soprano, Seiber affinity for folk material. He crafts elegant and evocative arrangements while maintaining the character and simplicity of the original tunes. Each song in the collection reflects a different mood and narrative, ranging from playful and lighthearted to melancholic and lyrical. Seiber's harmonizations, while often subtle, bring out the nuances of the melodies, sometimes infusing them with modal inflections or gentle chromaticism. His approach follows in the tradition of composers like Kodály and Bartók, who sought to preserve and reimagine folk music in an artful yet accessible way.

Réveillez vous's lyrics roughly mean "Wake up, sleeping beauty". The melody is very soft, and the guitar accompaniment uses chord progressions, which seems to pave the way for the lyrical emotions and connections of the soprano voice.

Réveillez-vous, belle endormie,
Réveillez-vous, car il est jour.
Mettez la tête à la fenêtre,
Vous entendrez parler de nous.

Awaken, you sleeping beauty,
Awaken, for day has dawned,
Lean out of the window,
You will hear folk speak of us.

La belle a mis le pied à terre,
Tout doucement s'en est allée,
D'une main elle ouvre la porte:
Entrez galant, si vous m'aimez.

The beautiful girl has arisen,
She moved very quietly
To open the door with her hand;
Enter, my gallant, if you love me!

Mais la belle s'est endormie
Entre les bras de son amant
Et celui-ci qui la regarde,
En lui voyant ces yeux mourants.

But the beautiful girl has fallen asleep
In the arms of her lover,
Who looks at her
With dying eyes.

Que les étoiles sont brillantes
Et le soleil est éclatant,
Mais les beaux yeux de ma maîtresse
En sont encore les plus charmants.

How brightly the stars glitter,
How glaringly the sun beats down,
But the beautiful eyes of my mistress
Are still more alluring.

J'ai descend is a very cheerful melody, describing seeing a nightingale in the garden, and the nightingale advising to be wary of the singer.

J'ai descendu dans mon jardin
Pour y cueillir du romarin
Gentil coquelicot, Mesdames
Gentil coquelicot nouveau

I went down to my garden
To pick rosemary
Sweet poppy, my ladies,
Sweet new poppy

J'n'en avais pas cueilli trois brins
Qu'un rossignol vint sur ma main
Il me dit trois mots en latin
Que les hommes ne valent rien

I hadn't even picked three sprigs
When a nightingale alighted onto my hand
He said three words in Latin
That men aren't worth anything

Que les hommes ne valent rien
Et les garçons encore moins bien
Des dames, il ne me dit rien
Mais des d'moiselles beaucoup de bien

That men aren't worth anything
And young men are worth even less
Of the ladies he didn't tell me anything,
But of damsels he spoke very highly.

Rossignol. The scene depicts a conversation between a wild nightingale and a human in the forest. The guitar part which introduces the singer's melody has a narrative quality enhanced by Seiber's delicate harmonics emotions.

Rossignolet du bois
Rossignolet sauvage
Apprends-moi ton langage
Apprends-moi-z à parler
Apprends-moi la manière
Comment il faut aimer

Comment il faut aimer
Je m'en vais vous le dire
Faut chanter des aubades
Deux heures après minuit
Faut lui chanter: la belle
C'est pour vous réjouir

On m'avait dit la belle
Que vous avez des pommes
Des pommes de renettes
Qui sont dans vot' jardin
Permettez-moi la belle
Que j'y mette la main

Non je ne permettrai pas
Que vous touchiez mes pommes
Prenez d'abord la lune
Et le soleil en main
Puis vous aurez les pommes
Qui sont dans mon jardin

Nightingale of the woods,
Wild nightingale,
Teach me your language,
Teach me to speak,
Teach me the way
To love, how to love

How should one love?
I am going to tell you.
You must sing serenades
Two hours after midnight.
You must sing to her:
My beautiful one, This is to bring you joy.

They told me, beautiful one,
That you had some apples
Some renette apples
That are in your garden.
Let me, beautiful one,
Lay my hand on them

No, I won't let you
Touch my apples.
Take first the moon
And the sun in your hand;
Then you will have the apples
That are in my garden.

Marguerite, elle est malade. This is a very interesting song. It describes Margaret who is sick and needs a doctor, but the doctor bids her not to drink. Margaret says, "I will never in my life give up drinking. Doctor, please get out of here."

Marguerite, elle est malade,
Il lui faut (aut! Aut!) Le médecin!
Médecin par sa visite
Lui a de(he he)fendu le vin
Médecin, va-t'en au diable
Puisque tu(u u) défend le vin
J'en ai bu toute ma vie
J'en boirai (he he) jusqu'à la fin.

Marguerite is ill,
She needs a doctor!
The doctor says in his visit
That wine is off limits!
Doctor, go to the Devil
As long as you keep wine from me!
I've drunk all my life
I will drink until the very end!

Gaetano Donizetti (1797–1848) was an Italian opera composer in the 19th century, famous during his own time as well as now, and one of the representatives of the Romantic period. He was born in Bergamo, Italy, and was the core figure of the Italian Bel Canto. Donizetti was born in a poor family with no musical tradition, but he made his mark in the field of music with his talent and hard work. In his early years, he studied music under the guidance of Simon Mayr, laying a solid foundation for composition. In 1818, he created his first opera, *Enrico di Borgogna*, and began his brilliant career in opera creation. Donizetti created about 70 operas during his lifetime, and his style was known for its beautiful melodies, strong drama, and extremely high requirements for singers' vocal skills. His works were popular in Europe in the 19th century, especially in Italy and France.

La Conocchia is Neapolitan song, written in the early 19th century, reflects the folk traditions of Southern Italy. The text playfully describes a young woman spinning wool at her distaff while contemplating love, using the spinning as a metaphor for the twists and turns of romantic emotions. Donizetti's setting enhances the song's buoyant character with a lively, dance-like rhythm and graceful melodic lines, evoking both the simplicity and elegance of folk music.

Quann'a lo bello mio voglio parlare,
Ca spisso me ne vene lu golio,
A la fenesta me mett'a filare,
Quann'a lo bello mio voglio parlare

When I want to speak to the one I love,
Because often I want to do that,
I sit down spinning at my window
When I want to speak to the one I love

Quann'isso passa po' rompo lo filo,
E co'una grazia me mett'a priare
Bello, peccarita, proite milo,
Isso lu piglia, ed io lo sto a guardare,
E accossi me ne vao'mpilo mpilo
ah jeme!

When he passes by I break the thread a bit
And with grace begins to ask
Handsome one, please get it back to me
He bends down and I stand watching him
And so is lit in me a fire (which will burn)
Forever!

Gioachino Rossini (1792–1868) was an opera composer who was born in a poor family. He entered music school in 1806. During his studies, Rossini understood music by copying many famous composers' scores such as Haydn and Mozart and tried to compose music himself¹¹. Rossini's creation took Italian opera on a new path, that is, he determined the ideological themes closely related to life and used a melodic structure based on folk tunes. He restored the original national spirit of comic opera, added heroic themes full of the flavor of the times to the creation of serious opera, and infiltrated elements of comic opera into it. Rossini was adamant that singers adhere strictly to the score. Unlike the earlier tradition, where performers often took liberties with embellishments and cadenzas, Rossini provided meticulously written-out ornamentation, dynamics, and phrasing. He discouraged excessive improvisation, insisting that singers follow his musical indications. This approach ensured that his operas maintained stylistic integrity and expressive clarity, while still allowing for dramatic expression within a controlled framework. Rossini's influence extended beyond his own time, as his works became training grounds for bel canto technique, influencing later composers such as Bellini, Donizetti, and even Verdi.

Anzoleta Avanti la Regata is one of three cycles from Rossini's *La regata veneziana*. This charming song cycle vividly portrays the excitement of a Venetian sailboat race (regatta) through the perspective of Anzoleta, a young woman passionately cheering for her beloved, Momolo, as he competes in the race.

Là su la machina xe la bandiera varda,
La vedistu, vala a ciapar.
Co quela tornime in qua sta sera,
O pur a sconderte ti pol andar.
In pope, Momolo, no te incantar.

Over there on the machina the flag is flying,
Look, you can see it, now go for it.
Bring it back to me this evening,
Or else run away and hide.
Once in the boat, Momolo, don't gawp.

Va, voga d'anema la gondoleta
Nè el primo premio te pol mancar,
Va là, recordite la to Anzoleta

Row the gondola with heart and soul,
Then you cannot help but be first.
Go on, think of your Angelina

Che da sto pergolo te sta a vardar.
In pope, Momolo, no te incantar,
cori a svolar.

Watching you from this balcony
in the boat, Momolo, don't gawp.
Once in the boat, Momolo, fly like the wind.

La Fioraia Fiorentina. This delightful song paints the portrait of a young flower seller in Florence, whose beauty and charm rival the flowers she offers. The text, filled with poetic imagery, describes how she captivates those around her, making it impossible for passersby to ignore her enchanting presence. Rossini's music mirrors this playful and flirtatious energy, with a graceful melody, lilting rhythms, and sparkling accompaniment that evoke the lively atmosphere of an Italian street scene.

I più bei fior comprate,
Fanciulli, amanti e spose:
Son fresche le mie rose,
Non spiran che l'amor.

Ahime! Soccorso implora
Mia madre, poveretta
E da me sola aspetta
Del pan e non dell'or.

The most beautiful flowers [you can]
Buy, children, lovers, and newlyweds:
My roses are fresh,
[they] Don't die like love [does].

Alas! Help, implores
My mother, poor little [thing]
And from me she hopes only
For bread and not for gold.

Amy Beach (1867–1944) was a pioneering American composer and pianist, celebrated as the first female composer in the United States to achieve widespread recognition for her large-scale works. Born in Henniker, New Hampshire, she displayed prodigious musical talent from an early age, composing her first pieces as a child and making her professional debut as a pianist at the age of 16. Despite limited formal composition training—largely self-taught beyond early lessons—she developed a distinctive style that blended late Romantic lyricism with rich harmonic textures and expressive depth. Beach's most significant achievement was her Gaelic Symphony (1896), the first symphony composed by an American woman to be performed by a major orchestra. Alongside orchestral and chamber works, she composed extensively for voice and piano, producing art songs that showcase her gift for melody and sensitivity to text.

Three Shakespeare Songs Op. 37 composed in 1897, is a set of art songs that beautifully capture the poetic essence and dramatic nuance of William Shakespeare's words. With these works, Beach demonstrates her ability to capture the emotive essence of Shakespeare's poetry while crafting intricate, expressive vocal lines and piano accompaniments.

O Mistress Mine from Twelfth Night. A lighthearted yet wistful setting of Feste's song, this piece reflects on the fleeting nature of love and time. Beach's melody is both lyrical and charming, enhanced by gentle harmonic shifts that give the song a warm, intimate character.

O, mistress mine, where are you roaming?
O stay and hear; your true love's coming,
That can sing both high and low:
Trip no further, pretty sweeting;
Journeys end in lovers' meeting,
Every wise man's son doth know.
What is love? tis' not hereafter;
Present mirth hath present laughter;
What's to come is still unsure:
In delay there lies no plenty;
Then come kiss me, sweet and twenty,
Youth's a stuff will not endure.

Take, O Take Those Lips Away from Measure for Measure. This poignant and melancholic song conveys a sense of longing and sorrow. The restrained vocal line and subtle harmonic tension highlight the poem's theme of lost love and deception.

Take, o take those lips away,
That so sweetly were forsworn;
And those eyes, the break of day,
Lights that do mislead the morn:
But my kisses bring again;
Seals of love, but seal'd in vain, seal'd in vain.

Fairy Lullaby, from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, is a delicate and atmospheric setting of the lullaby sung by the fairies to Titania; this piece features ethereal harmonies and floating melodic lines, creating a dreamlike, magical quality.

Philomel, with melody,
Sing in our sweet lullaby:
Lulla, lulla, Lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm, nor spell, nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So good night, with lullaby.

John Woods Duke (1899–1984) was an American composer and pianist, best known for his contributions to the art song repertoire. Born in Cumberland, Maryland, he studied at the Peabody Conservatory and later in Paris, where he was influenced by the French song tradition. As both a composer and performer, Duke combined his deep understanding of vocal writing with a refined pianistic style, crafting songs that are notable for their lyricism, sensitivity to text, and elegant harmonic language. Duke's compositional style reflects a fusion of European art song traditions with American poetic sensibilities. He set texts by poets such as e.e. cummings, Emily Dickinson, and John Keats, always prioritizing natural speech rhythms and expressive word painting. His songs, while melodically accessible, often contain subtle harmonic shifts and intricate piano accompaniments that enhance the emotional depth of the poetry.

The Bird is a poignant and evocative art song that showcases his gift for sensitive text setting and expressive lyricism. Setting a poem by John Peale Bishop, Duke crafts a piece that captures both the fleeting, delicate nature of a bird and the deeper emotional undercurrents of the text. The vocal line is elegant and fluid, mirroring the graceful movement of the bird, while the piano accompaniment provides subtle harmonic color and rhythmic interest. Duke's ability to highlight the natural inflection of the text creates an intimate and introspective atmosphere, characteristic of his best song settings.

O clear and musical,
Sing again! Sing again!
Hear the rain fall
Through the long night.
Bring me your song again,
O dear delight!
O dear and comforting,
Mine again! Mine again!
Hear the rain sing
And the dark rejoice!
Shine like a spark again,
O clearest voice.

Ao Changqun (1950) is one of China's most distinguished contemporary composers, known for his masterful integration of traditional Chinese musical elements with Western compositional techniques. A longtime educator at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, where he served as Dean of the Composition Department and Vice President, Ao has played a pivotal role in shaping generations of musicians while contributing richly to China's modern classical repertoire. His works span symphonies, chamber music, vocal pieces, and film scores, often drawing inspiration from China's diverse ethnic traditions—particularly the folk melodies of Tibetan and Qiang cultures. Ao's music is characterized by its lyrical expressiveness, vivid orchestration, and a profound sense of national identity, making it both accessible and deeply evocative.

QingyuAn Lantern Festival. Ao Changqun's art song *Qing Yu An Yuan Xi* is a poignant musical setting of Xin Qiji's celebrated poem, capturing the bittersweet beauty of the Lantern Festival in ancient China. Known for his lyrical sensitivity and mastery of blending Chinese poetic imagery with Western vocal traditions, Ao transforms Xin's verse—a meditation on fleeting joy and unfulfilled longing—into a delicate yet deeply expressive musical narrative.

东风夜放花千树	The east wind blows thousands of flowers at night.
更吹落，星如雨	It blows down stars like rain.
宝马雕车香满路	The precious horse-carving carriages fill the road with fragrance.
凤箫声动，	The sound of phoenix flutes moves,
玉壶光转	and the light of jade pots turns.
一夜鱼龙舞	Fishes and dragons dance all night.
蛾儿雪柳黄金缕	Moths, snow willows, golden threads.
笑语盈盈暗香去	Smiles and fragrance fade away.
众里寻他千百度	I searched for him among the crowd for thousands of times.
蓦然回首	Suddenly I looked back.
那人却在，	He was there,
灯火阑珊处。	in the dim light.

Xiaolinglong Wang, born on July 31, 2000, is a soprano from China. She is currently studying at the University of North Texas under the guidance of Jennifer Lane. In August 2019, she participated in the University Artists Festival at the New England Conservatory, where she performed in the mini opera "Sammy and Remmy" and received an Honorable Mention Award in the festival competition. In 2021, she sang the role of Micaëla in "Carmen" at Hainan University. In 2022, she competed in the Vienna Golden Hall Invitational Competition and won the gold medal in the Vocal Aria Group. In 2023, she performed the role of Water in the opera "The Little Prince" at the Longy School of Music of Bard College. She has also received multiple gold and silver medals in major vocal competitions across China.