

Vocal Chamber Ensemble

Instructors: Tom Bogdan and Kitty Brazelton

PROGRAM

CANTIQUE DE JEAN RACINE

Gabriel Fauré

REQUIEM:

Gabriel Fauré

I. Introit and Kyrie

II. Offertory *Connor Dolson, Baritone Soloist*

III Sanctus

IV Pie Jesu *Eliza McKelway, Soprano soloist*

V Agnus Dei

VI Libera Me *Max Wolkowitz, Baritone soloist*

VII In Paradisum

INTERMISSION

LOVE, I KNOW, BEYOND A DOUBT

Kitty Brazelton

Motet for choir and jazz quartet

*Solos: Liliana Conde, Lydia Chrisman, Samantha Damon,
Tatyana Schmid and Trevor Wilson*

O JOY!

Kitty Brazelton

Pianists: Yoshiko Sato and Kanako Seki

Members of the Vocal Chamber Ensemble:

Michelle Cagianese, Michael Chinworth, Lydia Chrisman, Terry Creach, Anastasia Clarke, Liliana Conde, Samantha Damon, Connor Dolson, John Eagle, Kristen Gremillion, Amelia Hogan, Lauren Lisante, Nathan Luce, Eliza McKelway, Amelia Meath, Andrew Mellen, Megan Osborn, Anthony Pinto, Alexandra Sauser-Monnig, Tatyana Schmid, Dylan Shad, Elizabeth Sherman, Marika Shyduroff, Molly Spear, Naomi Washer, Trevor Wilson and Max Wolkowitz

String Orchestra: Supervised by Kaori Washiyama:

Kaori Washiyama, Jennifer Schwartz, Mary Gregg, Nari Seo and Megan Diehl

Bass: Mike DelPrete, French Horn: John Eagle

Electronic Keyboard: Yoshiko Sato

Jazz Quartet:

Baritone Saxophone: Dan Roninson

Bass: Kaarin Lysen

Drums: Doug Von Korff

Pianist: Kanako Seki

Wednesday, May 27, 2009

8:00 PM

Greenwall Auditorium

"Love, I Know Beyond A Doubt" is a motet or "word"-piece, a medieval song form I've always been fascinated by.

Motets were originally polytextual, often polylingual, as well as polyphonic—polyconceptual like film montage. Cool, huh? Mine uses the Latin plainchant "Ave maris stella" (which I love so much) as *cantus firmus* (the underlying "fixed chant" which legitimizes) and as the icing to the song-layer-cake (or *motetus*), Ars Nova composer/poet Guillaume de Machaut's *chanson roial* "Amours, je say sans doubance", with my vernacular translations of both (!). Here's a taste:

The opening verse sung by the sopranos—

*Joie, plaisence et douce nourriture,
Vie d'onneur prennent maint en amer;
Et plusieurs sont qui n'i ont fors pointure,
Ardor, dolour, plour, tristee et amer.
Se dient, mais acorder
Ne me puis, qu'en la souffrence
D'amours ait nulle grevance,
Car tout ce qui vient de li
Plaist a cuer d'ami.*

which translates—

*Joy, pleasure, sweet nourishment,
And a life of honor take many who love;
While many others have only pain,
Hardship, gloom, tears, sadness and bitterness,
They say, but agree
I cannot, that in the suffering
of love there is no wrong,
For everything which comes of it
Should please the heart of a lover.*

The third verse really pushes the point home—

*Mais ceaus qui sont en tristee, en ardure,
En plours, en plains, en doulour sans cesser,
Et qui dient qu'Amours leur est si dure
Qu'ils ne puelent sans morir plus durer,
Je ne puis ymaginer
Qu'ils ainment sans decevance
Et qu'en eaus trop ne s'avance
Desirs; pour ce sont einsi,
Qu'il l'ont desservi.*

and here's what one of the soloists (Tanya) will sing—

*Some lovers get sad
Get bitter and cry
They say love's too hard
They'd rather die—
But I can't imagine
They truly love
It must be Desire
They're dying of.*

Later she will return and sing the moral conclusion—

*For Love who is noble
Knows who does not lie
Knows how to repay all:
Her true live in joy.*

The choir who has already sung l'envoi in French—

*Amours, je say sans doubance
Qu'a cent doubles as meri
Ceaus qui t'ont servi.*

now sings the envoi in English—

*Love, I know beyond a doubt
That thou hast rewarded one hundred times over
Those who have served thee.*

And you've got the message. Love is much more than romance. A god? At any rate, the "lady love" as beacon who motivates and guides the knight errant was a new and powerful idea. The medieval phenomenon of courtly love, its poetry and chivalrous behavior, brought women into a vast new cultural prominence. Around the same time, the cult of the Virgin arose. Before, you had the Trinity—all male. Now we get Mary. So I surround Machaut's tenets of courtly love with "Ave maris stella." This 11th-c. plainchant is from the first blush of Mary's rise into Christian imagination.

Altos, tenors and basses will sing in Latin for most of the motet— translated it means—

*Ave maris stella
Dei Mater alma,
Atque semper Virgo
Felix caeli porta.*

*Hail star of the sea
Gentle Mother of God
Forever Virgin and
fertile gate of heaven.*

alto and tenor soloists (Trevor and Liliana) will sing in Occitans—

*O Maria Deu Maire
Deu, t'es e fils e paire
Domna preia per nos
To fil lo glorio.*

I wrote "Love..." in 1997 in memory of the college professor who introduced me to medieval music. Peter Gram Swing was both tough and supportive of me as a music major, and then made sure I got my degree 5 years later when I dropped out 3 (non-music) courses short. I wrote it—I hoped—performable by a college choir, with multiple short solos rather than fewer with more pressure—one of the solos is even for a pop vocalist. Swarthmore College, my alma mater, however, had already had its memorial celebration and moved on. Disappointed, I always thought it was a good piece and hoped it could be heard someday.

I submitted "Love" in spring 2007 for a choral reading session in Minneapolis by VocalEssence led by Philip Brunelle. The choir enjoyed it and Philip awarded me the commission for "O Joy!" premiered last September 2008 in the Twin Cities' Orchestra Hall with Garrison Keillor emceeing. The middle section of "O Joy!" is my translation from the Hebrew and Latin versions of an excerpt from Psalm 77. The outsides are all me I'm afraid. I'm out of space, so I can't include it—but you'll hear it live! En-Joy!

—Kitty