

Glad in April's Bliss:

A Recital of Songs of Nature and Love by Women

Madison Drace, soprano

Laura Ameriello, piano

Saturday, April 1st, 2023

12:00pm

First Unitarian Society of Ithaca

Bozzetti liriche

- I. Canta il Viadante nella Notte
- II. Notte di Neve
- III. Calma di Mare
- IV. Canto di Mare

Giulia Recli

(1890-1970)

Cinq mélodies

- I. L'armada
- IV. Soir en mer
- V. Mon amour était mort

Adela Maddison

(1862-1929)

An April Day

Beside the Sea

The Glory of the Day was in Her Face

Florence Price

(1887-1953)

INTERMISSION

The Mourning Tree

All the Earth/A Beautiful Morning

Jessica Curry

(b.1973)

arr. Gregg Rossetti

(b.1982)

Fünf Blumenlieder

- I. Maiglöckchen
- II. Himmelschlüssel
- III. Veilchen
- IV. Flieder
- V. Rosen

Mathilde von Kralik

(1857-1944)

Love, Let the Wind cry...How I Adore Thee

I Am in Doubt

Lyric for True Love

Undine Smith-Moore

(1904-1989)

Texts and Translations

Bozzetti liriche

Giulia Recli (1890-1970)

I. Canta il Viadante nella Notte

(Johann Wolfgang von Goethe 1779-1832)

Su tutti i monti è pace
Nelle cime degli alberi
Appena senti un alito sfiorar...
Gli augelli nel bosco tacciono,
Attendi, attendi!
Fra poco tu pur riposerai.

II. Notte di Neve

(Alberto Musatti 1882-1960)

Come in fiocchi di silenzio
Nella notte vien la neve
E la tenebra la beve.
Gitta l'agile suo culmin l'alta torre solitaria

Dentro al brulichio dell'aria

Mentre morbidi si posano
Mille fiocchi con le piane ali
Sovra le campane
Ed insegnano ai sonori bronzi il semplice
piacere
Di tacere, di tacere!

III. Calma di Mare

(Goethe)

Sull'acqua silenzio profondo,
Senza movimento riposa il mare,
Afflitto vede il barcaiolo liscia superficie ovunque
Non canto, silenzio di morte incombe!
Nell'infinito lontano non un'onda muove.

I. The Wanderer's Night Song

On all hills there is peace
In the tree tops
Scarcely a breath is felt grazing over...
The wood birds are silent,
Look out, await!
Soon you will find your rest.

II. Night of Snow

Like flakes of silence
In the night the snow comes
And the darkness drinks it up
It shoots nimbly toward the top of the high solitary
tower
Into the swarming air

While softly they touch down,
Thousands of flakes with their soft wings
Over the bells
And teaching the resonant bronze the simple pleasure
Of silence, of silence!

III. Calm at Sea

Profound silence over the water,
Without movement the ocean rests,
The sailor anxiously the smooth horizon...
Not a song, the silence of the dead threatens!
In the distant infinity not one wave is moving.

Canto di Mare

(Goethe)

La nebbia si squarcia, il cielo è sereno,
Il vento rionfia la candida vela!
Affrettate, affrettate!
L'onda ci porta, l'orizzonte avvicina!
Ecco: vedo la mia terra!

Song of the Sea

The fog is breached, the sky is calm,
The wind billows out of the white sail!
Hurry! Hurry!
The wave carries us up, the horizon approaches!
Here it is: I can see my homeland!

Italian translations by Julie Cross

Cinq mélodies

Adela Maddison (1862-1929)

Edmond Haraucourt (1856-1941) from *Seul* (1891)

I. L'armada

Sors de ta maison et va sur la côte;
La maison est vide et la tour est haute,
Monte sur la tour,
Vois au loin de la triste grève,
Les Espoirs partis sur la Mer des Rêves
Rentrer tour à tour...

Je vois un vaisseau sans mâts et sans voiles,
Où, découragé de croire aux étoiles,
Le pilote dort;
Le vent tord la nef que la mer secoue,
Et ma bien-aimée est peinte à la proue
Dans sa robe d'or

Reste sur la tour et regarde encore
Le vague horizon qui se décolore
Dans la paix du soir...

Je vois un vaisseau sous ses voiles graves
Qui, sinistrement, porte les épaves
Du fait accompli:
Lourd de mâts rompus et de vieilles peautres,
C'est l'espoir qui vient consoler les autres,
L'espoir de l'oubli...

I. The Armada

Leave your house and go to the coast;
The house is empty and the tower high,
Climb the tower,
See as far as the sad, rocky beach
The Hopes that departed on the Sea of Dreams
Returning one by one...

I see a vessel without masts and without sails
Where, discouraged from believing in the stars,
The pilot sleeps...
The wind wrings the ship shaken by the sea
And my beloved is painted on the prow
In her golden dress

Remain on the tower and look again
At the hazy horizon which becomes bleached
In the peace of evening...

I see a vessel under whose solemn sails
Grimly carries the wrecks
Of done deeds:
Heavy with shattered masts and old rudders
It is hope who comes to console the others,
The hope of forgetting...

IV. Soir en mer

Vois-tu comme la mer est vaste autour de nous?
Notre barque est une algue errant aux creux des lames;
Le vent nocturne et froid qui court sur les remous
Mêle au frisson des flots le frisson de nos âmes.

Pareils aux alcyons qui flottent dans leurs nids,
Nous berçons notre exil sur le désert de l'onde,
Et la nuit nous écrase entre deux infinis:
Mais nos cœurs sont plus grands que la mer n'est
profonde.

Oh, rends-moi ta caresse, et dis si tu comprends,
Quand ta lèvre m'appelle et quand mon bras t'enlace,

Que nos cœurs étoilés puissent être si grands,
Et que tant de bonheur tienne si peu de place!

V. Mon amour était mort

Mon amour était mort, ma peine était finie,
Et j'errais sous les cieux pour le leur raconteur:
La nuit rêvait avec tant d'harmonie
Que je me suis mis à chanter.

Chanter en t'oubliant! Je chantais l'allégresse
D'avoir conquis la paix qui doit toujours durer:

Mais je chantais avec tant de tendresse,
Que je me suis mis à pleurer.

IV. Evening at sea

Do you see how vast the sea is around us?
Our boat is errant seaweed in the hollow of the waves.
The night wind is cold which runs along the eddies
Mixing the shiver of swells with the shiver of our souls.

Like to corals which float in their nests,
We rock to sleep our exile on the desert of the wave,
And the night crushes us between two infinities
But our hearts are larger than the sea is deep.

Oh caress me, and tell me if you understand
When your lips call to me and when my arms embrace
you

That our starry hearts could be so large,
And that so much happiness could take up such little
space!

V. My love has died

My love has died, my pain had ended
And I wandered under the skies to tell them of it:
The night dreamed with such harmony
That I began to sing.

To sing while forgetting you! I sang of the joy
Of having conquered the peace which must always
remain.

But I sang with such tenderness
That I began to cry.

French translations by Lucy Fitz Gibbon

Selections from Florence Price (1887-1953)

An April Day

(Joseph Seamon Cotter Jr. 1895-1919)

On such a day as this I think,
On such a day as this,
When earth and sky and nature's world
Are clad in April's bliss;
And balmy zephyrs gently waft
Upon your cheek a kiss;
Sufficient is it just to live
On such a day as this.

Beside the Sea

(Paul Laurence Dunbar 1872-1906)

If you could sit with me beside the sea to-day,
And whisper with me sweetest dreamings o'er and o'er;
I think I should not find the clouds so dim and gray,
And not so loud the waves complaining at the shore.

If you could sit with me upon the shore to-day,
And hold my hand in yours as in the days of old,
I think I should not mind the chill baptismal spray,
Nor find my hand and heart and all the world so cold.

If you could walk with me upon the strand to-day,
And tell me that my longing love had won your own,
I think all my sad thoughts would then be put away,
And I could give back laughter for the Ocean's moan!

The Glory of the Day was in Her Face

(James Weldon Johnson 1871-1938)

The glory of the day was in her face,
The beauty of the night was in her eyes.
And over all her loveliness, the grace
Of Morning blushing in the early skies.

And in her voice, the calling of the dove;
Like music of a sweet, melodious part.
And in her smile, the breaking light of love;
And all the gentle virtues in her heart.

And now the glorious day, the beautiful night,
The birds that signal to their mates at dawn,
To my dull ears, to my tear-blinded sight
Are one with all the dead, since she is gone.

Selections from *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture*

Jessica Curry (b. 1973)

Dan Pinchbeck (fl. 2015)

The Mourning Tree

I passed the day at the mourning tree,
Where the river's sorrows run deep
And all at once a host of birds
Did settle and nest around me

In their song, I heard your song
I heard the bomber's drone
Beneath those birds and the swaying wheat
I heard you coming home

Oh my love where did you fly?
After you came home to me
Like the nightjar you left me here
To nest in the mourning tree.

All of the Earth/A Beautiful Morning

*Their line is gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.
In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun.*

(Psalm 19:4)

*How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? For ever?
how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
having sorrow in my heart daily?
how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?*

(Psalm 13:1-2)

And a-roving I'll go until death comes for me
To carry me back to her arms

Fünf Blumenlieder

Mathilde von Kralik (1857-1944)

Irene Zoepf (fl. ca. 1898)

I. Maiglöckchen

Maiglöckchen, liebe, junge Blumenkinder,
Am Stengel wiegt ihr euch
In sanften Nicken harmlosen Sinn's
Und weiß glänzt euer Kleidchen
Wie heit're, fromme Unschuld;
Euer Duft nur, der ist voll Sehnsucht.

II. Himmelschlüssel

Himmelschlüssel pflückten wir mitsammen;
Auf den Wiesen lag der Sonnenschien,
Spann uns ganz in gold'ne Fäden ein,
Himmelschlüssel pflückten wir mitsammen.

Damals war es Frühling um uns her;
Junger Frühling war uns im Gemüte;
Trugen nach dem Himmel kein Begehrt,
Schauten nur, wie schön die Erde blühte.

III. Veilchen

Gib mir, Liebster, da wir zum Abschied rüsten,
Veilchen, die zu vor deine Lippen küßten;
Will in ihrem Dufte den Kuß, den Bangen,
Wieder empfangen.

Leiser dann ein Köpfcchen ums andre sinket,
Schwächer stets der Duft, den mein Atem trinket,
Schwächer stets die Küsse, die sie mir schenken,
Wie dein Gedenken.

IV. Flieder

Laß mir den blühenden Fliederstrauß
Im Zimmer steh'n über Nacht.
Dann will ich sacht das Fenster schießen,
Daß seine Däfte nicht können hinaus.
Werden sie mir die Sinne umfließen,
Mit Maienbangen sich in die Seele mir gießen,
Meinen Schlummer umpfangen,
Lösen die Qual,
Vielleicht im Fliederduft kann ich träumen
Ein letztes Mal
Meinen Frühling.

I. Lilies of the Valley

Lilies of the valley, lovely young flower children,
On your stems you rock
Your harmless hearts in gentle nodding,
And your little dresses sparkle white
Like cheerful, pious innocence;
Only your fragrance is full of longing.

II. Cowslip primroses

We plucked primroses together;
The sunshine lay on the meadows,
Held us together with golden threads,
We plucked primroses together.

Then spring was all around us;
Young springtime was in our hearts;
We carried no wishes to heaven,
Only saw how lovely the earth bloomed.

III. Violets

Give me, darling, since we must part,
Violets your lips have kissed;
I want, in their fragrance,
To receive the sad kiss again.

Quietly then one little head sinks after the other,
Always weaker the fragrance that my breath drinks in,
Always weaker the kisses that they give me,
Like the memory of you.

IV. Lilacs

Let the blooming bouquet of lilacs
Stand in my room overnight.
Then I will gently close the window,
So its fragrance cannot escape.
It will flow into my senses,
With May sadness pour itself into my soul,
Surround my slumber,
Dissolve in pain,
Perhaps in the scent of lilacs I can dream
One last time
Of the spring time in my life.

V. Rosen

Noch mehr, noch mehr!
So viel die Hände fassen,
Will Rosen ich, in meiner Kammer tragen
Und mir von ihnen Antwort
Geben lassen auf meine Seele zweivolles Fragen.

Den Duft, durch den der Morgenwind gezittert,

Den tausend Sonnenküsse süß gemacht,
Daran sich vollsog jede Juninacht,
Wenn fern am Horizonte es gewittert,
Die ros'gen Kelche, die zum ersten Male geöffnet
sich
Um Tau und Licht zu trinken,
Die Purpurblättchen, die von Rand der Schale,
Wie des Genusses müd zu Boden sinken,
Sie will ich fragen:
Gibt's für mein Herz nichts and'res als entsagen?

V. Roses

Even more, even more!
As many as my hands can hold,
I want to carry roses into my room
And let them give an answer
To my soul's doubtless questioning.

The fragrance through which the morning breeze
trembled,

Which a thousand kisses of sun made sweet,
With which every June night is saturated,
When in the distance thunders on the horizon,
The rosy chalice that opens for the first time,

To drink dew and light,
The purple petals that from the edge of the vessel
Like pleasure sink exhausted to the ground,
I want to ask them:
Is there nothing for my heart but renunciation?

German translations by Julie Cross

Selections from Undine Smith-Moore (1904-1989)

Love, Let the Wind Cry... How I Adore Thee
(Henry T. Wharton 1846-1895 after Sappho)

Love let the wind cry
On the dark mountain,
Bending the ash trees
And the tall hemlocks
With the great voice of
Thunderous legions,
How I adore thee.

Let the hoarse torrent
In the blue canyon,
Murmuring mightily
Out of the gray mist
Of primal chaos
Cease not proclaiming
How I adore thee.

Let the long rhythm
Of crunching rollers,
Breaking and bursting
On the white seaboard
Titan and tireless,
Tell, while the world stands,
How I adore thee.

Love, let the clear call
Of the tree cricket,
Frailest of creatures,
Green as the young grass,
Mark with his trilling
Resonant bell-note,
How I adore thee.

But, more than all sounds,
Surer, serener,
Fuller of passion
And exultation,
Let the hushed whisper
In thine own heart say,
How I adore thee.

I Am in Doubt
(Florence Hynes Willette fl. ca. 1969)

I'll love you until stars fall.
Can it be so sure, so lasting as my heart demands
of one whose slightest touch upon my hands
is like the wind inside an aspen tree?
I am in doubt of this frail thing
I hold so sworn to constancy
And this is why, why,
Too often I have watched a burnt blue sky
Where slipping stars spilled scarlet
and grew cold.

Lyric for True Love
(Willette)

True love, true love arise for our trysting
a young scented wind hastens by to remind us,
the season is on us; the hour is right.
Oh do you remember an April behind us
When dogwood twined gentle and white?

Your voice was a singing bird caught in the branches
Your hair a bright river that curved as it fell
and silky your eyelids were, cool as the blossoms;
Your mouth for my thirst was a well.

True love, true love arise for our trysting.
Leave your throat bare and your long hair undone.
We lean to each other where wild boughs are misting
and shake out our dreams in the sun.

PROGAM NOTES

The year is 2023. To quote drag queen Bimini Bon-Boulash, “[not a joke, just a fact.](#)” The year is 2023 and yet, women composers remain grossly underrepresented in the classical music concert spaces. According to a [2021 study](#) of 100 orchestras, 11.45% of concerts programmed included pieces composed by women. Even worse, only 1.1% of pieces programmed were composed by BIPOC women. The year is 2023 and the Metropolitan Opera, the largest classical organization in North America, once again did not program [operas composed by women](#). Definitely not a joke and frankly, a disappointing fact.

While strides are being made to change this reality, the voices of many women remain lost. For every Clara Schumann or Amy Beach, one can only imagine how many other voices have not regularly breached a performance space, if at all. My goal here today is to introduce you to some of these women, most of which you likely have never before heard.

Some of these women are connected to better known white male composers: Adela Maddison was a colleague and possible student of Gabriel Fauré. Mathilde von Kralik was a pupil of Anton Bruckner and peer of Gustav Mahler. Giulia Recli studied under Ildebrando Pizzetti. These women, however, should not be viewed as an extension of these men; instead, their music should stand on its own.

Meanwhile, Florence Price and Undine-Smith Moore, while praised in their lifetimes, were painfully aware of the fact that not only did they have the hurdle of gender to conquer, but the hurdle of race. If not for a discovery of her works [from her abandoned summer home](#), as well as efforts made by black and white musicians and musicologists, the music of Price may well have remained “lost.” Only in recent years has Price’s music started to reappear in symphonic concert programs. Smith-Moore, too, acknowledged the difficulty of having her works published despite being an acclaimed educator. One can hope Smith-Moore will find new life in her works.

Simultaneously, I wish to present the music of now. Not only do women continue to compose, but they compose music for all types of spaces and purposes, from concert halls to silver screens. In this program, there are songs written by Jessica Curry for a unique medium: a video game.

Only a handful of recordings exist for most of these pieces and access to them can be difficult. So let me be a voice in which to refer; I believe in accessibility of art and I hope I may serve as a model for subsequent performances.

As the title of this recital implies, pieces in this recital encompass the subjects of nature and love with the poetry often combining the two.

A celebrated composer until World War II, **Giulia Recli**’s career came to a halt when she [protested the fascist takeover of Italy](#). After the war, she dedicated herself to teaching and critical writing. Through the poetry of Alberto Musatti and Italian translations of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, these short songs show appreciation of the natural world. “Canta il Viadante nella Notte,”

“Notte di Neve,” and “Calma di Mare” are all observations of landscapes. The slow-moving accompaniments ground the vocal line, which itself does not move quickly in these pieces. The vocal lines are like a meditation with the lack of ornaments and high notes; the color of the environments is more important than the singer. The final piece, “Canto il Mare,” moves a little quicker with the wind under it as the speaker catches sight of their homeland in the distance – a reason to rejoice. The speaker is so thrilled that the text is sung through twice.

Adela Maddison lived a unique, if somewhat privileged, life. Her higher position in society allowed for her to travel abroad and make a living as a composer, though much of her music is now lost. Her songs on the poetry of Edmond Haraucourt depict love and hope intertwined with oceanic and nautical themes. The depictions of ships in “L’armada” symbolize hope lost as they return battered from the sea. Each stanza of the poem is its own miniature painting with its own ethereal texture. “Soir en Mer” is erotic with the invitation to view the sea from a small vessel. The long, lyric lines in the voice are sensual and the undulating accompaniment makes it all of the richer. “Mon amour était mort,” unlike the two preceding pieces, is more direct, finding the joy in recovering from love lost... or perhaps not quite yet, as the piece is primarily in a minor mode. Maddison’s time spent in Paris is evident in all pieces; the accompaniments are filled with tonal ambiguity, much like the works of Debussy and Ravel.

In the words of Richard Heard, **Florence Price** was a “pioneer among African-American composers.” She was considered a major composer in her time with hundreds of works and was the first African-American woman to have her work played by a major orchestra. She is also likely the most familiar name on the program due to the recent rediscovery of her catalogue. The selections presented here not only fit directly into the recital’s theme, but are also deeply personal; in December 2020, I lost my aunt Meredith. She was a musician and music educator, and knowing she will never see this performance is painful. Here I honor her, one of my biggest cheerleaders, with this Price set: Merrie was born in April, loved the ocean, and as the last piece states, “in her smile, the breaking light of love.” The pieces are overall not the most vocally demanding, therefore allowing for the poetry and piano to shine.

Jessica Curry (the only living composer in this program) is co-founder of video game studio The Chinese Room and a BAFTA winning composer. She holds a college degree in English Literature and she views her [unconventional musical training as an advantage](#). Her songs here illustrate deep love that endures after personal and literal catastrophe. Originating from the “walking simulator” video game *Everybody’s Gone to the Rapture*, these selections paint pictures of ordinary citizens after the world has already ended. Through intimate scenes reenacted by glowing specters, hidden depths of the citizens are revealed to the player as they piece together life in a small, scenic British town leading up to the apocalypse. “The Mourning Tree,” the theme for the character Wendy, hints to the player that there is reason behind her unpleasant demeanor. “All the Earth” and “A Beautiful Morning” share similar musical material, linked by biblical verses. The former opens the game, introducing the player to the desolate landscape, while the latter scores a scene where the character Frank is on the precipice of committing a grave sin. Curry was inspired by British sacred music and [the work of Ralph Vaughan-Williams](#); those influences can be easily heard throughout both pieces.

The life of **Mathilde von Kralik** is not well chronicled. However, she was involved in several Viennese musical organizations, including her role as president of the Vienna Women’s Choral Society. *Fünf Blumenlieder* draws upon the poetry of Irene Zoepf, each titled with a type of

flower. Longing rings through each piece, evolving and intensifying throughout the set. “Maiglöckchen” is small and delicate like its namesake, utilizing the piano’s upper range almost like a nostalgic music box. “Himmelschlüssel,” conversely, is active; the driving accompaniment makes the memory of spring feel fresh. Intoxication is evident in “Velichen” with its lack of repeats in the melody as well as the waltz feeling. “Flieder” is filled with lust as voice rises and falls within the dreamy soundscape created by the accompaniment. “Rosen,” the most dramatic in the set, is more like a piano concerto with a vocal descant than a song. The voice and piano push and pull throughout, but ends quietly on a question: “is there nothing for my heart but renunciation?”

Undine Smith-Moore, in addition to being a composer, was a decorated educator, arranger, and pianist. Although she preferred to compose for choir, the handful of art songs she left behind are masterful. The songs on this program paint a love most passionate; the songs in this set are large, sweeping, grandiose gestures mixed with vulnerability. “Love Let the Wind Cry... How I Adore Thee” hits the ground running with romantic, chordal sweeps in the piano and the voice enters loud and strong. Meanwhile, the piano and voice in “I Am in Doubt” reflect doubt through an ambiguous melody and ever-changing accompaniment. “Lyric for True Love,” originally written as a companion piece to the preceding song, is the most dramatic declaration of them all with little place for the voice to rest. The voice leads the piano through the entire piece, ending the recital on a literal high note.

My hope is that, while some of these pieces performed may be considered one of the firsts, they will be far from the last. I hope this recital inspires you in the audience to seek out other compositions by the women in this program. Demand their presence in the concert halls and opera houses. Pass their legacy on to your students. Perform their music for yourself. And, most importantly, I hope you will support and celebrate all women composing today so they can never be lost in the first place.

FURTHER READING

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BIOGRAPHIES

Madison Drace (soprano)

Madison Drace, a native of Syracuse, NY, is an American soprano and budding musicologist with a wide array of musical interests including romantic opera, twentieth-century art song, and video game music. She has performed around the United States and Europe. Operatic roles include the title role in *Suor Angelica*, Harriet Beecher Stowe in the world premiere of *The Infinite Energy of Ada Lovelace*, and Mrs. Segstrom in *A Little Night Music*.

On top of her Western classical pursuits, she has a deep love for video game music. In February 2023, she performed arrangements of “Aria di Mezzo Carattere” from *Final Fantasy VI* and “Cara Mia Addio” from *Portal 2* at the North American Conference on Video Game Music. She also recently presented her research on the *Final Fantasy VI* aria at two College Music Society regional conferences. She is currently working on several projects related to video game songs.

Madison received her Bachelor of Arts in Music degree from Gettysburg College and her Masters of Music Performance from the University of Central Oklahoma. For more, visit www.MadisonDrace.com.

Laura Amoriello (piano)

Laura Amoriello is a pianist, pedagogy specialist, and certified meditation instructor. A college professor for 18 years, she now teaches piano privately and at Opus Ithaca School of Music. Laura holds a Doctor of Education degree from Teachers College, Columbia University, and Master’s and Bachelor’s degrees in piano performance and pedagogy from Penn State University and Westminster Choir College. She chairs the Wellness Committee for the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy and is a Certified Teacher in the Art of Practicing. Laura lives in Ithaca, NY with her husband, writer Pete Croatto, and their spirited kindergartener, Olivia. For more, visit www.lauraamoriello.com.

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