

Alexis Seminario, soprano
Degree Recital
Sunday, May 8, 2022
3 pm

Texts + Translations

From *Les Illuminations*

Benjamin Britten (1913–76)
Text by Arthur Rimbaud (1854–91)

I. Fanfare (1854-91)

Fanfare

J'ai seul la clef de cette parade sauvage.

I alone hold the key to this savage parade.

VII. Being Beauteous

Being Beauteous

Devant une neige, un Être de Beauté de haute
taille. Des sifflements de mort et des cercles de
musique sourde font monter, s'élargir et trembler
comme un spectre ce corps adoré: des blessures
écarlates et noires éclatent dans les chaires
superbes. Les couleurs propres de la vie se
foncent, dansent, et se dégagent autour de la
Vision, sur le chantier. Et les frissons s'élèvent et
grondent, et la saveur forcenée de ces effets se c
hargeant avec les sifflements
mortels et les rauques musiques que le monde, loin derrière
nous, lance sur notre mère de beauté,—elle recule,
elle se dresse. O! nos os sont revêtus d'un
nouveau corps amoureux.

Before the snow, stands a tall Being of Beauty.
There is the whistling of death and circles of
deafening music which makes this being expand,
and tremble like a phantom covered in injuries
that are scarlet and black and burst in superb
flesh. The immaculate colors of life darken, dance,
and emerge around the Vision, on site. And
shivers rise and rumble, and the frenzied flavor of
these effects, charged with the deadly whistle and
screeching music that the world, far behind us,
launches on our mother of beauty,—she
withdraws, stands up. Oh! Our bones are coated
once more with a new loving body.

Ô la face cendrée, l'écusson de crin, les bras de cristal! le
canon sur lequel je dois m'abattre à travers la mêlée des
arbres et de l'air léger!

Oh, the ashen face, the crest of horsehair, the arms of crys-
tal! The cannon on which I must come down to through the
melee of trees and the light air!

Her Kind, (1960) from *Sexton Songs* (2004)

David Conte (b. 1955)
Text by Anne Sexton (1928–74)

I have gone out, a possessed witch,
haunting the black air, braver at night;
dreaming evil, I have done my hitch
over the plain houses, light by light:
lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind.
A woman like that is not a woman, quite.
I have been her kind.

I have ridden in your cart, driver,
waved my nude arms at villages going by,
learning the last bright routes, survivor
where your flames still bite my thigh
and my ribs crack where your wheels wind.
A woman like that is not ashamed to die.
I have been her kind.

I have found the warm caves in the woods,
filled them with skilllets, carvings, shelves,
closets, silks, innumerable goods;
fixed the suppers for the worms and the elves:
whining, rearranging the disaligned.
A woman like that is misunderstood.
I have been her kind.

Песня Офелии

Разлучаясь с девою милой,
Друг, ты клялся мне любить!..
Уезжая в край постылый,
Клятву данную хранить!..

Там, за Данией счастливой,
Берега твои во мгле...
Вал сердитый, говорливый
Моет слезы на скале...

Милый воин не вернется,
Весь одетый в серебро...
В гробе тяжело всколыхнется
Бант и черное перо...

Гамаюн птица вещая

На глядах бесконечных вод,
Закатом в пурпур облеченных,
Она вещает и поет,
Не в силах крыл поднять смятенных...

Вещает иго злых татар,
Вещает казней ряд кровавых,
И трус, и голод, и пожар,
Злодеев силу, гибель правых...

Предвечным ужасом объят,
Прекрасный лик горит любовью,
Но вещей правдою звучат
Уста, запекшиеся кровью!..

Мои были вместе

Мы были вместе, помню я...
Ночь волновалась, скрипка пела...
Ты в эти дни была — моя,
Ты с каждым часом хорошела...

Сквозь тихое журчанье струй,
Сквозь тайну женственной улыбки
К устам просился поцелуй,
Просились в сердце звуки скрипки...

Ophelia's Song

You are leaving your sweet girl, dear,
You swore to me your love!..
Leaving for an undesired country,
You gave an oath you said you would keep!

There, beyond happy Denmark,
Your shores are in the darkness...
The waves are angry, talkative
Washing the tears from the cliff...

My darling warrior will not return,
All dressed in silver...
The red and black feather
will shake heavily in the coffin.

Gamayun, the bird of prophecy

Over the surface of endless waters
Wrapped with purple sunset,
She prophesies and sings,
Unable to raise her burdened wings...

She prophesies the cruel Tartars' oppression,
Foretells bloody executions,
Earthquakes, famines, and fires,
Powerful villains, and death of the innocent.

Surrounded by primordial terror,
Her beautiful face burns with love,
But her lips encrusted with blood
echo with prophetic truth!

We were together

We were together, I remember...
The night was doomed and the violin sang...
In those days you were mine,
With each hour you grew more beautiful...

Through the quiet rippling of the stream,
Through secret feminine smiles
Lips begging for a kiss,
Our hearts begging for the sound of the violin...

A Letter to My Daughter

My mother walked softly round her silent house
While images faded from darkening mirrors
And the grey ash of fear
Fell. - She knew
There would be no return, as I know
Your childhood is sealed for ever,
A ship in a stoppered bottle.
Now You travel strange roads, sleep
In strange beds and your dreams
Are the dreams of a stranger.
Your life Speaks with a different tongue.
Memories grow transparent
I search for your essence
In hastily scrawled letters, and
Recoil from the apprehension
Of your total absence. The wind
That sweeps over sea and over land
Effaces all tracemarks-it measures
The distance between us. And distance
Takes many forms—of space and time.
Heart, mind and darkness.
So I shall light
A lamp in my window every night,
To comfort myself and also
To guide you safely home.

Walpurgisnacht, from *Four Ballades and Romances, Op.75*

Johannes Brahms
Text by Georg Wilhelm Heinrich Häring (under the pseudonym Willibald Alexis) (1798-1871)

Walpurgisnacht

“Lieb’ Mutter, heuf’ Nacht heulte Regen und Wind.”
“Ist heute der erste Mai, liebes Kind!”

“Lieb Mutter, es donnerte auf dem Brocken oben!”
“Lieb Kind, es waren die Hexen droben.”

“Liebe Mutter, ich möcht’ keine Hexen sehn.”
“Liebes Kind, es ist wohl schon oft geschehn.”

“Liebe Mutter, ob im Dorf’ wohl Hexen sind?”
“Sie sind Dir wohl näher, mein liebes Kind.”

“Ach Mutter, worauf fliegen die Hexen zum Berg?”
“Auf Nebel, auf Rauch, auf loderndem Werg.”

“Ach Mutter, was reiten die Hexen beim Spiel?”
“Sie reiten, sie reiten den Besenstiel.”

Walpurgis Night

“Dear Mother, the wind and rain howls tonight,”
“It is the first of May, dear child...”

“Dear Mother, there's thunder on the Brocken above¹.”
“Dear child, it is the witches above.”

“Dear Mother, I don't want to see witches.”
“Dear child, it has probably happened many times before.”

“Dear Mother, are there witches in the village?”
“They're probably closer to you, my dear child.”

“Dear Mother, how do the witches fly up to the mountain?”
“Dear child, on smoke from glowing flax.”

“Dear Mother, how do the witches ride to the meeting?”
“Dear child, they ride on a broomstick.”

“Ach Mutter, was fegten im Dorfe die Besen!”

“Es sind auch viel Hexen auf'm Berge gewesen.”

“Ach Mutter, was hat es Schornstein gekracht!”

“Es flog auch wohl Eine hinaus über Nacht.”

“Ach Mutter, dein Besen war die Nacht nicht zu Haus!”

“Lieb's Kind, so war er zum Brocken hinaus.”

“Ach Mutter, Dein Bette war leer in der Nacht!”

“Deine Mutter hat oben auf dem Blocksberg gewacht.”

“Dear Mother, there were a lot of brooms in the village yesterday.”

“There were also a lot of witches on the mountain.”

“Ah Mother, last night the chimney was smoking.”

“Dear child, someone needed to burn flax.”

“Dear Mother, last night your broom was missing.”

“Dear child, it was over the Brocken.”

“Dear Mother, your bed was empty last night.”

“Your Mother was on top of the Blocksberg.”

1. The Brocken, also sometimes referred to as the Blocksberg, is the highest peak in the Harz mountain range and also the highest peak in Northern Germany.

Ma première lettre

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Hélas! que nous oublions vite ...
J'y songeais hier en trouvant
Une petite lettre écrite
Lorsque je n'étais qu'une enfant.

Je lus jusqu'à la signature
Sans ressentir le moindre émoi,
Sans reconnaître l'écriture,
Et sans voir qu'elle était de moi.

En vain je voulus la relire,
Me rappeler, faire un effort . . .
J'ai pu penser cela, l'écrire,
Mais le souvenir en est mort!

Ô la pauvre naïve lettre,
Ecrive encor si gauchement . . .
Mais j'y songe, c'était peut-être
Ma première, un événement!

Jadis à ma mère ravie
Je l'ai montrée en triomphant.
Est-il possible qu'on oublie
Sa première lettre d'enfant!

Et puis le temps vient où l'on aime,
Et l'on écrit . . . et puis un jour,
Un jour on l'oubliera de même,
Sa première lettre d'amour!

Cécile Chaminade (1857–1944)
Text by Rosemonde Gérard (1871–1953)

My first letter

Alas! How quickly we forget...
It struck me yesterday, having found
A little letter written
When I was just a little girl.

I read as far as the signature
Without feeling the slightest bit of emotion,
Without recognizing the handwriting
And without seeing that I had written it.

Without success I tried to re-read it,
To remember, made an effort . . .
I had been able to think and write those thoughts, But the
memory has died!

Oh the poor, naïve letter,
So awkwardly written . . .
Yet, I think about it, maybe it was
My first, an event!

Once to my delighted mother
I showed it in triumph.
Is it possible that we forget
One's first letter from childhood!

And then the time comes when we love
And we write . . . and then one day,
One day we will forget that too,
That first letter of love!

Erwartung (1896)

Aus dem meergrünen Teiche
neben der roten Villa
unter der toten Eiche
scheint der Mond.

Wo ihr dunkles Abbild
durch das Wasser greift,
steht ein Mann und streift
einen Ring von seiner Hand.

Drei Opale blinken;
durch die bleichen Steine
schwimmen rot und grüne
funken und versinken.

Und er küßt sie, und
seine Augen leuchten
wie der meergrüne Grund:
ein Fenster tut sich auf.

Aus der roten Villa
neben der toten Eiche
winkt ihm eine bleiche
Frauenhand.

Schenk mir deinen goldenen Kamm

Schenk mir deinen goldenen Kamm;
jeder Morgen soll dich mahnen,
daß du mir die Haare küßttest.
Schenk mir deinen seidenen Schwamm;
jeden Abend will ich ahnen,
wem du dich im Bade rüstest,
o Maria!

Schenk mir Alles, was du hast;
meine Seele ist nicht eitel,
stolz empfang ich deinen Segen.
Schenk mir deine schwerste Last:
willst du nicht auf meinen Scheitel
auch dein Herz, dein Herz noch legen,
Magdalena?

Erhebung

Gib mir deine Hand,
nur den Finger, dann
seh ich diesen ganzen Erdkreis
als mein Eigen an!

O, wie blüht mein Land!
Sieh dir's doch nur an,
daß es mit uns über die Wolken
in die Sonne kann!

Anticipation

From the sea-green pond
near the red villa
beneath the dead oak
shines the moon.

Where her dark image
gleams through the water,
a man stands, and draws out
a ring from his hand.

Three opals glimmer;
among the pale stones
swim red and green
sparks and sink down.

And he kisses it,
and his eyes light up
like the deep green sea:
a window opens.

From the red villa
near the dead oak,
beckons a pale
woman's hand.

Give me your golden comb

Give me your golden comb;
every morning it shall remind you
that you kissed my hair.
Give me your silken sponge;
each evening I want to know
for whom you have prepared your bath -
oh, Maria!

Give me everything you have;
my soul is not vain,
proudly I receive your blessing.
Give me your heaviest load:
Don't you want to lay your heart
upon my head, lay your heart
Magdalena?

Exaltation

Give me your hand,
or even just a finger
I shall see this whole round earth
as my own!

Oh, how my country blooms!
Just look at me,
so that I may go over the clouds
into the sun!

Farther From the Heart, from the collection: *A Book of Days* (2016)

Eve Beglarian (b. 1958)
Text by Jane Bowles (1917–73)

Farther From the Heart (1942)

Oh, I'm sad for never knowing courage,
And I'm sad for the stilling of fear.
Close to the sun now and farther from the heart.
I think that my end must be near.

I linger too long at a picnic
'cause a picnic's gayer than me.
And I hold to the edge of the table
'cause the table's stronger than me.
And I lean on anyone's shoulder
Because anyone's warmer than me.

From *Four Poems of Nikita Gill* (2018)

Melissa Dunphy (b. 1980)
Text by Nikita Gill (1987)

I. Sorcery
for Lindsey Bower

Every day, I magic myself alive again
from the near death experience of trauma.
I swallow my heart back from
the lump it has become in my throat.
I taste my own memories
without the flavour of blood but as poetry.
I learn how to whisper my name
without it sounding like a curse.
I murmur spells to the parts of me
others have found too dangerous to love.

And after this morning ritual
I finally smile at the woman in my mirror.
Tell me again,
how healing is not a magical thing.
Tell me again,
how I am not made of sorcery.

II. From The Ashes She Became
for Lara Connally

Before she became fire, she was water.
Quenching the thirst of every dying creature.
She gave and she gave
until she turned from sea to desert.
But instead of dying of the heat,
the sadness, the heartache,
she took all of her pain
and from her own ashes became fire.

III. You Have Become a Forest
for Emily Lancon

One day when you wake up, you will find that you have become a forest. You have grown roots and found strength in them that no one thought you had. You have become stronger and more beautiful, full of life giving qualities. You have learned to take all the negativity around you and turn it into oxygen for easy breathing. A host of wild creatures live inside you and you call them stories. A variety of beautiful birds rest inside your mind and you call them memories. You have become an incredible self sustaining thing of epic proportions. And you should be so proud of yourself, of how far you have come from the seeds of who you used to be.