

Senior Recital

MUS500



Polly Vaillant '23

soprano

Jacob Hiser

piano

Phillips Exeter Academy
Forrestal-Bowld Music Center
“the Bowld”

Tuesday, May 30, 2023

7:00 pm

Program

Hark! The Echoing Air from <i>The Fairy Queen</i>	Henry Purcell (1659-1695)
Weep You No More Sad Fountains	Roger Quilter (1877-1953)
Oh Had I Jubal's Lyre from <i>Joshua</i>	George F. Handel (1658-1759)
<i>Wie Melodien Zieht Es Mir</i>	Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)
<i>Fleur Dessechéé</i>	Pauline Viardot (1821-1910)
<i>Clair De Lune</i>	Gabriel Fauré (1845–1924)
A Song	Julius Williams (b. 1954)
Where Have the Actors Gone	Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943)
Laurie's Song from <i>The Tender Land</i>	Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

Program Notes

The first three pieces of the program are all in English, the first and third of which are joyful songs from the Baroque period. Composed in 1692 by Henry Purcell, “Hark The Echoing Air” is an aria from Purcell’s opera *The Fairy Queen*, an adaptation of William Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Purcell composed *The Fairy Queen* three years before his death at age 36.

“Oh Had I Jubal’s Lyre” was composed in 1747 by George Frideric Handel (best known for his oratorio *Messiah*) as a part of his oratorio, *Joshua*. *Joshua* is Handel’s fourth oratorio based on a libretto by Thomas Morell, an English librettist and classical scholar.

Although composed during the middle and high parts of the Baroque period, both pieces represent the time with highly melismatic, decorative melodies and accompaniment. “Hark The Echoing Air’s” joy and excitement intensify throughout the piece with successive repetition. “Oh Had I Jubal’s Lyre” is similarly spirited but more regal.

In between “Hark The Echoing Air” and “Oh Had I Jubal’s Lyre” is “Weep You No More Sad Fountains,” composed by Roger Quilter in 1908 as part of the collection *Seven Elizabethan Lyrics*. The music is set to a poem written by Renaissance musician and poet John Dowland. Its melancholic setting reflects the sentiment of the poetry.

The next group of three pieces consists of art songs in German and French. “Wie Melodien Zieht es mir” was composed by Johannes Brahms in 1886 based on a poem by Klaus Groth. The melodic arc at the opening soars over the accompaniment depicting the wind and inspiration in the air. When the poem addresses how inspiration becomes grounded and turns into art, it is reflected musically with both dynamics and colorful harmonies.

Composed by Pauline Viardot in 1832, “Fleur Dessechéé” was written towards the beginning of the Romantic era. “Clair De Lune” was composed more than 50 years later in 1887 by Gabriel Faure. Both pieces exemplify the French music of the period with their long beautiful melodic lines and shifting characters. Listen to how the piano reflects a moonlit landscape in “Clair De Lune.”

The final three pieces are from contemporary classical composers. “A Song” is composed by renowned Black composer and Berklee College of Music faculty member Julius Williams with lyrics by Paul Laurence Dunbar. Born in 1872, Dunbar was an early influential Black poet. “A Song” describes a love lost, questioning love and life itself.

California composer Morten Lauridse wrote “Where Have The Actors Gone” in 1976. It is considered to be a contribution to the musical theater genre. The song is about the closing of a theater production, an allegory for the ending of a relationship.

The program concludes with “Laurie’s Song.” Composed by Aaron Copland in 1954, this soprano aria is from the opera *The Tender Land* with words by Erik Johns. The aria occurs in the first act during protagonist Laurie’s first scene on stage. As she sings, Laurie reflects on her upbringing and the town she grew up in, which she has never left. She ponders how quickly time has passed while wondering about the next phase of her life and what is waiting for her beyond her hometown. As a day student from Exeter, I’m getting ready to graduate from the Academy and leave home for the first time. A lot of what Laurie is expressing resonates deeply with me. “Laurie’s Song” is the perfect ending to my senior recital—and to my time as a student here at Exeter.

Text and Translations

Wie Melodien zieht es Mir

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
Verborgnen wohl ein Duft,
Den mild aus stillem Keime
Ein feuchtes Auge ruft.

Fleur Desseché

Dans ce vieux livre l'on t'oublie,
Fleur sans parfum et sans couleur,
Mais une étrange rêverie,
Quand je te vois, emplis mon coeur.

Quel jour, quel lieu te virent naître?
Quel fut ton sort? qui t'arracha?
Qui sait? Je les connus peut-être,
Ceux dont l'amour te conserva!

Rappelais-tu, rose flétrie,
La première heure ou les adieux?
Les entretiens dans la prairie
Ou dans le bois silencieux?

Vit-il encor? existe-t-elle?
À quels rameaux flottent leurs nids!

Thoughts Like Melodies

Thoughts, like melodies,
Steal softly through my mind,
Like spring flowers they blossom
And drift away like fragrance.

Yet when words come and capture them
And bring them before my eyes,
They turn pale like grey mist
And vanish like a breath.

Yet surely in rhyme
A fragrance lies hidden,
Summoned by moist eyes
From the silent seed.

Pressed Flower

In this old book you have been forgotten
Flower without scent or color
But a strange reverie
Fills my heart when I see you

What day, what place witnessed your birth?
What was your destiny? Who picked you?
Who knows? Perhaps I knew
Those who love preserved you!

Faded rose, do you recall
The first hours or the farewells?
The conversations in the meadow
Or in the silent wood?

Is he still living? Does she exist?
On which branches do their nests sway?

Ou comme toi, qui fus si belle,
Leurs fronts charmants sont-ils flétris?

Clair De Lune

Votre âme est un paysage choisi
Que vont charmant masques et
bergamasques
Jouant du luth et dansant et quasi
Tristes sous leurs déguisements
fantasques.
Tout en chantant sur le mode mineur
L'amour vainqueur et la vie opportune,
Ils n'ont pas l'air de croire à leur
bonheur
Et leur chanson se mêle au clair de
lune,
Au calme clair de lune triste et beau,
Qui fait rêver les oiseaux dans les
arbres
Et sangloter d'extase les jets d'eau,
Les grands jets d'eau sveltes parmi les
marbres.

Or like you, who were so lovely,
Are their charming looks withered?

Moonlight

Your soul is a chosen landscape
Bewitched by masquers and bergamaskers,
Playing the lute and dancing and almost
Sad beneath their fanciful disguises.
Singing as they go in a minor key
Of conquering love and life's favors,
They do not seem to believe in their fortune
And their song mingles with the light of the
moon,
The calm light of the moon, sad and fair,
That sets the birds dreaming in the trees
And the fountains sobbing in their rapture,
Tall and svelte amid marble statues.

Acknowledgements

“I let my music take me where my heart wants to go.” I chose this lyric from a Cat Stevens song for my senior quote for the yearbook. Almost four years ago, my music took me to Exeter, and I’ll be forever grateful that it did. Thank you all so much for being here with me today for my last voice recital at the Academy. My heart is full.

I have so many people to thank that it’s hard to even know where to begin. As a day student, the Music Building has become my “home away from home” here on campus. I’m so grateful for this building full of beautiful and creative spaces, and for the many people who make it such a wonderful place to be every day.

First as my chorus teacher and then as my voice instructor, Mr. Johnson has gracefully guided my musical journey at Exeter. His knowledge of and passion for music, true kindness, and gentle good humor have helped me grow in both craft and confidence. I spend so much time with Mr. Johnson that we’ve noticed that I’ve even picked up some of his speech habits and characteristics. I would not be here today without Mr. Johnson. He deserves all the boops, tea, and date shakes in the world. Spending so much time with Mr. Johnson has come with the added benefit of spending time with Mrs. Johnson, who I also got to sing with this year as part of the Rockingham Choral Society. I’m grateful to her for making that so fun, and also for sharing Mr. Johnson so generously with all of us!

Many other people have enriched and nurtured my musical, academic, and personal growth here at Exeter, including Mrs. Darby, Mr. Schultz, Mr. Rabb, Mr. Hearon, Mr. Hiser, Ms. Strazdes, Mr. Walker, Ms. Cadwell, Mr. Einhaus, Ms. Grube, Ms.

Emory, and everyone in my MUS500 class. I could write a page about each of these wonderful people and still have so much more to say.

I'm also so grateful for my friends here at Exeter, who consistently support and SHOW UP for me—even on beautiful sunny spring afternoons and evenings when they could literally be anywhere else. They also tolerate me singing EVERYWHERE and ALL THE TIME. I love all of you and will miss you more than you know.

My experience here at Exeter has been different than it is for many others. Unlike boarding students, I go home to my family every night. I'm grateful for my mom, dad, and brother, West. My Vaillant and Hughes grandparents, as well as my extended family, have also showered me with love, care, and encouragement.

As a member of various choral and acapella groups, jazz ensembles, rock bands, and musical theater productions here at Exeter, as well as as a singer-songwriter, I'm lucky to have been involved in many types of music. I'm grateful to the Music Department for giving me the creative freedom to explore these opportunities, as well as to all of the talented people I've been lucky enough to make music with along the way. Perhaps the hardest part of writing these acknowledgements is knowing I'm probably overlooking someone who made a difference and may not even know it.

The next place my music will take me is to Nashville, where I'll be pursuing a bachelor of music degree in classical vocal performance at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University. While I'm leaving Exeter behind, I'm very much bringing it with me.