

Mon Dieu Quelle Aube

John C. Ross
(b. 1951)

Pittsburg State University presents

Jessie Wright Martin, mezzo-soprano
and
Steven Edmund, piano

with special guests
Stella Hastings, soprano
Brian Woods, tenor

Tuesday, March 26, 2002
McCray Recital Hall
7:30 p.m.

1. *La Flûte de Pan*
2. *La chevelure*
3. *Le Tombeau*

1. La Flûte de Pan (Pierre Louÿs)
Hier le jour des hyacinthes,
Il m'a donné une syrinx bleue.
De roses bien taillées,
Une avec la blanche cire.
Qui est douce à mes lèvres comme le miel.
Il m'apprend à jouer, assise sur ses genoux;
Mais je suis un peu tremblante.
Il en joue après moi, si doucement
Que je l'entends à peine.

1. The Flute of Pan
On this day of hyacinths,
He has given me a pipe made
Of well-cut reeds,
Jewels together with the white wax.
That is as sweet as honey on my lips.
He teaches me to play, while I sit on his knees;
But I tremble just a little.
He plays it after me, so softly
That I can hardly hear him.

3 poesie persiane

I

II

III

I (Kamare)

Quando le domandai
la causa della nostra lontananza,
essa mi rispose: Te lo dirò.
Io sono il tuo occhio, e sono la tua anima
Perché ti sorprendi se tu non mi vedi?
Dimmi: chi hà mai potuto veder l'anima?
Dimmi?...Dimmi?...

II (Khavam)

Io mi levai dal centro della Terra.
araverso la settima porta
e m'assisi sul trono di Saturno.
E molti Enigmi divinali nel cammino.
Ma non l'Enigma della morte umana
ne quello del destino.

III (Abu-Said)

Le domandai:
A chi vuoi legare il tuo destino tu così bella
Essa mi rispose: a me stessa
Perché sono l'unica!
Perché sono l'amore,
son l'amante e l'amata!
Perché sono lo Specchio
la Bellezza e la visione!

I.

**Francesco Santoliquido
(1883-1971)**

I

*When he questioned
the cause of our distance,
She answered me: I will tell you.
I am your eye, and I am your soul
Why am I surprised if you don't see me?
Tell me: Who has ever been able to see the soul?
Tell me? Tell me?*

II

*I raised myself up from the center of the earth.
Too traverse the seventh door
and ascend to the throne of Saturn.
And many enigmas divine in the way.
But not the enigma of human death.
Nor that one of destiny.*

III

*I asked him:
to whom would you tie your destiny thou so beautiful
He responded to me: To myself,
Because I am the only one!
Because I am love,
I am the lover, and the loved!
Because I am the mirror
the most beautiful and a vision!*

II.

Mon Dieu Quelle Aube

John C. Ross
(b. 1961)

My mother taught me my first French word, "les fleurs" and my first principle of French grammar, that the conjugated verb is always accompanied by the pronoun (unlike Spanish where the pronoun is often dropped). She once bought an elementary French grammar book at a Salvation Army Store. She had taken French in high school. Four children and twenty years later she no doubt wanted to reconnect with that young girl who had desired to learn something beyond what her experience thus far had taught her, a desire she passed on to me. -- JCR

In memorium Shirley Ann Bell Ross 1935-2001

Mon Dieu Quelle Aube (Paulene Aspel)

Doucement elle monte sur sa passerelle
de fils de rosée,
portée qui espère des notes
jamais encore entendues . . .

J'ouvre ma fenêtre.
Je l'ouvre toute grande.
Un battant, deux battants.
Bonjour, le monde.
Touche ma joue
et que mes yeux respirent.
J'écoute tes voix.
Je te tends la main.
Entre, tu es chez toi,
lieu d'échanges, d'amour.
Ici, bientôt tu seras refait à neuf,
mes vœux fervants
vont relier, unir, apaiser
tes multiples fragments.

My God, What a Dawn

*Softly it climbs its ladder
of dewy threads,
a staff hoping for notes
never heard before . . .*

*I open my window.
I open it wide.
One side, two sides.
Hello, world.
Touch my cheek
and let my eyes breathe.
I'm listening to your voices.
I'm reaching out my hand.
Come in, you're home,
a place for give-and-take, for love.
Here you'll soon be made new again,
my devotion
will gather, unite and soothe
your separate strands.*

III.

Chanson de Bilitis

Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)

- 1. La Flûte de Pan**
- 2. La chevelure**
- 3. Le Tombeau des Naiades**

1. La Flûte de Pan (Pierre Louys)

Pour le jour des Hyacinthies,
Il m'a donné une syrinx faite
De roseaux bien taillés,
Unis avec la blanche cire
Qui est douce à mes lèvres comme le miel.
Il m'apprend à jouer, assise sur ses genoux;
Mais je suis un peu tremblante.
Il en joue après moi, si doucement
Que je l'entends à peine.

1. The Flute of Pan

*On this day of Hyacinthus,
He has given me a pipe made
Of well-cut reeds,
Joined together with the white wax
That is as sweet as honey on my lips.
He teaches me to play, while I sit on his knees;
But I tremble just a little.
He plays it after me, so softly
That I can hardly hear him.*

Nous n'avons rien à nous dire,
Tant nous sommes près l'un de l'autre;
Mais nos chansons veulent se répondre,
Et tour à tour nos bouches
S'unissent sur la flûte.

Il est tard;

Voici le chant des grenouilles vertes

Qui commence avec la nuit.

Ma mère ne croira jamais

Que je suis restée si longtemps

A chercher ma ceinture perdue.

2. La chevelure(Pierre Louys)

Il m'a dit: "Cette nuit, j'ai rêvé.

J'avais ta chevelure autour de mon cou.

J'avais tes cheveux comme un collier noir

Autour de ma nuque et sur ma poitrine.

Je les caressais, et c'étaient les miens;

Et nous étions liés pour toujours ainsi,

Par la même chevelure, la bouche sur la bouche,

Ainsi que deux lauriers n'ont souvent qu'une racine.

Et peu à peu, il m'a semblé.

Tant nos membres étaient confondus,

Que je devenais toi-même,

Ou que tu entraies en moi comme mon songe."

Quand il eut achevé,

Il mit doucement ses mains sur mes épaules,

Et il me regarda d'un regard si tendre,

Que je baissai les yeux avec un frisson.

3. Le Tombeau des Naiades (Pierre Louys)

Le long du bois couvert de givre, je marchais;

Mes cheveux devant ma bouche

Se fleurissaient de petits glaçons,

Et mes sandales étaient Lourdes

De neige fangeuse et tassée.

Il me dit: "Qu'é cherches-tu?"

Je suis la trace du satyre.

Ses petits pas fourchus alternant

Comme des trous dans un manteau blanc.

Il me dit: "Les satyres sont morts.

Les satyres et les nymphes aussi.

Depuis trente ans,

Il n'a pas fait un hiver aussi terrible.

La trace que tu vois est celle d'un bouc.

Mais restons ici, où est leur tombeau."

Et avec le fer de sa houe

Il cassa la glace

De la source où jadis riaient les naïades.

Il prenait de grands morceaux froids,

Es les soulevant vers le ciel pâle,

Il regardait au travers.

We have nothing to say,

So close are we to one another;

But our songs want to harmonize,

And gradually our lips

Are united on the flute.

It is late;

Here is the chant of the green frogs

That begins with the night.

My mother will never believe

That I stayed out so long

In search of my lost belt.

2. The Tresses

He told me: "Last night I dreamed.

I had your tresses around my neck.

I wore your locks like a dark chain

Around my neck and on my breast.

I caressed them and they were my own;

And we were thus forever united,

By the same tresses, lips upon lips,

As two laurels often have but one root.

And gradually, it seemed to me,

So much were our limbs entwined,

That I became you,

Or that you entered into me, like my dream."

When he had finished,

He gently laid his hands upon my shoulders,

And he looked at me with a glance so tender

That I cast down my eyes and trembled.

3. The Tomb of the Naiads

I wandered along the frost-covered woods;

My hair, blowing before my mouth,

Was adorned with tiny icicles,

And my sandals were heavy

With soiled clods of snow.

He asked me: "What are you looking for?"

I follow the trace of the Satyr.

His little hoofprints alternate

Like holes in a white coat.

He told me: "The Satyrs are dead,

The Satyrs and also the Nymphs.

In thirty years

There has been no winter as terrible as this.

The hoofprint which you see is that of a buck.

But let us stay here, on the site of their tomb."

And with the iron of his hatchet

He broke through the ice

Of the spring where the Naiads once had laughed.

He took large frozen pieces,

And, holding them toward the pale sky,

He peered through them.

Intermission

IV.

Mir ist die Ehre widerfahren (Presentation of the Rose) from Der Rosenkavalier

**Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)**

Stella Hastings, soprano

Act II. The young nobleman Octavian has been sent by his cousin, Baron Ochs von Lerchenau, to deliver a silver rose to his bride-to be, Sophie. Upon seeing her, Octavian is immediately smitten by her, and the young Sophie's heart is also filled with new sensations. Libretto by Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

Octavian: *[etwas stockend]*

Mir ist die Ehre widerfahren daß ich der hoch und wohlgeborenen Jungfer Braut, in meines Herrn Vettern Namen, dessen zu Lerchenau Namen, die Rose seiner Liebe überreichen darf.

Sophie: *[nimmt die Rose]*

Ich bin Euer Liebden sehr verbunden. Ich bin Euer Liebden in aller Ewigkeit verbunden. Hat einen starken Geruch wie Rosen, wie lebendige.

Octavian:

Ja, ist ein Tropfen persischen Rosenöls darein getan. Yes, some Persian rose oils have been poured on.

Sophie:

Wie himmlische, nicht irdische, wie Rosen vom hochheiligen Paradies. Ist ihm nicht auch?

[Oct. riecht an der Rose]

Ist wie ein Gruß vom Himmel.

Ist bereits zu stark, als dass man's ertragen kann. Zieht einen nach, als lägen Stricke um das Herz. *[leise]*

Wo war ich schon einmal und war so selig? Dahin muß ich zurück dahin, und müsst ich völlig sterben auf dem Weg. Allein ich sterb ja nicht. Das ist ja weit. Ist Zeit und Ewigkeit in einem selgen Augenblick, den will ich nie vergessen bis an meinen Tod.

Octavian:

Wo war ich schon einmal und war so selig? Ich war ein Bub, da hab ich die, die noch nicht gekannt. Wer bin denn ich? Wie komm ich denn zu ihr? Wie kommt denn sie zu mir? Wär' ich kein Mann, die Sinne möchten mir vergehn; das ist ein selger Augenblick, den will ich nie vergessen bis an meinen Tod.

Octavian: *[with slight hesitation]*

I am most honored by my mission, to say to you, most noble lady, most high born Bride, That my cousin, on whose behalf I come, Baron Lerchenau, begs you to take this rose as token of his love.

Sophie: *[takes the rose]*

I am to your Honour much indebted, for all eternity. 'Tis a most powerful fragrance, like roses, like living ones

Octavian:

Sophie:

How heavenly, not of the Earth it seems, a rose from the most sacred groves of Paradise. Isn't it?

[Octavian smells the Rose]

It's like a sign from Heaven.

O, how strong the scent, I scarce can suffer it.

Drawing me on, like something that's tugging at my heart. *[softly]*

Where did I taste, of old, such heavenly rapture?

Though death await me there, to that fair scene I must betake me once again.

But yet why think of death, 'tis far away. In one blest moment can dwell all time and eternity,

Ne'er may its holy memory fade, till death.

Octavian:

Where did I taste, of old, such heavenly rapture?

I was a child, until I saw her fair face this day.

But who am I?

What fate brings her to me?

What fate brings me to her?

Feeling and sense would leave me were I not a man.

This is a blessed moment for all Eternity.

Ne'er may its holy memory fade, till death.

V.

Canticle II

Abraham and Isaac

Brian Woods, tenor

Benjamin Britten
(1913-1976)

In the second of his five Canticles, Britten set texts from the Chester Miracle Plays as a short dramatic scena, depicting the story of God's bidding that Abraham kill his son Isaac. The singers represent the father and son independently and portray God's voice, represented by the two singers singing together, either in unison, or a fourth apart, suggesting early organum. The piece concludes with a closing benediction for all. Britten reverted to this work later, in the *War Requiem*.

God speaks:

*Abraham, my servant, Abraham,
Take Isaac, thy son by name,
That thou lovest the best of all,
And in sacrifice offer him to me
Upon that hill there besides thee.
Abraham, I will that so it be,
For aught that may befall.*

Abraham:

*My Lord, to Thee is mine intent
Ever to be obedient.
That son that Thou to me hast sent
Offer I will to Thee.
Thy bidding done shall be.*

(Here Abraham, turning him to his son Isaac, saith:)

*Make thee ready, my dear darling,
For we must do a little thing.
This woode do on thy back it bring,
We may no longer abide.
A sword and fire that I will take,
For sacrifice behoves me to make;
God's bidding will I not forsake,
But ever obedient be.*

(Here Isaac speaketh to his father, and taketh a bundle of sticks and beareth after his father, and saith:)

Isaac:

*Father, I am all ready
To do your bidding most meekely,
And to bear this wood full bayn am I,
As you commanded me.*

(Here they both go to the place to do sacrifice)

Abraham:

*Now, Isaac son, go we our way
To yonder mount if that we may.*

Isaac:

*My dear father, I will essay
To follow you full fain.*

(Abraham being minded to slay his son Isaac, lifts up his hands, and saith the following:)

Abraham:

*O! My heart will break in three,
To hear thy words I have pitye;
As Thou wilt, Lord, so must it be,*

To Thee I will be bayn.

Lay down thy faggot, my own son dear.

Isaac:

*All ready, father, lo it is here.
But why make you such heavy cheer?
Are you anything adread?*

Abraham:

Ah! Dear God! That me is woe!

Isaac:

*Father, if it be your will,
Where is the beast that we shall kill?*

Abraham:

Thereof, son, is none upon this hill.

Isaac:

*Father, I am full sore affeared
To see you bear that drawne sword.*

Abraham:

*Isaac, son, peace, I pray thee,
Thou breakest my heart even in three.*

Isaac:

*I pray you, father, layn nothing from me,
But tell me what you think.*

Abraham:

Ah! Isaac, Isaac, I must thee kill!

Isaac:

*Alas! Father, is that your will,
Your owne child for to spill
Upon this hilles brink?
If I have trespassed in any degree
With a yard you may beat me;
Put up your sword, if your will be,
For I am but a child.
Would God my mother were here with me!
She would kneel down upon her knee,
Praying you, father, if it may be,
For to save my life.*

Abraham:

*O Isaac, son, to thee I say
God hath commanded me today
Sacrifice, this is no nay,
To make of thy bodye.*

Isaac:

Is it God's will I shall be slain?

Abraham:

Yea, son, it is not for to layn.

(Here Isaac asketh his father's blessing on his knees, and saith:)

Isaac:

Father, seeing you muste needs do so,

Let it pass lightly and over go;

Kneeling on my knees two,

Your blessing on me spread.

Abraham:

My blessing, dear son, give I thee

And thy mother's with heart free.

The blessing of the Trinity,

My dear Son, on thee light.

(Here Isaac riseth and cometh to his father, and he taketh him, and bindeth and layeth him upon the altar to sacrifice him, and saith:)

Come hither, my child, thou art so sweet,

Thou must be bound both hands and feet.

Isaac:

Father, do with me as you will,

I must obey, and that is skill,

God's commandment to fulfil,

For needs so it must be.

Abraham:

Isaac, Isaac, blessed must thou be.

Isaac:

Father, greet well my brethren ying,

And pray my mother of her blessing,

I come no more under her wing,

Farewell for ever and aye.

Abraham:

Farewell, my sweet son of grace!

(Here Abraham doth kiss his son Isaac, and binds a kerchief about his head.)

Isaac:

I pray you, father, turn down my face,

For I am sore adread.

Abraham:

Lord, full loth were I him to kill!

Isaac:

Ah, mercy, father, why tarry you so?

Abraham:

Jesu! On me have pity,

That I have most in mind.

Isaac:

Now, father, I see that I shall die:

Almighty God in majesty!

My soul I offer unto Thee!

Abraham:

To do this deed I am sorrye.

(Here let Abraham make a sign as tho' he would cut off his son Isaac's head with his sword; then...)

God speaks:

Abraham, my servant dear, Abraham

Lay not thy sword in no manner

On Isaac, thy dear darling.

For thou darest me, well wot I,

That of thy son has no mercy,

To fulfil my bidding.

Abraham:

Ah, Lord of heaven and King of bliss,

Thy bidding shall be done, i-wiss!

A horned wether here I see,

Among the briars tied is he,

To Thee offered shall he be

Anon right in this place.

(Then let Abraham take the lamb and kill him.)

Sacrifice here sent me is,

And all, Lord, through Thy grace.

envoi (sending forth):

Such obedience grant us, O Lord!

Ever to Thy most holy word.

That in the same we may accord

As this Abraham was bayn;

And then altogether shall we

That worthy King in heaven see,

And dwell with Him in great glorye

For ever and ever. Amen.