

Recital Program

Bolcom: Waitin' 1:00

Mahler: Blicke mir nicht in die lieder 1:17

Cecilia Livingston: Penelope 8:00

Mahler: Liebste du um Schönheit 2:26

Juliana Hall: Sentiment 12:00

Mahler: Ich atmet' einen linden Duft 2:24

Possible world premier by MCW 2022 award winning composer ~5:00

Mahler: Ich bin der welt 7:16

The central theme of the recital is found in the first song: waiting. In this case, waiting for the realization of what you truly want and not what is expected of you. The Bolcom song has a deep and personal meaning to me, as it perfectly encapsulates in one page how I felt before coming to terms with my sexuality.

The following song by Mahler from his Rückert-Lieder centers around not feeling ready to move into the world (or perhaps a new identity) even though you have been working to do so for so long.

In the Cecilia Livingston piece, the speaker awaits the return of her beloved husband and child. She describes the waiting as loneliness and stillness in empty rooms and longs to hold the hand of her beloved once again while they sleep. In my own journey of actualization, I had a year of regression; moving back towards what was familiar, safe, and easy. Yet, the feeling of loneliness persisted. The answer to the question "what is it to be waiting?" is personified by the recurring "g sharp" in the accompaniment. It is only at the end of the piece, when the singer sings "loneliness" on that same "g sharp" that we realize she answers her own question.

The next Mahler piece is an examination of what a person's motivations for love might be. Beauty, youth, money all falls short of just loving for love. In the trajectory of the recital, this song is my own awakening to what my own motivations for love are. It is a realization that ulterior motive is not necessary, that love is truly enough.

The Juliana Hall is arguably the centerpiece of the recital. A 12 minute, unaccompanied monodrama for Mezzo. Presented in 6 movements, each one follows a particular emotion. The prologue, the singer greets the audience, commenting on what they like about certain people, somewhat shyly. The thrill of being together is overwhelming! The first emotion is joy; feeling open and bright and ready to embrace the world. The unstoppable force of happiness bubbles over like champagne but quickly goes flat when the singer realizes the feeling cannot last

forever. Sadness follows as the singer laments that “sad things are sad” and that endless calling into the void is fruitless and exhausting. The singer becomes angry, accusing the audience of staring and judging without knowing any part of their story and making assumptions. The singer despises the audience and tells them to mind their “damn business.” Immediately the singer is remorseful and says they feel as if “someone else is wearing my skin” and that angry outburst was the girl they try to hide and contain. The epilogue begs the audience to forget the ugliness and only “meet the self I edit for the world.”

Back to Mahler, this next song (*Ich atmet' einen linden duft*) outlines the power of scent-memory. How smells can bring one back to a specific moment in time and perhaps even back to the person that is associated with the scent. This piece serves as a meditation on memory, something simple and sweet.

The penultimate piece I am hoping will be a setting of one of my own poems chosen by the composer! More to come when that is decided.

Finally, the recital closes with “*Ich bin der welt*” by Mahler. This song is the final stop in the journey, finally knowing and accepting that one does not need the world, its approval, its worries, its pain. This final song is the moment I finally accept that I am enough, and I can rest secure in the knowledge I have gained, dead to the outside world and wrapped in a heaven of my own making. Content with only love and song.