FAREWELL RECITAL: Meryl Mantione, mezzo-soprano  
James Helton, piano  
Sunday, March 21, 2021, 7:30 pm

Program Notes

This recital is performed in memory of my parents, Arthur and Meryl Biggane. Their love and support have been a source of strength throughout my life.

Ah, Love, but a day (Robert Browning)

Ah, Love, but a day,
And the world has changed!
The sun's away,
And the bird estranged;
The wind has dropped,
And the sky's deranged;
Summer has stopped.

Look in my eyes!
Wilt thou change too?
Should I fear surprise?
Shall I find aught new
In the old and dear,
In the good and true,
With the changing year?

The Lament of Ian the Proud (William Sharp, as Fiona Macleod)

What is this crying that I hear in the wind?
Is it the old sorrow and the old grief?
Or is it a new thing coming, a whirling leaf
About the gray hair of me who am weary and blind?
I know not what it is, but on the moor above the shore
There is a stone which the purple nets of heather bind,
And thereon is writ: She will return no more.
O blown, whirling leaf, and the old grief,
And wind crying to me who am old and blind!

The world feels dusty (Emily Dickinson)

The world feels dusty,
when we stop to die...
We want the dew then
Honors taste dry...

Flags vex a dying face
But the least fan
stirred by a friend's hand
Cools like the rain

Mine be the ministry
when thy thirst comes...
Dews of thyself to fetch
and holy balms.
Wie Melodien zieht es (Klaus Groth)

Wie Melodien zieht es
Mir leise durch den Sinn,
Wie Frühlingsblumen blüht es,
Und schwebt wie Duft dahin.

Doch kommt das Wort und faßt es
Und führt es vor das Aug',
Wie Nebelgrau erblaßt es
Und schwindet wie ein Hauch.

Und dennoch ruht im Reime
Verborgen wohl ein Duft,
Den mild aus stillem Keime
Ein feuchtes Auge ruft.

Doch kommt das Wort und faßt es
Und führt es vor das Aug',
Wie Nebelgrau erblaßt es
Und schwindet wie ein Hauch.

Und dennoch ruht im Reime
Verborgen wohl ein Duft,
Den mild aus stillem Keime
Ein feuchtes Auge ruft.

Like melodies it runs

Like melodies it runs
Gently through my mind,
Like spring flowers it blooms,
And floats away like a fragrance.

Yet comes a word and fixes it
And brings it before the eye
Like misty grey it fades
And vanishes like a breath.

And yet, rests in the rhymes
Hidden, no doubt, a fragrance,
Which mildly from the silent bud
My moist eyes summons.

Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht (Heinrich Heine)

Der Tod, das ist die kühle Nacht,
Das Leben ist der schwüle Tag.
Es dunkelt schon, mich schläfert,
Der Tag hat mich müd gemacht.

Über mein Bett erhebt sich ein Baum,
Drin singt die junge Nachtigall;
Sie singt von lauter Liebe –
Ich hör es sogar im Traum.

Death is the cool night

Death is the cool night,
Living is the sultry day.
Dusk falls, I am drowsy,
The day has made me tired.

Above my bed rises a tree,
Where sings the young nightingale;
She sings of nothing but love –
I hear it even in dreams.

Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer (Hermann Lingg)

Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer
Nur wie Schleier liegt mein Kummer
Zitternd über mir.
Oft im Traume hör ich dich
Rufen drauß vor meiner Tür,
Niemand wacht und öffnet dir,
Ich erwach und weine bitterlich.

Ja, ich werde sterben müssen,
Eine andre wirst du küssen,
Wenn ich bleich und kalt.
Eh die Maienlüfte weh’n,
Eh die Drossel singt im Wald;
Willst du mich noch einmal sehn
Komm, o komme bald!

Ever lighter grows my slumber

Ever lighter grows my slumber,
but my sorrows lie like a haze,
trembling over me.
Often in my dreams I hear you
calling outside my door,
no one is awake to let you in,
I wake and weep bitterly.

Yes, I shall have to die,
another will you kiss
when I am pale and cold.
Ere May breezes blow,
er the thrush sings in the wood—
if you once more would see me,
come, oh come soon!
Sure on this shining night (James Agee)
Sure on this shining night
Of star made shadows round,
Kindness must watch for me
This side the ground.
The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.
Sure on this shining night I weep for wonder
wand'ring far
alone
Of shadows on the stars.

Give me Jesus (traditional Spiritual)
Oh, when I come to die, give me Jesus.
You may have all this world; give me Jesus.
Dark midnight was my cry, give me Jesus.
You may have all this world; give me Jesus.
You may have all this world, with its troubles and cares,
for of this I am sure, give me Jesus.

The Crucifixion (Anonymous, trans. Howard Mumford Jones)
At the cry of the first bird
They began to crucify Thee, O Swan!
Never shall lament cease because of that
It was like the parting of day from night
Ah, sore was the suffering borne
By the body of Mary's Son
But sorer still to Him was the grief
Which for His sake
Came upon His mother

Carlos Guastavino is one of the most celebrated 20th Century composers in Argentina. He was born in 1912 in Santa Fe Province and died there in 2000. During his lifetime he traveled to Great Britain, the former USSR and China, but his works are not well known in the United States. He published more than 150 songs for voice and piano, along with numerous works for solo piano, choral ensemble and chamber ensembles. Although my planned visit to Argentina during my Spring 2020 sabbatical was not possible due to the pandemic, it did provide me with the time to work on many of the songs in the collection *Flores Argentinas*. This collection was given to me as a gift by my students in San Juan, Argentina. I am grateful to Ball State University for granting me the sabbatical leave.

Cortadera, plumerito (León Benarós)
Cortadera, plumerito,
¡cuánto nácar en el viento!
Recuerdos de tus verdores
me causan un sentimiento.

¡Ay, cuánto te necesito,
trebol donde vivía!
¿Podré volver algún día,
cortadera, plumerito?

Por esos campos viví,
provincia de Buenos Aires,
y, abanicando los aires,
por esos años te vi.

Pampas grass, little feather
Pampas grass, little feather,
How like mother-of-pearl in the wind!
Memories of your greenery
cause me to feel.

Oh, how much I need you,
clover fields where I lived!
Can I come back one day
pampas grass, little feather?

Through those fields I lived
Buenos Aires Province,
and, fanning the airs,
for those years I saw you.
El clavel del aire blanco (León Benarós)

El clavel del aire blanco
es suspiro detenido
que en el aire se hacer flor
con el perfume más fino.

¡Ay, amor!
La flor en la niña,
la niña en la flor...

Del clavel del aire blanco
nadie ofenda su blancura,
porque tiene el parecer
de la inocencia más pura.

Hôtel (Guillaume Apollinaire)

Ma chambre a la forme d'une cage,
Le soleil passe son bras par la fenêtre.
Mais moi qui veux fumer pour faire des mirages
J'allume au feu du jour ma cigarette.
Je ne veux pas travailler - je veux fumer.

Voyage à Paris (Guillaume Apollinaire)

Ah! la charmante chose
Quitter un pays morose
Pour Paris
Paris joli
Qu'un jour dût créer l'Amour.

The Ships of Arcady (Francis Ledwidge)

Thro' the faintest filigree,
over the dim waters go,
little ships of Arcady,
when the morning moon is low.

I can hear the sailors' song
from the blue edge of the sea,
passing like the lights along
Thro' the dusky filigree

Then where moon and waters meet
sail by sail they pass away,
With little friendly winds replete
blowing from the breaking day

and when the little ships have flown,
Dreaming still of Arcady
I look across the waves, alone
in the misty filigree.

Hotel

My room has the form of a cage,
The sun passes its arm through the window.
But I who would like to smoke to make smoke pictures
I light my cigarette at the fire of the day.
I do not want to work – I want to smoke.

Going to Paris

Ah! a charming thing
Ah! la charmante chose
Ah! la charmante chose
to leave a morose country
for Paris
delightful Paris
that one day was created from love.

The Monk and his Cat (Anonymous, trans. W. H. Auden)

Pangur, white Pangur,
How happy we are
Alone together,
Scholar and cat.
Each has his own work to do daily;
For you it is hunting, for me study.
Your shining eye watches the wall;
my feeble eye is fixed on a book.
You rejoice when your claws
Entrap a mouse;
I rejoice when my mind
Fathoms a problem.
Pleased with his own art,
Neither hinders the other;
Thus we live ever
Without tedium and envy.
The Secrets of the Old (William Butler Yeats)

I have old women's secrets now
That had those of the young;
Madge tells me what I dared not think
When my blood was strong,
And what had drowned a lover once
Sounds like an old song.

Though Marg'ry is stricken dumb
If thrown in Madge's way,
We three make up a solitude;
For none alive today
Can know the stories that we know
Or say the things we say:

How such a man pleased women most
Of all that are gone,
How such a pair loved many years
And such a pair but one,
Stories of the bed of straw
Or the bed of down.

Lady of the Harbor (Emma Lazarus)

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!