



Music at the Corcoran presents...

From Salon to Stage:
WOMEN IN MUSIC

a next.vocal recital by
THERESA RANNI

with Prof. Patrick O'Donnell, piano
and featuring CLAUDE SU, violin

FRIDAY, APRIL 26, 2019, at 7:30 P.M.
Flagg Building, Hammer Auditorium
500 17th Street NW

CORCORAN
MUSIC

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON, DC

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From Salon to Stage:
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a next.vocal recital by
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Frühling Fanny Hensel (1805–1847)
poetry by Josef von Eichendorff

Gretchen am Spinnrade Franz Schubert (1797–1828)
poetry by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Nachtwanderer Fanny Hensel
poetry by Josef von Eichendorff



Green Finch and Linnet Bird Stephen Sondheim
from Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (b. 1930)

Come Ready and See Me Richard Hundley (1931–2018)
text by James Purdy

Never Will I Marry Frank Loesser
from Greenwillow (1910–1969)

Dearest Mama Douglas Moore (1893–1969)
from The Ballad of Baby Doe libretto by John La Touche

Intermission

What Baking Can Do Sara Bareilles
from Waitress (b. 1979)

I Hardly Remember
from *Alphabet City Song Cycle*
with Claude Su, violin

Georgia Stitt (b. 1972)
lyrics by Marcy Heisler



Si mes vers avaient des ailes

Reynaldo Hahn (1874–1947)
poetry by Victor Hugo

A Trianon

Augusta Holmes
(1847–1903)

L'heure exquise

Reynaldo Hahn
poetry by Paul Verlaine

Měsíčku na nebi hlubokém
from *Rusalka*

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)
libretto by Jaroslav Kvapil

Notes on the Program by Theresa Ranni

Without a doubt, one of the most famous musical families of nineteenth century Germany was the Mendelssohn family. The family of six hosted bi-weekly salons, where friends and musicians would gather at their Berlin home for an intimate concert of art songs. The music-filled childhood inspired Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1804–1847) to learn piano. Hensel attended Sing-Akademie zu Berlin with her brother in 1820. Although most women in Germany who attended music school did not receive compositional training or attended alongside their male counterparts, Fanny was recognized for her prodigious musical sense and was allowed to receive an education in composition with her brother.

Cultural attitudes towards women restricted Fanny's ability to pursue music professionally. Her father, Abraham, and brother Felix documented in letters their hesitancy to support her public career. Abraham cited that composition would detract from her responsibilities as a mother and wife of Wilhelm Hensel. Felix, despite his worries of societal acceptance, allowed several of Fanny's pieces to be published under his name.

Towards the end of her life, Fanny Hensel published music under her own name. "Nachtwanderer" (1843) and "Frühling" (1846) were among her estimated 466 compositions. We open the program tonight with "Frühling" ("Spring"). This piece, set to a poem by Josef von Eichendorff, tells a story of the exuberance of young love matched with the excitement of a blossoming spring. Set to another Eichendorff poem, "Nachtwanderer" ("Night Wanderer") uses natural elements to capture the isolation and foreboding nature of contemplation.

Nineteenth century German composers looked to poets, authors, and playwrights to provide stories for their lieder. Johann Goethe was one such writer. Goethe was popular during the Sturm und Drang literary movement, which is characterized by extreme emotional unrest and stress. These characteristics are observable in "Gretchen am Spinnrade" ("Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel") by Franz Schubert (1797-1828), which is based on a scene from Act One of Goethe's epic, *Faust*.

At this point in the epic, Gretchen has realized that she has fallen in love with Faust and is mourning the loss of innocence. Now that she has experienced love, she will never be happy without it again. Gretchen's distress can be heard through the right hand of the piano line, mimicking the motion of the spinning wheel; the wheel only ceases during her greatest point of emotion when she mourns Faust's kiss.

Like Fanny Hensel, Augusta Holmes (1847-1903) also published under a pseudonym, Hermann Zenta, during her early career, as it was difficult for female composers to be published. By 1890, Augusta was a celebrity in her own name, having won over Paris's leading cultural curators. Despite her unbridled popularity with the artistic elite of Paris during the end of the nineteenth century, Augusta still had difficulty finding theaters to produce her major operas and compositions because of her gender. Due to lack of representation during her lifetime, her legacy barely extended past her death in 1903. There are fewer than ten scholarly articles written about her work, and most articles outlined her social life rather than her compositions.

"A Trianon" ("To Trianon") tells the story of a young couple running through the gardens of Versailles. "A Trianon" makes reference to the Petit Trianon, a château built on the estate of the Palace of Versailles for Louis XV's mistress Madame de Pompadour. When Marie Antoinette gained control over the château and reduced entry to her inner circle, even Louis XVI was unable to enter the château without the Queen's permission. Since then, the Petit Trianon has become known as a place of privacy, pleasure, and intimacy.

A contemporary of Augusta Holmes was Reynaldo Hahn (1874-1947), a child prodigy. In 1888, Hahn was launched into popularity following the release of his first melodie, "Si mes vers avaient des ailes" ("If my verses had wings") when he was just 14 years old. The piece is set to a poem of the same name by Victor Hugo. "Si mes vers avaient de ailes" evokes imagery of a bird flying to convey a delicate and sweet tale of love, with romance dripping from every verse.

Among his early melodies is "L'heure exquise" set to a poem by Paul Veraine. Like "Si mes vers avaient des ailes," "L'heure exquise" uses extreme imagery of nature to paint the image of a "Perfect Hour". A tranquil and sweet setting is created, describing a night with moonlight gently gracing the earth through the trees, reflecting off a still pond.

Gentle night winds sweep the piano accompaniment gently over the keys in a smooth ascension, effortlessly switching between left and right hand to establish the intended effect.

In American stage music, there has always been a jarring lack of female representation in composition. Little has changed since the time of *Greenwillow* (1960) by Frank Loesser (1910–1969), when works by women were seldom produced. The plot of *Greenwillow* reflects the sentiments towards women at the time. The musical takes place in a magical town where the eldest man of each Briggs family generation is cursed to obey a “call to wander” and leave their wives at home to wait patiently for their return. Our hero, Gideon Briggs, seeks help to avoid this curse to stay home with his beloved girlfriend, Dorris. “Never Will I Marry” is sung towards the end of the first act as Gideon begins to succumb to the curse. This piece is more famously known however for its miscast performances by Judy Garland, Nancy Wilson, Barbara Streisand, and Audra McDonald. What was once an anthem for a man learning to toughen up has become a woman’s anthem for resisting gendered cultural norms in twentieth-century America.

Nearly two decades later in 1978, *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* by Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930) seems to present a better reflection of female cultural dynamics. Joanna, orphaned after her father is sent to prison for life and her mother is determined insane and unfit to parent, becomes a ward of the Judge. The Judge has developed feelings for the teenage girl and has locked her away in the house. In “Green Finch and Linnet Bird,” Joanna urges the birds, “if I cannot fly, let me sing.”

Of the 25 original scores on Broadway this season, only three women were granted composition credits. One of those women is Sarah Barielles (b. 1979) for *Waitress*, a story about a small-town baker named Jenna who finds herself pregnant and in an abusive relationship. Paired with the lack of adequate representation of female composers, the Broadway community faced backlash with the revival of several musicals antithetical to the Me Too Movement, such as *My Fair Lady* and *Pretty Woman*. Renowned female composer Georgia Stitt (b. 1972) spoke out against the lack of women on creative teams and the direction of resources to shows where women are restricted to “damsel-in-distress” roles.

Georgia Stitt, as one of the most active female composers in non-popular genres, has remained outspoken on issues of gender representation. She frequently collaborates with other women, including with Marcy Heisler (b. 1967) on *Alphabet City Song Cycle*. *Alphabet City Song Cycle* is a semi-autobiographical song cycle that follows a woman through the different phases of her life, from student to lover to widow. In “I Hardly Remember” a window attempts to recall the love she shared with her husband.

About the Performer

Theresa Ranni hails from the small town of Sugar Loaf, New York (an hour and a half north of the city, if you're asking). In this community, she discovered her love of music at a young age. Although her parents could tell you stories of her elementary school choir solos, Theresa considers the start of her singing career to be around 13 years old. At 13, Theresa decided to pursue classical vocal studies with the purpose of gaining a deeper understanding of the tradition of singing. Along with her interest in classical music, Theresa explored her enjoyment of popular music as a singer in a pop-punk band.

An active member of her local music community, Theresa decided to pursue her musical interests further as a Corcoran Scholar at the George Washington University. While a member of the Corcoran Music program, she explored a variety of genres through involvement in Music Program Productions, the GW University Singers Choir, and GW JiVE Jazz Vocal Ensemble. Theresa studied voice at GW with Tricia Lepofsky, Susan Derry, and Robert Baker. As a major in the Music program, Theresa has performed at numerous locations in the Washington Metropolitan area including the Music Center at Strathmore, Meyerhoff Theater, and the Kennedy Center.

Theresa is graduating with a Bachelors of Science in Economics and a Bachelors of Arts in Music. She enjoys studying the intersection between economics and music. For her undergraduate thesis in Economics, her research focused on forecasting the popularity of popular music. Theresa will be starting a career in consulting with International Business Machines Corporations in San Francisco upon graduation. Theresa hopes to continue performing in her local community and staying involved in the cultural scene.

Thank You

Theresa would like to thank Mary Lee Farris, Tricia Lepofsky, and Susan Derry for their tireless efforts to help her harness her voice. She extends thanks to Robert Baker for his support in advising her research and assisting her through recital preparations. She would like to thank Patrick O'Donnell for his work on this program and for his coaching over the past four years. She thanks the faculty and staff of the George Washington University Music Program for establishing an environment where she could learn the context of her vocal studies in music. Theresa would like to thank her siblings, Jessica, Kathryn, and Robert, for dealing within her nonstop singing throughout childhood. She thanks her grandfather for supporting her, despite distance. Theresa would like to thank her father for always finding time to come to her performances and lending emotional support. Theresa sends special thanks to her mother, for being an endless source of love and for always ensuring she had the ability to pursue her musical interests.

Music at the Corcoran

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Music at the Corcoran

MainStage Events

APRIL 28

GW BANDS:
THE GENIUS OF PERCY GRAINGER
3:00 p.m., Marvin Center,
Grand Ballroom
800 21st Street NW

next.
Capstone Recitals

APRIL 27

NICOLE KREMIN, VOICE
5:00 pm, Flagg Building,
Hammer Auditorium
500 17th Street NW

MAY 3

KRISTEN DAHLBERG
AND ALISSA INDECK, VOICE
7:30 pm, Phillips Hall, B-120
801 22nd Street NW

MAY 4

ANGELA LENTINI, VOICE
AND CLAUDE SU, VIOLIN
7:30 pm, Flagg Building,
Hammer Auditorium
500 17th Street NW



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MAY 4

GW WOMEN'S ENSEMBLE:
SPRING SHALL BLOOM
4:00 p.m., Flagg Building,
Hammer Auditorium
500 17th Street NW

MAY 5

GW UNIVERSITY SINGERS:
CHORAL JOURNEYS
3:00 p.m., Flagg Building,
Center Atrium
500 17th Street NW

APRIL 27

NORA WOLCOTT, HORN
7:30 pm, Flagg Building,
Hammer Auditorium
500 17th Street NW

APRIL 29

IVAN PIRSL, TRUMPET AND VOICE
7:30 pm, Flagg Building,
Hammer Auditorium
500 17th Street NW

Student Recitals

MAY 16

PETER BRACCIA
AND BRAY McDONNELL, ORGAN
5:30 pm, St. Paul's Church
2430 K Street NW

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