

BENNINGTON COLLEGE MUSIC DIVISION

PRESENTS

# PIERROT LUNAIRE

*Arnold Schoenberg*



THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1990

8:15 p.m.

GREENWALL MUSIC WORKSHOP

Pierrot Lunaire      ARNOLD SCHOENBERG  
(1912)

Jacob Glick, violin, viola  
Nathaniel Parke, 'cello  
Patricia Spencer, flute, piccolo  
Gunnar Schonbeck, clarinet, bass clarinet  
Elizabeth Wright, piano  
Anne Riesenfeld, voice  
Louis Calabro, conductor

Poems from Albert Giraud, "Pierrot Lunaire"  
German version by Otto Hartleben  
English translation by Ingolf Dahl and Carl Beier

20.      HEIMFAHRT / HOMEWARD BOUND

A moonbeam for the rudder,  
Water lily for a boat,  
So Pierrot travels southward  
With fresh prevailing wind.

The stream hums deep cadenzas  
And rocks the little skiff;  
A moonbeam for the rudder,  
Water lily for a boat.

To Bergamo, the homeland,  
Now Pierrot returns;  
Faint glows the green horizon  
With dawning in the east  
A moonbeam for the rudder.

21.      O ALTER DUFT / O FRAGRANCE OLD

O fragrance old from days of yore,  
Once more you intoxicate my senses.  
A prankish troop of rogueries  
Is swirling through buoyant air.

A cheerful longing makes me hope  
For joys which I had long despised.  
O fragrance old from days of yore,  
Once more you intoxicate me.

I have abandoned all my gloom  
And from my window framed in sunlight  
I freely gaze on the dear world  
And dream beyond in boundless transport –  
O fragrance old from days of yore.

She's waiting in the arbor,  
She loves Pierrot with aching heart —  
Steel needles, twinkling brightly,  
Stuck in her graying hair.

But suddenly—hark—a whisper!  
A windpuff titters softly;  
The moon, the cruel mocker,  
Is aping with its bright rays  
Steel needles' wink and blink.

18. DER MONDFLECK / THE MOONSPOT /

With a spot of white, of shining moonlight,  
On the collar of his jet-black jacket.  
So Pierrot goes walking in the evening,  
Out to seek some joy and high adventure.

Suddenly, in his dress something disturbs him.  
He examines it—and yes, he find there  
A spot of white, of shining moonlight,  
On the collar of his jet-black jacket.

Hang it, he thinks; another spot of whitewash!  
Whisks and whisks, yet he cannot remove it.  
So he goes on, full of spleen and fury,  
Rubs and rubs until the early morning  
A spot of white, of shining moonlight.

19. SERENADE

With a bow grotesque and monstrous,  
Pierrot scrapes away at his viola.  
Like a stork on only one leg,  
Sadly plucks a pizzicato.

Pop, out comes Cassander,  
Raging at the nightly virtuoso  
With a bow grotesque and monstrous,  
Pierrot scrapes away at his viola.

Now he throws down his viola:  
With his delicate left hand  
He grabs the baldpate by the collar —  
Dreamily plays upon his tonsure  
With a bow grotesque and monstrous.

PART I

1. MONDESTRUNKEN / MOONDRUNK

The wine that only eyes may drink  
Pours from the moon in waves at nightfall,  
And like a springflood overwhelms  
The still horizon rim.

Desires, shivering and sweet,  
Are swimming without number through the flood waters!  
The wine that only eyes may drink  
pours from the moon in waves at nightfall.

The poet by his ardor driven,  
Grown drunken with the holy drink  
To heaven he rapturously lifts  
His head and reeling slips and swallows  
The wine that only eyes may drink.

2. COLUMBINE

The moonlight's palest blossoms,  
The whitest wonder-roses  
Bloom in the summer nightfall.  
O might I break just one!

My anxious pain to soften  
I seek by darkest waters—  
The moonlight's palest blossoms,  
The whitest wonder-roses.

Fulfilled would be my yearning  
Might I, as one enchanted,  
As one in sleep, unpetal  
Upon your auburn tresses  
The moonlight's palest blossoms.

3. DER DANDY / THE DANDY

With lightbeams so weird and fantastic  
The luminous moon lights the glistening jars  
On the ebon high-holiest washstand  
Of the taciturn dandy from Bergamo.

Resounding in bronze-tinted basin  
Brightly laughs the fountain with metallic ring.  
With lightbeams so weird and fantastic  
The luminous moon lights the glistening jars.

Pierrot, with waxen complexion,  
Stands musing, and thinks: How shall I today make up?  
He shoves aside rouge and the Oriental green,  
And he daubs his face in most dignified style  
With moonbeams so weird and fantastic.

4. EINE BLASSE WÄSCHERIN / A PALE WASHERWOMAN

A pale washerwoman  
Washes nightly pallid kerchiefs,  
Naked, silverwhitest arms  
Reaching downward to the waters.

Through the clearing steal the breezes  
Gently stirring up the stream.  
A pale washerwoman  
Washes nightly pallid kerchiefs.

And the gentle Maid of Heaven,  
By the branches softly fondled,  
Spreads out on the darkling meadows  
All her light-bewoven linen  
A pale washerwoman.

5. VALSE DE CHOPIN / A CHOPIN WALTZ

As a faint red drop of blood  
Stains the pale lips of one stricken,  
So there sleeps within these tones  
A morbid, soul-infecting lure.

Chords of savage lust disrupt  
The icy dream of bleak despair  
As a faint red drop of blood  
Stains the pale lips of one stricken.

PART III

15. HEIMWEH / HOME SICKNESS

Sweetly plaintive a crystal sighing  
From the old Italian pantomime  
Rings across time: how Pierrot's grown awkward  
In such sentimental modern fashion!

And it sounds through the wastes of his heart  
Echoes softly through his senses also,  
Sweetly plaintive - a crystal sighing  
From the old Italian pantomime.

Now Pierrot forgets his somber mien.  
Through the silvery fireglow of moonlight  
Through the flooding waves of light, his yearning  
Soars on high to native skies so distant—  
Sweetly plaintive—a crystal sighing.

16. GEMEINHEIT! / VULGARITY

Into the bald pate of Cassander,  
Who rends the air with screaming,  
Blithe Pierrot, affecting airs so kind  
And tender bores with a skull drill!

Then he plugs with his big thumb  
His own genuine Turkish tobacco  
Into the bald pate of Cassander.  
Who rends the air with screaming.

Then screwing his cherry pipestem  
Deep into the polished baldpate.  
Quite at ease he puffs and draws  
His own genuine Turkish tobacco  
Out of the bald pate of Cassander!

17. PARODIE / PARODY

Steel needles, twinkling brightly,  
Stuck in her graying hair,  
Sits the duenna, murmuring,  
In her knee length scarlet skirt.

13. ENTHAUPUNG / BEHEADING

The moon, glistening scimitar  
Set on a black and silken cushion.  
Unearthly huge, it threatens downward  
Through sorrow-stricken night.

Pierrot wanders so restlessly,  
Lifts up his eyes in deathly fright  
To the moon, a glistening scimitar  
Set on a black and silken cushion.

His knees are shaking with fright,  
Fainting, he suddenly collapses.  
He thinks that on his sinful neck  
Comes whistling down with brutal force  
The moon, the glistening scimitar.

14. DIE KREUZE / THE CROSSES

Holy crosses are the verses  
On which poets, mute, are bleeding.  
Blindly beaten by the vultures,  
Fluttering swarms of ghostly phantoms.

In their bodies daggers revelled.  
Blazoned on the blood of scarlet!  
Holy crosses are the verses  
On which poets, mute, are bleeding.

Reft of life—the locks rigid—  
Lo, the rabble's noise is fading.  
Slowly sinks the sun in glory,  
Like a crimson Emperor's crown.  
Holy crosses are the verses.

Warm and joyous, sweet and yearning.  
Melancholy somber waltzes  
Haunt me ever through my senses,  
Cling in my imagination  
As a faint red drop of blood.

6. MADONNA

Rise, O Mother of All Sorrows,  
On the altar of my verses!  
Blood from your poor, shrunken breasts  
By the sword's cold rage was spilled.

Your deep wounds forever open  
Seem like eyes, so red and staring.  
Rise, O Mother of All Sorrows,  
On the altar of my verses.

In your thin and wasted arms  
You hold up your Son's broken body  
To reveal it to all mankind—  
Yet the eyes of men avoid your grief,  
O Mother of All Sorrows.

7. DER KRANKE MOND / THE SICK MOON

You somber, deathly-stricken moon,  
There on the heaven's darkest couch,  
Your gaze, so feverishly swollen,  
Charms me like a strange enchanted air.

Of insatiable love-pangs  
You die, die, by yearning overwhelmed,  
You somber, deathly-stricken moon,  
There on the heaven's darkest couch.

The lover who, with rapturous heart,  
Without a care to his mistress goes  
Is happy in your play of light,  
In your pale and tormented blood,  
You somber, deathly-stricken moon.

## PART II

### 8. NACHT / NIGHT

Somber, shadowy, giant mothwings  
Killed the splendid shine of sun.  
An unopened magic-book,  
The dark horizon lies in silence.

The dank fumes of lower darkness  
Give off vapor stifling memory!  
Somber, shadowy, giant mothwings  
Killed the splendid shine of sun.

And from heaven down to earth  
Sink, with heavy, swinging motion  
Monsters huge, an unseen terror  
On all mankind's hearts now falling  
Somber, shadowy, giant mothwings.

### 9. GEBET AN PIERROT / PRAYER TO PIERROT

Pierrot! My laughter  
I have forgot!  
The image of splendor  
Dissolved, dissolved.

Black waves my banner  
Now from my mast.  
Pierrot! My laughter  
I have forgot!

O give me once more,  
Horse-doctor of souls,  
Snowman of lyrics.  
Moon's maharajah,  
Pierrot my laughter!

### 10. RAUB / THEFT

Princely, luminous red rubies,  
Bloody drops of ancient glory,  
Slumber in the dead men's coffins  
Below, in the catacombs.

Nights, with his boon companions,  
Pierrot creeps down to plunder  
Princely, luminous red rubies,  
Bloody drops of ancient glory.

But look their hair stands straight up  
Pale with fright they stand rooted.  
Through the fearsome gloom like eyeballs  
Staring from the dead men's coffins,  
Princely, luminous red rubies.

### 11. ROTE MESSE / RED MASS

For evil's dread communion  
In blinding golden glitter,  
In candleshine-and-shudder,  
Mounts the altar—Pierrot!

His hand, the consecrated,  
Tears off the priestly vestments  
For evil's dread communion  
In blinding glitter.

With sign-of-cross and blessing gestures  
He shows to trembling, trembling souls  
The Host all red and dripping  
His heart in bloody fingers  
For evil's dread communion.

### 12. GALGENLIED / GALLOWS SONG

The haggard harlot  
With scrawny neck  
Will be the last  
Of his mistresses.

In his brain there  
Sticks like a sharp nail  
The haggard harlot  
With scrawny neck.

Thin as a pine tree,  
With hanging pigtail.  
Lustily she will  
Embrace the rascal,  
The haggard harlot!