

20. VOCAL RECITAL

*A 15-minute miniature recital of varied repertoire
with translations and program notes*

Jason Allen Anderson, *baritone*

Range: A-flat – g-flat

Oeuvre ton coeur

Georges Bizet
(1838-1875)

*The daisy has closed its petals,
The shadow has closed its eyes for the day.
Beauty, will you speak with me?
Open your heart to my love.*

*Open your heart, O young angel, to my flame
So that a dream may enchant your sleep.
I wish to reclaim my soul,
As a flower turns to the sun!*

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Betrachte, meine Seel, from *St. John Passion*

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

*Consider, my soul, with anxious willingness,
with sharp desire and half-constricted heart,
your highest blessing in Jesus's pains,
for you from the thorns that pierce him,
the heavenly flowers bloom!
You can pluck much sweet fruit from his wormwood,
therefore look without ceasing upon him!*

Is not his word like a fire, from *Elijah*

Felix Mendelssohn
(1809-1847)

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Ah, love, but a day!, from *Three Browning Songs*

Amy Beach
(1867-1944)

Zazà, piccolo zingara, from *Zazà*, Act II

Ruggero Leoncavallo
(1857-1919)

*Zazà, little gypsy, slave of a foolish love,
you have not reached the end of your grief yet!
How good that it should fall upon your face as tears
before your solitary and humble pilgrimage begins again!
You believed him to be free; now hope is dead.
Now it is you who are the free one!
And remember your obligation... your obligation!
Ah, the charm of the dreamed-of idyll disappeared all of the sudden!
A little angel's hand has made you come back!*

* * *

From an Unknown Past

Ned Rorem
(b. 1923)

1. The lover in winter plaineth for the spring
2. Hey nonny no!
7. Crabbed age and youth

PROGRAM NOTES

Who knows what Bizet could have accomplished had he lived longer? He is most widely remembered for his opera *Carmen*, which premiered only three months prior to his death. “Oeuvre ton coeur” simultaneously expresses excitement and trepidation about love blossoming in the night.

Johann Sebastian Bach’s *St. John Passion* was first performed on Good Friday, 1723. The libretto is freely adapted from Brockes *Der für die Sünden der Welt gemarterte und sterbende* (Jesus tortured and dying for the sins of the world) with additional texts from Christian Postel’s 1704 Passion libretto. “Betrachte, meine Seel” appears in Part II of the *St. John Passion* and is scored for two violas d’amore, lute, bassoon, and continuo. The text, when combined with these types of instruments (muted as they are), reaches down into the depths of the soul and begs it to consider Christ’s suffering and the benefits bestowed upon mankind through the Crucifixion. Sadly, Bach removed this aria in the 1725 edition because the viola d’amore and lute had fallen out of use.

Were it not for Felix Mendelssohn, the music of J. S. Bach might still remain in obscurity. It was Mendelssohn’s love of the music of Bach and his frequent “revivals” of Bach’s works that led to the development of scholarship devoted to Bach and his music. “Is not his word like a fire,” a dramatic aria invoking the power of God’s word to visit the earth like a fire, is from the 1846/7 oratorio *Elijah*. The work was originally composed to German text; the premiere was performed in Birmingham, England in English.

Amy Marcy Beach was the first woman composer and pianist to receive critical acclaim for her work in both fields. On the advice of her husband, Amy abandoned solo piano performance in favor of formal composition study. This formal study was not so formal though as she taught herself fugue, double fugue, composition, and orchestration using a range of theory texts and by translating theoretical works by Berlioz and Gevaert. “Ah, love, but a day!” is about love found and lost all in the same day and the transformative effects of that brief love.

Cascart sings “Zazà, piccola zingara” to his old friend and former love Zazà during Act II of Ruggero Leoncavallo’s opera *Zazà*. The title character is an accomplished concert hall singer who has fallen in love with Dufresne, an admirer of her singing. Unfortunately and unknown to her, Dufresne is married. Cascart attempts to convey to Zazà that there might be someone else in Dufresne’s life and to refocus on her stage career.

Ned Rorem, born in Indiana in 1923, began studies in composition at Northwestern University in 1940. He abandoned those studies two years later and headed for greener pastures at the Curtis Institute, where he was a student of Rosario Scalero. These studies were also short-lived and he abandoned formal study to become a copyist for Virgil Thompson. Though he never formally studied with Thompson, Rorem learned much about orchestration and prosody from him. Rorem traveled to Paris in 1949; he studied composition with Arthur Honegger and settled in Paris for six years. Rorem composed *From and Unknown Past*, featuring texts by 15th and 16th century poets, in 1951 and later arranged them for mixed chorus.