

The Poet Sings

Sunday, March 19, 2017

Dr. Robert Eaton, Artistic Director

Judy Yauckoes, Accompanist

Reader- Lloyd Schwartz

POWER OF MUSIC

I am in Need of Music- text Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979), music David Brunner (1953)

Elizabeth Bishop, who was born in Worcester and died in Boston, wrote both poetry and short stories. Primarily recognized for her poetry, she was Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress from 1949 to 1950, the Pulitzer Prize winner for Poetry in 1956, the National Book Award winner in 1970, and the recipient of the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 1976.

This poem is about a woman who finds healing and renewal in the power of music. She lets the music flow through her heart and soul, and it replenishes her exhausted spirit.

I am in Need of Music –

<https://allpoetry.com/I-Am-In-Need-Of-Music>

LOVE AND BEAUTY

Amor De Mi Alma - text Garcia De La Vega (1503-1536), music Z. Randall Stroope (1953)

A true Spanish Renaissance man, De La Vega was a poet, musician, and soldier. He died from the wounds of combat. Simply called “Soneto V” this poem is one of only 38 sonnets and a few odes that constitute De La Vega’s total output.

Amor De Mi Alma (You Are the Love of My Soul)

I was born to love only you;
My soul has formed you to its measure;
I want you as a garment for my soul.

Your very image is written on my soul;
Such indescribable intimacy
I hide even from you.

All that I have, I owe to you;
For you I was born, for you I live,
For you I must die, and for you
I give my last breath.

**She Walks in Beauty- text Lord Byron (George Gordon Byron) (1758-1824),
music Kevin Memley (1971)**

Lord Byron was a notorious and flamboyant figure in the Romantic movement. "She Walks in Beauty," was written after Byron at a party saw a cousin wearing a mourning dress. He was clearly struck by her innocent beauty.

She Walks in Beauty

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;
Thus mellowed to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

**My Spirit Sang All Day- text Robert Bridges(1844-1930),
music Gerald Finzi (1901-1956)**

Robert Bridges first trained and served as a doctor before turning to literature. He was Britain's Poet Laureate for 1913-1930. "My Spirit Sang All Day" is from a set of seven part-song settings of poetry by Robert Bridges and is an ecstatic declaration of the joy wrought by love.

My Spirit Sang All Day

My spirit sang all day
O my joy.
Nothing my tongue could say,
Only my joy!
My heart an echo caught –
O my joy

And spake, Tell me thy thought,
Hide not thy joy.
My eyes gan peer around,-
O my joy-
What beauty hast thou found?
Shew us thy joy.
My jealous ears grew whist;-
O my joy-
Music from heaven is't,
Sent for our joy?
She also came and heard;
O my joy,
What, said she, is this word?
What is thy joy?
And I replied, O see,
O my joy,
'Tis thee, I cried, 'tis thee:
Thou art my joy.

REFLECTION

The Fruit of Silence- text Mother (Saint) Teresa (1910-1997), music Pēteris Vasks (1946)

Considered one of the greatest humanitarians of the 20th century, Mother Teresa was canonized as Saint Teresa of Calcutta in 2016. She wrote, "Silence can never be corrected. Very often, I have the answer but I don't give it, I wait, and I am grateful to God for giving me the opportunity because silence can never be corrected."

The Fruit of Silence

The fruit of silence is prayer
The fruit of prayer is faith
The fruit of faith is love
The fruit of love is service
The fruit of service is peace.

Sure on this Shining Night- text James Agee (1909-1955), music Morten Lauridsen (1943)

James Agee was a film critic, author of the screenplay "The African Queen" and 1958 Pulitzer Prize winner for his novel *A Death in the Family*. "Sure on this Shining Night" is a beautiful, complex text from the perspective of a man walking outside one summer night. He has seen the darkness of the world in his life, but says throughout all of the darkness he has seen the kindness of the world. He looks up at the stars, and everything is right. His heart is 'whole' as he weeps in wonder and awe of the vastness of universe and

his own solitude. This text could also be interpreted as a reflection on the end of a man's life. 'The late year lies down the north, All is healed, all is health' is such a complex, cryptic phrase, but perhaps it could be describing Heaven and all its glory?

Sure on this Shining Night

<https://allpoetry.com/Sure-On-This-Shining-Night>

POWER OF MUSIC

**Flight Song- text Euan Tait (1968-),
music Kim André Arnesen (1980-)**

Euan Tait is of Welsh-Scottish heritage, born in the late Sixties to a Scottish soldier and a Nairobi-born book editor and teacher. In his early years his occupation was developing work projects and supporting people in their homes, later supporting clients with learning disabilities to gain and retain employment. Since 2014 he has been a lecturer in English and Creative Writing in Swindon, England. He says "I am a keen doublebass player and singer, and love the vibrant, changing life of the forest hills; each day is always rediscovery... For me, poetry is the "leaves to a tree" song of a living, vital, abundant life behind what is seen, infused from the outset by Keats, Whitman, Emily Dickinson and Wordsworth."

Images of flying and singing are joined; the conductor draws the pent-up song from the singer and enables flight.

Flight Song

All we are we have found in song:
you have drawn this song from us.
Songs of lives unfolding
flying overhead, cry overhead;
longing, rising from the song within.
Moving like the rise and fall of wings,
hands that shape our calling voice
on the edge of answers
you've heard our cry, you've known our cry:
music's fierce compassion flows from you.
The night is restless with the sounds we hear,
is broken, shaken by the cries of pain:
for this is music's inner voice,
saying yes, we hear you,
all you who cry aloud,
and we will fly, answering you:
so our lives sing, sing,
wild we will fly,
wild in spirit we will fly.
Like a feather falling from the wing,
fragile as a human voice,

afraid, uncertain,
alive to love, we sing as love,
afraid, uncertain,
yet our flight begins as song

***** Intermission *****

**A Jubilant Song- text Walt Whitman (1819-1892),
music Norman Dello Joio (1913-2008)**

Andrea Ehrenreich- Soprano

Walt Whitman is one of America's most celebrated poets, considered among world poets a successor to Homer, Virgil, and Shakespeare. Whitman's "Leaves of Grass", which he published in 1855, celebrated democracy, nature, love, and friendship. "A Song of Joys" from Leaves of Grass is a delightful, joyous, exuberant and lengthy poem about all the wonders of life and encompasses everyone and every aspect of our earth. Life is celebrated in all its trials as well as in its glories.

A Song of Joys from "Leaves of Grass"

O to make the most jubilant song!
Full of music—full of manhood, womanhood, infancy!
Full of common employments—full of grain and trees.

O the joy of my spirit—it is uncaged—it darts like lightning!

Know'st thou the excellent joys of youth?
Joys of the dear companions and of the merry word and laughing face?
Joy of the glad light-beaming day, joy of the wide-breath'd games?
Joy of sweet music, joy of the lighted ball-room and the dancers?

O the joy of increase, growth, recuperation,
The joy of soothing and pacifying, the joy of concord and harmony.

Prophetic joys of better, loftier love's ideals, the divine wife, the
sweet, eternal, perfect comrade?
Joys all thine own undying one, joys worthy thee O soul.

O to have life henceforth a poem of new joys!
To dance, clap hands, exult, shout, skip, leap, roll on, float on!
To be a sailor of the world bound for all ports,
A ship itself, (see indeed these sails I spread to the sun and air,)
A swift and swelling ship full of rich words, full of joys.

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

**“ thank You God for most this amazing” - text E.E. Cummings (1898-1962),
music Eric Whitacre (1970)**

Cathy Pacito- Soprano

E.E. Cummings was a painter, author, playwright and prolific poet with over 2,900 poems. An innovator Cummings utilizes the absolute freedom of words and punctuation to create a poem of perfect joy and reverence for life, nature and God. The speaker becomes like a child once more, and is in love with God and the world, excited yet reflective, and humbly exalting an indescribable God. Realizing the amazing wonder of God, saying, "Now the ears of my ears awake, and the eyes of my eyes are opened" to depict the realization of His wonder, and opened not by him but by God. Whitacre challenges us musically with a complex score of close harmonies that are intended to shimmer and reflect the individual word.

As an aside, there is no evidence that the poet ever used lower case when writing his name but that this was his publisher's idea.

“i thank You God for most this amazing”

<https://thepoetryplace.wordpress.com/2009/06/01/i-thank-you-god-for-most-this-amazing/>

**Dominic has a doll- text E.E. Cummings (1898-1962),
music Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987)**

Through the eyes of a child we again realize that love can enliven anything--even a rag doll found in a trash barrel.

Dominic has a doll

<http://eecummings.tumblr.com/post/75771100/dominic-has-a-doll-wired-to-the-radiator-of-his>

**The Human Heart text William Wordsworth (1770-1850),
music Eric Barnum (1979)**

Wordsworth was one of the major English Romantic poets. With Coleridge he published the seminal work Lyrical Ballads that became the manifesto of the English Romantic movement. The composer says, “This poem... is a grateful response to the human heart's unending variety of intents and emotions... How do we measure a human life except to gauge one's heart? Each moment looks back on one's life to childhood with all its joys, fears, tears, and laughs.”

The Human Heart

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!

The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:—

Hence in a season of calm weather
 Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

**The Lamb- text William Blake (1757-1827),
music John Tavener (1944-2013)**

English artist, mystic and poet, William Blake wrote Songs of Innocence (1789): a collection of poems written from a child's point of view, expressive of innocent wonder and spontaneity in natural settings. The simple question that begins "The Lamb" is answered with an equally simple, yet profound declaration of faith. Blake He also wrote the pithy and evocative "Proverbs of Hell" example of which are: The busy bee has no time for sorrow. No bird soars too high, if he soars with his own wings. Prisons are built with stones of Law, brothels with bricks of Religion.

The Lamb

Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bid thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,
He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

POWER OF MUSIC

**Bones be Good- text Lucille Clifton (1936-2010),
music Gwyneth Walker (1947)**

Lucille Clifton was Poet Laureate of Maryland and was twice nominated for the Pulitzer Prize in poetry. This poem is taken from the collection Good Woman, a collection of poems focusing on the writer's role as a woman and poet. The music in us all just begs to spring forth. The text laments the singers' inability to keep their bodies from "movin'," "spinnin'," "dancin'," and "tappin'."

Bones, Be Good!

<https://radicalhope.wordpress.com/2013/08/11/lucille-cliftons-poetry/>