

Orpheus And Eurydice

Janie Brokenicky, mezzo-soprano
Michael Davidson, tenor

Ad Astra Music Festival

JULY 18 ~ AUGUST 2
2015
*Russell,
Kansas*

This concert is underwritten by Vance and Deanna Ruggles

Orpheus and Eurydice

A recital by Michael Davidson and Janie
Brokenicky

Alex Underwood, Artistic Director
Deines Cultural Center
Saturday, July 18th 2pm

PROGRAM

An die Musik, D. 547	Franz Schubert
Lute and Voice	Michael Davidson
It was a lover and his lass from <i>Let us garlands bring</i> , Op. 18	Gerald Finzi
L'heure exquise	Reynaldo Hahn
Happiness from <i>Passion</i>	Stephen Sondheim
The Snake	Thomas Moore
Dirge from <i>Six Elizabethan Songs</i>	Dominick Argento
When I have sung my songs	Ernest Charles
The Lonely Road	Virna Sheard
Flow, my tears	John Dowland
Why do they shut me out of Heaven? from <i>Twelve Poems of Emily Dickinson</i>	Aaron Copland
The River Styx	unknown
Ferry me across the water	Ned Rorem
Heimkehr, Op. 15 TrV. 148	Richard Strauss

INTERMISSION

Das verlassene Magdlein from <i>Morike-Lieder</i>	Hugo Wolf
Orpheus with His Lute	Paul Sperry
En Sourdine from <i>Qinq Melodies</i>	Gabriel Faure
Eurydice to Orpheus: A Picture by Leighton	Robert Browning
From <i>Orfeo ed Euridice</i> , Act 3	Christoph W. Gluck
Qual vita e questo mai	
Che fiero momento	
Morgen from <i>Vier Lieder</i> , Op. 27	Richard Strauss
Orpheus	Robert Herrick
Almen se non poss'io	Vincenzo Bellini
I have trod the upward and the downward slope from <i>Songs of Travel</i>	Ralph V. Williams
Move On from <i>Sunday in the Park with George</i>	Stephen Sondheim

A note

The story of Orpheus and Eurydice epitomizes the universally tragic plot of love and loss by studying the limits of romantic suffering. The rich body of art and poetry it inspires exemplify the lengths with which humans are willing to go in order to rescue loved ones. The impulse to take extraordinary measures on behalf of those whom we love is a common trope throughout history. Indeed Orpheus risked his life by braving the very depths of hell to save his beloved Eurydice; however, it is humanity's curse that death remains the one enemy which cannot be cheated. And so is the fate of these timeless characters...we ask: how far would you travel to save the ones you love?

Today's recital tells this story. The poetry, sometimes spoken and sometimes sung, originates from varying times, cultures, and languages. Many of the texts have even been borrowed from other stories, repurposed here for the emotional journey of Orpheus and Eurydice. The major plot points have been enhanced by the thoughtful consideration of musical genre and style. In a moment of jaw-clenched determination, Orpheus sings an austere Renaissance lute song. In a moment of anger at her death, Eurydice sings a passionate and tonally adventurous 20th century American classic; in a despairing lament, Orpheus sings a devastatingly Romantic ballad.

Let these epics and songs transport you to a world of ancient Gods.



Orpheus and Eurydice (1862) - Edward Munch

An Die Music, Franz von Schober

O, wond'rous art, --- in countless gray and
darkened hours,
When life's most bitter taste of loneliness
was mine --
Have you transported my heart to warm and
happy meadows,
And so, you've offered me joy and fierce
endurance,
Your magic beauty, your love, and peace .
Sometimes your harp pours forth a sigh of
passion,
So sweet a blessed chord in melodies of old,
Then heaven's doors with hours of love
does open.
Oh, gracious art, for these I thank you so!
Oh, gracious music, I thank you so!

It was a lover and his lass, William Shakespeare

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.
Between the acres of the rye,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
These pretty country folks would lie,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.
This carol they began that hour,
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
How that life was but a flower
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.
And, therefore, take the present time
With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
For love is crown'd with the prime
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the spring.

L'heur, Paul Verlaine

The white moon
shines in the woods.
From each branch
springs a voice
beneath the arbor.
Oh my beloved...
Like a deep mirror
the pond reflects the silhouette
of the black willow
where the wind weeps.
Let us dream! It is the hour...
A vast and tender calm
seems to descend
from a sky made iridescent by the moon.
It is the exquisite hour!

Happiness, Stephen Sondheim

I'm so happy, I'm afraid I'll die here in your
arms. What would you do if I died like this -
right now, here in your arms?
That we ever should have met is a miracle
No, inevitable -Then inevitable, yes, but I
confess it was the look --The look? The
sadness in your eyes that day when we
glanced at each other in the park
We were both unhappy
Unhappiness can be seductive
You needed me...How quickly need can
lead to love. All this happiness merely from
a glance in the park. So much happiness, so
much love — I thought I knew what love
was. I wish we might have met so much
sooner. I could have given you my youth
I thought I knew what love was I thought I
knew how much I could feel
All the time we lost...I didn't know what love
was.
I've never known what love was.
But now -- I do. And now -- I do.
It's what I feel with you.
The happiness I feel with you.
So much happiness --

Dirge, William Shakespeare

Come away, come away, death,
 And in sad cypress let me be laid.
 Fly away, fly away, breath;
 I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
 My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
 O, prepare it!
 My part of death, no one so true
 My part of death, no one so true
 Did share it.
 Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
 On my black coffin let there be strown.
 Not a friend, not a friend greet
 My poor corpse, where my bones shall be
 thrown. A thousand thousand sighs to save,
 Lay me, O, where
 Sad true lover never find my grave,
 To weep there!

When I have sung, Ernest Charles

When I have sung my songs to you I'll sing
 no more. 'T would be a sacrilege to sing at
 another door. We've worked so hard to hold
 our dreams just you and I. I could not share
 them all again I'd rather die. With just the
 thought that I had loved so well so true.
 That I could never sing again. That I could
 never, never sing again except to you!

Flow, my tears, Anonymous

Flow, my tears, fall from your springs!
 Exiled forever, let me mourn;
 Where night's black bird her sad infamy
 sings, There let me live forlorn.
 Never may my woes be relieved,
 Since pity is fled; And tears and sighs and
 groans my weary days, my weary days
 Of all joys have deprived.
 Hark! you shadows that in darkness dwell,
 Learn to contemn light
 Happy, happy they that in hell
 Feel not the world's despite.

Why do they shut me out of Heaven?, Emily Dickinson

Why -- do they shut me out of Heaven?
 Did I sing -- too loud?
 But -- I can sing a little "Minor,"
 Timid as a bird.

Wouldn't the angels try me --
 just -- once -- more --
 Just -- see -- if I troubled them --
 But don't -- shut the door!

Oh if I -- were the Gentlemen
 in the White [Robe]¹
 and they -- were the little Hand -- that
 knocked -
 Could -- I -- forbid?
 Why do they shut me out of Heaven?
 Did I sing too loud?

Ferry me across the water, Christina Rossetti

"Ferry me across the water,
 Do, boatman, do."
 "If you've a penny in your purse
 I'll ferry you."

"I have a penny in my purse,
 And my eyes are blue;
 So ferry me across the water,
 Do, boatman, do!"

"Step into my ferry-boat,
 Be they black or blue,
 And for the penny in your purse
 I'll ferry you."

Heimkehr - Adolph Friedrich von Schack

The branches sway more gently,
the boat flies toward the shore;
home to its nest turns the dove,
home to you turns my heart.

It has wandered enough on shimmering
days,
when life clamored
and with beating wings
it keenly explored foreign lands.

But now the sun has departed,
and silence sinks down upon the grove.
My heart feels this: with you is peace,
with you alone is rest.

Das verlassene magdlein, Eduard Mörike

Early, when the cock crows,
before the stars disappear,
I must stand at the hearth;
I must light the fire.
Beautiful is the blaze of the flames;
the sparks fly.
I gaze into the fire,
sunk in grief.
Suddenly, it comes to me,
unfaithful boy,
that last night
I dreamed of you.
Tears upon tears then
pour down;
So the day comes -
O would it were gone again!

Orpheus with his lute, William Shakespeare

Orpheus with his lute made trees,
And the mountain tops that freeze,
Bow themselves when he did sing:
To his music plants and flowers
Ever sprung; as sun and showers
There had made a lasting spring.
Every thing that heard him play,
Even the billows of the sea,
Hung their heads, and then lay by.
In sweet music is such art,
Killing care and grief of heart
Fall asleep, or hearing, die.

En Sourdine, Paul Verlaine

Calm in the half-day
That the high branches make,
Let us soak well our love
In this profound silence.

Let us mingle our souls, our hearts
And our ecstatic senses
Among the vague langours
Of the pines and the bushes.
Close your eyes halfway,
Cross your arms on your breast,
And from your sleeping heart
Chase away forever all plans.

Let us abandon ourselves
To the breeze, rocking and soft,
Which comes to your feet to wrinkle
The waves of auburn lawns.

And when, solemnly, the evening
From the black oaks falls,
The voice of our despair,
The nightingale, will sing.

**Qual vita e questa mai/che fiero
momento, Pierre-Louis Moline/Ranieri
de' Calzabigi**

What sort of life is this, which I am
beginning to live!
And what secret does Orpheus conceal from
me?
Did he draw me out of the funereal place
In order to make himself guilty of the
treacherous abandonment?

The light is fading, oh heaven, before my
eyes.
Heavy in my breast, my breathing is
becoming difficult.
I tremble... I waver... and I feel, among the
anxiety and terror -
as I long for elation, returned to life -
I feel my heart vibrating, alas, from a painful
throbbing.

What a brutal moment!
What a cruel fate,
To pass from death to such sorrow.

Morgan, John Henry Mackay

And tomorrow the sun will shine again,
and on the path I will take,
it will unite us again, we happy ones,
upon this sun-breathing earth...

And to the shore, the wide shore with blue
waves,

we will descend quietly and slowly;
we will look mutely into each other's eyes
and the silence of happiness will settle upon
us.

Almen se non poss'io, Pietro Metastazio

At least, if I am not able
to follow my beloved,
you affections of my heart,
go with him for me.

Already near him always,
Love keeps you gathered,
and the path to him is not
an unfamiliar one for you.

I have trod, R.L. Stevenson

I have trod the upward and the downward
slope;

I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all,
and bid farewell to hope;

And I have lived and loved,
and closed the door.
slope;

I have endured and done in days before;
I have longed for all,
and bid farewell to hope;

And I have lived and loved,
and closed the door.

Move on, Stephen Sondheim

Stop worrying where you're going, move on
If you can know where you're going, you've
gone

Just keep moving on.

I chose, and my world was shaken--so what?

The choice may have been mistaken

but choosing was not.

You have to move on.

Look at what you want,

Not at where you are,

Not at what you'll be.

Look at all the things you've done for me:

Opened up my eyes

Taught me how to see

Notice every tree!

Understand the light!

Concentrate on now!

I want to move on . . .

I want to explore the light.

I want to know how to get through

through to something new--

Something of my own!

Move on! Move on!

Stop worrying if your vision is new.

Let others make that decision . . .

they usually do!

You keep moving on.

Look at what you want,

Not at what you are

Not at what you'll be

Look at all the things you gave to me.

See what's in my eyes, And the color of my
hair, and the way it catches light.

And the care, and the feeling

And the light, moving on!

We've always belonged together.

We will always belong together!

Just keep moving on.

Anything you do, let it come from you--

then it will be new.

Give us more to hear!



Janie Brokenicky, mezzo-soprano, is a newly appointed instructor of music at Kansas State University, where she'll teach music theory and applied voice and is founding the Flint Hills Children's Choir. She just finished her three-year tenure as the Assistant Professor of Choral Music at Tabor College in Hillsboro, KS, where she conducted the women's choir and Concerto Bella Voce. Teaching honors include the 2009 Kansas Horizon Award for outstanding achievement as a first year teacher and the 2010 KCDA Young Director of the Year Award. She holds both Bachelors and Masters degrees in music from Kansas State University. She has been a guest soloist with the Wichita Chamber Chorale, Kansas State University Symphony Orchestra, Fort Hays Symphony Orchestra, and Flint Hills Chorale. Last summer, she was the mezzo-soprano soloist for Mozart's *Requiem* with the Russell Summer Concert Series.

Michael Davidson holds a Bachelor's of Music and Voice from Loyola University New Orleans and a Master's of Music and Voice from the University of Kansas. While at Kansas University he participated in several operas and played the role of Ferando in Mozart's *Così fan Tutte*. Professionally he has sung with both the New Orleans Opera and The Kansas City Lyric choruses, as well as the Eutin Summer Opera Festival in Eutin Germany. He has performed in two choruses accompanying Plácido Domingo, and has worked with some of the nation's foremost vocal coaches including John Wustman, Martin Katz, Russell Miller and Leonardo Vordoni. Currently Michael teaches music at Russell High School and Ruppenthal Middle School. Michael's most recent projects include directing/producing *Cinderella* at RHS and directing music for *Godspell* at Barton County Community College.



Leann Hillmer is a semi-retired coach who spent her career working with Santa Fe Opera, Minnesota Opera, Tanglewood, and seventeen years as a staff coach for New York City Opera. After finishing Bachelors and Masters degrees in piano at the University of Kansas, her first job in New York City was at the Metropolitan Opera. She served on faculty at both Manhattan School of Music and Mannes School of Music in New York City. She has lived in Düsseldorf, Germany and spent nearly a decade living in Boston before returning to her family's farm in Sylvan Grove, KS. In Kansas, Leann has worked at Ellsworth High School as the school accompanist for Keri Boley and at Russell High School with Alex Underwood. She still coaches independently for students at Ft. Hays State University and is a primary vocal coach for the Ad Astra Music Festival.

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