



University of North Texas
College of Music

Master's Recital | Sunday, May 4, 2025 | 6:30 p.m. | Paul Voertman Concert Hall

Xinwei Chen, collaborative piano

Prosper Makhanya, baritone

Xiaojing Luo, soprano

Three Dickinson Songs (1999).....André Previn
1. As Imperceptibly as Grief (1929–2019)
2. Will There Really Be a Morning? Poetry by Emily Dickinson
3. Good Morning Midnight

from Songs of Travel (1904).....Ralph Vaughan Williams
1. The Vagabond (1872–1958)
2. Let Beauty Awake Poetry by Robert Louis Stevenson
4. Youth and Love
6. The Infinite Shining Heavens
8. Bright is the Ring of Words
9. I Have Trod the Upward and the Downward Slope

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée (1932).....Maurice Ravel
I. Chanson romanesque (1875–1937)
II. Chanson épique Poetry by Paul Morand
III. Chanson à boire

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

Storiella d'amore (1883) Giacomo Puccini
(1858–1924)
Poetry by Antonio Ghislanzoni

Les chemins de l'amour (1940) Francis Poulenc
(1899–1963)
Poetry by Jean Anouilh

from Soirées musicales (1830–1835) Gioachino Rossini
1. La promessa (Poetry by Metastasio) (1792–1868)
5. L'invito (Poetry by Carlo Pepoli)
8. La danza (Poetry by Carlo Pepoli)

Program Notes, Texts and Translations

This program explores a rich tapestry of emotional and cultural expressions through art song and chanson, traversing the spirited wit of Rossini, the whimsical charm of Ravel, the nostalgic warmth of Poulenc, the introspective depth of Previn and Vaughan Williams, and the Italianate lyricism of Puccini.

André Previn – Three Dickinson Songs (1999)

Released 10th July 2001 for American soprano Renée Fleming, *Three Dickinson Songs* marks André Previn's refined and intimate engagement with the poetry of Emily Dickinson. Known for his multifaceted career as a composer, conductor, and jazz pianist, Previn brings a subtle, lyrical sensibility to these settings, carefully shaping each phrase to reflect the emotional texture and rhythmic nuance of Dickinson's language.

The first song, *As imperceptibly as grief*, captures the quiet fading of summer and the ephemeral beauty of nature, with understated harmonic color. The second, *Will there really be a "Morning"?*, is filled with wonder and yearning, asking childlike but profound questions about hope. The final piece, *Good morning, Midnight*, takes on a conversational, ironic tone, as Dickinson greets darkness like an old companion—Previn's setting artfully balances poignancy with sly wit.

These songs are a testament to Previn's ability to match poetic introspection with expressive musical clarity, making the set a modern gem of American art song.

1. As imperceptibly as grief

Poetry by Emily Dickinson

As imperceptibly as grief
The summer lapsed away
Too imperceptible at last
To seem like Perfidy

A Quietness distilled
As Twilight long begun,
Or Nature spending with herself
Sequestered Afternoon

The Dusk drew earlier in
The Morning foreign shone
A courteous, yet harrowing Grace,
As Guest, that would be gone
And thus, without a Wing
Or service of a Keel
Our Summer made her light escape
Into the Beautiful.

2. Will there really be a "Morning"?

Poetry by Emily Dickinson

Will there really be a "Morning"?
Is there such a thing as "Day"?
Could I see it from the mountains
If I were as tall as they?

Has it feet like Water lilies?
Has it feathers like a Bird?
Is it brought from famous countries
Of which I have never heard?

continued on following page

Oh some Scholar! Oh some Sailor!
Oh some Wise Man from the skies!
Please to tell a little Pilgrim
Where the place called "Morning" lies!

3. Good morning – Midnight

Poetry by Emily Dickinson

Good morning Midnight
I'm coming Home
Day got tired of Me
How could I of Him?

Sunshine was a sweet place
I liked to stay
But Morn didn't want me now
So Goodnight Day!

I can look can't I
When the East is Red?
The Hills have a way then
That puts the Heart abroad

You are not so fair Midnight
I chose Day
But please take a little Girl
He turned away!

Ralph Vaughan Williams – Songs of Travel (1904)

This nine-song cycle, composed between 1901 and 1904, sets poems by Robert Louis Stevenson collection Songs of Travel and Other Verses. It follows the journey of a wanderer whose reflections touch on love, loss, nature, and resilience. In this recital we will do The Vagabond, Let Beauty Awake, Youth and Love, The Infinite Shining Heavens, Bright Is the Ring of Words, and I Have Trod the Upward and the Downward Slope.

1: The Vagabond

Bold and resolute, this opening song establishes the traveler's identity with a marching rhythm that evokes steadfast independence. The music echoes the call of the open road, celebrating freedom above comfort or security.

Give to me the life I love,
Let the love go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above,
And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
Bread I dip in the river—
There's the life for a man like me,
There's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around,
And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
Nor a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above,
And the road below me.

continued on following page

Or let autumn fall on me
Where afield I linger,
Silencing the bird on tree,
Biting the blue finger.
White as meal the frosty field—
Warm the fireside haven—
Not to autumn will I yield,
Not to winter even!

2: Let Beauty Awake

Tender and lyrical, this song captures the delicate stillness of dawn and the transient nature of beauty. With flowing vocal lines and gentle harmonic shifts, it expresses reverence for life's fleeting, poetic moments.

Let Beauty awake in the morn from beautiful dreams,
Beauty awake from rest!
Let Beauty awake
For Beauty's sake
In the hour when the birds awake in the brake
And the stars are bright in the west!

Let Beauty awake in the eve from the slumber of day,
Awake in the crimson eve!
In the day's dusk end
When the shades ascend,
Let her wake to the kiss of a tender friend,
To render again and receive!

4: Youth and Love

This song portrays the traveler's momentary yearning for love and connection, weighed against his loyalty to solitude and wandering. The soaring vocal line contrasts with an underlying sense of restraint, reflecting inner conflict.

To the heart of youth the world is a highwyside.
Passing for ever, he fares; and on either hand,
Deep in the gardens golden pavilions hide,
Nestle in orchard bloom, and far on the level land
Call him with lighted lamp in the eventide.

Thick as stars at night when the moon is down,
Pleasures assail him. He to his nobler fate
Fares; and but waves a hand as he passes on,
Cries but a wayside word to her at the garden gate,
Sings but a boyish stave and his face is gone.

6: The Infinite Shining Heavens

Contemplative and atmospheric, this piece evokes the awe and mystery of a star-filled sky. The voice marvels at the vast universe above, while the steady piano line keeps the traveler grounded on his earthly path.

The infinite shining heavens
Rose, and I saw in the night
Uncountable angel stars
Showering sorrow and light.

continued on following page

I saw them distant as heaven,
Dumb and shining and dead,
And the idle stars of the night
Were dearer to me than bread.

Night after night in my sorrow
The stars looked over the sea,
Till lo! I looked in the dusk
And a star had come down to me.

8: Bright Is the Ring of Words

A triumphant reflection on the power and permanence of art, especially poetry. The vibrant melody suggests that while the traveler may vanish, his song—and its meaning—will live on.

Bright is the ring of words
When the right man rings them,
Fair the fall of songs
When the singer sings them,
Still they are carolled and said—
On wings they are carried—
After the singer is dead
And the maker buried.

Low as the singer lies
In the field of heather,
Songs of his fashion bring
The swains together.
And when the west is red
With the sunset embers,
The lover lingers and sings
And the maid remembers.

9: I Have Trod the Upward and the Downward Slope

Added posthumously, this final song offers a quiet, reflective epilogue to the cycle. With simple, resigned phrases, the traveler looks back on his life's journey with acceptance, closing the cycle with a sense of peace and completion.

I have trod the upward and the downward slope;
I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all, and bid farewell to hope;
And I have lived and loved, and closed the door.

Maurice Ravel – *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* (1932-33)

Maurice Ravel composed *Don Quichotte à Dulcinée* in 1932–1933 as part of a commission for a film about Don Quixote, originally intended to star the famous Russian bass Fyodor Chaliapin. Although several composers were approached for the project, Ravel completed his three-song cycle too late for the film's deadline, and the music ultimately stood alone as a concert piece. These were Ravel's last completed vocal works, written during a period of declining health, and they reflect his masterful orchestration, wit, and deep understanding of vocal expression. The texts by Paul Morand present Don Quixote in three distinct emotional guises: romantic idealist, pious warrior, and jovial drinker. Despite their brevity, the songs encapsulate a wide emotional and musical range, blending Spanish color with French elegance and literary nuance.

1. Chanson romanesque

Si vous me disiez que la terre
À tant tourner vous offensa,
Je lui dépêcherais Pança:
Vous la verriez fixe et se taire.

Si vous me disiez que l'ennui
Vous vient du ciel trop fleuri
d'astres,
Déchirant les divins cadastres,
Je faucherais d'un coup la nuit.

Si vous me disiez que l'espace
Ainsi vidé ne vous plaît point,
Chevalier Dieu, la lance au poing,
J'étoilerais le vent qui passe.

Mais si vous disiez que mon sang
Est plus à moi qu'à vous, ma Dame,
Je blêmirais dessous le blâme
Et je mourrais, vous bénissant.

Ô Dulcinée!

2. Chanson épique

Bon Saint Michel qui me donnez
loisir
De voir ma Dame et de l'entendre,
Bon Saint Michel qui me daignez
choisir
Pour lui complaire et la défendre,
Bon Saint Michel veuillez descendre
Avec Saint Georges sur l'autel
De la Madone au bleu mantel.
D'un rayon du ciel bénissez ma lame
Et son égale en pureté
Et son égale en piété
Comme en pudeur et chasteté:
ma Dame.

Ô grands Saint Georges et
Saint Michel,
L'ange qui veille sur ma veille,
Ma douce Dame si pareille
À vous, Madone au bleu mantel!

Amen.

3. Chanson à boire

Foin du bâtard, illustre Dame,
Qui pour me perdre à vos doux yeux
Dit que l'amour et le vin vieux
Mettent en deuil mon coeur, mon âme!

Poetry: Paul Morand

If you told me that the earth
Offended you with its turning,
I would dispatch Panza to it:
You would see it still and silent.

If you told me that boredom
Came to you from the sky too filled
with stars,
Tearing apart the divine registers,
I would mow down the night with
one stroke.

If you told me that space
Thus emptied does not please you,
God-like knight, lance in hand,
I would sow stars in the passing wind.

But if you told me that my blood
Is more mine than yours, my Lady,
I would pale under the blame
And I would die, blessing you.

O Dulcinea!

Poetry: Paul Morand

Good Saint Michael, who grants me
the grace
To see my Lady and to hear her,
Good Saint Michael, who deigns
to choose me
To please and defend her,
Good Saint Michael, please descend
With Saint George upon the altar
Of the Madonna with the blue mantle.
With a ray from heaven bless my blade
And its equal in purity
And its equal in piety
As in modesty and chastity:
my Lady.

O great Saint George and
Saint Michael,
The angel who watches over my vigil,
My sweet Lady so like You,
Madonna with the blue mantle!

Amen.

Poetry: Paul Morand

Away with the bastard, illustrious Lady,
Who, to ruin me in your sweet eyes,
Says that love and old wine
Bring mourning to my heart, my soul!

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Je bois à la joie!
La joie est le seul but
Où je vais droit...
Lorsque j'ai bu!

À la joie, à la joie!
Je bois à la joie!

Foin du jaloux, brune
maîtresse,
Qui geint, qui pleure et fait serment
D'être toujours ce pâle amant
Qui met de l'eau dans son ivresse!

Je bois à la joie!
La joie est le seul but
Où je vais droit...
Lorsque j'ai bu!

À la joie! À la joie!
Je bois à la joie!

I drink to joy!
Joy is the only goal
To which I go straight...
When I have drunk!

To joy, to joy! I
drink to joy!

Away with the jealous one, dark-haired
mistress,
Who groans, who weeps and swears
To always be that pale lover
Who waters down his intoxication!

I drink to joy!
Joy is the only goal
To which I go straight...
When I have drunk!

To joy! To joy!
I drink to joy!

Giacomo Puccini – Storiella d'amore (1883)

Poetry by: Antonio Ghislanzoni

Ghislanzoni's poem refers to Francesca da Rimini's famous love story from Dante's *Divina Commedia* (*Inferno*, Canto V), the model for numerous literary and musical representations, but Ghislanzoni ironically plays with Dante's text. Puccini's composition most probably dates from the spring of 1883 (like two other settings of Ghislanzoni poems 39, and 41).

Noi leggevamo insieme un giorno
per diletto
Una gentile istoria piena di mesti amor
E senz'alcun sospetto ella sedeami
[a lato] I
Sul libro avventurato intenta il guardo
e il cor.
L'onda dè suoi capelli il volto a
me lambia
Eco alla voce mia,
Eco faceano i suoi sospir.
Gli occhi dal libro alzando
Nel suo celeste viso,
Io vidi in un sorriso
Riflesso il mio desir.
La bella mano al core strinsi
di gioia ansante...
Né più leggemmo avante...
E cadde il libro al suol.
Noi leggevamo insieme, Ah! Ah!
Un lungo, ardente bacio congiunse
i labbri aneli,
E ad ignorati cieli
L'alme spiegaro il vol.

We were reading together one day
for fun
A lovely story full of sad love
And without any suspicion she sat
next to me
Her eyes and heart intent
on the book.
The wave of her hair caressed
my face
Her sighs were the echo
to my voice.
She look up from the book
and in her heavenly face
I saw her innocence
reflected in her smile.
I pressed her lovely hand to my heart
panting with joy...
We read no further
and the book fell to the floor.
We were reading together, ah! ah!
A long passionate kiss brought
our ardent lips together
And our souls flew
to unknown skies.

Francis Poulenc – Les chemins de l'amour (1940)

Written in 1940 for the play *Léocadia* by Jean Anouilh, *Les chemins de l'amour* ("The Pathways of Love") is one of Poulenc's most beloved chansons. With its lilting waltz rhythm and bittersweet melody, the song captures the tender melancholy of remembering a past love. Poulenc masterfully balances elegance with emotional intimacy, making this piece a quintessential example of his chanson style.

Les chemins qui vont à la mer
Ont gardé de notre passage
Des fleurs, des feuilles
et l'écho sous leurs arbres
De nos deux rires clairs.

Hélas, des jours de bonheur,
Radiieuses joies envolées,
Je vais sans retrouver traces
dans mon coeur.

Chemins de mon amour,
Je vous cherche toujours.
Chemins perdus vous n'êtes plus
Et vos échos sont sourds.
Chemins du désespoir,
Chemins du souvenir,
Chemins du premier jour,
Divins chemins d'amour.

Si je dois l'oublier un jour,
La vie effaçant toute chose,
Je veux dans mon coeur qu'un souvenir
Repose plus fort que l'autre amour.

Le souvenir du chemin,
Où tremblante et toute
éperdue,
Un jour j'ai senti sur moi
brûler tes mains

Chemins de mon amour,
Je vous cherche toujours.
Chemins perdus vous n'êtes plus
Et vos échos sont sourds.
Chemins du désespoir,
Chemins du souvenir,
Chemins du premier jour,
Divins chemins d'amour.

The paths that arch of the ocean
protect our crossing,
flowers losing their leaves
and the echo under the trees,
Our two bright laughs.

Alas, from days of happiness
radiant joys take flight,
I journey without recovering your traces
In my heart.

Paths of my love
I try to find you always lost paths,
you don't exist anymore,
And your echoes have been muffled.
Paths of despair,
Paths of memory,
Paths of first love,
Divine pathways of love.

This I am duty-bound to forget one day
the way that life obliterates all things.
I want in my heart that a memory will
Rest more strongly than another love.

The memory of paths
Where trembling and completely
passionate,
a day I have felt above myself
to burn and be consumed by your
hands.

Paths of my love
I try to find you always lost paths,
you don't exist anymore,
And your echoes have been muffled.
Paths of despair,
Paths of memory,
Paths of first love,
Divine pathways of love.

Gioachino Rossini – La promessa, L'invito, La danza (1830-35)

These three songs by Gioachino Rossini are drawn from his *Soirées musicales*, a delightful collection of salon pieces composed after his retirement from the operatic stage. In them, we see Rossini's characteristic wit, charm, and melodic brilliance distilled into short, vocally expressive works.

La promessa (The Promise), set to a poem by Metastasio, is a gentle yet passionate vow of eternal fidelity. The music mirrors the sincerity and restrained fervor of the text.

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Ch'io mai vi possa Lasciar d'amare, No, nol credete, Pupille care; Nè men per gioco V'ingannerò.	That I will ever be able to stop loving you No, don't believe it, dear eyes! Not even to joke would I deceive you about this.
Voi foste e siete Le mie faville, E voi sarete, Care pupille, Il mio bel foco Sin ch'io vivrò.	You alone are my sparks, and you will be, dear eyes, my beautiful fire as long as I live, ah!

L'invito (The Invitation) set to a poem by Carlo Pepoli, is an elegant pastoral serenade, laced with grace and lightness, inviting the beloved to join in nature's beauty and companionship.

Vieni, o Ruggiero, la tua Eloisa da te divisa non puo restar: alle mie lacrime già rispondevi, vieni, ricevi il mio pregar.	Come Ruggiero, your Eloisa Cannot stay separated from you: You've already responded to my tears, Come and grant my request.
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Vieni, o bell'angelo, vien, mio diletto, sovra il mio petto vieni a posar! Senti se palpita, se amor t'invita... vieni, mia vita, vieni, fammi spirar	Come, beautiful angel, come, my delight, Here on my bosom come to rest! Feel my throbbing heart, when love invites you, Come my life, come, make me die!
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La danza (The Dance), set to a poem by Carlo Pepoli, perhaps the most famous of the three, is a sparkling Neapolitan tarantella. Its fast-paced rhythms and virtuosic vocal writing make it a favorite showpiece—an exuberant celebration of music, love, and festivity.

Già la Luna è in mezzo al mare, Mamma mia si salterà: L'ora è bella per danzare; Chi è in amor non mancherà !	The moon is already in the middle of the sea, Oh my, we will jump: The hour is perfect for dancing; Who is in love will not miss out!
Presto in danza a tondo a tondo... Donne mie venite quà: Un garzon bello e giocondo A ciascuna toccherà.	Quickly, let's dance round and round... My ladies, come here: A handsome and cheerful young man Will come to each of you.
Fin che in ciel brilla una stella, E la Luna splenderà; Il più bel con la più bella Tutta notte danzerà.	As long as a star shines in the sky, And the moon is glowing; The most handsome with the most beautiful Will dance all night.

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Mamma mia, mamma mia,
già la luna è in mezzo al mare,
mamma mia, mamma mia,
mamma mia si salterà.
Frinche frinche frinche frinche
mamma mia, si salterà,
La la ra la ra...

Salta, salta, gira, gira,
Ogni coppia a cerchio va,
Già s'avvanza, si ritira,
E all' assalto tornerà.

Serra, serra colla bionda,
Colla bruna va quà e là,
Colla rossa va a seconda,
Colla smorta fermo sta.

Viva il Ballo a tondo, a tondo
Sono un Rè, sono un Bascià,
È il più bel piacer del mondo,
La più cara voluttà!

Mamma mia, mamma mia,
già la luna è in mezzo al mare,
mamma mia, mamma mia,
mamma mia si salterà.
Frinche frinche frinche frinche
mamma mia, si salterà,
La la ra la ra!

Oh my, oh my,
The moon is already in the middle of the sea,
Oh my, oh my,
Oh my, we will jump.
Faster faster faster faster
Oh my, we will jump,
La la ra la ra...

Jump, jump, turn, turn,
Every couple goes in a circle,
Now advancing, now retreating,
And then back to the charge.

Hold tight with the blonde,
With the brunette, go here and there,
With the redhead, go second,
With the pale one, stand still.

Long live the round dance, round and round
I am a King, I am a Pasha,
It is the greatest pleasure in the world,
The most cherished delight!

Oh my, oh my,
The moon is already in the middle of the sea,
Oh my, oh my,
Oh my, we will jump.
Faster faster faster faster
Oh my, we will jump,
La la ra la ra!