

I Love You to the Moon and Back: Songs of Woman and Child

Maggie Ramsey, Mezzo-Soprano
Ruth Locker, Piano

Cherrydale United Methodist Church
Saturday, June 29, 2024
7:30 p.m.

The Program

Frauenliebe und Leben

Music by Robert Schumann (1810-1856)

Poems by Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838)

I. Seit ich ihn gesehen (Since I saw him)

II. Er, der Herrlichste von allen (He, the most glorious of all)

III. Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben (I cannot grasp, nor believe it)

IV. Du Ring an meinem Finger (You ring on my finger)

V. Helft mir, ihr Schwestern (Help me, sisters)

VI. Süßer Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an (Sweet friend, you look amazed at me)

VII. An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust (On my heart, on my breast)

VIII. Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmerz getan (Now you have caused me the first pain)

Songs to the Moon

Music by Jake Heggie (1961-)

Poems by Vachel Lindsay (1879-1931)

I. Prologue: Once More - to Gloriana

II. Euclid

III. The Haughty Snail King (What Uncle William Told the Children)

IV. What the Rattlesnake Said

V. The Moon's The North Wind's Cooky (What the Little Girl Said)

VI. What the Scarecrow Said

VII. What the Gray-Winged Fairy Said

VIII. Yet Gentle Will the Griffin Be (What Grandpa Told the Children)

A light reception follows in the church parlor.

Program Notes

Frauenliebe und Leben

There is no doubt that Robert Schumann set Adelbert von Chamisso's *Frauenliebe und Leben* in honor of his wife, Clara. Clara was a highly successful musician in her own right, and it is quite possible that the meek, submissive quality of the woman in the poems was wishful thinking on the part of her husband. As Thilo Reinhard notes, "Schumann's version of Clara may have provided a counterbalance to her unusually enlightened and independent personality." The cycle gains some notoriety for the fact that its poetry—written by a man—presumes to know how a woman feels at various important moments in her life. Furthermore, there is the implication that a woman's life begins when she first sees her future husband and ends when he passes. Nevertheless, it is an important and beautiful work, a testament to the love the Schumanns' felt for each other.

Frauenliebe und Leben

Seit ich ihn gesehen

Seit ich ihn gesehen, glaub' ich blind zu sein.
Wo ich hin nur blicke, seh' ich ihn allein.
Wie im wachen traume, schwebt sein Bild mir vor taucht
aus tiefstem Dunkel heller nur empor.

Sonst ist licht und farblos, alles um mich her.
Nach der Schwestern Spiele, nicht begehr ich mehr.
Möchte lieber weinen still im Kämmerlein.
Seit ich ihn gesehen, glaub' ich blind zu sein.

Er, der Herrlichste von allen

Er, der Herrlichste von allen;
wie so milde, wie so gut!
Hölde Lippen, klares Auge,
heller Sinn und fester Mut.

So wie dort in blauer Tiefe,
hell und herrlich jener Stern,
also Er an meinem Himmel,
hell und herrlich, hehr und fern.

Wandle, wandle deine Bahnen,
nur betrachten deinen Schein,
nur in Demut ihn betrachten,
selig nur und traurig sein!

Höre nicht mein stilles Beten,
deinem Glücke nur geweiht;
darfst mich, nied're Magd, nicht kennen,
hoher Stern der Herrlichkeit!

A woman's life and love

Since I saw him

Since I saw him, I believe I am blind.
Wherever I look, I see only him.
As in a waking dream, his image floats before me
from deepest darkness, ever brighter.

All is light- and colorless around me.
The games of my sisters, I no longer wish to play.
I would rather cry quietly in my little room.
Since I saw him, I believe I am blind.

He, the most glorious of all

He, the most glorious of all;
how kind he is, how good!
Gentle lips, bright eyes,
clear mind and firm courage.

Just as in that blue depth
that star shines bright and glorious,
so is he in my heaven,
bright and glorious, sublime and far.

Wander, wander your course,
only to look at your light,
only to look at it humbly,
only to be happy and sad!

Do not hear my silent prayer,
given only for your happiness;
you cannot know me, the humble maiden,
noble star of glory!

Nur die würdigste von allen
darf beglücken deine Wahl,
und ich will die Hohe segnen viele tausend Mal.

Will mich freuen dann und weinen,
selig, selig bin ich dann,
sollte mir das Herz auch brechen, brich, o Herz,
was liegt daran?

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben

Ich kann's nicht fassen, nicht glauben;
es hat ein Traum mich berückt.
Wie hätt' er doch unter allen
mich Arme erhöht und beglückt?

Mir war's er habe gesprochen:
"Ich bin auf ewig dein."
Mir war's ich träume noch immer;
es kann ja nimmer so sein!

O lass im Traume mich sterben,
gewieget an seiner Brust,
den seligen Tod mich schlürfen
in tränen unendlicher Lust.

Du Ring an meinem Finger

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
mein goldenes Ringelein,
ich drücke dich fromm an die Lippen
an das Herze mein.

Ich hatt' ihn ausgeträumet,
der Kindheit friedlich, schönen Traum.
Ich fand allein mich verloren
im öden unendlichen Raum.

Du Ring an meinem Finger,
da hast du mich erst belehrt.
Hast meinem Blick erschlossen
des Lebens unendlichen, tiefen Wert.

Ich will ihm dienen, ihm leben,
ihm angehören ganz,
Hin selber mich geben
und finden verklärt mich in seinem Glanz.

Only the worthiest of all
will be made happy by your choice,
and I will bless the noble one many thousand times.

I want to rejoice and cry,
happy, happy am I then;
though my heart should break, break, o heart,
what does it matter?

I cannot grasp, nor believe it

I cannot grasp, nor believe it;
it's as if a dream has bewitched me.
How could he, from among all the others have exalted and
blessed poor me?

It seemed to me as if he had said:
"I am forever yours."
It seemed to me as if I was still dreaming,
for it could never be thus!

O let me die in this dream,
cradled on his breast,
let me drink blissful death
in tears of infinite joy.

You ring on my finger

You ring on my finger,
my little golden ring,
I press you devoutly to my lips,
to my heart.

My dream had come to an end,
childhood's peaceful, lovely dream.
I found myself lonely and lost
in empty, infinite space.

You ring on my finger,
you taught me first,
you opened to my eyes
life's infinite, deep value.

I want to serve him, live for him,
wholly belong to him,
give myself and find myself
transfigured in his splendor.

Helpft mir, ihr Schwestern

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern, freundlich mich schmücken.
Dient der Glücklichen heute, mir.
Windet geschäftig mir um die Stirne
noch der blühenden Myrte Zier.

Als ich befriedigt, freudigen Herzens,
sonst dem Geliebten im Arme lag,
immer noch rief er, sehn sucht im Herzen,
ungeduldig den heutigen Tag.

Helft mir, ihr Schwestern,
helft mir verscheuchen eine törichte Bangigkeit,
dass ich mit klarem Aug' ihn empfange,
ihn, die Quelle der Freudigkeit.

Bist, mein Geliebter, du mir erschienen;
Gibst du mir, Sonne, deinen Schein?
Lass mich in Andacht, lass mich in Demut,
lass mich verneigen dem Herren mein.

Streuet ihm, Schwestern, streuet ihm Blumen,
bringet ihm knospende Rosen dar.
Aber euch, Schwestern, grüss' ich mit Wehmut,
freudig scheidend aus eurer Schar.

Süsser Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an

Süsser Freund, du blickest mich verwundert an.
Kannst es nicht begrieven, wie ich weinen kann.
Lass der feuchten Perlen ungewohnte Zier
freudig hell erzittern in dem Auge mir.

Wie so bang mein Busen, wie so wonnevoll!
Wüsst ich nur mit worten, wie ich's sagen soll.
Komm und birg dein Antlitz hier an meiner Brust.
Will ins Ohr dir flüstern alle meine Lust.

Weisst du nun die Tränen, die ich weinen kann.
Sollst du nicht sie sehen, du geliebter, geliebter Mann?
Bleib' an meinem Herzen, fühle dessen Schlag,
dass ich fest und fester nur dich drücken mag.

Hier an meinem Bette hat die Wiege Raum,
wo sie still verberge meinen holden Traum.
Kommen wird der Morgen wo der Traum erwacht,
und daraus dein Bildnis mir entgegen lacht,
dein Bildnis!

Help me, sisters

Help me, sisters, kindly adorn me.
Serve me, the happy one, today.
Wind zealously around my forehead
the lovely wreath of the myrtle in bloom.

When I, contented, with a joyful heart
formerly lay in my beloved's arms,
he always invoked, his heart filled with yearning,
impatient by this very day.

Help me, sisters, help me
cast out a foolish anxiety,
that I with bright eyes may receive him,
him, the source of all happiness.

Have you, my beloved, come to me;
Do you, sun, give me your light?
Let me devoutly, let me humbly,
let me bow to my lord.

Strew, sisters, strew flowers before him,
offer him budding roses.
But you, sisters, I greet with sadness,
joyfully parting from your midst.

Sweet friend, you look amazed at me

Sweet friend, you look amazed at me.
You cannot understand how I can weep.
Let the moist pearl's adornment
tremble with playful clarity in my eyes.

How frightened is my heart, how filled with rapture!
If I only knew the words to tell it to you.
Come and hide your face here on my breast,
let me whisper in your ear all my delight.

Now you know the tears that I must shed.
Should you not see them, you beloved, beloved man?
Stay near my heart, feel its throbbing,
so that I may clasp you firmer and firmer.

Here by my bed the cradle will have its place,
where it may in silence hide my lovely dream.
There will come a morning when the dream awakens,
and from the cradle your image will smile up at me,
your image!

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust

An meinem Herzen, an meiner Brust,
du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!
Das Glück ist die Liebe, die Lieb' ist das Glück,

ich hab's gesagt und nehm's nicht zurück.
Hab' überschwenglich mich geschätzt,
bin überglücklich aber jetzt.
Nur die da säugt, nur die da liebt
das Kind, dem sie die Nahrung gibt; nur eine Mutter
weiss allein was lieben heisst und glücklich sein.

O wie bedaur' ich doch den Mann,
der Mutterglück nicht fühlen kann!
Du lieber, lieber Engel, du,
du schauest mich an und lächelst da zu!
An meinem Herzen, an meinem Brust,
Du meine Wonne, du meine Lust!

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmertz getan

Nun hast du mir den ersten Schmertz getan, der aber traf.
Du schläfst, du harter, unbarmhertz'ger Mann, den
Todesschlaf.
Es blicket die Verlass'ne vor sich hin,
die Welt ist leer, ist leer.

Geliebet hab' ich und gelebt, ich bin nicht lebend mehr.
Ich zieh' mich in mein Inn'res still zurück,
der Schleier fällt.
Da hab' ich dich und mein verlor'nes Glück,
du meine Welt!

On my heart, on my breast

On my heart, on my breast,
you my delight, you my joy!
Happiness is love, love is happiness,

I have said it and won't take it back.
I deemed myself so fortunate,
but I am more than happy now.
Only she who suckles, only she who loves
the child to whom she gives nourishment;
only a mother can know what it means to love and be happy.

Oh how sorry I feel for the man
who cannot feel a mother's bliss!
You dear, dear angel you,
you look at me and you smile at me!
On my heart, on my breast,
you my delight, you my joy!

Now you have caused me the first pain

Now you have caused me the first pain that really hurt.
You sleep, you hard and cruel man, the sleep of death.

The now forsaken woman stares into a void;
the world is empty, empty.

I have loved and I have lived, I do not live anymore.
I silently withdraw into myself,
the veil is falling.
Then I have you and my lost happiness,
you my world!

Songs to the Moon

Jake Heggie's career in opera composition began after he had worked as a public relations associate for San Francisco Opera. He made many connections at that company, including mezzo-soprano, Frederica von Stade, who became an outspoken advocate for his works and for whom he wrote *Songs to the Moon*. Von Stade premiered the work in 1998. The poems are by Vachel Lindsay, best known for turning poetry into performance art. Initially, he was expected to follow in his father's footsteps and become a doctor, but he convinced his parents to let him attend the Art Institute of Chicago. After much writing and travel, he ended up in Los Angeles, where he wrote "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," his most well-known poem and which he performed around the United States. He was able to publish his works, but still needed to travel and give poetry performances in order to support his family. After his health began to fail, he and his family moved back to Springfield, where he committed suicide in 1931.

1. Prologue: Once More – to Gloriana

Girl with the burning golden eyes,
And red-bird song, and snowy throat:
I bring you gold and silver moons,
And diamond stars, and mists that float.
I bring you moons and snowy clouds,
I bring you prairie skies tonight
To feebly praise your golden eyes
And red-bird song, and throat so white.

2. Euclid

Old Euclid drew a circle
On a sand-beach long ago.
He bounded and enclosed it
With angles thus and so.
His set of solemn greybeards
Nodded and argued much
Of arc and of circumference,
Diameter and such.
A silent child stood by them
From morning until noon
Because they drew such charming
Round pictures of the moon.

3. The Haughty Snail-King (What Uncle William Told the Children)

Twelve snails went walking after night.
They'd creep an inch or so,
Then stop and bug their eyes
And blow.
Some folks...are...deadly...slow.
Twelve snails went walking yestereve,
Led by their fat old king.
They were so dull their princeling had
No scepter, robe or ring –
Only a paper cap to wear
When nightly journeying.

This king-snail said: "I feel a thought
Within...it blossoms soon...
O little courtiers of mine...
I crave a pretty boon...
Oh, yes...(High thoughts with effort come
And well-bred snails are ALMOST dumb.)
"I wish I had a yellow crown
As glistening...as...the moon."

4. What the Rattlesnake Said

The moon's a little prairie-dog.
He shivers through the night.
He sits upon his hill and cries
For fear that *I* will bite.

The sun's a bronco. He's afraid
Like every other thing,
And trembles, morning, noon and night,
Lest *I* should spring, and sting.

5. The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky (What the Little Girl Said)

The Moon's the North Wind's cooky.
He bites it, day by day,
Until there's but a rim of scraps
That crumble all away.

The South Wind is a baker.
He kneads clouds in his den,
And bakes a crisp new moon *that...greedy*
North...Wind...eats...again!

7. What the Gray-Winged Fairy Said

The moon's a gong, hung in the wild,
Whose song the fays hold dear.
Of course you do not hear it, child.
It takes a FAIRY ear.

The full moon is a splendid gong
That beats as night grows still.
It sounds above the evening song
Of dove or whippoorwill.

6. What the Scarecrow Said

The dim-winged spirits of the night
Do fear and serve me well.
They creep from out the hedges of
The garden where I dwell.

I wave my arms across the walk.
The troops obey the sign,
And bring me shimmering shadow-robes
And cups of cowslip-wine.

Then dig a treasure called the moon,
A very precious thing,
And keep it in the air for me
Because I am a King.

8. Yet Gentle Will the Griffin Be (What Grandpa Told the Children)

The moon? It is a griffin's egg.
Hatching tomorrow night.
And how the little boys will watch
With shouting and delight
To see him break the shell and stretch
And creep across the sky.
The boys will laugh. The little girls,
I fear, may hide and cry.
Yet gentle will the griffin be,
Most decorous and fat,
And walk up to the Milky Way
And lap it like a cat.



Mezzo-soprano **Maggie Ramsey** is an opera singer based in Alexandria, VA. Most recently, she sang the role of Dame Hannah in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Ruddigore* with the Victorian Lyric Opera Company in Rockville, MD. In 2023 she covered the roles of Sandman, Hansel, and the Witch in Shakespeare Opera Theatre's production of *Hansel and Gretel* in Northern Virginia. In 2022, she performed the role of Emilia in their production of *Othello*. Maggie has also sung the role of the Mother in *Amahl and the Night Visitors* with SOT. Other roles with SOT include Queen Gertrude in *Hamlet* (2020). Prince Escalus in *Romeo and Juliet* (2019), and Demetrius in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2017). She also sang as a featured soloist in their summer concert, *Vive La France*, in 2019. In 2018 she became a member of the Sopranessence women's ensemble and has appeared in concerts with them ever since. Other companies Maggie has appeared with are Knoxville Opera, Marble City Opera, Asheville Lyric Opera, Janiec Opera Company at the Brevard Music Center, Greensboro Opera, and Greensboro Light Opera and Song. She is

pleased to present this recital at her beloved Cherrydale United Methodist Church, where she served as soprano soloist for five years.

THANK YOU TO MY PARTNER IN CRIME, RUTH LOCKER! You are a rock for me and for Sopranessence.

A free will offering will be taken. Ms. Ramsey is attending the Berkshire High Peaks Music Festival July 22-29 on partial scholarship, and any donations received will go toward covering the remaining cost of her tuition and travel.

BHPF is an education arm to the non-profit Close Encounters with Music foundation, and donations toward a participant's tuition are tax-deductible. If you would like to take advantage of the tax deduction, you may donate directly to CEWM (putting Maggie's name in the memo line if paying by check). Should you choose to donate cash, check, PayPal, or Venmo to Ms. Ramsey directly, part of your donation will also go to Cherrydale United Methodist Church.

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