Senior Recital

Jennell Smith, soprano
Arie Motschman, piano

Sunday, April 23, 2017 at 7 pm
Music Building Recital Hall
One-hundred Twenty-first Concert of the 2016-17 Concert Season
WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

*Exsultate, jubilate*, K. 165

I. Exsultate, jubilate
II. Tu virginum corona
III. Alleluia

CLARA SCHUMANN (1819-1896)

*Liebst du um Schönheit*

GUSTAV MAHLER (1860-1911)

*Liebst du um Schönheit*

AMY BEACH (1867-1944)

*Three Browning Songs*, Op. 44

I. The Year’s at the Spring
II. Ah, Love, but a Day!
III. I Send My Heart up to Thee

arr. Hale Smith (1925-2009)

*This Little Light of Mine*

arr. Hall Johnson (1888-1970)

*His Name So Sweet*
**Exsultate, jubilate, K. 65 | W. A. Mozart**

In January 1773, Mozart wrote the solo motet *Exsultate, jubilate*, in his teenage years, after hearing the gifted Italian castrato, Venanzio Rauzzini. This cycle was written on his last of three concert tours in Italy. It has now been adapted for predominantly female voices. Although the text authorship is anonymous, Mozart captured the essence of this piece with his jubilant music. The translation, which means "shout for joy," is particularly exemplified in the third movement.

**Liebst du um Schönheit | Clara Schumann**

Robert Schumann secretly published this piece in a collection entitled *Three Songs, Op. 12*, and presented it to Clara Schumann on their first anniversary and Christmas together. This song is set to the words of poet Friedrich Rückert and conveys the idea of loving someone for the sake of true love and not superficiality. Clara was known for having masterful technique, beautiful tone and poetic spirit in her compositional style.

Clara Schumann was a German composer and a celebrated concert pianist. She toured for over 60 years and was known as the ‘Queen of the Piano.’ She was the main breadwinner of the family and often times performed music from Chopin and her husband from memory. Clara and Robert Schumann were close friends with Johannes Brahms and some were led to believe Clara and Brahms were more than friends. They frequently spent time together and shortly after Robert’s death Clara died and Brahms followed soon after, allegedly from heartbreak.

**Liebst du um Schönheit | Gustav Mahler**

Gustav Mahler is mainly known for his conducting and his large symphonic works. He began as a pianist, where he started lessons at the age of six, but later on as an adult, he gravitated towards conducting. Despite his mastery of conducting and symphonic works, he still encompassed great skill in his vocal compositions. According to Oxford Music Online, Mahler had “idealistic aesthetics of Romanticism” and believed that “Astro-German music was higher than other types…” because it possessed “spiritual and philosophical significance.” This was able to transcend and potentially reconcile the social and racial differences of his time.
This vocal selection is also based on Friedrich Rückert’s poem, but Mahler’s version is completely juxtaposed to Schumann’s rendition. This piece is written in the romantic time period and the poetic interpretation is reflected in the music. It is simple but still grand; it is delicate but strong. He mastered the art of conflicting beauty. Schumann did more text painting, but Mahler’s interpretation is equally as beautiful with great climactic moments in the vocal melody as it ascends and the sense of suspense when the melody descends.

The Three Browning Songs, Op. 44  |  Amy Beach

Much like Beethoven and Mozart, Amy Beach was a child prodigy. “She was able to accurately and always sing up to 40 songs in the same key, and before the age of two, she knew how to improvise the alto piano line above her mother’s soprano melodies on the piano.” She even taught herself to read at the tender age of three and four and would mentally compose piano pieces. To add even more insight to her genius at a juvenile age, “she could play by ear whatever music she heard, including hymns in four-part harmony.” She made her critically acclaimed debut with the Boston Symphony Orchestra as a piano concerto soloist before the age of 18 and became a self-taught composer after watching Wilhelm Gericke. Gericke conducted the Boston Symphony Orchestra and encouraged Beach to sit in on rehearsals so that she could learn about compositions. According to Mardinly, “she began transcribing works of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner, as well as translating Hector Berlioz’ theoretical treatise from its French language.” It was frowned upon for a woman to compose in a serious manner, so her resources were limited. She had no choice but to teach herself. She devoted her time to composition instead of performance after she married. Despite her limited resources, Beach rose to the occasion and became a great composer.

These songs were set to the poetry of Robert Browning. It was a part of a romantic drama called “In a Gondola” that consisted of dialogue between lovers. Amy Beach admired the poetry of Browning and took on the venture of composing music to best suit the text. These pieces are beautiful and are great examples of romantic pieces because of their harmonic structures and the grandeur construction of the accompaniment in contrast to the simple and sweet melody. This is especially heard in “Ah, Love, but a Day!” and “I Send My Heart up to Thee.”
**This Little Light of Mine** | Hale Smith

Hale Smith was influenced at an early age by the jazz styles of fellow black musicians Earl Hines and Duke Ellington. His experience as a jazz performer, composer and orchestrator led him to undertake projects with several noted jazz musicians, including a collaboration with Foreststorn ‘Chico’ Hamilton on the film score for *Mr. Ricco* in 1974. His music is characterized by a clever organization of motivic materials, an attention to melodic writing and a free use of chromaticism.

The Jazz influence heavily expressed in this arrangement of the popular spiritual “This little light of mine,” is beautifully arranged by Hale Smith, where he keeps the familiar melody, but adds color and harmonious jazz chords underneath.

**His Name so Sweet** | Hall Johnson

Hall Johnson was an American choral director and composer. He received his first music degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1910 and studied further at the Juilliard School and the University of Southern California. In 1934 he received an honorary Doctorate in Music from the Philadelphia Music Academy. Johnson began his career as a violinist and violist, but turned to choral conducting in 1925 and organized the famous Hall Johnson Choir. The most notable appearances of the choir were in the stage and film productions of *The Green Pastures*, in the film *Lost Horizon*, and at the 1951 International Festival of Fine Arts in Berlin.

This selection involves a conversation between the singer and the sinner, class leader and Zid’n elder in expressing the goodness of the Lord Jesus. The singer wants to express just how good the name of Jesus is after an encounter with Jesus at the well. The singer asks if they know Jesus in the way that he/she knows him because after that encounter, his life is changed! I imagined that this spiritual is derived from the story of the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4:1-26.
Jennell Smith is currently a senior at Kennesaw State University pursuing a Bachelor’s in Music Education in Choral Studies. She entered KSU in fall 2014, after receiving an Associates Degree in Music from Georgia State University Perimeter College, where she studied voice under Dr. Tamara Harper and Evelyn Sponaugle-Hughes. At Georgia Perimeter College, she portrayed the roles of Patty Simcox, in the school’s production of *Grease*, Papagena’ in the school’s production of *The Magic Flute*, and in an Honor’s recital, where she performed works from Handel, Wolf, Schumann and Faure’.

At KSU, Smith is a member of the Chamber Singers choir under Dr. Leslie Blackwell, and has been a member upon her first semester at KSU. She is also a member of the Gospel Choir under Dr. Oral Moses, and has sung with the Women’s Choir under Dr. Alison Mann. She performs around Atlanta, Georgia, but mostly enjoys performing annually at the 2020 Leading Women’s Awards, where the awareness of persons living with HIV and activists of HIV are recognized for their great works in the community. She is also a private instructor at Kavali’s Flying Fingers Inc., where she teaches voice, piano and guitar. She is an advent member of her church, where she sings on the praise team and is the Sunday school teacher and youth leader. She hopes to build her own private vocal studio, upon receiving her degree as well as teach Middle School Chorus.
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- **KSU Community and Alumni Choir**
about the school of music

The School of Music at Kennesaw State University is an exciting place to live, work and learn. Housed in the College of the Arts, the School is infused with masterfully skilled and dedicated performing teachers who care deeply about their profession, our programs, our community, and every student involved in music and the arts. We are so excited about the musical and artistic events that happen here, and we are excited that you are here with us to enjoy them!

The School of Music is busy preparing our students to be productive artists. We want them to be accomplished and creative leaders of the arts world of tomorrow, professionals who are diversely trained and well-practiced. Diverse in their backgrounds, our students hail from many of the leading musical arts and honors organizations from across the Southeast, and as a School of Music, we are dedicated to the purpose of furthering the arts and cultural offerings to our region and beyond.

Please take the time to meet our faculty, students and staff. Interact with them, talk shop with them - their enthusiasm is contagious whether on or off the stage. I look forward to a long and rewarding relationship with you. With your continued support of music and the arts, there is nothing that we cannot accomplish together!

Stephen W. Plate, DMA
Director
KSU School of Music

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