

2016

# Graduate voice recital

Kayla Kjeldseth  
*University of Northern Iowa*

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GRADUATE VOICE RECITAL

KAYLA KJELDSETH, SOPRANO & KOREY BARRETT, PIANO

An Abstract

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Music

Kayla Kjeldseth

University of Northern Iowa

December 2016

This Study by: Kayla Kjeldseth

Entitled: Graduate Voice Recital – Kayla Kjeldseth, soprano & Korey Barrett, piano

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the

Degree of Master of Music

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Date

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Dr. Jean McDonald, Chair, Thesis Committee

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Date

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Dr. Korey Barrett, Thesis Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Mitra Sadeghpour, Thesis Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Kavita R. Dhanwada, Dean, Graduate College

This Recital Performance by: Kayla Kjeldseth

Entitled: Graduate Voice Recital – Kayla Kjeldseth, soprano & Korey Barrett, piano

Date of Recital: March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016

has been approved as meeting the recital requirement for  
the Degree of Master of Music

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Date

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Dr. Jean McDonald, Chair, Recital Committee

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Date

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Dr. Korey Barrett, Recital Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Mitra Sadeghpour, Recital Committee Member

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Date

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Dr. Kavita R. Dhanwada, Dean, Graduate College

## ABSTRACT

Kayla Kjeldseth, soprano, presented her graduate voice recital on Thursday, March 24th, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. in Davis Hall of the Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center at the University of Northern Iowa campus. The recital was given with collaborative pianist, Korey Barrett, and included works by Mendelssohn, Marx, Gluck, Puccini, and Griffes.

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847) is best known for composing *St. Paul* (1836) and *Elijah* (1846), two examples of oratorio from his time that gained deep-rooted renown. The popularity he achieved aided in reviving oratorio as a genre, and both works remain in the standard repertoire. *Elijah*, set to text by William Bartholomew, portrays the life of the Biblical prophet bearing the same name.<sup>1</sup> Performed throughout the world, this work has been a concert mainstay in the United States for over a century.<sup>2</sup> “Hear ye, Israel!” opens Part II and is often performed as an excerpt. Set in AB form, the aria consists of two large contrasting sections separated by a short recitative. The aria opens with a pensive statement of the title text that recurs throughout the A section, calling upon the people of Israel. The brief recitative prepares the people of Israel for the words of the Lord, and acts as a bridge between the A and B sections, providing a majestic dramatic shift. The end of the aria concludes with the words, “Be not afraid,” which are set to an uplifting three-note ascending motive.

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<sup>1</sup> Larry R. Todd, “Mendelssohn, Felix,” accessed January 16, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/51795pg11>.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Ochs, “Welcoming *Elijah* in 1927 Chicago: Mendelssohn in Yiddish Socialist Clothing,” *American Music* 29 (1). University of Illinois Press: 85–110. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/americanmusic.29.1.0085>

A set of Lieder by Joseph Marx (1882-1964) followed the aria on the recital. Marx composed 158 songs during his lifetime, and although he composed during the same time as Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern, he rejected atonality and embraced a style that is singularly Romantic.<sup>3</sup> “Der Ton” (1909) is a setting of a poem by Knut Hamsun. The song opens with sustained vocal lines that are expressed in long *messa di voce* contours, supported by arpeggiations in the piano that span two octaves. “Der Ton” peaks on the word “König” (king) with a strong arrival in A-Major. A treble sixteenth-note accompaniment evokes a dream-like atmosphere that portrays the text “Lehnt stumm die Nacht an die Scheiben” (When night lies silently on the window), and a violent piano interlude follows to portray the harshness of the world. With the text “Das trägt mich zu fremden Borden” (It carries me to distant borders), Marx offers the contrast of *Ruhig*, a slower tempo. A short transition in D-Minor ushers in the final section through an accelerated tempo. The song is brought to its climax with the long duration of the words “langen” (long) and “Akkorden” (chords). A postlude void of any harmonic conflict ends the piece in repose.

“Es zürnt das Meer” (1912) is a setting of a poem from Paul Heyse’s *Italienisches Liederbuch*, in which the narrator speaks metaphorically about love in terms of a raging sea. Opening with a thick and raucous piano accompaniment, the voice joins with phrases that express agitation. After a poignant measure of rest, the voice enters alone to the text,

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<sup>3</sup>J. Peter Burkholder and Donald Jay Grout. *A History of Western Music*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2014.)

“Es zürnt mit mir, der sonst mich freundlich grüßte” (He who used to greet me in a friendly manner now rages against me). This drama is mirrored in a sudden shift to F-Major with the entrance of the piano. The optimism is swiftly contrasted by stark accompaniment and a recitative-like response, “die bosen Zungen haben’s angesponnen” (the evil tongues have provoked it). The piece ends much like it begins, with angry wave-like phrases that reflect the narrator’s pain. Marx increases the drama, again employing the use of silence preceding a powerful statement of the word “Flammen” (flames) on an octave leap. The fast tempo of the Lied provides a contrast between “Der Ton” and “Selige Nacht.”

“Selige Nacht,” (1912) set to a text by Otto Erich Hartleben, illustrates dreams of ecstasy. The constantly repeated two triplets followed by a quarter-note figure in the piano offer a sense of breathing. Although known for his use of long vocal lines that are meant to showcase the virtuosity of the voice, in this song Marx exploits the voice in phrases that are remarkably prolonged. This time the voice is paired with shorter accompanimental phrases that create ambiguity in time and space. Twice throughout the Lied, Marx indicates *Breiter* (broader) as the voice and piano are rhythmically joined, first to the text, “Rosenduft an uns’rer Liebe Bett” (rose scent by our love bed), and later with “Träume des Rausches” (dreams of intoxication). Finally, the song ends with the two satisfied lovers represented by a simple dialogue between the piano and voice to the text, “so reich an Sehnsucht” (so rich with nostalgia).

“Die tote Braut” (1912) is the second Lied to utilize poetry from Heyse’s *Italienisches Liederbuch*. Of all of the Marx Lieder selected for the recital, this piece is

the most austere, as the poem depicts a dead bride's perspective. The piano opens with a short, dissonant prelude, and is joined by an off beat patter that is eerily monotone. At "weint" (cry), the effect of wailing is created in the accompaniment with the turmoil of four triplet figures. "Weint" (cry) returns nine measures later with a melodic gesture that suggests keening, and is accompanied by a savage outburst in the piano. The Lied ends hauntingly to the text, "O bete nun für mich!" (Oh pray now for me) in juxtaposition with an optimistic A-Flat Major chord on the downbeat of the last sung measure.

"Nachtgebet" (1910) is set to a poem by Hess that compares love to a religious experience. Set in AA<sup>1</sup>, the opening of the Lied portrays admiration with a descending right hand accompaniment that rises again before leading the eager voice in on what feels like a half beat too soon. The voice enters the second time on the upbeat of one, this time in the character of savoring the moment. The vulnerability inherent in the text, "O, sähst du mich jetzt beten zu deinen heilig tiefen Augen, die fragend zu mir flehten wie nach Liebe" (Oh, if you saw me praying now to your deep, holy eyes, that plead to me as if asking for love), is aptly coupled with a melodic line that is high in tessitura and delicate in dynamic. With the word "Liebe" (love) the first A section concludes, set to a *piano* high A-Flat that is sustained for almost two measures. Section A<sup>1</sup> closes with Marx notating *frei im Vortrag* (free in style) over the last two vocal phrases that are accompanied by sustained chords. Marx's notation allows the voice freedom and control over tempo in its final phrases.

Christoph Willibald Ritter von Gluck (1714-1787) was a dominant composer of French and Italian opera in the eighteenth century, and is recognized for leading the

“reform” of opera. Prior to the aria “Divinités du Styx” from *Alceste* (1767), it has been announced that King Admeto is on his deathbed. Queen Alceste begs Apollo for pity and is told King Admeto can only be saved with a sacrifice, for which someone must volunteer his or her own life. In the aria, Queen Alceste anguishes over whether she should surrender her own life. The aria opens with a stately syncopated accompaniment that is emulated whenever Queen Alceste sings the text, “Divinités du Styx” (Divinities of Styx). In Greek mythology, Styx is known as the river that separates the world of the living from the underworld. Set in a rondo-like form ABACDA, the A section comprises many repeats of the same text, portraying Queen Alceste’s increasing unrest. In the B section she speaks of her faithfulness to King Admeto with music that is more legato and gentle in character, a contrast to the regal A sections. Returning abruptly, the A section represents Queen Alceste’s inability to choose life or death. The C section begins much like the B section, with a sense of inner turmoil and tenderness. The D section is fast-moving and decisive in nature, ending with the penultimate utterance of “Divinités du Styx” (Divinities of Styx). Here it is raised a major third, illustrating Queen Alceste’s choice to sacrifice herself. With the return of the final A section, Queen Alceste calls upon the divinities of Styx one last time. The straightforward rondo-like structure of the aria provides a refreshing contrast to the Romantic repertoire surrounding it on the program.

Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924) holds a steadfast place in the history of music as one of the most successful Italian operatic composers after Verdi. Most notable for his operas *La bohème* (1896), *Tosca* (1899), and *Madama Butterfly* (1904), Puccini also

wrote at least fourteen songs for voice and piano. Though the songs are not as famous as his operas, they are no less valuable to scholars and students because they employ many of Puccini's signature stylistic qualities.<sup>4</sup>

The poetic tone of "A te" (1875) is projected on the entrance of the voice with the text, "Ho! quant' io t' amo" (Oh! How much I love you). This phrase is sung on repeated notes with the last note of the phrase raised one step, rendering a sense of passionate persistence. Puccini highlights the word "desio" (desire) with a painful F-Natural added into the accompaniment. The relationship of the piano and vocal line is one of support, where the piano is always doubling the voice in at least one octave. Off beat eighth-notes in the right hand provide a dance-like feeling based on the text, "O bene mio... dammi un bacio... e mi farai tutto obliar" (Oh my darling... give me a kiss... and that will make me forget everything). The song ends with the narrator's significant longing, which is reflected in the prolonged duration of the word "obliar" (forget) that is sung three times in succession.

"E l'uccellino" (1898) offers a sprightly contrast to the song preceding it. The text by Renato Fucini resembles a lullaby or nursery rhyme, and describes a little boy falling asleep on his mother's breast to the sound of a bird singing. Much of the vocal line is doubled by the piano, and the song is made memorable by a chirping, disjunct melodic motive. The motive signifies the "little bird," and the third time it is repeated the song comes to a prompt conclusion.

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<sup>4</sup> J. Peter Burkholder and Donald Jay Grout. *A History of Western Music*.

“Terra e mare” (1902) is set to a text from a section of the poem, *Ultime Rime*, by Enrico Panzacchi, and is a song of the sea. Similar to “E l’uccellino,” the voice in “Terra e mare” reiterates a stepwise motive that evokes images of turbulent wind and waves. This piece provides contrast from others in the set with its lack of a piano prelude and in the atmosphere created by a minor tonality.<sup>5</sup>

The text of “Sole e amore” (1888) was likely written by Puccini himself, and it is known as being foundational material for *La bohème* (1896).<sup>6</sup> Appearing in the famous scene in Act III between Mimì and Rodolfo, the music is barely altered from the original setting in “Sole e amore.” The final phrase of the song is a dedication to the Periodico Artistico-Musicale titled *Paganini*, where the song was first published. The final line of text in Puccini’s autograph manuscript originally read, “il primo di marzo ell’ottanotto” (March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1888), possibly the date of composition. “G. Puccini” was sung on the recital instead of the date because it is more discernible to the audience and it offers a cheeky contrast to the serious nature of the following set.

The final set in the recital was by Charles Tomlinson Griffes (1884-1920), an American composer of art songs, piano works, and symphonic works. *Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod* (1918) were written at the high point of Griffes’s art song compositional career, and each are through-composed settings.<sup>7</sup> The author of each of the poems is,

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<sup>5</sup> Giacomo Puccini. *Songs for Voice and Piano*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.)

<sup>6</sup> John Glenn Paton. *Gateway to Italian Art Songs: An Anthology of Italian Song and Interpretation*. (Alfred Music Publishing, 2004), 198

<sup>7</sup> Donna K Anderson. "Griffes, Charles T," accessed January 16, 2016, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11770>.

Fiona MacLeod, a pseudonym of Scottish poet, William Sharp, who wrote during the late nineteenth century. "Lament of Ian the Proud" was sung first. The curious, elderly voice enters in duple meter over a syncopated figure of quarter and tied eighth-notes in the accompaniment. This is significant because Griffes begins each song of the set with the voice in duple meter and the piano in triple meter. The use of dissonance is prominent in this song, and is also a technique prevalent in Griffes's writing after 1911. The piece is full of chromaticism in the voice part, which amplifies the drama of the tragic text that contemplates the promise of newness in old age. The chromatic tendency is also pervasive in the final two songs of the set.

In "Thy Dark Eyes to Mine," the voice enters after a short piano prelude in a dreamy duple against triple meter. The most tonally stable of the songs, rare dissonance accompanies important text in order to strike the ear. An example of this occurs on the word "desire," where an F-Flat is added to the voice and accompaniment in an F-Minor key signature. The song possesses an innocent quality in contrast to those surrounding it, and it reflects on young love. The vocal melodic material from the opening returns to conclude the piece, and it creates symmetry that serves as an anchor for the set.

"The Rose of The Night" ends the recital. The preface to the score states, "There is an old mystical legend that when a soul among the dead woos a soul among the living, so that both may be reborn as one, the sign is a dark rose, or a rose of flame, in the heart of the night." The voice enters in duple over a triple metered piano, and the vocal line moves predominantly in scalar motion, which sets it apart from the previous two songs. The ending harkens back to the vocal conclusion of the second song with the use of a

quarter-note ascending scale executed in a *ritardando*. Finally, a piano postlude recalls material from the prelude material of the first song, “Lament of Ian the Proud,” and it reinforces the idea that each song is interconnected.

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University of Northern Iowa

PRESENTS

KAYLA KJELDSETH

SOPRANO

&

KOREY BARRETT

PIANO

Davis Hall

March 24, 2016

6pm

Divinités du Styx  
from *Alceste*

Christoph Willibald von Gluck  
(1714 - 1787)

Nachtgebet  
Die tote Braut  
Selige Nacht  
Es zürnt das Meer  
Der Ton

Joseph Marx  
(1882 - 1964)

## INTERMISSION

Hear ye, Israel!  
from *Elijah* Op. 70

Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809 - 1847)

A te  
E l'uccellino  
Terra e mare  
Sole e amore

Giacomo Puccini  
(1858 - 1924)

*Three Poems of Fiona MacLeod*  
The Rose of the Night  
Thy Dark Eyes to Mine  
The Lament of Ian the Proud

Charles Tomlinson Griffes  
(1884 - 1920)

This recital is given in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Music in Vocal Performance at The University of Northern Iowa School of Music. Kayla Kjeldseth is a voice student of Dr. Jean McDonald.

Please refrain from applause until the conclusion of each set.