

Spring 2023

She to the Sea and In Sun and Rain

Danielle Vada Cohen
Bard College

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She to the Sea
and
In Sun and Rain

Senior Project submitted to
The Division of the Arts
of Bard College

by
Danielle V. Cohen

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2023

Dedication

To my family who made sure I got through this – all of it.

To my friends who kept me laughing.

To David who has always believed in me.

In memory of:

Lior Cohen

Len and Mary Kilian

Charlene Berry

Artist's Statement

She to the Sea and *In Sun and Rain*, the titles of my two recitals, encapsulate the essence of the music performed in each installation. The first recital, *She to the Sea*, was a presentation of classical vocal repertoire including art songs by Ralph Vaughan Williams and Claude Debussy, German lieder by Johannes Brahms and Clara Schumann, and Italian arias by Francesco Cilea and Pietro Mascagni. These selections demonstrated my vocal abilities through a classical lens. Giving myself permission in this recital to be expressive and evocative through classical music allowed me the freedom to go forth boldly in performance. This opened the door for me to give a thoughtful and emotional performance. The pieces I selected with the help of David Sytkowski, who not only advised me throughout this whole process but also worked with me as a vocal coach and collaborative pianist, were not only wrought with complex emotions but also gave me the space to be literarily and philosophically analytical. Parsing out meaning, creating my own translations, and writing out my own interpretations of each piece was an extremely fulfilling part of the process that aided immensely in preparing me for the performance of this first recital.

In Sun and Rain was the title of my second and final recital. This performance was in the style of a cabaret in which I presented each song with some speaking between certain selections. Communicating with the audience through speaking gave me the opportunity to share entertaining anecdotes and to directly name some sources of inspiration and dedication. The repertoire presented in this recital was in the vein of musical theatre. An immense passion of mine, musical theatre is a contemporary means of expressing the human experience through performance. Drawing inspiration from personal experience, family, and friends gave me the emotional resources to be authentic in how I performed the repertoire and to be an effective storyteller. The written pieces I endeavored to complete before this performance gave me the

emotional foundation I needed in order to present a grounded and engaging performance of this compelling musical material.

These recital performances pushed me to trust myself and my musical knowledge, instincts, and even quirks. Getting myself to let go of the tight grip I was using to hold onto each song as though doing so would prove that I truly knew the material was a scary leap but one that was necessary for building cohesive and expressive performances. Letting audiences see the vulnerable, brash, silly, excited, scared, and empowered parts of me was a challenge I am so glad I faced. Thank you to everyone who nudged me forward and who knew I could do it before I did.

Bard College Music Program presents

She to the Sea

Danielle V. Cohen, *soprano*

David Sytkowski, *piano*

Monday, November 14th, 2022

7:30 PM

Bitó CPS

PROGRAM

Beau Soir, L. 84	Claude Debussy (1862-1918)
Do Not Go, My Love (1917)	Richard Hageman (1881-1966)
Sapphische Ode, Op. 94, No. 4	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
From <i>L'amico Fritz</i> (1891) "Son Pochi Fiori"	Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)
Warum willst du and're fragen? Op. 12, No. 11	Clara Schumann (1819-1896)
From <i>Adriana Lecouvreur</i> (1902) "Acerba voluttà"	Francesco Cilea (1866-1950)

INTERMISSION

Dann (196?)	Julius Bürger (1897-1995)
Four Nights (1922-25)	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Waitin' (1985)	William Bolcom (b. 1938)
Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer , Op. 105, No. 2	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
Silent Noon (1904)	Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)
Die Mainacht, Op. 43, No. 2	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Program Notes

Claude Debussy had an affinity for writing about bodies of water, perhaps most notably *La Mer (The Sea)*. This remains the case in “Beau Soir” as Debussy chose to set a poem by Paul Bourget that depicts a river, shining pink at twilight, streaming into the sea. Water-related imagery, in this case, is used to symbolize the cycle of life, almost assuaging any fears about death by casting it in a peaceful light.

Richard Hageman was a Dutch composer who grew up as a child prodigy and was a concert pianist by the age of six. He worked at the Metropolitan Opera for many years as a pianist and conductor, as well as teaching at various institutions across the US. He also was a guest director at the Chicago, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles symphony orchestras. Hageman was additionally known for writing film scores; he won an Academy Award for the score of the western *Stagecoach*. Though he composed an opera and a “concert drama,” he found most of his long-lasting acclaim for his art songs, most notably “Do Not Go, My Love,” which is set to a Rabindranath Tagore poem.

Johannes Brahms was a composer, pianist, and conductor in the Romantic period. Many of his works continue to be staples in concert repertoire, premiering many of them himself. His lieder often depicted pastoral scenes and nature, which is clearly seen in “Die Mainacht.” This song uses lots of nature imagery used to illustrate and emphasize loneliness and yearning. This use of natural imagery was also used in “Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer”, particularly in the final section, which depicts the May breeze and a bird flying through the forest. In “Sapphische Ode”, floral imagery is used to illustrate lost love.

Pietro Mascagni was an Italian composer who was mostly known for his operas. His magnum opus, *Cavalleria rusticana*, which premiered in 1890, paved the way for the Verismo movement in Italian opera and music in general. Two of his additional operas, *L'amico Fritz* and *Iris*, continue to be shown in Europe. The aria “Son Pochi Fiori” comes from the opera *L'amico Fritz* (which Mascagni himself conducted at its premiere in Rome) and is Suzel’s main aria in act one and occurs when she presents Fritz with a bouquet of flowers.

Clara Schumann was a German composer and pianist. She was a child prodigy and began touring European cities as a concert pianist at the age of eleven. Schumann had a career as a concert pianist for 61 years and was known as one of the most talented and influential pianists of the Romantic period. Schumann wrote that nothing brought her such “great pleasure” as composition and that “the joy of creation” was immeasurably incredible. After she married Robert Schumann, her composition turned mainly to choral music and lieder. “Warum willst du and're fragen” comes from the song cycle *Liebesfrühling*, which was composed by both Clara and Robert Schumann. Clara wrote songs numbers two, four, and eleven, with number eleven being “Warum willst du and're fragen.” This piece was published in 1841, and by 1848, Schumann had entirely stopped composing.

Francesco Cilea was an Italian composer who is mostly known for his operas *L'arlesiana* and *Adriana Lecouvreur*. He was influenced by Mascagni's introduction of the Verismo movement and crafted his opera, *La Tilda*, after Mascagni's *Cavalleria rusticana*. To this day, however, his opera, *Adriana Lecouvreur*, remains his most famous and internationally known; it indicates the fact that Cilea was influenced by the Neapolitan school while also using the tonal shading methods of French composers, notably Jules Émile Frédéric Massenet. In the aria "Acerba voluttà," Princess de Bouillon awaits her lover, Maurizio, and wonders if he remains faithful and in love with her.

Julius Bürger was an Austrian composer exiled from his home country during Hitler's rise to power. Bürger's decision to flee Austria proved to be the best possible choice as the rest of his family was murdered on the way to the Auschwitz concentration camp. The bulk of his compositions were completed in his early years, and his compositions dwindled after he made it to America. In the US, he was a staff member for many years at the Metropolitan Opera. Despite mainly having abandoned composition, he won a composition award from the University of Indiana in 1984 for his work, *Variations on a Theme by C. Ph. E. Bach*, which he had written thirty-nine years earlier. The fact that trains are such a crucial part of "Dann" is extremely interesting because he made his decision to leave his homeland behind when he was taking a train back to Vienna; he and his wife got off the train in Paris, sensing that it would be unsafe to return to their home. Trains were a vital piece of why Bürger was able to live, so it is fascinating that he chose to set music to a text that uses trains to convey a message about aging.

Ralph Vaughan Williams was an English composer whose music was deeply influenced by Tudor music and English folk music. His compositions, particularly his symphonies, were published in stark contrast to the German style of the nineteenth century. Vaughan Williams' most famous concert works include *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and *The Lark Ascending*. His vocal music, particularly his songs for solo voice and piano, was greatly influenced by British folk music. While some of his songs, including "Silent Noon," have become standard repertory internationally, other song cycles, such as *Four Poems by Fredegond Shove*, in which "Four Nights" is the second song, are by far less known, but no less interesting or beautiful. Some of his songs cover dark topics, and *Four Poems by Fredegond Shove* does not shy away from them since most of the songs in the cycle allude to death and its ramifications.

William Bolcom is an American composer and pianist. He has earned several awards for his compositions, including the Pulitzer Prize and a Grammy Award. Bolcom began composing at the age of eleven, and his primary influences then included Béla Bartók and Roy Harris. He has composed four operas, several concertos, and nine symphonies. Bolcom has also written many song cycles, and some of them are cabarets. All 24 cabarets were published together in the 1990s. "Waitin'" is one such song, but paints a different picture than many of the other cabaret songs. Whilst a lot of Bolcom's cabaret songs strike a tonally interesting and almost funny chord in terms of content, "Waitin'" is a deep cut into the heart of someone who is always waiting for something to fall into place.

About the Artists

Danielle V. Cohen is a soprano and senior at Bard College. She has been in Bard College's undergraduate Opera Workshop for several years, performing duets, ensemble pieces, and an aria. She was also in Bard's Musical Theatre Workshop for two semesters. In the Spring of 2022, Danielle played the character Agnes in a workshop production of Max Vernon's *Show & Tell*. Danielle intends to attend the summer program Opera Viva! this summer in Verona, Italy. She is excited to present this evening of song and is proud of all the hard work she and her teachers have put into making this happen.

David Sytkowski, pianist and vocal coach, is a Visiting Artist in Residence at Bard College and the Bard College Conservatory of Music, where he is Director of Music for Opera Workshop, leads the Musical Theatre Performance Workshop, coaches singers and teaches private piano. He frequently appears as a symphony pianist and collaborator at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Feinstein's at The Nikko San Francisco and the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts. In September 2019, he made his Joe's Pub debut in *Under The Influence* with legendary cabaret artist Justin Vivian Bond. This led to Auntie Glam's Happy Hour, a weekly livestream during the COVID-19 shut down that *New York Times* critic Zachary Woolf proclaimed one of "The Best of the Year's At-Home Divas" in December 2020. As principal music coach for the Bard SummerScape festival for eight years, he has prepared Korngold's *Die tote Stadt* and *Das Wunder Der Heliane*, Rubenstein's *Demon*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*, Dvorak's *Dimitrij*, Mascagni's *Iris*, Smyth's *The Wreckers*, and Weber's *Euryanthe*.

Many thanks to:

David, for your belief and kindness
 My family, for your support and love
 My friends, for being a constant source of light

In remembrance of:

Lior Cohen
 Leonard Kilian
 Mary Kilian
 Charlene Berry

Texts and Translations

Beau Soir*By Paul Bourget*

Lorsque au soleil couchant les rivières sont roses
 Et qu'un tiède frisson court sur les champs de blé,
 Un conseil d'être heureux semble sortir des choses
 Et monter vers le cœur troublé.

Un conseil de goûter le charme d'être au monde
 Cependant qu'on est jeune et que le soir est beau,
 Car nous nous en allons, comme s'en va cette onde :
 Elle à la mer, nous au tombeau!

Beautiful Evening*Translation by Danielle V. Cohen*

When the sun is setting, the rivers are pink
 And a warm shiver runs through the fields of wheat,
 Happy advice seems to come out of this
 And goes up to the troubled heart;

It steers us to taste the charm of being in the world
 While we are young and the evening is beautiful,
 Because we are going away, as the river does:
 It to the sea, us to the tomb!

Sapphische Ode*By Hans Schmidt*

Rosen brach ich nachts mir am dunklen Hage;
 Süßer hauchten Duft sie, als je am Tage,
 Doch verstreuten reich die bewegten Äste
 Tau, der mich näßte.

Auch der Küsse Duft mich wie nie berückte,
 Die ich nachts vom Strauch deiner Lippen pflückte:
 Doch auch dir, bewegt im Gemüt gleich jenen
 Tauten die Tränen.

Sapphic Ode*Translation by Danielle V. Cohen*

I gather roses at night in the dark hedge;
 Their fragrance breathed sweeter than by day,
 but the moving branches richly scattered
 Dew, which sprinkled on me.

Even the scent of kisses was more enchanting than ever,
 When I plucked them from your rose-bush lips at night
 But you too, moved like the roses in your heart,
 Dropped the dew of tears

Son Pochi Fiori

Libretto by Nicola Daspuro

Son pochi fiori, povere viole,
 Son l'alito d'aprile
 Dal profumo gentile;
 Ed è per voi
 che le ho rapite al sole...
 Se avessero parole,
 le udreste mormorar:

Noi siamo figlie timide e pudiche di primavera
 Siamo le vostre amiche;
 Morremo questa sera,
 Ma saremo felici
 Di dire voi, che amate gl'infelici:
 Il ciel vi possa dar
 Tutto quel bene che si può sperar.
 Ed il mio cor, aggiunge
 una parola modesta, ma sincera:
 Eterna primavera La vostra vita sia,
 ch'altri consola...
 Deh, vogliate gradir
 Quanto vi posso offrir!

Just a Few Flowers

Translation by Danielle V. Cohen

Just a few flowers, humble violets,
 I am the breath of April
 The gentle scent
 And it is for you
 That I stole them from the sun...
 If they had words,
 You would hear them murmur:

We are daughters shy and modest of spring
 We are your friends;
 We will die tonight,
 But we will die happy
 To say to you, who loves the unhappy:
 Heaven may give you

All the good you can hope for.
 And my heart adds
 A word modest, but sincere
 Let your life be eternal spring,
 That consoles others...
 Please, please
 How much I can offer you!

Warum willst du and're fragen?

By Friedrich Rückert

Warum willst du and're fragen,
 Die's nicht meinen treu mit dir?
 Glaube nicht, als was dir sagen
 Diese beiden Augen hier!

Glaube nicht den fremden Leuten,
 Glaube nicht dem eignen Wahn;
 Nicht mein Tun auch sollst du deuten,
 Sondern sieh die Augen an!

Schweigt die Lippe deinen Fragen,
 Oder zeugt sie gegen mich?
 Was auch meine Lippen sagen,
 Sieh mein Aug', ich liebe dich!

Why will you question others?

Translation by Danielle V. Cohen

Why will you questions others,
 Who are not faithful to you?
 Believe nothing but what
 Both of these eyes say!

Do not believe strangers,
 Do not believe strange fantasies;
 Nor should you interpret my actions,
 But instead look in these eyes!

Will lips silence your questions,
 Or testify them against me?
 Whatever my lips may say,
 See my eyes, I love you!

Acerba voluttà

Libretto by Arturo Colautti

Acerba voluttà, dolce turtura,
 lentissima agonia, rapida offesa,
 vampa, gelo, tromor, smania,
 paura, ad amoroso sen torna l'attesa!

Ogni eco, ogni ombra nella notte incesa
 contro la impaziente alma congiura :
 fra dubbiezza e disio tutta sospesa,
 l'eternità nell'attimo misura...

Verrà ? m'oblia? s'affretta? o pur si pente?
 Ecco, egli giunge!
 No, del fiume è il verso,
 misto al sospir d'un arbore dormente...

O vagabonda stella d'Oriente,
 non tramontar, non tramontar :
 sorridi all'universo,
 e s'egli non mente, scorta il mio amor!

Bitter pleasure

Translation by Danielle V. Cohen

Bitter pleasure, sweet torture,
 Slow agony, swift offense,
 Blaze, frost, tremor, zeal,
 Fear, for the lover who waits!

Every echo, every shadow in the burning night
 Conspires against the impatient dawn:
 All suspended between doubt and dejection,
 Eternity measures the moment...

Will he come? Or forget me? Or hurry? Or even repent?
 Behold, he comes!
 No, of the river is the verse,
 Mixed with the sigh of a sleeping tree...

Oh, wandering star of the East,
 Set not, set not,
 Smile to the universe,
 And if he lies not, escort my love!

Dann

By Gottfried Benn

Wenn ein Gesicht, das man als junges kannte

Und dem man Glanz und Tränen fortge küsst,
Sich in den ersten Zug des Alters wandte,
Den frühen Zauber leben einge büsst.

Der Bogen einst, dem jeder Pfeil gelungen,
Purpurgefiedert lag das Rohr im Blau,
Die Cymbel auch, Die jedes Lied gesungen
"Funkelnde Schale,"
"Wiesen im Dämmer grau"

Dem ersten Zug der zwei te schon im Bunde,
Ach, an der Stirne hält Sie schon die Wacht,
Die einsame,
Die letzte Stunde –
Das ganze liebe Antlitz dann in Nacht.

Then

Translation by Danielle V. Cohen

If a face that you knew when you were young
And whose shine and tears are kissed away,
Turned in the first train of old age,
Lost the magic of fresh life.

The bow once succeeded every arrow,
The purple-feathered reed laid in the blue,
The cymbal too, sung every song
"Sparkling bowl,"
"Gray meadows in the twilight"

The first train, the second already in line,
Ah, on her forehead, she keeps watch,
The lonely one,
The final hour –
The whole, lovely face then in the night.

Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer

By 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 wehn,
 Eh' die Drossel singt im Wald:
 Willst du mich noch einmal sehn,
 Komm, o komme bald!

My sleep grows ever quieter

Translation by Danielle V. Cohen

My sleep grows ever quieter,
 Only my sorrow lies like a veil
 Trembling above me.
 Often in my dreams, I hear you
 Shouting outside my door:
 No one watches and lets you in,
 I wake and weep bitterly.

Yes, I will have to die,
 And you will kiss someone else,
 When I am pale and cold.
 Before the May breezes blow,
 Before the thrush sings in the forest:
 If you could see me once again,
 Come, oh come soon!

Die Mainacht

By Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty

Wann der silberne Mond durch die Gesträuche blinkt,
 Und sein schlummerndes Licht über den Rasen streut,
 Und die Nachtigall flötet,
 Wandl' ich traurig von Busch zu Busch.

Überhüllet vom Laub, girret ein Taubenpaar
 Sein Entzücken mir vor; aber ich wende mich,
 Suche dunklere Schatten,
 Und die einsame Träne rinnt.

Wann, o lächelndes Bild, welches wie Morgenrot
 Durch die Seele mir strahlt, find' ich auf Erden dich?
 Und die einsame Träne
 Bebt mir heißer die Wang' herab.

The May Night

Translation by Danielle V. Cohen

When the silver moon shines on the bushes,

And the sleepy light scatters on the lawn,
And the nightingale sings,
I wander sadly from bush to bush.

Covered by leaves, a pair of doves
Coo their delight to me; but I turn away,
I seek darker shadows,
And the lonely tear runs.

When, o smiling image, like dawn shining through my soul,
Will I find you on earth?
And the lonely tear
Trembles hotter and hotter down my cheek.

Bard College Music Program presents

In Sun and Rain

Danielle V. Cohen, voice
David Sytkowski, piano

Monday, April 17th, 2023

7:30 PM

Bitó CPS

PROGRAM

Changing My Major from *Fun Home*

Music by Jeanine Tesori, Lyrics and book by Lisa Kron

Hello Young Lovers from *The King and I*

Music and book by Oscar Hammerstein II , Lyrics by Richard Rodgers

People from *Funny Girl*

Music by Jule Styne, Lyrics by Bob Merrill, Book by Isobel Lennart

I Have Confidence from *The Sound of Music*

Music by Oscar Hammerstein II, Lyrics by Richard Rodgers, Book by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse

If I Were a Rich Man from *Fiddler on the Roof*

Music by Jerry Bock, Lyrics by Sheldon Harnick, Book by Joseph Stein

Last Midnight from *Into the Woods*

Music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim, Book by James Lapine

INTERMISSION

I'm Breaking Down from *Falsettos*

Music and lyrics by William Finn, Book by William Finn and James Lapine

Old Maid from *110 in the Shade*

Music by Harvey Schmidt, Lyrics by Tom Jones, Book by N. Richard Nash

Someone Like You from *Jekyll & Hyde*

Music by Frank Wildhorn, Lyrics and book by Leslie Bricusse

Pretty Funny from *Dogfight*

Music and lyrics by Benj Pasek and Justin Paul, Book by Peter Duchan

Come to Your Senses from *tick, tick... BOOM!*

Music, lyrics, and book by Jonathan Larson

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Other recent engagements include the New York premiere of Gregory Spears's *Fellow Travelers* for the PROTOTYPE festival in January 2018, Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein's *The Mother of Us All* for the reopening of the Hudson Opera House in Fall 2017 with R.B. Schlather, Berkshire Opera Festival's inaugural production of *Madama Butterfly*, Hindemith's *The Long Christmas Dinner* and Von Schillings's *Mona Lisa* with American Symphony Orchestra. He frequently appears as a symphony pianist and collaborator at venues such as Carnegie Hall, Weill Recital Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, Feinstein's at The Nikko San Francisco and the Fisher Center for the Performing Arts.

Special Thanks to

David Sytkowski
 Matt Deming
 James Bagwell
 Teresa Buchholz
 My loving family
 My amazing friends