



COLLEGE OF MUSIC

University of North Texas College of Music

GAC Recital | Friday, September 12, 2025 | 6:30 p.m. | Paul Voertman Concert Hall

Sarah Harvey, mezzo-soprano

Willem Van Schalkwyk, piano

"Fac ut portem Christi mortem,"

from *Stabat Mater* (1841) Gioachino Antonio Rossini
(1792–1868)

Libretto by Jacopone da Todi

Wesendonck Lieder (1858) Wilhelm Richard Wagner

I. Der Engel (1813–1883)

II. Stehe still!

Text by Mathilde Wesendonck

III. Im Treibhaus

IV. Schmerzen

V. Träume

"Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour,"

from *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1881) Jaques Offenbach
(1819–1880)

Libretto by Jules Barbier, Michel Carré

Jennifer Watson, soprano

Maria De Jesus Contreras, harp

-INTERMISSION-

Program twenty-two of the 2025–2026 season
Photography and videography are prohibited

So Pretty (1968)Leonard Bernstein
(1918–1990)
Lyrics by Betty Comden, Adolph Green

from Twelve Songs from Emily Dickinson (1950) Aaron Copland
I. Nature, the Gentlest Mother (1900–1990)
III. Why Do They Shut Me Out of Heaven? Poetry by Emily Dickinson
V. Heart, We Will Forget Him
IX. I Felt a Funeral in My Brain

"Stride la vampa," from *Il Trovatore* (1853)Giuseppe Verdi
(1813–1901)
Libretto by Salvatore Cammarano,
Leone Emanuele Bardare

Program Notes, Texts and Translations

Gioachino Antonio Rossini, best known for his comic operas, dominated the early 19th century opera with his lively melodies, wit, and the masterful use of what would be known as the “Rossini crescendo”.¹ In addition to his operas, Rossini composed a few significant sacred compositions including his *Stabat Mater*. This operatically-styled sacred work displays flare for his dramatic, lyrical, and theatrical abilities.

“**Fac ut portem Christi mortem**” evokes the tone of a personal prayer to the Virgin Mary. Tender and sorrowful, yet passionate, the melody is paired with emotional vocal lines that mirror the longing to unite with Christ's suffering.

Fac ut portem Christi mortem

Fac, ut portem Christi mortem,
passiónis fac consòrtem
et plagas recòlere.

Fac me plagis vulnerári,
cruce hac inebriári
et cruòre Fílii.

Make me bear the death of Christ

Make me bear the death of Christ,
Make me share His Passion,
and His wounds remember.

Make me be afflicted with those wounds
And intoxicated with this Cross
and blood of Your Son.²

Wilhelm Richard Wagner (1813–1883) was a revolutionary German composer, best known for his operas, in which he fused music, drama, and myth into a new art form. He transformed Western music with his use of his concept of the “Gesamtkunstwerk”, a total work of art marrying all elements of theatrical production to musical composition. His groundbreaking use of **leitmotifs** (recurring musical themes tied to characters or ideas), richly chromatic harmony, and continuously shifting tonal centers redefined the structure and emotional depth of opera. Works like *Tristan und Isolde*, *The Ring Cycle*, and *Parsifal* not only reshaped 19th-century music but also laid the foundations for modernism and influenced countless composers during and after his time.

The **Wesendonck Lieder** is a song cycle for female voice and piano, a rare composition from Wagner as his musical style did not easily adapt to smaller genres. This setting is a by-product of his own love affair with Mathilde Wesendonck, inspired from their intense bond that caused a major scandal in his personal life. He was also highly influenced by The Schopenhauer Principle, a philosophical idea of pessimism that focuses on the idea that existence is suffering brought on by the unconscious “will to live,” which drives our thoughts and decisions. Pleasure only acts as a temporary remedy for this state of suffering; the only true way to overcome it is through a complete dissolution of the self. Schopenhauer distinguishes music as the greatest of the arts in that it is not representational. Its power comes in its ability to communicate truths without the limitation of language, thus acting as a direct expression of the metaphysical will. He singles out opera as the most powerful form of music that one can experience, since it enhances meaning with drama and poetic text. Wagner began work on the *Wesendonck Lieder* in November 1857, four months after starting *Tristan und Isolde*.

“**Der Engel**” serves as a gentle, tender vision of heavenly bliss that consoles earthly suffering. The narrator sees an angel descending to protect her from the pain and temptations of life, offering salvation. Here we can see Schopenhauer's escape from the will as love serves a spiritual force beyond the mundane, earthly existence.

¹ *The rossini crescendo*. KCME. (n.d.). <https://www.kcme.org/the-rossini-crescendo/>

² Giovanni Battista Pergolesi - *Stabat mater* 10. *Fac Ut portem* (English translat. Giovanni Battista Pergolesi - *Stabat Mater* 10. *Fac ut portem* (English translation). (n.d.). <https://lyricstranslate.com/en/stabat-mater-10-fac-ut-portem-make-me-bear-death-christ.html>

Der Engel

In der Kindheit frühen Tagen
Hört ich oft von Engeln sagen,
Die des Himmels hehre Wonne
Tauschen mit der Erdensonne,

Daß, wo bang ein Herz in Sorgen
Schmachtet vor der Welt verborgen,
Daß, wo still es will verbluten,
Und vergehn in Tränenfluten,

Daß, wo brünstig sein Gebet
Einzig um Erlösung flieht,
Da der Engel nieder schwebt,
Und es sanft gen Himmel hebt.

Ja, es stieg auch mir ein Engel nieder,
Und auf leuchtendem Gefieder
Führt er, ferne jedem Schmerz,
Meinen Geist nun himmelwärts!

The Angel

In the early days of childhood
I often heard tell of angels
Who exchange heaven's pure bliss
For the sun of earth,

So that, when a sorrowful heart
Hides its yearning from the world
And would silently bleed away
And dissolve in streams of tears,

And when its fervent prayer
Begs only for deliverance,
That angel will fly down
And gently raise the heart to heaven.

And to me too an angel descended,
And now on shining wings
Bear my spirit, free from all pain,
Towards heaven!³

"Stehe still!" is a dramatic meditation on time, transience, and inner peace. The poet commands time to stop so that a moment of profound love and stillness can expand into eternity. The romantic paradox of trying to hold onto a fleeting moment is coupled with Schopenhauer's idea that time and change are illusions caused by desire.⁴ As the narrator pleads for the moment of stillness, what is shared after is a glimpse beyond suffering. Musically, Wagner suspends resolution and mirrors the desire to freeze time.

Stehe still!

Sausendes, brausendes
Rad der Zeit,
Messer du der Ewigkeit;
Leuchtende Sphären im weiten All,
Die ihr umringt den Weltenball;
Ureilige Schöpfung, halte doch ein,
Genug des Werdens, laß mich sein!

Halte an dich,
zeugende Kraft,
Urgedanke, der ewig schafft!
Hemmet den Atem,
stillt den Drang,
Schweiget nur eine Sekunde lang!
Schwellende Pulse,
fesselt den Schlag;
Ende, des Wollens ew'ger Tag!
Daß in selig süßem Vergessen
Ich mög' alle Wonne erlassen!

Stand still!

Rushing, roaring
wheel of time,
You that measure eternity;
Gleaming spheres in the vast universe,
You that surround our earthly sphere;
Eternal creation - cease:
Enough of becoming, let me be!

Hold yourselves back,
generative powers,
Primal Thought that always creates!
Stop your breath,
still your urge,
Be silent for a single moment!
Swelling pulses,
restrain your beating;
Eternal day of the Will - end!
That in blessed, sweet oblivion
I might measure all my bliss!

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³ <https://oxfordsong.org/song/der-engel>

⁴ Linsenmayer, M., (2015, May 2). *Schopenhauer's idealism: How time began with the First Eye Opening: The Partially Examined Life Philosophy Podcast: A Philosophy Podcast and blog.* <https://partiallyexaminedlife.com/2015/05/01/schopenhauers-idealism-how-time-began-with-the-first-eye-opening/>

Wenn Auge in Auge wonnig trinken,
 Seele ganz in Seele versinken;
 Wesen in Wesen sich wiederfindet,
 Und alles Hoffens Ende sich kündigt,
 Die Lippe verstummt in
 staunendem Schweigen,
 Keinen Wunsch mehr will das
 Innre zeugen:
 Erkennt der Mensch
 des Ew'gen Spur,
 Und löst dein Rätsel, heil'ge Natur!

When eye gazes blissfully into eye,
 When soul drowns utterly in soul;
 When being finds itself in being,
 And the goal of every hope is near,
 When lips are mute in
 silent wonder,
 When the soul wishes for
 nothing more:
 Then man perceives
 Eternity's footprint,
 And solves your riddle, holy Nature!⁵

"Im Treibhause" lies in spiritual exile and alienation. As the narrator compares herself to exotic plants housed in a greenhouse, she yearns for a lost home and suffers in an artificial world. This greenhouse becomes a metaphor for longing, detachment, and the futility of worldly desires. Schopenhauer's "veil of Maya" (illusion of world) is present here, as the plants are synonymous to the beauty of life that hides deep suffering.⁶ Wagner has marked the score a "study for Tristan und Isolde".

Im Treibhause

Hochgewölbte Blätterkronen,
 Baldachine von Smaragd,
 Kinder ihr aus fernen Zonen,
 Saget mir, warum ihr klagt?

 Schweigend neiget ihr die Zweige,
 Malet Zeichen in die Luft,
 Und der Leiden stummer Zeuge
 Steiget aufwärts, süßer Duft.

 Weit in sehndem Verlangen
 Breitet ihr die Arme aus
 Und umschlinget wahnbevangen
 Öder Leere nicht'gen Graus.

 Wohl ich weiß es, arme Pflanze:
 Ein Geschicke teilen wir,
 Ob umstrahlt von Licht und Glanze,
 Unsre Heimat ist nicht hier!

 Und wie froh die Sonne scheidet
 Von des Tages leerem Schein,
 Hüllet der, der wahrhaft leidet,
 Sich in Schweigens Dunkel ein.

 Stille wird's, ein säuselnd Weben
 Füllet bang den dunklen Raum:
 Schwere Tropfen seh' ich schweben
 An der Blätter grünem Saum.

In the Greenhouse

High-arching leafy crowns,
 Canopies of emerald,
 You children who dwell in distant climes,
 Tell me, why do you lament?

 Silently you bend your branches,
 Inscribe your symbols on the air,
 And a sweet fragrance rises,
 As silent witness to your sorrows.

 With longing and desire
 You open wide your arms,
 And embrace in your delusion
 Desolation's awful void.

 I am well aware, poor plant;
 We both share a single fate,
 Though bathed in gleaming light,
 Our homeland is not here!

 And just as the sun is glad to leave
 The empty gleam of day,
 The true sufferer veils himself
 In the darkness of silence.

 It grows quiet, a whirring whisper
 Fills the dark room uneasily:
 I see heavy droplets hanging
 From the green edge of the leaves.⁷

⁵ *Stehe still!*: Song texts, lyrics & translations. Oxford Song. (n.d.-b).
<https://oxfordsong.org/song/stehe-still>

⁶ Eastern philosophy - schopenhauer and maya - philosophy stack exchange. (n.d.).
<https://philosophy.stackexchange.com/questions/24188/schopenhauer-and-maya>

⁷ *Im treibhaus*: Song texts, lyrics & translations. Oxford Song. (n.d.-b).
<https://oxfordsong.org/song/im-treibhaus>

“Schmerzen” shows the paradox of beauty through pain. Just as the sun must burn to shine, the human heart must suffer for the ability to feel the opposing sublime. This ties in with Wagner’s continuous theme that an artist is a suffering visionary.

Schmerzen

Sonne, weinest jeden Abend
Dir die Schönen Augen rot,
Wenn im Meeresspiegel badend
Dich erreicht der frühe Tod;

Doch erstehst in alter Pracht,
Glorie der düstren Welt,
Du am Morgen, neu erwacht,
Wie ein stolzer Siegesheld!

Ach, wie sollte ich da klagen,
Wie, mein Herz,
so schwer dich sehn,
Muß die Sonne selbst verzagen,
Muß die Sonne untergehn?

Und gebietet Tod nur Leben,
Geben Schmerzen Wonnen nur:
O wie dank’ich daß gegeben
Solche Schmerzen mir Natur.

Agonies

Every evening, sun, you redden
Your lovely eyes with weeping,
When, bathing in the sea,
You die an early death;

Yet you rise in your old splendour,
The glory of the dark world,
When you wake in the morning
As a proud and conquering hero!

Ah, why should I complain,
Why should I see you,
my heart, so depressed,
If the sun itself must despair,
If the sun itself must set?

If only death gives birth to life,
If only agony brings bliss:
O how I give thanks to Nature
For giving me such agony!⁸

“Träume”, the final song of the cycle, focuses on the wonderment of dreams and experience of love. Like the other poems in the cycle, Träume idealizes a higher, eternal plane of existence as opposed to earthly reality. As the text progresses, the poet experiences the dreams with increasing vividness as they do not fade away despite the first stanza. Instead, they “sink into the tomb” in the last stanza, achieving their ideal destiny. Deeply Schopenhauerian, we see the highest form of love is the renunciation of the self and the will through dissolution. This score is also marked as a study for *Tristan und Isolde*.

Träume

Sag, welch wunderbare Träume
Halten meinen Sinn umfängen,
Daß sie nicht wie leere Schäume
Sind in ödes Nichts vergangen?

Träume, die in jeder Stunde,
Jedem Tage schöner blühn,
Und mit ihrer Himmelskunde
Selig durchs Gemüte ziehn!

Träume, die wie hehre Strahlen
In die Seele sich versenken,
Dort ein ewig Bild zu malen:
Allvergessen, Eingedenken!

Träume, wie wenn Frühlingssonne
Aus dem Schnee die Blüten küßt,
Daß zu nie geahnter Wonne
Sie der neue Tag begrüßt,

Dreams

Say, what wondrous dreams are these
Embracing all my senses,
That they have not, like bubbles,
Vanished to a barren void?

Dreams, that with every hour
Bloom more lovely every day,
And with their heavenly tidings
Float blissfully through the mind!

Dreams, that with glorious rays
Penetrate the soul,
There to paint an eternal picture:
Forgetting all, remembering one!

Dreams, as when the Spring sun
Kisses blossoms from the snow,
So the new day might welcome them
In unimagined bliss,

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⁸ Schmerzen: Song texts, lyrics & translations. Oxford Song. (n.d.-c).
<https://oxfordsong.org/song/schmerzen>

Daß sie wachsen, daß sie blühen,
Träumend spenden ihren Duft,
Sanft an deiner Brust verglühen,
Und dann sinken in die Gruff.

So that they grow and flower,
Bestow their scent as in a dream,
Fade softly away on your breast
And sink into their grave.⁹

Jacques Offenbach was a German-born French composer, best known as the father of operetta. Born in Cologne to a Jewish cantor, he moved to Paris as a teenager and eventually became one of the city's most beloved and influential musical figures.¹⁰ His style is often thought as light, tuneful, clever, and irreverent. A few of his most notable works include *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Le Belle Hélène* (1864), and *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* (1881), posthumously completed.

"**Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour**" is a duet in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* between the characters Guilietta and Nicklausse. The duet is written in the style of a barcarolle with a lilting, gently rocking movement in 6/8 time reflecting the movement of gondolas on the canals of Venice.

Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour

Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour
Souris à nos ivresses
Nuit plus douce que le jour
Ô, belle nuit d'amour!
Le temps fuit et sans retour
Emporte nos tendresses
Loin de cet heureux séjour
Le temps fuit sans retour
Zéphyrus embrasés
Versez-nous vos caresses
Donnez-nous vos baisers!
Vos baisers! Vos baisers! Ah!

Beautiful night, oh night of love

Beautiful night, oh night of love
Smile upon our joys!
Night sweeter than the day
O, beautiful night of love!
Time flees and never returns
Carrying away our endearments
Far from this happy stay
Time flees and never returns.
Burning Zephyrs
Give us your caresses
Give us your kisses!
Your kisses! Your kisses! Ah!!¹¹

⁹ *Träume: Song texts, lyrics & translations*. Oxford Song. (n.d.).
<https://oxfordsong.org/song/tr%C3%A4ume-2>

¹⁰ Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. (n.d.). *Jacques Offenbach*. Encyclopædia Britannica.
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jacques-Offenbach>

¹¹ *Belle Nuit: Les contes d'hoffmann: Jacques Offenbach*. Opera. (n.d.).
[https://www.opera-arias.com/offenbach/les-contes-d'hoffmann/belle-nuit-\(barcarolle\)/](https://www.opera-arias.com/offenbach/les-contes-d'hoffmann/belle-nuit-(barcarolle)/)

Leonard Bernstein was a towering figure in 20th-century music—an American composer, conductor, pianist, and educator. He broke boundaries between classical and popular music and became one of the most charismatic and influential musicians of his time. He blurred genres and believed deeply that music could heal, teach, and transform society.¹²

“So Pretty” is a short but powerful anti-war art song composed in 1968, with lyrics by Betty Comden and Adolph Green. It was written for a Vietnam War protest and performed by Barbra Streisand at a high-profile fundraiser for presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy. This simple, yet effective message still remains relevant today and I would like to dedicate this song to those affected in Gaza.

So Pretty

We were learning in school today
All about a country far away
Full of lovely temples painted gold,
Modern cities, jungles ages old.
And the people are so pretty there
Shining smiles, and shiny eyes and hair...
Then I had to ask my teacher why
War was making all those people die.
They're so pretty, so pretty.
Then my teacher said, and took my hand,
“They must die for peace, you understand.”
But they're so pretty, so pretty.
I don't understand.

Aaron Copland was a groundbreaking American composer, often called “the voice of American music.” He created a distinctly American sound by blending folk melodies, open harmonies, and modern classical techniques. He wrote both sophisticated concert works and popular-sounding pieces that reached wide audiences, having composed film scores, chamber music, and vocal works such as *Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson*. According to Copland, these songs are “intellectual and discreet”, written with angular vocal lines, repeated rhythmic patterns, and simple melodic material.¹³

“Nature, The Gentlest Mother” is transparent and pastoral with text painting that reflects the sound of nature through the piece. With the occasional birdcall, Dickinson's poem gives mother nature a voice as she nurtures all living things with kindness and patience.

¹² *Leonard Bernstein: Kennedy Center*. The Kennedy Center. (n.d.). <https://www.kennedy-center.org/artists/b/ba-bn/leonard-bernstein/>

¹³ *Twelve poems of Emily Dickinson*. Song of America. (2023, February 23). <https://songofamerica.net/song/twelve-poems-of-emily-dickinson/>

Nature, the gentlest mother

Nature, the gentlest mother
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest,—
Her admonition mild

In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.

How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon,—
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down

Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.

When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky,

With infinite affection
And infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.

"Why Do They Shut Me Out of Heaven?" expresses a sense of alienation and longing, a frequent theme of Dickinson. As vocal passages alternate between a declamatory style and more lyrical sections, we find a simple piano accompaniment that is direct and vulnerable.

Why do they shut Me out of Heaven?

Why do they shut Me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?
But I can say a little "Minor"
Timid as a Bird!

Wouldn't the Angels try me
Just once more
Just see if I troubled them
But don't shut the door!

Oh, if I were the Gentleman
In the "White Robes"
And they were the little Hand that knocked
Would I forbid?
Why do they shut Me out of Heaven?
Did I sing too loud?

“Heart, We Will Forget Him” a quiet but powerful reflection on loss, memory, and the inner struggle to let go of love. Copland uses simple lines and slow pacing to create a feeling of quiet reflection and inner conflict as the music is sparse, gentle, and lyrical, mirroring the emotional delicacy of the text.

Heart, we will forget him

Heart, we will forget him
You and I, tonight.
You may forget the warmth he gave,
I will forget the light.

When you have done, pray tell me,
That I my thoughts may dim;
Haste! lest while you're lagging,
I may remember him!

“I Felt a Funeral in My Brain” explores inner torment, mental collapse, and the boundaries of consciousness, all drawn from Dickinson's haunting poem. One of the most intense and psychologically complex songs in the cycle, sharp rhythms and sudden dynamic shifts are heard by both the voice and the piano to imitate a fragmented mind.

I felt a funeral in my brain,

I felt a funeral in my brain,
And mourners to and fro,
Kept treading, treading, till it seemed
That sense was breaking through.

And when they all were seated
A service like a drum
Kept beating, beating, till I thought
My mind was going numb.

And then I heard them lift a box,
And creak across my soul
With those same boots of lead again
Then space began to toll

As all the heavens were a bell,
And Being but an ear,
And I and silence some strange race,
Wrecked, solitary, here.

Giuseppe Verdi was one of the greatest Italian opera composers of his time, if not all time. His music is known for its emotional power, memorable melodies, and deep connection to human drama. A master of combining intense personal stories with political and social themes, his operas feature vivid characters, dramatic plots, and rich, expressive music. A few of his iconic operas include *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Aida*, and *Il trovatore*. His works remain central to the operatic repertoire worldwide.

“Stride La Vampa”, an aria from *Il trovatore*, is the character Azucena's recalling of watching her mother burned alive. The scene reveals the trauma that drives an obsession with revenge to avenge her mother—an obsession that led her to accidentally kill her own child, ultimately leading to her fractured psyche and the tragic consequences that would follow.

Stride la vampa!

Stride la vampa!
La folla indomita
Corre a quel fuoco,
Lieta in sembianza;

Urli di gioia
Intorno echeggiano:
Cinta di sgherri
Donna s' avanza!

Sinistra, splende
Sui volti orribili,
La tetra fi amma
Che s'alza al ciel!

Stride la vampa!
Giunge la vittima
Nerovestita,
Discinta e scalza!

Grido feroce
Di morte levassi;
L'eco il ripete
Di balza in balza!

Sinistra, splende
Sui volti orribili,
La tetra fi amma
Che s'alza al ciel!

The Fire Roars!

The fire roars!
The restless mob
runs to the fire
with happy faces;

shouts of joy
echo around;
surrounded by killers
a woman is brought forth!

Evil shines
upon horrible faces
beside the gloomy flame
that rises to the sky!

The fire roars!
The victim arrives
dressed in black,
disheveled, barefoot!

A fierce shout
of death arises;
the echo repeats
from hill to hill!

Evil shines
upon horrible faces
beside the gloomy flame
that rises to the sky!¹⁴

¹⁴ Green, A. (2019, February 1). “Stride la vampa” from Verdi’s “Trovatore.” LiveAbout. <https://www.liveabout.com/stride-la-vampa-lyrics-and-english-text-translation-724032>

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