Graduate Lecture Recital: Medea Bonny, soprano

Medea Bonny

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ITHACA COLLEGE

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

GRADUATE LECTURE RECITAL

Medea Bonny, soprano
Atakan Sari, piano

Nabenhauer Recital Room
Saturday, April 28, 2007
6:00 p.m.
PROGRAM

Lecture:
Stravinsky's Character Development With a Mozart Gesture:
A comparison of Anne Truelove (The Rake's Progress), and
Countess Almaviva (Le Nozze di Figaro).

INTERMISSION

Performance:
Dove sono i bei momenti
from Le Nozze di Figaro
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756–1791)

No Word From Tom/Cabaletta
from The Rake's Progress
Igor Stravinsky
(1882–1971)

Graduate Lecture Recital presented in partial fulfillment for the
degree Master of Music in Vocal Performance.

Medea Bonny is from the studio of Patrice Pastore.
Stravinsky's Character Development With A Mozart Gesture

A Lecture Recital

Presented By:
Medea Bonny, Soprano
Atakan Sari, Piano

Saturday, April 28, 2007
6:00 p.m. Habenhauer Recital Room
Dear Audience,

Thank you all for coming this evening. As you are waiting for the recital to begin, I felt it appropriate to take the time to explain why I have chosen the topic at hand.

Igor Stravinsky has always been a composer that has interested me. Singing in a production of “Symphony of Psalms,” his unique style attracted me from a young age. Looking back, it was his manipulations of the past that drew me to his compositions. While contemporary compositions like Stravinsky’s are some of my most favorite works to perform, I have changed a lot since this initial introduction. In preparing for this recital, I have gained a new found respect for both Stravinsky and his inspiration — Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

Knowing the wide variety of musical background present in the audience, my goal is for everyone to leave with a better understanding behind the brilliance of these two men’s compositional approaches in reference to opera. In preparation for the lecture you are about to witness, please familiarize yourselves with terms, biographical sketches, and opera synopses. Additionally, I have included a question/comment sheet, should you develop questions, or would like to inform me of your new found knowledge.

Thank you all for coming — it means a great deal to me, and I truly hope you enjoy the recital.

Sincerely,

Medea Bonny

This recital is in memory of my late Granny, the casualties of the Iraqi War, and the resent victims of the Virginia Tech shooting.
God Bless.
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was born in Salzburg on January 27, 1756, and died in Vienna on December 5, 1791. Writing until his death, some of his most celebrated compositions are the opera genres he mastered: opera seria, opera buffa and Singspiel. As the child prodigy of the musician Leopold Mozart, Wolfgang began composing at the age of five, and was beginning opera compositions at the age of ten. *Le Nozze di Figaro, Don Giovanni, Die Zauberflöte*, and *Cosi fan tutte* have and still remain among the most popular of his operatic repertoire. In addition to his minimum of twenty operas, Mozart also composed vast amounts of other works in his short life of 35 years.

Igor Stravinsky born in Lomonosov, Russia (formerly known as Oranienbaum) near St Petersburg on June 17, 1882 — died April 6, 1971 in New York. As one of the most influential composers of the 20th century, his work reflects almost every important tendency in the century's music:

- neo-nationalism of his early ballets
- experimental nationalism of the World War I years
- neo-classical period from 1920–51
- proto-serial works of the 1950s
- highly personal interpretation of serial method

To a degree, the varying places Stravinsky lived are reflected in his work through complex patterns of influence and allusion. While he never lost contact with his Russian roots and, even after he quit composing with recognizable Russian/Slovic materials, his music maintained an unbroken continuity of technique and thought.

Written during his neo-classical years in America, *The Rake's Progress* was Stravinsky’s first opera in the traditional sense.
Synopsis of the Operas

Le Nozze di Figaro
Composition Dates: October 1785 until April 1786
By Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Le Nozze di Figaro is a "sequel", so as to speak, to The Barber of Seville, and represents a single "mad" day in the palace of the Count Almaviva. Rosina is now the Countess; her husband, the Count is seeking the favors of Susanna who is to be wed to her love, Figaro, the Count's valet. When the Count detects the interest of the young page, Cherubino, in the Countess, he tries to get rid of Cherubino by giving him an officer's commission in his own regiment. Figaro, Susanna, and the Countess conspire to embarrass the Count and expose his infidelity. Meanwhile Figaro is caught up in a dispute with Bartolo and Marcellina, which ends when he is revealed to be their son. At night, all find themselves on the palace grounds, where a comic series of cases of mistaken identity results in the Count's humiliation and then forgiveness by the Countess.

The Rake's Progress
Composition Dates: 1948 until 1951
By Igor Stravinsky

Act 1: The garden of Truelove's house, Mother Goose's brothel, Truelove's garden — After coming into an inheritance, Tom Rakewell bids farewell to his sweetheart Anne Truelove, and sets off for London in the company of Nick Shadow, a servant who offers his services for free for a year and a day. Tom, in the brothel of Mother Goose, embarks on a life of debauchery. Having had one amorous adventure after another, Tom is still unhappy. To show the world that he doesn't care about morals or conventions, Tom agrees to Nick's proposal to marry Baba the Turk, a rich, but monstrous lady, who performs onstage. Meanwhile, Anne who hasn't heard a word, sets off for London to find Tom and help him.

Act II: Tom's house, The street in front of Tom's house — Tom's house Anne is heartbroken when she sees Tom and Baba now married. Anne's words disturb Tom deeply, although he does not show it. Eventually, Tom becomes disgusted with the monstrosity he has married. After going bankrupt, Tom disappears and all his possessions are to be sold by auction to pay his debts. Baba stops the auction and tells Anne that Tom still loves her and that she alone can save him from the shameful life he is leading. Baba herself goes back to the theater and the applause of the crowd.

Act III/Epilogue: Tom's house, now covered in dust, A churchyard, Bedlam — The truth is at last revealed to Tom — Nick is the devil, and is after Tom's soul rather than his money. Tom gambles his last chance on a game of cards, but Nick still condemns him to madness, then descends from sight into a grave. Tom wakes up in Bedlam, bemoaning that he is Adonis and that Venus will soon come to visit him. Faithful Anne comes to comfort Tom and, letting him believe that she is Venus, rocks him to sleep with a lullaby. Tom wakes after she has gone, raves of his sweet Venus who has lovingly cradled and forgiven him, calls on her and on Orpheus, then sinks back, dead. The principals gather to tell the moral that each finds in the story. All concur: "For idle hands, And hearts and minds, The Devil finds, A work to do."
Terms and Definitions

Aria— Affiliated mainly with opera, this is a self-contained piece for one voice usually with orchestral accompaniment.

Cabaletta— The second half of a double aria: a faster or more rhythmic movement following a cantabile section. It is usually sung twice with the same text.

Cavatina— Originally an operatic solo aria in a regular form sung by a character upon his or her entrance.

Coloratura— An old word meaning “colouring”. The term means florid figuration or ornamentation, especially in classical vocal music.

Music Drama— The term ascribed to the revolutionary medium of artistic expression created by the German composer Richard Wagner. It was in large part through this novel form that Wagner had a major effect on the course of European classical music. The creation of this art form was borne of Wagner's thorough dissatisfaction with the prevailing trends and strictures in the operatic presentation of his time.

Number Opera— A self-contained piece that is combined with other such pieces in a performance. Large vocal works (such as opera, oratorio, or musical) when the written or printed score for such a work designates the titles of the pieces with sequential numbers, hence the aptness of the term. The use of numerical designations in extended vocal musical works has the practical advantage of facilitating rehearsal plans, especially when their designations include assignment of characters.

Opera Buffa— The popular rival to opera seria was opera buffa, the 'comic' opera that took its cue from the improvisatory commedia dell'arte.

Opera Seria— An Italian musical term which refers to the noble and "serious" style of Italian opera that predominated in Europe from the 1720s to ca 1770.

Recitative Secco— Also called dry recitative, this is melodic speech set to music, or a descriptive narrative song in which the music follows the words accompanied by simple chords using a continuo on an instrument like a harpsichord. All the action is in the vocal line.

Recitative Accompagnato— While this is melodic speech set to music as well, it differs from the recitative secco by having action in the accompaniment— provided by the orchestra in this case instead of one instrument.
Dove sono i bei momenti
from Le Nozze di Figaro

E Susanna non vien!
Sono ansiosa di saper come il Conte accolse la proposta.
Alquanto ardito il progetto mi par e ad uno sposo si vivace e geloso!
Ma che mal c’è?
cangiando I miei vestiti con quelli di Susanna,
e i suoi co’miei al favor della notte
Oh! Cielo!
Aqual unil stato fatale
io son riodotta da un misto inaudito d’infedelta, di gelosia, di sdegno!
prima amata,
indi offesa,
e alfin tradita,
Fammi or cercar Da una mia serva aita!

Dove sono i bei momenti
Di dolcezza e di piacer?
Dove andaro i giuramenti di quel labbro menzogner?
Perch’mai, se in pianti e in pene per me tutto si cangiò,
là memoria di quel bene dal mio sen non trapassò?

Ah! se almen la mia costanza nel languire amando ognor mi portasse una speranza di cangiar l’ingrato cor.

Where are the beautiful moments from The Marriage of Figaro

And Susanna doesn’t arrive!
I am anxious to know the how the Count reacted to the proposal.
The plan seems to me rather bold, especially with a husband so high-strung and jealous!
But what harm is there in changing my clothes with those of Susanna, and hers with mine, under the cover of night?
Oh heaven!
To what an unfortunate state of humility I have been reduced by a cruel husband who — with an incredible mixture of infidelity, jealousy, and disdain — after having first loved me, having then offended me, and having betrayed me, causes me now to seek help from one of my servants!

Where are the beautiful moments of sweetness and pleasure?
Where did the promises of those lying lips go?
Why ever, if in tears and in suffering everything has changed for me, has the memory of that dear one not left my breast?

Ah, if only my constancy while languishing, always loving, may bring me a hope of changing his ungrateful heart.
Bibliographical Information

Information for the *Le Nozze di Figaro* synopsis, biographical information, and term definitions were adapted from, *New Grove On-line, Wikipedia*, and *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*. *The Rake's Progress* synopsis was taken from an adaptation done by Stage Director, Jonathon Field of the West Bay Opera House in San Francisco, CA.

A Special Thanks To . . .

~ All of you who came this evening. Your presence here tonight means more than you know.

~ Mr. Kaczmarczyk, Dr. Radice, and Professor Swenson for taking the time to read my research paper for my lecture.

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~ God for all gifts you have granted me.