

Program Notes
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April 5, 2025

George Handel

George Handel (1685-1759) was German-born English composer of the late Baroque era who was noted particularly for his operas, oratorios, and instrumental compositions. He democratized music, and in this respect his popular oratorios, his songs, and his best-loved instrumental works have a social significance that complements their purely musical importance. Handel's music became an indispensable part of England's national culture.

Let Me Wander Not Unseen, Or Let The Merry Bells Ring Round

Let Me Wander Not Unseen is the Allegro song 'in Sicilian Style' proposed by James Harris, a suggestion taken up by Handel to delectable effect. Originally this led to a chorus using the same music to finish Part I but, in a last-minute revision in 1740, Handel substituted a lively major-key setting of the words 'Or let the merry bells ring round', a joyous tune with imitations of English change-ringing and a sparkling part for a carillon.

W.A. Mozart

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) was an Austrian composer, widely recognized as one of the greatest composers in the history of western music. His style essentially represents different elements that ties back to his Austrian roots such as mature music which is distinguished by its melodic beauty, its formal elegance, and its richness of harmony and texture. He attempted most of the art-music forms of his time and excelled at them all.

Batti, batti o bel Masetto

Batti, batti, o bel Masetto is a libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte (after Giovanni Bertati's libretto for Giuseppe Gazzaniga *Il convitato di pietra*: also after the Don Juan legends) from the opera *Don Giovanni* which premiered in 1787. It is from Act I scene 4 set in Seville in the 17th century in the garden of Don Giovanni's place in the late afternoon. The scene contains Zerlina and Masetto who are a peasant couple about to be married. The festivities have begun when Giovanni happens on the scene and becomes enamoured of the charming Zerlina. He tries to lead her to his castle and almost succeeds. In this aria a contrite Zerlina teases and kisses her offended fiance into good humor again.

Robert Schumann

Robert Schumann (1810-1856) was a German Romantic composer renowned particularly for his piano music, songs (lieder), and orchestral music. Many of his best-known piano pieces were written for his wife, the pianist Clara Schumann. As a composer, Schumann was first and most naturally a miniaturist. Much of his early and later works are full of enigmas, musical quotations, and veiled allusions. In the field of the piano miniature and the pianistic song, he is a supreme master in the simpler kind of lyrical inspiration and in the invention of musical aphorisms. Schumann was rightly considered an advanced composer in his day, and he stands in the front rank of German Romantic musical figures.

Lied Der Braut

Lied Der Braut is a song about a woman who is so deeply in love begging for her mother's permission and trust to fall in love without knowing what the future will bring. The love she has experienced has made the love for her mother lack and lessen. She wants her mother to feel the same love that she has in her heart which has given a life that is radiant.

Seit Ich In Gesehen

Seit Ich In Gesehen is about a woman who tells of her blindness ever since seeing the man who she loves for the first time. Wherever she looks whether it's in her dreams or even in darkness, she sees nothing but him as a light that shines brightly.

Der Nussbaum

Der Nussbaum comes from the song cycle that he gave to his bride Clara on their wedding day. The song cycle was named after the traditional bridal finery, Myrthens (Myrtles). It's a delicate setting of one of Mosen's poems in which a meditative melody is shared between the piano and voice. The text tells of the whispers and caresses shared by two nut tree blossoms, revealing a certain maiden's dreams of a bridegroom; nearby a girl listens, drifting gently into reverie.

Gabriel Faure

Gabriel Faure (1845-1924) was a composer whose refined and gentle music influenced the course of modern French music. Although he had deep respect for the traditional forms of music, Fauré delighted in infusing those forms with a mélange of harmonic daring and a freshness of invention. One of the most striking features of his style was his fondness for daring harmonic progressions and sudden modulations, invariably carried out with supreme elegance and a deceptive air of simplicity.

En Priere

En Priere is a song that is based on Jesus Christ and his faith that he has in God the father. Jesus is praying to God asking him that if he is meant to teach his words, give him the wisdom to serve him. Allow nothing but the truth to come out of his every word so that if anyone were to have uncertainty, they are filled with humility in order to revere God. To give him the strength and gentleness that is needed to withstand the suffering which will lead to his dying on the cross at Calvary.

Reynaldo Hahn

Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947) was a Venezuelan-born French composer known for his art songs. Hahn's music is melodious and graceful. His memoirs are valuable sources for the musical and literary life of his time.

L'heure Exquise

L'heure Exquise is a piece that describes the Exquisite Hour in which the sun sets and night begins to fall. The white moon is shining so brightly throughout the entire forest reflecting off of the pond and bouncing its light on all the surroundings. It shows how calm, gentle, and peaceful nature is.

Harry T. Burleigh

Harry T. Burleigh (1866-1949) was an American singer, composer, arranger, and music editor who was a noted arranger of African American spirituals. He studied at the National Conservatory of Music in New York City under Antonin Dvorak who heavily influenced him and through his singing acquainted Dvorak with the traditional Black vocal music of the United States. He was a mentor to the next generation of African American singers, including Roland Hayes, Marian Anderson, and Paul Robeson, among others.

Every Time I Feel The Spirit

Every Time I Feel The Spirit is an African-American spiritual that embraces the energy and joyfulness in which the spirit brings. The spirit of God allows you to rejoice in his presence which can be heard and felt. Not only does it speak of a prayer but it can actually be considered a prayer itself.

Moses Hogan

Moses Hogan (1957-2003) was an American conductor, arranger, and pianist. He was influenced by his upbringing in the African American Baptist church, particularly the unaccompanied spiritual arrangements he heard there. In 1993, he founded the Moses Hogan Chorale, one of only two American choirs invited to perform at the 1996 World Choral Symposium in Sydney, Australia. In 1998, Hogan assembled his most notable group, the Moses Hogan Singers, whose debut album Give Me Jesus was released in 2002.

Give Me Jesus

Give Me Jesus is an African-American spiritual that speaks on seeking out Jesus throughout our life. Instead of worrying about the outside world, making God our whole world and wanting him to enter into it. When we wake up, in the darkness of midnight, and when we come to die we want Jesus to be present.

Florence B. Price

Florence B. Price (1887-1953) was a composer and the first African American woman to win widespread recognition as a symphonic composer in the 1930s. She is best known for her art songs and arrangements of spirituals sung by many of the most renowned singers. She incorporated spirituals and characteristic dance music within classical forms, and at times deviated from traditional structures in deference to influences which are implicitly African American such as call-and-response techniques and Juba dance rhythms. To her art songs and piano music she brought a thorough knowledge of instrumental and vocal writing, colorful harmonies and exotic modulations.

My Soul's Been Anchored In The Lord

My Soul's Been Anchored In The Lord is a song that talks about committing your life fully to God. When Jesus is our anchor, we become empowered by his Spirit to do all things through Christ who strengthens us. When we become anchored and filled with Jesus, we are planted, rooted, steady, and unmoving.