Janai Brugger / Soprano
Martin Katz / Piano

with
Adam Unsworth / Horn

Wednesday Evening, January 31, 2018 at 7:30
Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre
Ann Arbor

49th Performance of the 139th Annual Season
Song Remix: A Biennial Songfest
This evening’s recital is supported by the Maurice and Linda Binkow Philanthropic Fund.

Special thanks to Stanford Olsen, Scott Piper, Matthew Thompson, and the entire U-M Vocal Performance Department for their participation in events surrounding this evening’s recital.

Special thanks to Nicholas Roehler for providing the translations and surtitles for this evening’s recital.

Ms. Brugger appears by arrangement with Rayfield Allied.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.
PROGRAM

I
Francis Poulenc
Air champêtre from Airs chantés, No. 2 (Pastoral Air)
Text by Jean Moréas

C. from Deux Poèmes de Louis Aragon, No. 1
Text by Louis Aragon

Reine des mouettes from Métamorphoses, No. 1 (Queen of the Seagulls)
Text by Louise de Vilmorin

Violon from Fiançailles pour rire, No. 5 (Violin)
Text by Louise de Vilmorin

Fleurs from Fiançailles pour rire, No. 6 (Flowers)
Text by Louise de Vilmorin

II
Franz Schubert
Auf dem Strom, D. 943 (On the River)
Text by Ludwig Rellstab
Mr. Unsworth

III
Richard Strauss
Heimliche Aufforderung, Op. 27, No. 4 (Secret invitation)
Text by John Henry Mackay

Ophelialieder, Op. 67
Texts by Karl Joseph Simrock, after William Shakespeare
Wie erkenn’ ich mein Treulieb? (How Can I Tell my True Love)
Guten Morgen, ’s ist Sankt Valentinstag! (Good Morning, It’s Valentine’s Day!)
Sie trugen ihn auf der Bahre bloß (She Bore him on his Bier Naked)

Cäcilie, Op. 27, No. 2
Text by Heinrich Hart

Intermission
IV
Sergei Rachmaninoff
Six Songs, Op. 38

At Night in My Garden
Text by Avetik Isaakian

To Her
Text by Andrei Bely

The Daisies
Text by Igor Severianin

The Rat Catcher
Text by Valery Yakovlevich Bryusov

The Dream
Text by Fyodor Sologub

A-oo
Text by Konstantin Balmont

V
Lee Hoiby
always, it’s Spring
Text by E.E. Cummings

What if…?
Text by Samuel Coleridge

To an Isle in the Water
Text by William Butler Yeats

The Lamb
Text by William Blake

There came a wind like a bugle
Text by Emily Dickinson
NOTES ON THE PROGRAM

For those of you who attended the first concert in this year’s Song Biennial, *What’s in a Song?*, this second event will seem wholly different. Instead of many singers sharing the evening, Ms. Brugger and I present a more or less traditional solo vocal recital, although not an evening of repertoire heard too often, and certainly not in the customary chronological order. Traditional yes, in that only one singer and one pianist will occupy the stage and the audience’s attention, but that description stops there.

When one considers the three centuries of repertoire available for selecting songs for such an evening, it is rather unusual that four of tonight’s five sets of songs were composed in the 20th century, and two of the songs by Strauss miss that category by only six years. The variety of musical styles heard tonight is also refreshingly lacking in predictability: Poulenc’s sensuous neo-classicism is completely at odds with the ultra-romantic indulgences of Strauss and Rachmaninoff. Moreover, the four languages heard tonight greatly affect the sound of the voice, and display vastly different attitudes on the part of the composers toward the inflection of both text and music.

Following on the heels of the twin icons of impressionism, the group we call “Les Six” made it their mission to engineer a sea change in composition, no less so than Debussy and Ravel had done earlier to combat Wagner’s influence on music worldwide. Of those half-dozen French creative artists, Francis Poulenc’s name alone remains in the active file of repertoire heard often and everywhere. And to go further, if the name Poulenc is known for anything specifically, it is for vocal music, and songs in particular. Like his British counterpart, Benjamin Britten, Poulenc had an important singer to inspire him and to introduce his song creations to the world. For three decades, baritone Pierre Bernac with the composer at the piano toured the world extensively, and no concert was without a healthy dose of Poulenc’s *mélodies*.

It is possible that Poulenc’s attraction to the verses of great contemporary poets plays a significant role in the quality of his songs, a role not shared by the other five composers in his group. Add to that an inherent feeling for all things lyrical and you have a recipe for more than 200 songs of real quality. Poulenc’s songs dominate the 20th-century French repertoire and rightly so. Poulenc tended to group his songs in sets, and that is true of the quintet heard this evening. The fourth and fifth songs are from a group uniquely feminine in nature, all depicting a woman with a partner. It might be her lover, or her ex-lover, or a devilishly attractive Hungarian violinist in a nightclub. “Reine des mouettes,” the third song, is absurdly brief, witty, and is the flagship of a trio of two crazy songs and one quite profound one — hence the title *Metamorphosis*. The one-letter title “C” is a conceit of the poet Louis Aragon; all the lines in this poem end with the same
sound, the pronunciation of this letter in French. This is among Poulenc's most-performed songs, a hauntingly beautiful but tragic description of war-torn France by a pacifist poet. I mention the first song last, for it puts the lie to my earlier statement of Poulenc's literary sensibilities — Poulenc had no affection for this poet; his publisher forced him to set these words to music. Luckily, with “Air champêtre” we are left with one of the evening's most charming moments where Poulenc's disrespect is nowhere evident.

II
Another composer whose fame and immortality rests on his songs is, of course, Franz Schubert. Our whole notion today of what an art song can be stems from this gentle genius, who never meant to revolutionize the world (as his contemporary Beethoven did), but only to make it a lovelier, more sensitive place. The exact number of Schubert's songs is not certain, but it definitely exceeds 600, and this from a man who died at 31 years of age.

In 1828, the last year of the composer's life, Schubert composed two large-scale songs for voice, piano, and an assisting instrument. The more famous of the pair is “Der Hirt auf den Felsen” (The Shepherd on the Rock) with clarinet as the featured addition, written only three months before the composer’s death. Tonight we hear its fraternal twin, written six months earlier, featuring the French horn. This extended song is in a single tempo, with a variety of piano accompaniments to keep its lyricism interesting.

A separate sub-category of the 600 Schubert songs would have to be his water songs. Whether it is the brook in Die schöne Müllerin or the ocean in “Der Zwerg,” Schubert was clearly inspired by the rhythm and atmosphere of moving water. From his earliest efforts to the year of his death, water never failed to fascinate and motivate him. In tonight’s offering, as the boat draws away from the shore and begins its river journey, we enter a world of undulating serenity.

The poem by Rellstab which inspired Schubert to pen this lovely song is said to have been left to him in Beethoven's estate. Schubert featured this song in the only concert he ever gave on his own behalf to raise money toward his medical expenses. Originally sung by a tenor, it was performed soon after his death by a soprano to raise funds for his memorial.

III
Songs of Richard Strauss bring the first half of tonight’s program to a close. Strauss is another composer — like Poulenc and Britten — who toured the world as a pianist-partner to a singer and often performed his own Lieder. In his case, it was his wife, soprano Pauline de Ahna, with whom his tempestuous relationship was widely known, and certainly did not hurt with selling tickets to their Lieder evenings throughout Europe.

The style of Strauss songs is no different from the style of his many celebrated operas. The accompaniment — be it orchestra or piano — is lush but not at all lacking in contrapuntal activity either. The vocal line may be lyrical or declamatory, depending on the demands of
the chosen text. Composers are sometimes classified as word painters or melodists; Strauss manages to straddle these two categories and often excels in both.

The bookends of tonight’s Strauss set are two well-known anthems of desire, love, and wooing. “Heimliche Aufforderung” is that unusual love song which speaks of people who have been together before their encounter in this song. They have a history, and a thrilling one. While no words are exchanged when they meet at a crowded party, it is clear what might happen, with any luck. “Cäcilie” is a three-fold plea for this girl with the unusual, non-German name to accede to the singer’s wish and cohabit with him. This is truly an aria masquerading as a song; were this to be dropped into Ariadne auf Naxos or Rosenkavalier, no one would be the wiser.

Between these two great love songs, we hear the three songs of Ophelia. These are taken from the hapless heroine’s final speech in Shakespeare’s Hamlet, and it should be noted that Strauss set the German translation which is marvelously theatrical, but not exactly translated from the Bard. Ophelia is clearly demented in most of these measures, with just a moment or two of sanity peeking through now and then.

It is easy to tell how the composer re-invented himself to set these texts to music, particularly as they are surrounded by what one could call mainstream Strauss. With the Opheliaclieder, tonality comes and goes, and traditional melody is close to entirely absent. These are songs to present theatrically; there is no other agenda for programming them.

With their fluctuating tempi and lack of harmonic center, one would not recognize them as Richard Strauss, unless one were likening them to his other crazed personalities such as Salome or Elektra.

IV

After leaving his native Russia in 1917, Rachmaninoff never wrote another song. To his friends he confessed that without Russian soil beneath his feet, he could not find inspiration for solo vocal music. Living in Sweden, Denmark, and finally America did nothing to change this, despite pleas from other Russian expatriates to provide more songs.

Tonight we hear his final outpouring of songs, Op. 38, from 1916. His affairs were in chaos, the political and economic situation in Russian was similarly volatile, and yet for this final flowering of song, Rachmaninoff managed to find a new voice, a fresh new look at harmony, melody, and rhythm. His earlier songs are no less beautiful; they are beloved and often performed throughout the world, but Op. 38 breaks new ground.

For openers, these songs have no time signatures. This is a composer’s most expedient way of putting the spotlight on the text. For these songs, Rachmaninoff did not go back to Pushklin and Tolstoy, giants of a former era, but instead turned to contemporary symbolist wordsmiths who were personal friends of his. Rather than attempt to capture the rhythm of the words in a conventional fashion using rhythmic formulas, the composer did away with any adherence to rhythmic models and permitted the inflection of the text to
reign supreme over the music. This is not to say that there is no melody, but these songs occupy a different portion of the Rachmaninoff kingdom.

In addition to the rhythmic pioneering, there is a huge extension of the piano’s role here, and a similar expansion of what harmony can be. No other vocal music — and precious little piano music — exhibits this new territory for this composer. One can only wonder what he would have created if his friends had convinced him to write more songs after leaving Russia.

Lee Hoiby left us only seven years ago. A remarkable pianist, he could have had a career as a concert soloist, but chose instead to leave a legacy of vocal music — both song and opera. Hoiby would have to be considered a conservative and traditional composer; he never experimented with non-mainstream systems of harmony or rhythm. Still, his insistence on the text governing the flow of the music and his predilection for literary icons as fodder for his songs and operas has left us a body of work of high quality.

Hoiby has much in common with both Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti. All three are closely associated with the Curtis School of Music in Philadelphia, come from backgrounds where singing was prevalent, and clearly all three are known for their vocal compositions, although Barber is more universal in terms of genres. Menotti took the young Hoiby under his wing and employed him as an assistant as his operas were produced in New York on Broadway. Hoiby coached the singers, often drilled the orchestra in sectional rehearsals, and advised the elder maestro on matters of balance and staging.

Like Poulenc, Hoiby had a very fortunate association with a celebrated singer, in his case, with Leontyne Price. Three sets of songs were written for her, and their demands clearly point to Price’s specific talents.

Tonight’s set of songs by this talented American immediately show his fondness for great writers; just read the list of poets, and it is akin to taking a survey poetry course. Whether it is antique spiritual world of Blake, the whimsical world of Cummings, or the life-changing messages from Emily Dickinson, Hoiby responds with the appropriate musical language for both singer and pianist. His songs never fail to illuminate the texts he chooses.

Program notes by Martin Katz.
American soprano **Janai Brugger**, a 2012 winner of Operalia and of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, began the current season returning to the Royal Opera House–Covent Garden in the role of Pamina in *Die Zauberflöte*. She performs in Mahler’s *Symphony No. 4* with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra and travels to her home city of Chicago to take on the role of Liù in *Turandot* at Lyric Opera of Chicago and stars in *Ask Your Mama* with Chicago Sinfonietta.

Ms. Brugger also returns to the University of Michigan with a recital and a concert performance as Clara in *The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess*. At Palm Beach Opera she sings Susanna in *Le Nozze de Figaro* and finishes the season at the Dutch National Opera as Servillia in *La clemenza di Tito*.

Recent highlights include performances at the Metropolitan Opera in several roles: Jemmy in *Guillaume Tell*, Michaela in *Carmen*, Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, and Marzelline in *Fidelio*. The proud recipient of the 2016 Marian Anderson Award, she gave a recital at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and later joined the Atlanta Symphony for the role of Amor in *Orfeo* in concerts and a recording. She appeared in the Bonn AIDS Gala in Germany and sang Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9* at Grant Park in Chicago.

Identified by *Opera News* as one of their top 25 “brilliant young artists” (October 2015 issue), Ms. Brugger appeared in the Metropolitan Opera’s Rising Stars concert series and made several US concert and recital appearances, along with her highly successful debut as Norina in *Don Pasquale* at Palm Beach Opera. She revived the role of Musetta in *La bohème* at Los Angeles Opera under the baton of Gustavo Dudamel. Recent highlights include the role of Pamina at Los Angeles Opera in the new production by Barrie Kosky; and Liù in *Turandot* at the Metropolitan Opera, where she also sang the role of Helena in *The Enchanted Island*.

In previous seasons, she made her debut as Michaela in *Carmen* with Opera Colorado; she sang High Priestess in *Aida* at the Hollywood Bowl with Los Angeles Philharmonic, Juliette in *Roméo et Juliette* at Palm Beach Opera, and, as a member of the Domingo-Thornton Young Artist Program, her Los Angeles Opera appearances include Barbarina in *La Nozze di Figaro* under the baton of Placido Domingo, Page in *Rigoletto* with James Conlon, and Musetta in *La bohème* with Patrick Summers.

Ms. Brugger appears frequently in concert and in recital; she sang at the Peter Dvorsky Festival in the Czech Republic; with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra during the May Festival and at the Ravinia Festival with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra as First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* both under the baton of James Conlon; at Grant Park Festival’s Fourth of July open-air concert before 10,000 people; and with the Philadelphia Orchestra in their 2013 gala concert performance.

A native of Chicago, she obtained a master’s degree from the University of Michigan, where she studied with the late Shirley Verrett. She received her bachelor’s degree from DePaul University where she studied with Elsa Charlston. In 2010, Ms. Brugger participated in The Merola Opera...
Program at San Francisco Opera, and went on to become a young artist at Los Angeles Opera for two seasons.

**Martin Katz** has been called “the gold standard of accompanists” by the *New York Times*. His 50-year career has taken him to five continents, collaborating with the world’s most celebrated singers in recital and recording. He has regularly shared the concert stage with Marilyn Horne, Frederica von Stade, Karita Mattila, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Lawrence Brownlee, David Daniels, and Piotr Beczala, to name but a few.

Mr. Katz is also active as a conductor and editor. He has led opera productions for San Francisco’s Merola program, the BBC, as well as innumerable performances at the University of Michigan. His editions of Baroque and bel canto operas have been performed in Houston, Ottawa, and at the Metropolitan Opera.

At U-M for more than three decades, he has chaired the program in collaborative piano and coached vocal repertoire for singers and pianists alike. His students are working in their chosen field all over the world. U-M recently awarded him a Distinguished University Professorship.

An author too, Mr. Katz’s first opus, *The Complete Collaborator*, has been published by Oxford University Press, and is considered the seminal work on the subject.

Soloist and recording artist **Adam Unsworth** is associate professor of horn at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. As a performer, he is dedicated to commissioning and performing works of living composers, with a goal of expanding repertoire and redefining the boundaries of the horn. His recent CD release, *Snapshots*, on Equilibrium Records, is a compilation of previously unrecorded music, much of which Mr. Unsworth commissioned since starting at Michigan 2007. His newest release titled *Balance* is a jazz recording for horn, jazz quintet, and chamber orchestra, which features arrangements of his original compositions.

Prior to his appointment at U-M, he was fourth horn of The Philadelphia Orchestra (1998–2007) and second horn of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (1995–98). He has performed as a guest with the St. Louis, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, and Chicago symphonies. A former faculty member at Temple University, Mr. Unsworth has appeared as a recitalist and clinician at many universities throughout the US, and has made several solo and chamber appearances at Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall. Mr. Unsworth received his formal training at Northwestern University, where he studied with former Chicago Symphony Orchestra members Gail Williams and Norman Schweikert. He continued with graduate work at the University of Wisconsin-Madison with Douglas Hill. He later recorded *Jazz Set for Solo Horn*, released in 2001 as part of *Thoughtful Wanderings*, a compilation of Hill’s works for horn. The University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Music named him their “Distinguished Alumnus of the Year” in 2000.
UMS ARCHIVES

Janai Brugger makes her sixth UMS appearance this evening following her UMS debut in performances of Handel’s Messiah at Hill Auditorium in December 2014. She most recently appeared under UMS auspices in December 2016 in performances of Handel’s Messiah. Martin Katz makes his 42nd UMS appearance this evening following his UMS debut in November 1976 in recital with bass-baritone Justino Diaz in Hill Auditorium. He has appeared on UMS stages over the past four decades with singers including Cecilia Bartoli, Kathleen Battle, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Marilyn Horne, Karita Mattila, Lawrence Brownlee, David Daniels, and Frederica von Stade. He most recently appeared at UMS in January 2018 in What’s in a Song with singers Nicole Cabell, Daniela Mack, Nicholas Phan, and John Relyea at the Lydia Mendelssohn Theatre. Adam Unsworth makes his third UMS appearance this evening, following his UMS debut in October 2009 with the Michigan Chamber Players in Stamps Auditorium. He most recently appeared at UMS in November 2010 with the Michigan Chamber Players in Rackham Auditorium.
MAY WE ALSO RECOMMEND...

2/2 Gabriel Kahane’s 8980: Book of Travelers
2/4 Ian Bostridge: Schubert’s Winterreise
2/17 The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess

Tickets available at www.ums.org.

ON THE EDUCATION HORIZON...

2/3 Master Class: Ian Bostridge
(Britton Recital Hall, Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, 12:30 pm)

2/13 Artist Interview: Janai Brugger
(Watkins Lecture Hall, Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, 2:30 pm)

2/16–17 The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess: A Symposium
(Gallery, Hatcher Graduate Library, 913 S. University Avenue)
Please visit smtd.umich.edu/Gershwin for full schedule details and to register.

2/19 FRAME: A Salon Series on Visual Art, Performance, and Identity
(202 S. Thayer Street Building, Atrium, 7:00 pm)

Educational events are free and open to the public unless otherwise noted.