Faculty Recital: Rachel Schutz, soprano

Rachel Schutz
Ithaca College School of Music Faculty

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Faculty Recital:
Rachel Schutz, soprano
Mary Holzhauer, piano
Dann Coakwell, tenor
Paige Morgan, oboe
Christin Schillinger, bassoon

Hockett Family Recital Hall
Thursday, March 5th, 2020
8:15 pm
Program

As Steals the Morn (from L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato)  G. F. Handel  

Dann Coakwell, tenor  
Paige Morgan, oboe  
Christin Schillinger, bassoon  

Quatre Poèmes hindous  
1. Madras  
2. Lahore  
3. Bénarès (Naisance de Bouddha)  
4. Jeypur  

Maurice Delage  
(1879-1961)  

Zdes' khorosho (op. 21, no. 7)  
K ney (op. 38, no. 2)  
Krysolov (op. 38, no. 4)  
Vesenniye vody (op. 14, no. 11)  

Sergei Rachmaninoff  
(1873-1943)  

Intermission

Meditation  
1. Know you how many petals falling  
2. Monologue  

Chen Yi  
(b. 1953)  

Atwood Songs  
1. Notes Towards a Poem that Can Never be Written  
2. Memory  
3. Eating Fire  
4. Habitation  
5. Four Evasions  

Tania León  
(b. 1943)  

Je ne t'aimes pas  
Es regnet  
Youkali (Tango Habanera)  
I'm a stranger here myself (One Touch of Venus)  

Kurt Weill  
(1900-1950)
Program Notes

Artists have been travelling the world learning from each other for centuries. Whether it was Debussy hearing Gamelan music at the 1889 Paris World’s Fair, Mozart learning from the Italian operatic masters, or Villa-Lobos being heavily influenced by African and Indigenous musical styles, cultural sharing has been an important part of the development of Western art music.

These composers, and those on this evening’s program, both learned from their new surroundings as well as contributed to the musical life of their new homes. Their rich output and influence on others offer convincing evidence of the value of sharing aesthetic and cultural ideas.

Though born and educated in Germany, George Friedrich Handel (1685-1759) emigrated to Britain at age 27 after a short stint in Italy. While he helped popularize Italian Opera Seria in Britain and brought with him influences from German polyphony, he was also greatly influenced by the English choral tradition, and in turn, grew the canon immensely. “As steals the morn” is a lovely duet for tenor and soprano from his pastoral ode L’Allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato. The vignette-like larger work is a celebration of the English countryside set to the text of John Milton (1608-1674). Handel’s librettist Charles Jennens provided the text for the unifying Part III from which this duet hails, and while the text is not as soaring as Milton’s, the delightful music more than makes up for it.

Between 1911 and 1913, Maurice Delage and his father travelled throughout South Asia, a trip which resulted in Delage’s most famous piece Quatre poèmes hindous. Each song was named after the city in which it was written, and the cycle represents the first time that Indian rhythmic and melodic forms were introduced into Western music. The result is impressionistic harmonic language, complex rhythms, and a then-new vocal technique (moving from an open to closed mouth while singing) which put Delage at the forefront of musical modernity in early 20th century France.

Born in Russia to a musical family, Sergei Rachmaninoff quickly singled himself out as a talented pianist and prolific composer. After his family estate was seized during the Russian Revolution of 1917, Rachmaninoff fled to Scandinavia, where he eventually procured safe passage to the United States. Having left much of his fortune in Russia, Rachmaninoff turned to performing in order to support his family. In fact, his performance tours took up so much of his time that he only composed six works after arriving in the United States, and later admitted that in leaving Russia, "I left behind my desire to
compose: losing my country, I lost myself also." While his compositional output nearly ceased after emigration, his influence on the musical life of the United States, and in particular on Ithaca College where he served on the founding board, was vast.

Chinese composer Chen Yi first arrived in the US in 1986 to begin her DMA at Columbia University after being the first female student to complete an MA in composition at China’s premier Central Conservatory in Beijing. While her musical education began at a young age, it was interrupted by China’s Cultural Revolution which forced her into labor in the countryside. She used this time away from home to learn about traditional folk culture which would later heavily influence her compositional style. Chen has a unique way of blending Chinese and Western musical traditions, and her style is demonstrated well in these two songs. She employs several extended vocal techniques and uses a piano ostinato to evoke the style of Beijing Opera, while simultaneously using a Western approach to dissonance and form.

Cuban-born composer, conductor, and arts advisor Tania León also emigrated to the US to continue her education. She has been an influential advocate for new music, and her “Composers Now” festival brings together new music in a myriad of genres from classical to electronic and jazz to indie. She has also been an advocate for Latin American music in the US, and many of her compositions make reference, musically or thematically, to her cultural roots. These five songs were born in upstate New York (as they were commissioned by the Eastman School of Music and Syracuse University) and demonstrate her contemporary atonal style well.

Though he began life primarily as an instrumental composer writing symphonies, chamber music, and sonatas, Kurt Weill soon found the stage to be his musical home. By the late 1920s his songs and musical theater works had become immensely popular with Berlin audiences and he was a well-respected composer. Despite this flourishing career, however, Weill fled Berlin in 1933 for Paris. As a prominent Jew and leftist, he had become a target for the Nazi regime who began to interfere with his performances. He soon continued his emigration to the US where he returned his attention to the stage and began composing for Broadway and Hollywood. The selection of songs presented this evening offers a sampling of his output, from French cabaret through American musical theater.