

The Music Department of Wagner College presents

Thomas Folderauer, baritone
with
Giovanni Longo, piano

Friday, April 14, 2023, at 5 p.m.
Music Performance Center, Campus Hall

Thomas Folderauer is a student of Vincent Graña.

Program

Why do the nations so furiously rage together? George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)
from *Messiah*, HWV 56

Lord God of Abraham, Issac and Israel! Felix Mendelssohn (1809–1847)
from *Elijah*, Op. 70

Ideale Paolo Tosti (1846–1916)
Sogno

from *The Great Comet* Dave Malloy (b. 1976)
Sonya & Natasha
Sarah Sweeney, soprano
Sonya Alone
Paul Hogan, guitar

The Stag Thomas Folderauer (b. 2000)
Sarah Sweeney, soprano
Thomas Folderauer, piano

Questo amor, vergonga mia Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924)
from *Edgar*

Intermission

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée, M. 84 Maurice Ravel (1875–1937)
1. Chanson romanesque
2. Chanson épique
3. Chanson à boire

from *Winterreise*, D. 911 Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
5. Der Lindenbaum
15. Die Krähe
21. Das Wirtshaus

Program Notes

Why do the nations so furiously rage together?

from *Messiah*

Messiah is one of the most famous choral compositions in the classical music repertoire. It was composed in 1741 by George Frideric Handel and has a libretto featuring passages from the King James Bible adapted for the oratorio by Charles Jennens (1700–1773). It is in three parts: Part I centers on the prophecies of Jesus' birth as well as the events surrounding his birth, Part II details his crucifixion, and Part III focuses on Jesus' resurrection and the Day of Judgement.

“Why do the nations so furiously rage together?” is an air from Part II. The singer is originally accompanied by a string orchestra performing driving figures with immense energy. In this performance, the orchestral music is arranged for solo piano. The frenzied nature of the accompaniment can be heard within the piano part, and this element combined with several powerful moments for the voice aptly expresses the fury of God against the nations for their vanity. The Air's text is that of Psalm 2:1-2 and features long melismas on words such as *rage*, *council*, and *anointed*. It serves as a crucial moment in the work, setting up God's eventual triumph over the vengeful nations.

Since its premiere in Dublin, Ireland in 1742, *Messiah* has been performed countless times worldwide. The beloved classic is a masterpiece, and its cultural relevance today speaks to the strength of Handel's music.

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel!

from *Elijah*

“Lord God of Abraham, Issac, and Israel” is an aria from Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. The work is an oratorio fashioned after similar works of Handel and Bach. It recalls the life of the prophet Elijah as told in the books 1 Kings and 2 Kings of the Old Testament.

In the aria, Elijah is on Mount Carmel calling upon God to light his altar in flames. The Israelites have been worshipping Baal, a god in the Canaanite Religion, so Abraham set up a test with the prophets of Baal. Each prophet will set up an altar for their god; whichever god lights their altar ablaze is the true god. Despite hours of worship, Baal never lights the altar, but when Elijah speaks to God the words of the aria, from 1 Kings 18:36-37, his altar is set ablaze.

Tosti Art Songs

Paolo Tosti is best known as a composer of art songs noted for their singable, memorable melodies as well as their romantic and nostalgic theming. Although Tosti never composed opera, his work is a standard part of the classic Italian repertoire. He also wrote songs with French and English texts, and at one point was the most popular composer in England. He wrote over 300 songs during his lifetime, and many are still performed today.

The two songs featured in this recital are “Ideale,” which features a text by Carmel Errico (1848–1892), and “Sogno,” which features a text by Olindo Guerrini (1845–1916). Both songs deal with longing for the love of another and both ultimately end with the visions of the other being a dream. The difference between these two songs reflects the different approaches to the lover. “Ideale” unabashedly runs to its lover while “Sogno” reluctantly returns, but both end in the bittersweet feeling of knowing the lover who is, however, absent.

The Great Comet

Natasha, Pierre, and the Great Comet of 1812, or simply *The Great Comet*, is a show written in 2017 by Dave Malloy, whose words and music blend contemporary and classical styles. His previous works include theatrical explorations of Rachmaninoff and *Winterreise* with a contemporary twist; *The Great Comet* continues this trend. The show is taken from an 80-page excerpt of *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy and features a score influenced by classical music, electronic dance music, and indie rock. Malloy has described it “an electro-pop opera ripped from a slice of Tolstoy's *War & Peace*.”

“Sonya & Natasha” and “Sonya Alone” are successive scenes in the stage production. Cousins Natasha and Sonya have been dear friends since their childhood, and Sonya has finally learned of Natasha's affair with Anatole Kuragin. Here their relationship reaches a breaking point, leaving Sonya to pick up the pieces.

Sonya is defined by silent endurance. Her gentle strength is different from that of the roles typically assigned to the baritone voice, but I felt it was an important exercise and challenge as a singer to explore it. Sonya is typically portrayed by an alto, so I have transposed all of Sonya's music down by an octave to suit a lower voice. Both selections have retained their original key.

The Stag

“The Stag” is a song from my in-progress musical adaptation of the first branch of the *Mabinogion*. The *Mabinogion* is a collection of stories from twelfth-century Welsh literature. They are divided into four “branches,” each dealing with a different group of characters and events (with some overlap).

The first branch tells stories of kings, queens, magic, and honor. This song, however, deals with none of the aforementioned. Instead, it features a stag roaming the countryside. The song switches between the idyllic scene of a buck in the meadow and the sudden panic and alertness that the prey experiences. It ends with a group of hounds circling and taking down the deer. Typically the hounds will be singers, but in this performance the low chords in the piano at the end of the song take their place.

Before being written down, these stories were part of oral tradition, passed down by word of mouth through centuries. They were constructed to be remembered, and the music reflects that. The piano features repeating, simple figures. However, these weren't simple stories. They were loaded with deep meaning and symbolism. The soprano sings the role of The Stag, and her melody is more complex than that of the piano. It features odd intervals, subtle changes in lengths of phrase, and long sustained notes. The composition can be thought of as a minimalist art song.

Questo amor, vergogna mia

from *Edgar*

Edgar was the second opera completed by Giacomo Puccini. It premiered in Milan on April 21, 1889, and featured a libretto by Ferdinando Fontana (1850–1919). Puccini was a composer of the *verismo* style. His works were typically set in the present day, had gritty storylines, and dealt with the lives of everyday people instead of deities or nobility. *Edgar*, an early example of this style, is set in the late medieval period and follows a knight who falls in love with a village girl, with love triangles and tragic outcomes ensuing.

“Questo amor, vergogna mia” is an aria in Act I for Frank, who sings of his unrequited love for Tigrana, a seductress trying to sway Edgar to return to their life of debauchery together. After this aria, Frank renounces his feelings for Tigrana and recruits Edgar into his army. This shows Tigrana's lasting grip on those she tries to manipulate, as Edgar spends the rest of the opera deciding between his passion for Tigrana and his love for Fidelia, Frank's virtuous sister.

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée

Don Quichotte à Dulcinée is a song cycle composed by Maurice Ravel to poetry by Paul Morand (1888–1976). The cycle was commissioned by the film director Georg Wilhelm Pabst for a cinematic adaptation of Miguel de Cervantes's epic novel *Don Quixote*. Ravel was in failing health while writing the cycle, and because this slowed his work Pabst went instead with music by Jacques Ibert. Ravel completed only three of the four intended songs, but the three that he completed serve as the full song cycle and were Ravel's final compositions.

The three songs feature unique time signatures and elements of Spanish dance, accentuating different aspects of Don Quichotte's character and story. "Chanson romanesque" showcases Quichotte's sensuality for Dulcinée, his princess just out of reach, as well as the lengths he would go to for her favor. "Chanson épique" features slow full chords in the piano reminiscent of a church organ. It reveals Quichotte's devotion to Dulcinée which borders on the spiritual. The final song, "Chanson à boire", removes the focus on Dulcinée and instead shows Quichotte in the pursuit of bubbly wine. This goofy song features rhythms that enhance the feeling of a drunken Quichotte stumbling around. It depicts Quichotte as a character who is silly but full-hearted and sincere in all he does.

Winterreise

Winterreise is a cycle of 24 songs or lieder by Franz Schubert (1797–1828), who imbued his songs with an inventiveness unseen before him and with a dramatic sense typically reserved for opera. Schubert found an appropriate source in *Die Winterreise* by Wilhelm Müller (1794–1827), a poetry cycle that follows a single character dealing with intense heartbreak while setting off on a long walk through a wintery landscape.

The three selections in this recital serve as an abbreviated version of the journey, each song displaying a distinct feature of the work. In "Der Lindenbaum" (The Linden Tree), old symbols of love morph into new symbols of grief; the piano's main melody shifts from the major key to the minor key. "Die Krähe" (The Crow) is a venture into the tormented psyche of the wanderer, who sees a crow flying relentlessly above his head. He wonders whether it is a sign of his imminent death. The piano plays high in the treble register, leaving the wanderer stranded high in the air. How different is the wanderer's silhouette in the snowy landscape from that of the crow's in the vast, white sky? "Das Wirtshaus" (The Inn) expresses the wanderer's desire to rest. He finds comfort in the green wreaths he sees around him and feels that at the inn he can rest for good. The inn is actually a graveyard, and although he feels the unrelenting need to rest, he still finds himself walking forward. The incessant call to rest is overtaken by the need to move forward; a man and his walking stick become even more inevitable than death.

"Come to Schober's today and I will play you a cycle of terrifying songs; they have affected me more than has ever been the case with any other songs." He then, with a voice full of feeling, sang the entire *Winterreise* for us." - Joseph von Spaun, a friend of Schubert.

Schubert performed this work, which he felt to be one of his best, in 1827 for a group of his friends at the home of Franz von Schober. Within the next year he was dead. It's between these two images that *Winterreise* sits, deeply profound and deeply morbid, constantly teetering on a tightrope between the two.

The Performers

Thomas Folderauer is a classically trained baritone and composer based in New York City. He is a senior vocal performance major at Wagner College. He is in Vincent Graña's vocal studio and has studied composition under Thomas Juneau and Stephanie Leotsakos.

He has performed the roles of Papageno in Wagner College Opera's *The Magic Flute* and Octavius in Savannah Yates's rock adaptation of *Cleo and Tony*, and has played for many musicals as a pianist or drummer. In May, he will perform as Le Podestat in Wagner College Opera's production of *Le Docteur Miracle*. His work as a composer includes his original musicals *Roanoke*, which was performed at Wagner College, and *Niagara*, which had its debut at the DC Arts Center in Washington, D.C. after workshop productions in Connecticut and Maryland.

Thomas is the 2020 Wagner College Italian Idol competition winner and a recipient of the Ronald Cross Music History Award. He plans to pursue a graduate degree in classical voice.

Giovanni Longo is the Wagner College Music Department's primary pianist. He plays for various choirs as well as for student juries and recitals. He also offers a class in which he coaches students on their singing as well as analyzes great singers and operas.

Sarah Sweeney is a junior vocal performance major and the 2021 Wagner College Italian Idol competition winner.

Paul Hogan is a junior theatre performance major. He records and releases original music under the name Doc Francis.