Blair School of Music
Presents

Jeffrey Williams, baritone
Jennifer McGuire, piano

Tuesday, September 8, 2020
8:00 p.m.
Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall

Presented with gratitude to an anonymous friend
for generously supporting the Blair School
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Jennifer McGuire, piano

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**Vier Arietten**, op. 82 (1811)
- Dimmi, ben mio, che m’ami
- T’intendo, si, mio cor
- L’amante impaziente (*Arietta assai seriosa*)
- L’amante impaziente (*Arietta buffa*)

*Ludwig van Beethoven* (1770-1827)

**In questa tomba oscura**, WoO 133 (1808)
- Beethoven

**An die ferne Geliebte**, op. 98 (1816)
- Auf dem Hügel sitz ich spähend
- Wo die Berge so blau
- Leichte Segler in den Höhen
- Diese Wolken in den Höhen
- Es kehret der Maien, es blühet die Au
- Nimm sie hin denn, diese Lieder

*Beethoven*

*Intermission*

**Lieder Selections**
- Heinrich Marschner (1795-1861)

- **Ballade vom Ritter Hugo**, op. 190, no. 3 (1860)
- **Das sehndende Herz**, op. 162, no. 6 (1853)
- **Herbstlied**, op. 154, no. 4 (1850)
- **Leb’ wohl, Therese!**, op. 128, no. 3 (1844)
- **Ungleiche Theilung**, op. 151, no. 5 (1850)
- **Der deutsche Wald, das deutsche Herz**, op. 185, no. 1 (1859)
- **Erhuthigung**, op. 185, no. 2 (1859)

**Ha! Welche Lust!**
- Marschner
  - Lord Ruthven’s aria from *Der Vampyr* (1828)

**Ha! Welch‘ ein Augenblick!**
- Beethoven
  - Don Pizarro’s aria from *Fidelio* (1805)
Program Notes

Four Ariettas, op. 82
These songs were published in 1811, at the beginning of Beethoven’s late period. Short and expertly constructed, these gems highlight Beethoven’s expertise in combining music and text. We don’t know the author of the first text, “Dimmi, ben mio, che m’ami,” but in hearing the music, we can understand why Beethoven titled it “Hoffnung” (hope). It is in the bright key of F Major, and features a supportive piano part, at times no piano part (giving the singer time to plead his case) and finally, moments where the piano takes over the melody and the singer responds. Piano and singer come back together before the recapitulation of the first melody with a lengthy cadenza in unison on the word “m’ami.”

The next three ariettas are set to texts by the master librettist Pietro Metastasio. “T’intendo, si, mio cor” has also been set by Gaetano Donizetti, Vincenzo Righini, and Isabella Colbran (the wife of Gioacchino Rossini) among others. In Beethoven’s setting, the piano imitates the beating heart that the narrator is trying to keep silent. It is possible to hear an underlying sense of hope in this song as well; though the narrator wants to keep her feelings close, perhaps she senses they could be reciprocated.

The final two ariettas share the same text, “L’amante impaziente”. The Arietta assai seriosa is a miniature scena, beginning with an anguished “Where is my love” in a slow triple meter. The music then snaps into a fast duple meter, angrily lamenting the excruciating passage of time. The narrator’s emotions swing back and forth once more before landing in the triple meter Andante, reveling in some surprising harmonic changes as the end approaches.

As one may expect, the Arietta buffa is the polar opposite. This narrator doesn’t stop to wallow in their anguish; they seem to pace back and forth, checking their watch and throwing up their hands. The piano tosses off impatient arpeggios and a galumphing bass line in triple meter.

In questa tomba oscura, WoO 133
This is Beethoven’s response to a call for composers to set this text by Giuseppe Carpani. Sixtythree composers submitted songs, but, according to Susan Youens, “Beethoven’s setting is the only memorable version of this poem on an antique theme: the dead lover’s reproach to the...faithless woman.” ¹ The anger of this jilted ghost is palpable in the piano’s tremolos, which start simmering but crescendo to a mighty boil. The chorale that begins and ends the song is simple but strong in nature; the ghost is certain that they are in the right. Beethoven’s addition of two “ingratas” at the end leave no room for doubt.

An die ferne Geliebte, op. 98
Text by Alois Jeitteles

An die ferne Geliebte is widely considered the first song cycle. It is through-composed, so the songs cannot stand on their own, and the opening phrase in the first song reappears in the final song, completing the cycle. In the words of Charles Rosen, “An die ferne Geliebte...not only steps outside the classical aesthetic...[it] also had a deep and genuine influence upon the music of the generation

¹ Susan Youens, program notes for Beethoven: Lieder und Gesänge, Hyperion Records.
immediately after Beethoven’s death...it is astonishing that Beethoven goes even beyond Schubert to the open and circular form of Schumann.”

The texts were written by the young physician Alois Jeitteles. Nature is personified throughout, as the narrator implores the brook, the clouds and the birds to carry his songs to his beloved, and for them to bring the beloved’s back. The narrator revels in the springtime, only to be brought to tears of loneliness. He concludes by releasing his songs out into the world, believing that “at these songs, what parts us so far will recede, and a loving heart will be reached by what a loving heart has blessed.”

An die ferne Geliebte is timeless, and in our current circumstances, perhaps timely. You, dear audience, have experienced separations in your own way very recently. Please accept this performance of An die ferne Geliebte as our gift to all of you, and perhaps as a badge of hope.

Each of the following Marschner song selections are from later in Marschner’s compositional life and after his reputation as a respected opera composer was well established. Due to the fascination with and takeover of Richard Wagner’s music dramas, Marschner started devoting more of his time to the genre of art song. Although Marschner borrowed from greats like Beethoven and Weber, these selections will clearly display his compositional voice. Marschner’s music features the frequent use of triplets, a special brand of melodiousness, his propensity for minor and flat keys, and the assurance that no matter where you are in a given work, you are never far from a diminished chord. All seven of these selections are featured on the “Heinrich Marschner: Songs for Baritone” disc we recorded for Centaur Records that will soon be released.

“Ballade vom Ritter Hugo” is one of the last songs Marschner ever wrote and similar in style to Loewe’s great ballads. This narrative work functions like a compressed thriller-in-verse in which everyone mentioned in the story dies. A knight betrayed by a maiden, rides off violently, thirsty for vengeance. He stabs the maiden’s lover to death with a long spear, then stabs the maiden to death for losing her honor, and in a last act of frustration, the knight stabs himself to death.

“Das sehndende Herz” is a perfect encapsulation of the Romantic period in poetry and in music. As the title dictates, the poem is full of longing and imagery helping us know that peace is ringing for us and our pain will fade away. A triplet C sounds throughout the song representing the beating heart that will inevitably, like all hearts, achieve quiet rest.

“Herbstlied” joys in autumn days that pass by seamlessly and know nothing of anxious worries. You can really hear the leaves calmly dropping overhead in the right hand of the piano. There is a wonderfully satisfying deceptive cadence near the end of the piece where Marschner chose to repeat text and add a sort of sighing coda.

“Leb’ wohl, Therese!” is a German translation by Ferdinand Freiligrath of “Farewell, Theresa!” by Thomas Moore the famous Irish poet and songwriter known for lyrics like “The Last Rose of Summer”. The poetry is dark and Marschner uses the appropriately gloomy C minor to depict the clouds the protagonist has hung over Theresa’s life. He chooses to release Theresa from his heaviness, hoping that when this cloud disappears, she can return to her smiling, happy existence.

“Ungleiche Theilung” is a short, episodic song about the unequal experiences two people can have in the same relationship. While one person may be thriving, the other may be suffering in agony. Marschner uses a simple arpeggiated accompaniment so the focus can be on the text’s exasperations of love.

“Der deutsche Wald, das deutsche Herz” is a flurry of sextuplets in a prideful E-flat Major and a great example of the romanticization of German forests in literature and music. The poem tells us that German forests and German hearts share many of the same traits - depth, flowerings, richness, boldness, etc. The strength of the rhythm and accompaniment are infectious.

“Ermuthigung” is imploring a friend to get out of the house, look around, and see the joy and beauty all around them. He returns to the questions, “Can you possibly complain? Dare you be apprehensive?” multiple times implying the friend was difficult to convince. The song flows effortlessly between recitative-like sections and lyrical sections with clever variances in accompanimental styles appropriately reflecting the text sentiment.

The two concluding arias come from thoroughly evil characters in operas by these great German composers. Lord Ruthven is the titular vampire in Marschner’s Der Vampyr who makes a deal with the Vampire Master to sacrifice three virgin brides within the next 24 hours in exchange for another year of life on Earth. In the aria, “Ha! Welche Lust!” Ruthven describes just how easy this task will be for him and how much pleasure he will get out of it. Don Pizarro is the cruel governor of the prison in Beethoven’s Fidelio that has taken Florestan captive and spreads false rumors about Florestan’s death. In the aria, “Ha! Welch’ ein Augenblick!” Pizarro describes that his moment has come to murder Florestan and claim victory. As you can see in the titles alone and will hear in the musical content/form, Marschner was not shy about borrowing from what Beethoven did in Pizarro’s aria. Although both arias are in d minor and have strikingly similar B sections, the Marschner aria sits higher vocally and calls for a more extended use of the upper range. Both of these are uncommonly brilliant opera arias for the baritone voice in the German language in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century.

Biographies

Jeffrey Williams has been hailed by Baltimore Sun, as “very likable, a winning performance sung with much confidence, phrasing everything stylishly,” by Miami Herald as possessing a “commanding, sizeable, effortless, manly baritone” and by Opera News as a “versatile, fearless performer.” He has portrayed Tchaikovsky’s Eugene Onegin, Marschner’s Lord Ruthven in Der Vampyr, Lionel in the Philadelphia premiere of Tchaikovsky’s Maid of Orleans, Mozart’s Papageno in Die Zauberflöte, Tchaikovsky’s Prince Yeletsky in Pique Dame, Rachmaninoff’s Aleko, Mozart’s Figaro, many of Gilbert & Sullivan’s baritones and numerous others. Williams has been a Nashville Opera Mary Ragland Young Artist and a Seagle Music Colony Young Artist. Williams is a frequent soloist in the diverse oratorio and concert works of Adams, Bach, Barber, Brahms, Fauré, Handel, Mozart, Saint-Saëns, Vaughan Williams and others. He has taken part in the Russian Opera Workshop at the Academy of Vocal Arts, Middlebury College’s Deutsch für Sänger Programm, and the John Duffy Composers Institute in conjunction with the Virginia Arts Festival in Norfolk, Virginia premiering
operatic works of living composers. He appears on two world-premiere recordings, both with Albany Records, Thomas Sleeper’s series of mini-operas Einstein’s Inconsistency and Michael Dellaira’s The Death of Webern, with the latter being recognized as a Critic’s Choice and one of the Five Best New Works of 2016 by Opera News. A third recording of Heinrich Marschner songs with pianist, Jennifer McGuire, for Centaur Records will be released this Fall 2020.

Williams has received numerous awards including an Arleen Auger Memorial Fund Study Grant, the Cynthia Vernardakis Award at the Orpheus National Voice Competition, a Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions Mid-South Regional Finalist, 2018 Wilhelm Stenhammar International Voice Competition Finalist in Norrköping, Sweden, the Baltimore Music Club Prize in Performance, and the George Castelle Award in Voice. He is currently the Tennessee Chapter President of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS). He is also affiliated with American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), the National Opera Association (NOA), and has been inducted into the Pi Kappa Lambda and Omicron Delta Kappa honor societies.

Williams received his D.M.A. in Vocal Pedagogy and Performance from the University of Miami, Frost School of Music, M.M. in Voice Performance from the Peabody Conservatory of The Johns Hopkins University, and B.A. in Music from Muhlenberg College. Williams has taken on additional studies at the Sachrang Akademie in Sachrang, Germany, the Académie Musicale de Villecroze in Villecroze, France, the Salzburg Mozarteum Sommerakademie in Salzburg, Austria, SongFest’s Professional Development Program at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, California, and the 2017 NATS Intern Program in Toronto, Canada. He considers himself fortunate to have worked with some of the world’s finest teachers/singers – Tom Krause, Helen Donath, John Shirley-Quirk, Sherrill Milnes, William Stone, Richard Zeller, François Le Roux, Robynne Redmon and others.

In addition to being associate professor of voice at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, Tennessee, Williams maintains an active performance schedule. For more information, please visit [http://jeffreywilliamsbaritone.com/](http://jeffreywilliamsbaritone.com/)

**Jennifer McGuire** is a pianist, coach and conductor based in Nashville. She is Music Director of the Vanderbilt Opera Theatre and senior lecturer in collaborative piano at the Blair School of Music. McGuire maintains an active recital schedule in Nashville and across the country, with recent engagements at Symphony Space, the University of Memphis and the Eastman School of Music, among others. She is featured on the albums Irrational Exuberance (Beauport Classical) and Sursum (Navona Records), as well the upcoming Heinrich Marschner: Songs for Baritone with baritone Jeffrey Williams (Centaur Records). She is a core member of the Atlantic Ensemble, a chamber group annually featured on the Accueil Musical de St.-Merry concert series in Paris, France. In addition to teaching at Vanderbilt, McGuire has worked for Cincinnati Opera, Dayton Opera, Opera Birmingham and the Nashville Symphony Chorus, and is a regular official pianist for the Metropolitan Opera National Council auditions in Memphis and Nashville.
McGuire has enjoyed many faculty appointments at summer programs. She was a repetitor at the AIMS festival in Graz, Austria, from 2008-10. In 2014, she co-founded a summer mentoring program for young professional vocal coaches with collaborative pianist Roger Vignoles. In 2016, McGuire joined the faculty of the Seagle Music Colony as music director for the world premiere of the grand opera Roscoe. McGuire also coached the singers for the Albany Symphony’s concert version of Roscoe, which featured soprano Deborah Voigt in the lead role of Veronica. In 2019, McGuire joined the faculty of the Boston Conservatory Opera Intensive as conductor, presenting opera scenes on the Palau de Les Arts in Valencia, Spain. In June 2020, McGuire coached singers virtually for the summer festival Poco a Poco.

McGuire made her conducting debut with Vanderbilt Opera Theatre’s production of The Marriage of Figaro in 2017. She has since conducted Candide, The Ghosts of Gatsby, and Mansfield Park at Vanderbilt, as well as Le Nozze di Figaro at the Seagle Music Colony and Don Pasquale at Boston Conservatory at Berklee. Upcoming conducting engagements include Albert Herring and L'enfant et les sortilèges at Vanderbilt, and a workshop of the new opera Halcyon with Vital Opera in Millbrook, NY.

McGuire completed two master’s degrees (piano performance and collaborative piano) at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Eugene Pridonoff, Kenneth Griffiths, Donna Loewy and Sylvia Plyler. She completed a Bachelor of Music in piano performance at Shorter College with Helen Ramsaur. McGuire lives in Nashville with her husband, librettist Joshua McGuire, son, and basset hound. For more information, please visit jenniferquammenmcguire.com.
Upcoming Blair Events

Ariell Sabina, Junior Violin Recital
Saturday, September 12, 2020
8:00 p.m.
Live Streamed from Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall

Ross Sanchez, Junior Trombone recital
Sunday, September 20, 2020
8:00 p.m.
Live Streamed from Steve and Judy Turner Recital Hall