

MICHELLE MONROE,
MEZZO-SOPRANO

WITH
MARIYA AKHADJANOVA, PIANO

PROGRAM

<i>Casa Guidi</i>	Dominick Argento
Casa Guidi	(1927-2019)
The Italian Cook and the English Maid	
Robert Browning	
The Death of Mr. Barrett	
Domesticity	
<i>Reflets</i>	Lili Boulanger
	(1893-1918)
<i>Attente</i>	
<i>Dans l'immense tristesse</i>	
Sechs Lieder von Friedrich Bodenstedt, op. 10	Ingeborg von Bronsart
Mir träumte einst ein schöner Traum	(1840-1913)
Abschied vom Kaukasus	
Wie lächeln die Augen	
Nachtigall, o Nachtigall	
Das Vöglein	
Sing, mit Sonnenaufgang singe	

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Mezzo-soprano **Michelle Monroe** joined the faculty at UNI in 2016. She has been praised for her “command of dramatic shape and musical details.” Highlights from Ms. Monroe’s concert work include Mozart’s *Requiem in D minor*, Handel’s *Messiah*, Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, Beethoven’s *Symphony No. 9*, *The Noise* by Kimberly Osberg, and *Dialogue of Self and Soul* by James Stephenson. Appearing frequently with regional opera companies, her recent roles include Feri in *Die Csárdásfürstin*, Orlofsky in *Die Fledermaus*, Dorabella in *Così fan tutte*, Beppe in *L’amico Fritz*, Maddalena in Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, Carrie in *Carousel*, and Ruth in *The Pirates of Penzance*.

Ms. Monroe is a frequent recitalist and enjoys performing contemporary American vocal music. She gave the world premiere of *Four Songs* with Dr. Robin Guy, piano, by award winning composer Jeremy Beck for Beck’s album “Remember.” Michelle holds her M.M. in Voice Performance from the University of Northern Iowa, her B.M.E. from Northern State University, and is currently pursuing her D.M.A. in Voice at the University of Iowa.

Mariya Akhadjanova, a native of Uzbekistan, is a Doctoral Candidate in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at University of Iowa where she studies under the tutelage of Dr. Ksenia Nosikova. She is currently working as a staff collaborative pianist at the School of Music, University of Iowa. In November 2023, she won the Absolute Platinum Prize and the Rachmaninoff Prize, and was selected for Apple Music, Spotify, and YouTube Music Platform Publication in the Grand Maestro International Music Competition. Mariya has performed at Carnegie Hall and Merkin Concert Hall, receiving top prizes in several international competitions, including the Swiss and Quebec International Music Competition. Mariya holds a Bachelor’s and Master’s degree from the Uzbekistan State Conservatory in Tashkent and earned a second Master’s degree in Piano Performance at the University of Northern Iowa, where she studied under Dr. Dmitri Vorobiev and Dr. Vakhtang Kodanashvili, graduating in May 2018.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Ein Traum

by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt

Mir träumte einst ein schöner Traum:
Mich liebte eine blonde Maid;
Es war im grünen Waldesraum,
Es war zur warmen Frühlingszeit:

Die Knospe sprang, der Waldbach schwoll,
Fern aus dem Dorfe scholl Geläut—
Wir waren ganzer Wonne voll,
Versunken ganz in Seligkeit.

Und schöner noch als einst im Traum
Begab es sich in Wirklichkeit—
Es war im grünen Waldesraum,
Es war zur warmen Frühlingszeit:

Der Waldbach schwoll, die Knospe sprang,
Geläut erscholl vom Dorfe her—
Ich hielt dich fest, ich hielt dich lang
Und lasse dich nun nimmermehr!

O frühlingsgrüner Waldesraum!
Du lebst in mir durch alle Zeit—
Dort ward die Wirklichkeit zum Traum,
Dort ward der Traum zur Wirklichkeit!

Abschied vom Kaukasus

by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt

Die Gletscher leuchten im Mondenlicht,
und Thränen feuchten mein Angesicht.
Die Winde sausen, die Möven schreien,
die Wogen brausen, ich denke Dein!

Das Land entschwindet schon fern dem Blick,
doch zu dir findet mein Herz zurück;
ich will ihm Schwingen des Liedes leih'n
es soll dir singen: ich denke dein,

Wie lächeln die Augen

by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt

Wie lächeln die Augen der Liebe willkommen,
Wie sonnig geht Alles dem Herzen dann ein!
Und wie trüb sind die Augen, wird Abschied genommen--
Doch es muss ja so sein, ach, es muss ja so sein!

Wohl immer sucht Liebe die Liebe zu trösten,
doch Trost geht dem scheidenden Herzen nicht ein,
bis all seine Schmerzen in Thränen sich lösen--
Doch es muss ja so sein, ach, es muss ja so sein!

(Bronsart omits 3rd stanza)

A Dream

English translation by Richard Stokes

I once dreamed a beautiful dream:
A blonde maiden loved me,
It was in the green woodland glade,
It was in the warm springtime:

The buds bloomed, the forest stream swelled,
From the distant village came the sound of bells—
We were so full of bliss,
So lost in happiness.

And more beautiful yet than the dream,
It happened in reality,
It was in the green woodland glade,
It was in the warm springtime:

The forest stream swelled, the buds bloomed,
From the village came the sound of bells—
I held you fast, I held you long,
And now shall never let you go!

O woodland glade so green with spring!
You shall live in me for evermore—
There reality became a dream,
There dream became reality!

Farewell from Caucasus

English translation by Michelle Monroe

The glaciers glow in the moonlight,
and tears wet my face.
The wind whistles, the seagulls scream,
the waves pound, I think of you!

The land already vanishes far from view,
yet my heart finds its way back to you;
I wish to lend it wings of song
It should sing to you: I think of you!

How the eyes smile

English translation by Michelle Monroe

How the eyes of love smile welcomingly,
How sunny then everything is made to the heart!
and how cloudy are the eyes when farewell is taken--
Yet it must be that way, ah, it must be that way!

Surely love always seeks to comfort love,
but no consolation goes to the departing hearts,
until all his pain is dissolved into tears--
Yet it must be that way, ah, it must be that way!

Nachtigall, o Nachtigall
by Alexander Pushkin,
translated from Russian
by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt

Nachtigall, o Nachtigall!
Sangeshelle Nachtigall!
Sag, ' wohin, wohin dich schwingst,
Wo die ganze Nacht du singst?
Welche Arme mag, gleich mir,
Trostbedürftig lauschen dir,
Die zur Nacht das Aug' nicht schließt.
Weil's von Thränen überfließt!

Flieg, durchfliege Nachtigall,
Rings die weiten Lande all--
Fliege über's blaue Meer,
Lug' auf fremdem Strand umher,
Sieh in Stadt und Lande zu,
Nirgend, nirgend findest du
Eine Maid in Dorf und Stadt,
Die, wie ich, zu leiden hat!

Auf der Brust mir armen Ding
Eine Schnur von Perlen hing;
Ach, ich trug auch, armes Ding,
Auf dem Finger einen Ring,
Und im Herzen treu und mild
Trug ich meines Liebsten Bild!
Doch im Herbst verloren ganz
Meine Perlen ihren Glanz--
Und in Winternacht mein Ring
an der Hand in Stücken ging.
Jetzt im Frühling wein' ich sehr:
Habe keinen Liebsten mehr!

Das Vöglein
by Alexander Pushkin,
translated from Russian
by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt

Glücklich lebt, vor Noth geborgen.
Gottes Vöglein in der Welt,
kennt nicht Mühen, kennt nicht Sorgen,
denn sein Nest ist leicht bestellt!
Vöglein träumt auf grünem Baume,
bis ihm Gottes Ruf erklingt
aus dem morgenhellen Raume;
und es schüttelt sich und singt.

Auf den Lenz, den duftig frischen,
folgt der schwüle Sommer bald,
Nebel, Regen, Stürme mischen
sich im Herbste feucht und kalt;
allen Menschen wird es trüber-
fliegt zum Süden Vögelein
über's blaue Meer hinüber
fliegt zu neuem Frühling ein!

Nightingale, oh Nachtigall
English translation by Michelle Monroe

Nightingale, oh nightingale!
Nightingale bright with song!
Tell me, where, where do you linger,
Where do you sing all night?
Which arms wish, like mine,
In need of comfort, to listen to you,
Who don't close their eyes at night.
Because they overflow with tears!

Fly, fly directly nightingale,
Around all the wide lands --
Fly over the blue sea,
Look around on a foreign shore,
Look in city and country,
Nowhere, nowhere will you find
A maiden in a village or a city
That is suffering as I!

Upon my breast, poor thing that I am,
A string of pearls hung;
Ah, I also wore, poor me,
A ring upon my finger,
And in my heart, loyally and gently,
I carried the image of my beloved!
Yet in autumn lost all
my pearls' shine --
And on a winter's night my ring
Broke into pieces upon my hand.
Now in springtime I weep mightily:
For I no longer have a beloved!

The little bird
English translation by Michelle Monroe

Happily it lives, sheltered against affliction,
God's little bird in the world,
it knows not troubles, it knows not sorrows,
because his nest is easily kept!
The little bird dreams on a green tree,
until God's call rings out to him,
from that expanse of tomorrow's light;
and it jolts itself and sings.

In the spring, fragrant and fresh,
Sultry summer soon follows,
Fog, rain, and storms merge
themselves in autumn wet and cold;
It will become bleaker to all people-
The little bird flies to the South
across the blue sea
it flies to a new spring!

Sing, mit Sonnenaufgang singe
by Alexander Puschkin,
translated from Russian
by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt

Sing, mit Sonnenaufgang singe,
Nachtigall, dein schmetternd Lied!
Sing, so lange noch der Frühling
blumig Wald und Flur durchzieht!

Sing der Schöpfung bunte Schöne,
sing was blühet, fließt und lebt;
glücklich ist, wen deiner Töne
Zauberkraft zu dir erhebt!

Taucht im Meer die Sonne unter,
folgt die Nacht dem Tageslicht
alle Schöpfung ruht in Bangen
mit verhülltem Angesicht:

Du allein durchbrichst das Schweigen,
singst von Lieb' in dunkler Nacht
singst gewiegt auf schwanken Zweigen,
über dir des Himmels Pracht!

Wüster Traum ist alles Leben
ohne Liebe, wüst' das All --
Lieb' und Lied ist dir gegeben:
singe, süsse Nachtigall!

Reflets
poem by Maurice Maeterlinck

Sous l'eau du songe qui s'élève
Mon âme a peur, mon âme a peur.
Et la lune luit dans mon coeur
Plongé dans les sources du rêve !

Sous l'ennui morne des roseaux.
Seul les reflets profonds des choses,
Des lys, des palmes et des roses
Pleurent encore au fond des eaux.

Les fleurs s'effeuillent une à une
Sur le reflet du firmament.
Pour descendre, éternellement
Sous l'eau du songe et dans la lune.

Sing, sing with the rising of the sun,
English translation by Michelle Monroe

Sing, sing with the rising of the sun,
Nightingale, your clear song!
Sing, so long as springtime still
Passes through the flowering forest wood and meadow!

Sing of the beauty of the colorful creation,
Sing something flowering, moving and alive;
Happy is the one, who through your sound's
magic power is lifted up to you

When the sun disappears under the sea,
the night follows daylight --
All creation rests in trepidation
With a veiled face:

You alone can break through the silence,
You sing of love in the dark night --
You sing, swaying on shaking branches,
Heaven's splendor over you!

All life is a desolate dream,
Without love, the universe is desolate --
Love and song has been given to you:
Sing, sweet nightingale!

Reflections
English translation by Richard Stokes

Beneath the water of the dream that rises,
My soul is afraid, my soul is afraid.
And the moon shines into my heart
That is bathed in the dream's source!

Beneath the sad tedium of the reeds,
Only the deep reflection of things,
Of lilies, palms and roses,
Still weep on the water's bed.

One by one the flowers shed their leaves
Upon the firmament's reflection
To descend, eternally,
Beneath the dream's water and into the moon.

Attente
poem by Maurice Maeterlinck

Mon âme a joint ses mains étranges
À l'horizon de mes regards;
Exaucez mes rêves épars
Entre les lèvres de vos anges!

En attendant sous mes yeux las,
Et sa bouche ouverte aux prières
Éteintes entre mes paupières
Et dont les lys n'éclosent pas ;

Elle apaise au fond de mes songes,
Ses seins effeuillés sous mes cils,
Et ses yeux clignent aux périls
Éveillés au fil des mensonges.

Dans l'immense tristesse

Dans l'immense tristesse et dans le lourd silence,
Un pas se fait entendre, une forme s'avance,
Et vers une humble tombe elle vient se pencher -
O femme, en ce lieu saint, que viens-tu donc chercher?

Pourquoi viens-tu troubler la paix du cimetière?
As-tu donc un trésor caché sous quelque pierre,
Ou viens-tu mendier, à l'ombre des tombeaux,
Pauvre vivante, aux morts, un peu de leur repos?

Non, rien de tout cela jusqu'ici ne l'amène,
(La lune en cet instant éclairait cette scène,)
Et ce que cette femme, (hélas! le coeur se fend,)
Ce que cette femme vient chercher,
c'est un frêle et gracieux enfant,

Qui dort sur cette tombe, et qui, dans sa chimère,
Depuis qu'il a vu là disparaître sa mère,
Doux être! s'imaginer en son naïf espoir
Qu'elle n'est que cachée et qu'il va la revoir.

Et l'on dirait, le soir, en vision secrète,
Lorsque le blond enfant sent s'alourdir sa tête,
Et que sa petite âme est lasse de gémir,
Que sa mère revient chanter pour l'endormir.
(poem by Bertha Galeron de Calone)

Waiting
English translation by Richard Stokes

My soul has folded its strange hands
On the horizon of my gaze;
Satisfy my scattered dreams
Between the lips of your angels!

Waiting beneath my weary eyes,
Mouth open in prayers
Extinguished behind my eyelids
Whose lilies never open;

My soul brings peace to the depths of my dreams,
Its breasts bared beneath my lashes
And its eyes blink at the perils
Awoken through the thread of lies.

In the immense sadness

In the immense sadness and heavy silence
A footstep is heard, a form advances
And then leans over a humble tomb –
O woman, what do you seek in this holy place?

Why come to trouble the peace of the cemetery?
Have you some treasure hidden beneath a stone,
Or have you come to beg, poor living woman,
A little repose from the dead in the shade of their tombs?

No – none of that leads you to this place,
(The moon at this moment lights the scene,)
And what this woman (alas, the heart breaks,)
What this woman seeks
is a frail and graceful child

Who sleeps on this tomb and who, in his imagination,
Since he saw his mother vanish there,
Sweet creature! supposes with naïve hope
That she is only concealed and that he will see her.

You would think – a nocturnal secret vision –
That when the blond child feels his head lolling
And when his little soul is tired of groaning,
His mother returns to sing him asleep.
(translation Richard Stokes)

Casa Guidi

We more and more like our new apartment.
When I am tired of the sofa we go out on our terrace,
Where there is just room for two to walk —
Walk back and forward till the moon rises!
And the moon rises beautif’ly, and drops
Down the grey walls of San Felice.

We are getting on slowly in the furnishing department.
Robert wants a ducal bed for my room — all gilding and carving.
I persuaded him to get a piano instead.

We have had an illumination throughout the city —
And you in England can’t guess how beautiful
A Florentine illumination is!
The Pitti Palace opposite us was drawn out in fire!
You would have thought that all the stars
Out of Heaven had fallen into the piazza.

Sometimes he says to me: “Now, Ba, wouldn’t it have been wrong
If we two had not married?”

I do love this house — there’s the truth —
“Like a room in a novel,” this room has been called.

The Italian Cook and the English Maid

From beef-steak pies up to fricassees Alessandro is a master.
And from bread and butter puddings to boiled apple-dumplings,
An artist. Only — he doesn’t like Wilson to interfere.
She declares that he repeats so many times a day:

“I’ve been to Paris — I’ve been to London —
I have been to Germany — I must know.”

Also he offends her by being of opinion that:

“London is by far the most immoral place in the world.”
(He was there for a month once.)
And when she talks of the domestic happiness enjoyed in England.
He shakes his head disputatiously, and bids her

“Not to take her ideas of English domestic life from the
Signor and Signora — who were quite exceptions —
He never saw anything like *their* way of
Living together certainly, though

“He had been to Paris, and been in London, and been in Germany —
No, the Signor was an angel, and there was the truth of it —
Yes the Signora was rather an angel too — she never spent
Two thousand scudi on her dress, as *he* had seen women do —
So the Signor might well be fond of the Signora —
But still for a Signor to be always sitting with his
Wife in that way, was most extraordinary and

“He had been to Paris, and been to London” and so on ‘da capo’-

So poor Wilson’s head goes round she declares, and she
Leaves the field of battle from absolute exhaustion.

Robert Browning

And now I begin to wonder naturally whether I may not be
Some sort of a real angel after all.
It is not so bad a thing, be sure, for a woman
To be loved by a man of imagination.
He loves her through a lustrous atmosphere
Which not only keeps back the faults but produces
Continual novelty through its own changes.

If ever a being of a higher order lived among us
Without a glory round his head...he is such a being.
I feel to have the power of making him happy...
I feel to have it in my hands.

It is strange that anyone so brilliant should love *me*.
But true and strange it is...it is impossible for me to
doubt it anymore.
Here am I, in the seventh year of marriage,
Happier than on the seventh day!
The love not only stays, but grows.
He rises on me hour by hour and I am
Bound to him indeed with all the cords of my heart.

And Papa thinks I have sold my soul —
For *genius*...mere genius!

The Death of Mr. Barrett

It is true that first words must be said —
But of the past I cannot speak. I believe
Hope had died in me long ago
Of reconciliation in this world...

Occupation is the only thing to keep one
On one's feet a little, that I know well.
Only it is hard sometimes to force oneself
Into occupation...there's — the hardness.

I take up books — but my heart goes walking up and down
Constantly through that house on Wimpole Street.
Till it is tired, tired, tired. The truth is,
I am made of paper, and it tears me.

Domesticity

We have fires now, though the weather is lovely for November
And I take long walks every day.

We have fires now, and as soon as the lamp comes
Robert sits in his arm chair, and I curl myself up on the sofa.
Or perhaps on a cushion on the hearth,
And we say to one another
“Oh how delightful this is!
I do hope no one will come tonight.”

So we read and talk and Robert can't keep from
Letting out the end of David Copperfield.
And I scold him and won't hear a word more.

Then the door opens, and enter
Baby holding by Wilson's finger.
“I can't think what he wants,”
Says Wilson, “but he *would* come.”
Upon which he walks straight up to me and puts up one foot.
Pointing to it with his hand, pulling at my gown —
Perhaps you don't know what this means, but I do.
He wants to go to bed...

So I get up and go away with him and Wilson
And Robert calls after us: “Come back soon, Ba.”

And I go back soon...